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TNPSC BITS

- NASA's new planet hunting Spacecraft Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) has become operational and has started collecting data after its successful launch in April 2018.
- Common Service Center (CSC) and National Health Accounts (NHA) signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to implement the Ayushman Bharat scheme through 3 lakh Common Service Centers (CSCs) across the country.
- Red Fort, built east of Madras Medical college, in Chennai is going to be remodelled as a "Museum". It was constructed in 1897 and it belongs to Indo-Saracenic style of structure.
    - It is classified as "Grade I Heritage building" by Justice E Padmanabhan Committee.
- Telangana police launched facial recognition system (FRS), a first of its kind crime detection tool in the country. The FRS software has been linked to TSCOP mobile phone app, allowing field-level police personnel to check a suspect's face from anywhere with the criminal database.
- Apple became the first publicly traded U.S. company to be valued at $1 trillion. The tech company's stock jumped 2.8 percent to as high as $207.05
- The 61st World Santa Claus Congress (2018) was held at Copenhagen in Denmark.
- The appointments committee of the cabinet (ACC) has appointed Vijay Thakur Singh as Secretary (East) in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).
- Renowned industrialists Kumar Mangalam Birla and Y.C. Deveshwar were appointed as non-official independent directors in Air India.
    - It is for the first time that big industrialists have been named on the board of a public sector enterprise
- Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has approved 122 new research project proposals worth Rs 112 crore for funding under its IMPRINT-II (Impacting Research Innovation and Technology) scheme.
    - These projects were approved at IMPRINT-II Apex Committee meeting chaired by HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar in New Delhi.
- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has postponed Chandrayaan-2, India's second mission to the moon to January 2019. This will be second time mission has been postponed.
    - With this delay, India may lose 4th position in the world for soft-landing on the moon to Israel as it too planning to launch moon mission in December 2018.
- The government has extended e-visa facility for citizens of 165 countries at 25 airports and five seaports in order to promote tourism.

- Food safety appellate tribunal has been set up on behalf of the Tamil Nadu Government. Additional Chief Justice of Chennai metropolitan magistrate court Zakir Hussain has been appointed as the New Head of that Tribunal.
- Public sector non-life insurance firm United India Insurance Company announced the appointment of S Gopakumar as its Director and General Manager with immediate effect.
    - Earlier, Gopakumar was serving GIC Housing Finance Ltd as its Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer.
- According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) data, the value of transactions made through mobile wallets touched a record Rs14,632 crores in June, the rise of 4.2% from May.
    - The number of transactions fell around 5% to 309.62 mn in June after reaching an all-time high of 325.41 mn in May.
- PayU India has entered into a strategic partnership with Reliance Money, leading NBFC brands in India, to offer instant app-based personal loans, via LazyPay.
- Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) has integrated its MyCall and DND 2.0 apps on the Umang (Unified mobile application for new-age governance) platform for Android users.
- Poet Magudeeswaran has been conferred with 'Chirpi Literary' Award of Chirpi Foundation.
- Attorney General K K Venugopal on behalf of the center told the Supreme Court that Constitutional related judicial proceedings handled by Chief Justice of India - can be video recorded and live streamed – on a trial basis for a period of one to 3 months.
- Sri Lanka batsman Danushka Gunathilaka has been suspended from all forms of international cricket by Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) after the violations of 'Code of Conduct' by the player.
    - It happened during the end of the third day's play in the 2nd and final Test between Sri Lanka and South Africa in Colombo.
- Germany midfielder Mesut Ozil has announced that he is quitting German National football team citing Racism. Mesut Ozil has dual citizenship with Turkey as his ancestors were from Turkey, even though he was born in Germany and plays football for Germany.
- Turkey will sell four corvette warships to Pakistan which will be the country's largest single export deal. Turkey signed a memorandum of understanding to build four corvettes for Pakistan under the MiLGEM project last year.
- The government has doubled import duties on 328 textile products to 20% from existing rate of 10% under Section 159 of the Customs Act, 1962.
- Chennai will be hosting the 6th edition of the Covelong Point Surf festival at Kovalam on Aug 17, 2018.

- Rugby World cup 2019 is going to be hosted by Japan, for the 1st time in Asia. It will be the ninth Rugby World Cup.
- Nicolas Maduro, Venezuela's president has escaped an assassination attempt when the explosives detonated just above him during a speech in a military event.
    - He replaced the socialist, Hugo Chavez in 2013.
- Saudi Arabia – announced that it is cutting all its diplomatic, trade and investment ties with Canada – for its interference in the Internal Affairs of Saudi Arabia.
    - It has also expelled the Canadian ambassador and recalled its own envoy in Canada.
- On the occasion of Government Maternity Hospital, Egmore inaugurating the 175th year of service celebrations, C Vijayabaskar, Health Minister of Tamil Nadu inaugurated the RFIT service (Radio frequency identification tag) to prevent the newborn from stolen or lost within the hospital campus.
- Mumbai's St Xavier's College will get its first non-Christian principal in the institution's 150-year history after Rajendra Shinde assumes charge on September 1, the day when the college turns 150 years
    - The principal-designate, who at present heads the Botany department of the college, will replace Dr. Baptist Agnel Menezes, the 1st Non-Jesuit principal of the College.
- Both Houses of Parliament were adjourned for the day on 08.08.2018 after paying obituary to DMK chief M Karunanidhi who passed away on 07.08.2018. This is the first time the Parliament has been adjourned to pay tribute to a person who was never been a MP.
- Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha that, only citizens of India have the right to seek information under the provisions of Right to Information Act, 2005. Non-Resident Indians are not eligible to file RTI applications.
- Former Michigan state lawmaker Rashida Tlaib is set to become the first Muslim woman elected to United States of Congress after winning the Democratic primary for the House of Representative seat of the United States of Congress.
- Gujarat Co-operative Milk Marketing Federation Ltd. (GCMMF), the marketers of the popular Amul brand of milk and dairy products, was awarded the 'Marketer of the Year' award by the International Advertising Association of India (IAAI)
- US President Donald Trump has nominated Aditya Bamzai, a prominent Indian-American law professor and legal expert to be a member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board for the remainder of a six-year term expiring on January, 29, 2020.

- It is an independent agency that protects privacy and civil liberties in the country.

- Start-up India launched Start-up Academia Alliance programme to fulfil Government's mission to promote spirit of entrepreneurship in the country. It is unique programme to foster mentorship opportunity between academic scholars and startups working in similar domains.
- 51st ASEAN Foreign Ministers meeting was held at Singapore. It was Chaired by the Foreign Minister of Singapore, Lee Hsien Loong. Iran officially joined the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.
- Shimla-based filmmaker Devkanya Lotheta's film "Behind the Bars" has won the first prize under the Short Film Award Scheme - 2018 of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC).
- Meghalyaa hosted the 5th 'Act East business show' to strengthen between ASEAN countries and North-Eastern states. The show was organised by the Indian chamber of commerce in association with Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER)
- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the reappointment of Ram Sewak Sharma as chairperson of Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) for the further period beyond August 2018 up to September 2020, i.e. date on which he attains the age of 65 years.
- Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC) has launched a new digital platform 'MyDeal' to simplify capital raising process through capital markets by providing real-time access to information such as investors' feedback, profiles, client orders and deal pricing.
- The Global Innovation Index 2018 was launched in New Delhi. The event was organized by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) – one of the founding partners of GII along with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), in collaboration with the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).
    - GII improved from 60 in 2017 to 57 in 2018.
- The 3rd India-Nepal Coordination meeting was started in New Delhi aimed at enhancing mutual cooperation and coordination between the two Border Guarding Forces (BGF) of both countries.
- Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, who completed his first year in office on Saturday, visited 28 of 29 states in the country during his term in office, setting a record for Vice-Presidents of India.
- Fertiliser major IFFCO has entered into joint venture with Congelados De Navarra to set up food processing plant at Ludhiana in Punjab. With this joint venture, co-operative IFFCO for first time will foray into food processing sector.
- NITI Aayog, together with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the UT Administrations of Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep hosted an

Investors' Conference on August 10, 2018 at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra, New Delhi for the Holistic Development of Islands.

- The Conference was inaugurated by Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog.

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu released the Book 'Bebak Baat' written by Vijay Goel, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Statistics & Programme Implementation, in New Delhi.
- Indian-American Aruna Vishwanathan was one of the 3 women honoured with 'Women in Business: Making a Difference Award' at the 19th annual Indo-American Chamber of Commerce of Greater Houston (IACCGH) gala, in Houston, United States.
- Railway stations in Rajasthan are the cleanest in the country with Jodhpur topping the list of cleanest railway stations released by the Quality Council of India (QCI).
- Union Minister for Science and Technology Harsh Vardhan inaugurated a genetic resource storage facility at the Laboratory for Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES) at Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad.
- The lander on the Chandrayaan-2 mission, which is scheduled to be launched early next year, will be named 'Vikram' after Vikram Sarabhai, the father of Indian space programme.
- Punjab government announced that will start 'Tatkal Sewa' for property registration across the state
- Chhattisgarh is the first among the 28 other states in the country to provide 'Right to Skills' Development to the youth.
- Indian rupee for first time in history plunged to record low of Rs. 70.07 against US dollar on 14 August 2018.
- President Ram Nath Kovind has given Madhya Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel additional charge of Chhattisgarh. She was given additional charge following death of Chhattisgarh Governor Balramji Dass Tandon.
- Prime Minister during his addresses on the 72nd Independence Day announced that permanent commission will be granted to serving SSC women officers of armed forces. Under current scheme Women are inducted in armed forces only as officers and not in subordinate ranks.
- Indian Banks' Association has appointed Egon Zehnder International as a 'Knowledge Partner' to the Banks Board Bureau (BBB). As a Knowledge Partner, Egon Zehnder International will help to design, implement and institutionalise a flagship leadership development strategy for public sector banks in India.
- Senior diplomat D Bala Venkatesh Varma was appointed as India's next ambassador to Russia. Varma, a 1988 batch Indian Foreign Service officer, is currently serving as Indian envoy in Spain.

- In the wake of Prime Minister's vision for creating digital museums at stations using QR code, Ministry of Railway has made "digital screens" operational at 22 stations on this Independence Day to spread awareness about Indian Railways Heritage.
    - The project aims at showcasing the legacy of Indian Railways through one to two-minute-long movie clips on digital LED screens.
- Tamil Nadu government has launched its website www.tnsdma.com for disaster management. Government has also signed MoU with 'Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre' – to provide training and Disaster risk management strategies for Government staff involved in disaster management.
- Panini language laboratory was recently inaugurated at Mahatma Gandhi institute in Mauritius to promote reading and writing Hindi amongst young and its further development.
    - It was launched by External Affairs minister Sushma Swaraj on the side-lines of 11th World Hindi Conference held in Mauritius.
- Pakistan Cricketer Nasir Jamshed has been banned by Pakistan Cricket Board for 10 years on spot fixing charges. The charges were leveled during the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2016-17 season.
    - It was to be noted that he was banned for the second time in the last 2 years.
- The Directorate of Collegiate Education (DCE) in Tamil Nadu has issued a circular asking all arts, science and other colleges, coming under its purview, to ban use of cellphones by students on the premises of the institutions.
    - Centre-run institutions such as IIT Madras have been excluded from this rule.
- Aavin has launched the sale of its products in Hongkong. Aavin products are already available in Malaysia and Singapore.
- Union Home Ministry has issued a directive that no ATM will be refilled with cash after 9 pm in cities, 6 pm in rural areas and 4 pm in Naxal-affected areas from February 8, 2019
- Annie Zaidi was awarded the Hindu Playwright Award 2018 for her play Untitled-1, at the launch of the 14th edition of The Hindu Theatre Fest at Chennai.
    - The award carried a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh. Yes Bank was the Title Sponsor for the fest.
- Justice Manjula Chellur has been appointed as Chairperson of Appellate Tribunal for Electricity (APTEL) by the power ministry. Prior to this, she was Chief Justice of Bombay High Court.
    - She was the first woman Chief Justice of Calcutta High Court and first female judge of the Karnataka High Court.

- English cricketer James Anderson became the first player to take 100 wickets at Lord's. Overall, James Anderson is the 2nd bowler to take 100 wickets at a single venue after Sri Lanka's Muttiah Muralitharan, who has taken more than 100 wickets at 3 separate venues in Test matches.
- Film Actor Akshay Kumar has been appointed the brand ambassador for Government of India (GoI)'s special road safety awareness campaign. As part of the campaign "Sadak Suraksha – Jeevan Raksha", 3 short films starring Akshay has been released to generate public awareness towards road safety.
- Telangana government has launched the eye care scheme 'Kanti Velugu' on the occasion of 72nd Independence Day 2018. In the 'Kanti Velugu' eye care scheme, every citizen of Telangana will be entitled to have free eye care viz. free eye screenings, medicines and spectacles, and surgeries. It envisages covering 3.7 crore population.
- The World Organ Donation Day (WODD) is observed every year on August 13 to encourage people to donate their precious organs.
- University Grants Commission (UGC) issued circular directing all universities and higher education institutions to ban the sale of junk food on their campuses.
- Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry is developing National Logistics Portal is to ensure ease of trading in international and domestic markets. The portal will link all stakeholders of EXIM (export and import), domestic trade and movement and all trade activities on a single platform.
- Industry chamber (Assocham) appointed former bureaucrat Uday Kumar Varma as its new Secretary General. He succeeds DS Rawat who held the position for nearly 14 years.
- Department of Telecommunications has indicated that the passengers in Flights can browse and make calls from October onwards at 30000 feet. Earlier, TRAI has announced that the Local and international flights will be allowed to provide voice and data services within Indian airspace at an altitude of 9850 feet onwards.
- Pakistan's new government has banned the discretionary use of state funds and first-class air travel by officials and leaders, including the President and the Prime Minister, as part of its austerity drive.
- On August 23, the annual festival at Nallur Kandaswamy Kovil has started in Jaffna, Sri Lanka with the sacred flag hoisting ceremony. In the 25-day festival, Ther Thiruvila (chariot festival) is the most popular of all events.
- The 2018 Krishi Kumbh International Conference and Exhibition, organized by the Uttar Pradesh Government, was held at Indian Institute of Sugarcane Research (Telibagh) in Lucknow. The aim of the 3-day conference is
    - To provide a platform to farmers, technical experts, and entrepreneurs for the exchange of knowledge and expertise in the field of the agriculture sector.

- Arunachal Pradesh government is going to organize a youths' conclave, titled ATAL (Arunachal Transformation & Aspirational Leadership) Conclave, in September 2018. The aim of the 3-day ATAL conclave is to engage youths in the age group of 18 to 30 years of the state pro-actively in the areas of public policy and governance.
- The 9th edition of Mountain Echoes Literature Festival 2018 has started in Thimphu, Bhutan to serve as a collaborative platform for knowledge sharing, leading to a global cultural potpourri of ideas. It will celebrate 50 years of diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan.
- The book "281 and Beyond" is the autobiography of veteran cricketer VVS Laxman, which will be launched by Westland Sport in November 2018. The title has been taken from the series-turning innings of 281 against Australia at the Eden Gardens in 2001.
- Pakistani-origin Mehreen Faruqi, of the Australian Green Party, became the first Muslim woman to occupy a seat in the country's Senate. She replaces Lee Rhiannon from the Green Party, WHO announced her retirement in May.
- The 8th meeting of India-Kenya Joint Trade Committee was held in Nairobi, Kenya.
- "Atal Ji Ne Kaha", is the latest of the books on the BJP patriarch and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee launched by Indian PM. The book was Authored and compiled by Brijendra Rehi. He was a noted Doordarshan producer and a senior journalist.
- Ganga Prasad was sworn in as the 16th Governor of Sikkim at a function held at Raj Bhawan in Gangtok. Acting Chief Justice of High Court of Sikkim, Justice Meenakshi M Rai, administered the oath of office to Prasad.
    - Ganga Prasad succeeds Shriniwas Patil as the 16th Governor of Sikkim.
- Baby Rani Maurya was on Saturday sworn in as the seventh Governor of Uttarakhand. Uttarakhand High Court Chief Justice, Rajiv Sharma administered the oath of office to Maurya at Raj Bhavan in Dehradun. Maurya succeeded Krishan Kant Paul.
    - Maurya is the 2nd woman to become the Governor of the Uttarakhand, after Margaret (August 2009 to May 2012).
- Former India opener Lalchand Rajput has been appointed as the head coach of Zimbabwe's national team.
- Tamil Nadu Corporation is going to convert the 'Service Lane' in Marina Beach and Elliot's Beach as Paid Parking Zone'.
- The 22nd Youth Parliament competition was held at Jawahar Navodya Vidyalya Basohli at Kathua district in Jammu and Kashmir. The event was organised by Navodaya Vidhlaya Samiti, Chandigarh region.

- The Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu has released the Book 'Colonial Syndrome: The Videshi Mind Set in Modern India', written by Prof. Rama Krishna Rao, in Vishakhapattanam, Andhra Pradesh.
    - The book highlights the distinct difference or disconnect between native Indian ethos and present state.
- The National Anti-Profiteering Authority (NAA) has started a helpline, 011-21400643, to encourage consumers to file complaints against the companies that are not passing GST rate cut benefits.
- Scotland became the first country in the world to give out free sanitary napkins to all the students of its schools, colleges and universities.
- Prashant Agrawal has been appointed as the next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Namibia.
- Sandeep Kumar has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to Ireland.
- North Korea is going to host Asian youth and Junior weightlifting championships, 2019 which will be commencing from October 27, 2019 in Pyongyang.
- Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways & Coal, inaugurates Smart Railway Conclave organized by FICCI in New Delhi.
- Union Government's premier thinks tank NITI Aayog has made computer chip manufacturer NVIDIA its deep learning technology partner support its MoveHack event.
    - MoveHack is global mobility hackathon event organized by NITI Aayog to crowdsource solutions aimed at the future of mobility in India.
- Search engine giant Google has unveiled Project 'Navlekha' to make online content relevant for more Indian users, especially in local languages. It was unveiled along with a host of upgrades of Google's other products at fourth 'Google for India' event held in New Delhi.
    - Navlekha is a word derived from Sanskrit meaning "a new way to write." The platform aims to bring 1,35,000 publishers in Local languages together 'online' by making webhosting simpler
- Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare issued an advisory to all states and Union Territories to not allow manufacture, sale, and advertisement of e-cigarettes and other Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS).
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for the umbrella scheme "Ocean Services, Technology, Observations, Resources Modelling and Science (O-SMART)" of Ministry of Earth Sciences
    - Implementation of O-SMART will help in addressing issues relating to Sustainable Development Goal-14, which aims to conserve use of oceans, marine resources for sustainable development.

- Ruchi Ghanshyam has been appointed as the next Indian High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, she will be replacing incumbent High Commissioner to the UK, YK Sinha.
- Emmerson Mnangagwa has been sworn in as the President of the Republic of Zimbabwe. Where former President Robert Mugabe resigned in November last year and with elections due this year.
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will outsource the production of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicles (PSLVs) and Small Satellite Launch Vehicles (SSLVs) to private Industries. The Indian Space agency Chairman K Sivan informed that private industries will play a major role in capacity building.
- Govt of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a $375 million loan agreement to contribute to double farming incomes in Madhya Pradesh by expanding irrigation networks and system efficiency.
- The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, and the International Energy Agency (IEA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Enhancing Innovation for Clean Energy Transition.
    - This seeks to deepen co-operation in support of clean energy innovations to accelerate the research, development, and demonstration (RD&D) of clean energy technologies in India.
- Governor of Assam has extended application of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (AFSPA) in the entire state for six more months with immediate effect.
    - This decision was taken as precautionary measure to maintain law and order during ongoing National Register of Citizens (NRC) update process.
- Global IT firm IBM has partnered with Indian IT companies (Persistent Systems, Invest India, Wipro, Capgemini and NASSCOM) for its 'Call for Code' initiative that aims to build global solutions for disaster management.
- Arunachal Pradesh Assembly passed a bill for the creation of three new districts - Pakke-Kesang, Lepa Rada and Shi Yomi - in the state.
- R K Singh, Minister of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy released a book on "Weather Information Portal for Indian Power System".
    - This document has been developed by POSOCO in collaboration with IMD to facilitate enhanced utilization of Weather Portal in all spheres of Power Sector.

TAMILNADU

All-Woman Metro Railway station

- Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has announced that Shenoy Nagar and Koyambedu Metro Rail stations is going to be fully managed by Woman employees.
- Shenoy Nagar station was handed over to the All-Woman authorities on July 31st, 2018 as a part of women empowerment.
- Chennai has totally 26 Metro Rail stations.

GI Tag - Nagercoil temple jewellery

- The Geographical Indications (GI) registry of the government of India, has given an authorized user certificate to the Nagercoil temple jewellery.
- A peculiar red and green stone called 'Kuchu kal' is used for making the jewellery.
- The temple jewellery is believed to have originated somewhere in the 9th century during the reign of the Chola dynasty.
- This traditional jewellery is made of the finest gold embedded with several precious gems and stones and is also the authentic ones which are used by classical dancers.



T.N. Economy

- Tamil Nadu has clocked a growth rate of 8.09% in 2017-18, staging a recovery from the effects of November 2016 demonetisation and the introduction of Goods and Services Tax (GST) in July 2017.
- This has been largely due to the double-digit growth rate of agriculture and allied activities aided by the other two sectors – industry and services.
- The farm sector registered 15.1% growth rate followed by industry's 7.75% and services' 6.55%.

Valvil Ori festival

- The two-day Valvil Ori festival has been commenced on 02nd August at the Kolli Hills in Namakkal.

- The district administration is organising the festival every year to recall the glory of King Valvil Ori who ruled over Kolli Hills in 200 AD.
- The king is known for his archery skills and also for his generosity.

Tamil Nadu's first government-trained non-Brahmin priest

- For the first time in Tamil Nadu, a temple in Madurai has broken caste barriers and appointed a non-Brahmin priest.
- It was in 1970 that Karunanidhi had first passed an order to clear the way for members of all castes to become priests.
- But the order was stuck down by the Supreme Court.
- But in 2006, Karunanidhi once again passed the order, and this time (December 2015) the Supreme Court upheld the decision.
- Following the 2006 order, 206 men, including 24 belonging to SC/ST communities, underwent training in many temples owned by Tamil Nadu'S Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment department and completed Junior Priest certification.
- On March 1 this year, a person named T.Marichamy, who was one among the 206 to undergo training, was appointed as a priest in Madurai's Thallakulam Aiyappan temple.
- He is also the first person who does not belong to a lineage of traditional priests to be appointed in a temple to perform puja after undergoing formal training as an archaka.
- The appointment was being made as per Agamas Shastra (the manual for worship, temple building and rituals) of the individual temple.
- In its judgment in December 2015, the apex court, while refusing to strike down the order, said that the appointments must be in accordance with the agama that govern the worship at respective temples.
- It was this judgment that enabled the Communist Party of India (Marxist)-led government in Kerala to appoint a Dalit as a priest in 2017.

Justice R Ragupathi Commission

- Tamil Nadu High court orders the suspension of Justice R.Ragupathi Commission.
- It was constituted in 2011 by AIADMK govt. to probe the irregularities in the construction of new Assembly-cum-Secretariat complex between 2006 and 2011.

Chief Justice of Madras High Court

- Justice Vijaya Kamlesh Tahilramani was sworn-in as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court at a ceremony in Raj Bhavan in Chennai.



- Justice Tahilramani's appointment as CJ followed as the elevation of her predecessor Chief Justice Indira Banerjee to the Supreme Court.
- The TN Governor Banwarilal Purohit administered the oath of office to the new Chief Justice.

5 New taluks of revenue department

- The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Edappadi K. Palaniswamy, inaugurated 5 new taluks of revenue department.
- The newly formed taluks are,
    - Kallikudi in Madurai district
    - Raja Singa Mangalam in Ramanathapuram district
    - Eral in Thoothukudi district
    - Thisaiyanvilai in Tirunelveli district
    - Mohanur in Namakkal district

Enrollment of Suganya Samriddhi Yojana

- Tamil Nadu ranks First in the overall enrollment of Suganya Samriddhi Yojana, a flagship savings scheme of the Central Government for the Girl children
- It has grossed Rs 2,940 crores in the last 3 years from 15.95 lakhs account holders.
- This is based on the figures available upto June 2018.

Vishaka panel formed

- For the first time in the history of Tamil Nadu police, the Vishaka committee has been formed to probe the complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace.
- The committee had been formed in compliance with the Vishaka guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court.
- The panel will be headed by Seema Agarwal, ADGP
- Members of the Committee
    - Seema Agarwal, ADGP (Head)
    - S Arunachalam, ADGP
    - Thenmozhi, DIG
    - Saraswati, SP (Retd)
    - Ramesh, Serving Member of DGP Office



iCRAFPT 2018

- International Conference on Recent Advances in Food Processing Technology (iCRAFPT) 2018 is being held at Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology, Thanjavur in Tamilnadu.
- The Theme of the conference was "Doubling farmers' income through food processing".
- This conference will be a valuable and important platform for inspiring international and interdisciplinary exchange at the forefront of food research.

TN Launches plastic pollution-free Tamil Nadu' Campaign

- The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has launched a 'plastic pollution-free Tamil Nadu' Campaign to ban the 'Use and Throw' plastics from January 01, 2019.
- He has also launched an exclusive web portal, www.plasticpollutionfreetn.org and a mobile application called 'Plastic Pollution Free Tamil Nadu'.



- The actors, Suriya, Karthi, Jyothika, and Vivek has been announced as "Brand ambassadors" of the campaign and to promote eco-friendly bags

Flag hoisted by Governor at Raj Bhavan for the 1st time

- In a first, Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit unfurled the Indian tricolor at the Raj Bhavan on the occasion of Independence Day.
- Generally, a Governor unfurls the tricolor only on Republic Day, January 26 during a colorful ceremony here at the Marina.
- Purohit hoisting the national flag at Raj Bhavan was a break from the tradition established in 1974.
- Before that year, it was the practice for governors to hoist the flag at the official Independence Day event of the State government.
- But, with the efforts of former chief minister M.Karunanidhi, this privilege was later given to chief ministers of the country.

Sorkuvai Scheme

- Tamil Nadu government is going to launch a 'Sorkuvai' scheme.
- The scheme will link all the Tamil words and English words as per their original 'meanings' apart from linking the 'Most Searched' words with pictographic images.

India's tallest film studio

- Tamil Nadu Chief Minister inaugurated India's tallest film studio 'MGR Centenary Film Studio' in Kalaignar city, Paiyanur.
- The 56 feet tall, 110 meters long and 100 feet wide studio was constructed using funds collected by the Federation of Film Employees Union of South India (FEFSI), at Paiyanur.

State Disaster Management Perspective Plan 2018–2030

- Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami released the State Disaster Management Perspective Plan 2018–2030.
- The plan has been prepared by the Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Authority in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- It's aims to build a safe and disaster-resistant Tamil Nadu through systematic approach, inclusive development and mainstreaming disaster risk concerns into the development ethos of the State.

NATIONAL

India Designated Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA-1)

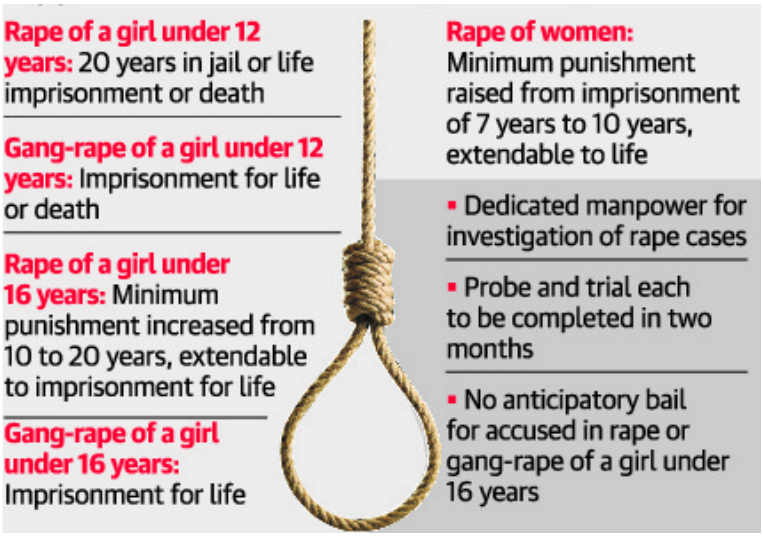
- United States has designated India as Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA-1) country.
- This will allow India to buy highly advanced and cutting-edge sensitive technologies from America.
- This coveted status brings India in par with US's closest allies and partners such as NATO.
- Currently, there are 36 countries on the STA-1 list. India is the only South Asian country to be on the list. Other Asian countries designated as STA-1 are Japan and South Korea.
- STA-1 designation authorizes export, re-export, and transfer (in-country) of specified items on Commerce Control List to destinations posing a low risk of unauthorized or impermissible uses.
- STA-1 treatment will expand the scope of technology exports subject to Export Administration Regulations (EAR) that can be made to India without individual licenses.

Homeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Bill, 2018

- Lok Sabha has passed Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Bill, 2018 by voice vote to replace Ordinance promulgated by President in May 2018.
- It amends Homoeopathy Central Council Act, 1973 which sets up Central Council of Homoeopathy and regulates homeopathic education and practice.
- The Bill amends 1973 Act to provide for supersession of Central Council with effect from May 18, 2018.
- The Council will be reconstituted within 1 year from date of its supersession.
- In the interim period, the Board of Governors constituted by central government will exercise powers of Central Council.
- Board of Governors will consist of up to 7 members including persons of eminence in the field of homeopathy education, eminent administrators, appointed by Union Government.
- The Central Government will select one of these members as Chairperson of Board.

Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018

- Lok Sabha has passed Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018 to provide death penalty to those convicted of raping girls below the age of 12 years.



- The Bill replaces an ordinance promulgated by President in April 2018 and amends Indian Penal Code (IPC), Criminal Procedure Code, Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and Indian Evidence Act.
- It provides for,
    - Stringent punishment of jail term of minimum 20 years or life imprisonment or death for rape of girl less than 12 years
    - Punishment with imprisonment for rest of life or death sentence in case of gang rape of girl below 12 years.
    - No provision for anticipatory bail for a person accused of rape or gang rape of girlS under 16 years

- Speedy investigation and trial, which must be completed in two months.
- Proposes 6 months' time limit for disposal of appeals in rape cases.

Strategic Partnership guidelines

- Defense Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has approved implementation of Strategic Partnership guidelines.
- It is considered a major step towards boosting private sector participation in domestic defense manufacturing.
- The Strategic Partnership model lay emphasis on incentivization of transfer of niche technology and higher indigenous content.
- The SP model has four segments
  - submarines,
  - single engine fighter aircraft,
  - helicopters and
  - armored carriers/main battle tanks

  which will be specifically opened up for the private sector.
- All procurements under the SP model would be executed by specially constituted Empowered Project Committees to "provide focused attention and ensure timely execution."

Swachhta Pakhwada

- Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoPNG), its attached offices and Oil & Gas CPSEs under the administrative control of MoPNG celebrated Swachhta Pakhwada fortnight from 01st to15th July, 2018.
- The main theme of MoPNG initiatives in this Pakhwada were "Innovation" and "Sustainability".
- A maiden initiative of Swachhata ranking of Oil & Gas CPSEs/ attached offices was undertaken.
  - 1st – ONGC
  - 2nd – IOCL
  - 3rd – HPCL
- It has to be noted that the Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd (ONGC), has been ranked 197 in the latest 'Fortune Global 500' list.
- ONGC is recently conferred with INFRA Icon Award at the Mid-day 'INFRA Icons'

- Swachhta Pakhwada was Launched in April 2016.
- Its objective is to bring intense focus on the issues and practices of Swachhata by engaging Ministries/Departments – for a period of a Fortnight.

Startup India Yatra

- The Startup India Yatra was launched on July 30, 2018 in Raipur, the capital city of Chattisgarh.
- It moves to Bilaspur from Raipur and intends to travel to other cities of Chhattisgarh.
- Startup India Yatra has previously been held in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh.
- Startup India organises the 'Startup India Yatra' in one state every month to promote job creation in tier 2 and tier 3 towns and cities.

Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Third Amendment) Bill, 2017

- Lok Sabha has unanimously passed Constitution (123rd Amendment) Bill, 2017 by two-third majority.
- The constitutional amendment bill seeks to grant National Commission on Backward Classes (NCBC) constitutional status at par with National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCSTs).
- The Bill
    - Removes power of NCSC to examine matters related to backward classes.
    - Mentions that NCBC will comprise of five members appointed by President. Their tenure and conditions of service will also be decided by President through rules.
    - Seeks to make NCBC Constitutional body by inserting new article 338B in constitution.
    - Gives NCBC powers of civil court while investigating or inquiring into any complaints.

Move Hack

- NITI Aayog has launched global mobility hackathon Move Hack to crowdsource solutions aimed at future of mobility in India.
- It is first platform in the world that has enmeshed
    - Public transport,

- Private transport,
- Road safety,
- Multimodal connectivity and
- New age transport technologies (zero emission vehicles & Intra city aerial transport)

in a hackathon spearheaded by Government.

- The hackathon has two-pronged campaign approach:
  - "Just Code It" (solutions through innovations in technology / product / software and data analysis)
  - "Just Solve It" (Innovative business ideas or sustainable solutions).
- The hackathon is organized in partnership with Government of Singapore and is powered by Hacker Earth.
- PwC is the Knowledge Partner and NASSCOM is the Strategic Partner.

Logo and tagline for GI

- Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) under Ministry of Commerce and Industry has unveiled tricolour logo for geographical indication (GI) certified products.
- The logo has tagline "Invaluable Treasures of Incredible India" printed below it.
- In the open contest, winning logo was designed by Adri Chatterjee and winning tagline was coined by Akancha Tripathi.



- The purpose of logo and tagline for GI selected is to increase awareness about intellectual property rights (IPRs) and also and importance of GI products in the country.

Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill

- President Ram Nath Kovind has given assent to a law that will deter fugitive economic offenders to evade legal process in India and flee the country.
- A fugitive economic offender is any individual against whom warrants for arrest is issued for his involvement in select economic offences involving amount of at least Rupee 100 crore or more and has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution.
- The new law allows designated special court to declare a person as fugitive economic offender and to confiscate his property, including 'benami' ones.

- The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 was passed by the Rajya Sabha on July 25. The Lok Sabha had cleared the measure on July 19.
- The President has also given nod to other laws
    - Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Act, 2018
    - State Banks (Repeal and Amendment) Act, 2018
    - Specific Relief (Amendment) Act, 2018.

India's first Blockchain District

- Telangana State Information Technology, Electronics and Communication department (ITE&C) signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Tech Mahindra to launch India's first Blockchain district.
- The MoU was signed at International Blockchain Congress 2018 held in Hyderabad.
- Blockchain is decentralized incorruptible digital ledger for storing data across peer-to-peer network. It decentralizes information without it being copied.
- This database is not stored on physical servers but on cloud, which makes it easy to store unlimited data

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana – Target Achieved

- Union Government has announced that it has reached target of providing 5 crore free LPG connections under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) almost 8 months ahead of schedule (in 27 months instead of 35 months)
- UP, West Bengal, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Odisha are 6 states that have accounted for nearly 65% of connections provided under PMUY.
- 47% of overall beneficiaries are from weaker sections of society i.e., SC/STs
- The Wold health Organisation (WHO) has recognised PMUY as one of decisive intervention by Government to address indoor air pollution which accounts for nearly 10 lakh deaths in year in the country.

National Sports University Bill, 2018

- Lok Sabha has passed National Sports University Bill, 2018 by voice vote to set up the country's first National Sports University in Imphal (west), Manipur
- It is mandated to promote sports education in areas of sports sciences, sports technology, sports management, and sports coaching.

- The Bill replaces National Sports University Ordinance, 2018 promulgated by President in May 2018 to protect interests of students who already have been enrolled in National Sports University.

Integrate to Innovate (i2i) Programme

- Invest India in partnership with energy companies has launched Integrate to Innovate Programme for startups in energy sector.
- It is 3-month programme for startups in the power sector aims to foster collaboration between startups and large corporations of the energy sector.
- It is official Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of Central Government.
- It has been set up as non-profit venture under Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industries.

Three Women Judges – India

- With the elevation of Madras High Court Chief Justice Indira Banerjee as the Supreme Court judge, the apex court has created a new record in the Indian judicial history.
- For the first time, the top court will have three sitting woman judges namely,
    - Justice R Bhanumathi
    - Justice Indu Malhotra
    - Justice Indira Banerjee
- The President of India has recently appointed Justice Indira Banerjee, Orissa High Court Chief Justice Vineet Saran and Uttarakhand High Court Chief Justice K.M.Joseph as judges of the Supreme Court.



- Justice Banerjee would become the eighth woman judge in the history of the Supreme Court.
- She succeeds the likes of,
    - Fathima Beevi
    - Sujata V. Manohar
    - Ruma Pal
    - Gyan Sudha Misra
    - Ranjana Prakash Desai
- At present, the Supreme Court of India has 22 judges.

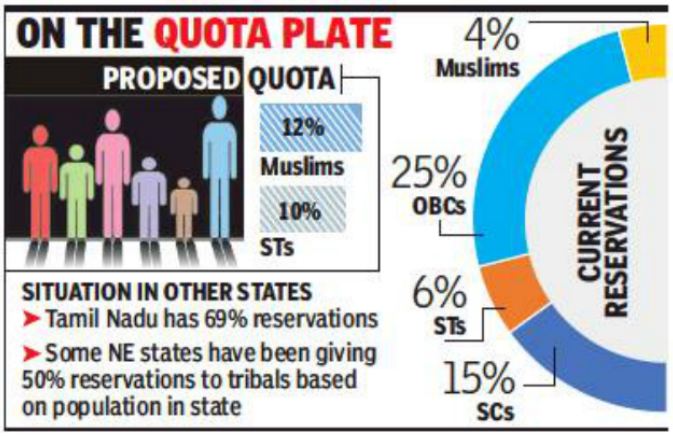
- Justice Geeta Mittal was appointed as the Chief Justice of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court, becoming the first woman judge in the history to head the Jammu and Kashmir HC.
- Sindhu Sharma has acquired the distinction of becoming the first woman judge of the same High Court.

Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin – WHO

- According to a WHO report it is estimated that the Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G) will result in preventing more than three lakh deaths due to diarrhoea and protein-energy malnutrition between 2014-October 2019.
- The progress report on potential health impact from increased sanitation coverage through the SBM-G was conducted by the WHO for the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- The report notes that under the SBM-G, 19 States and Union Territories were declared Open Defecation Free (ODF).
- The report further estimated that 14 million Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) can be avoided between 2014 and 2019.
- WHO estimation of health impacts is based on comparative risk assessment (CRA) methods.

TN's 69% quota in professional college seats

- The Supreme Court declined to intervene in a petition filed by 2 successful NEET (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) candidates from Tamil Nadu.
- According to the petition, the 69% quota was against the fundamental right enshrined in the constitution that no person should be discriminated against in the name of his/her caste, religion, gender, sex, etc.



- The petition argued that the apex court had capped the reservation at 50%.
- Consequently, Tamil Nadu had passed a law enabling 69% reservation. The law was included in the Ninth Schedule of the Constitution.
- The Backward Class Commission, which was directed to assess the justifiability of 69% reservation on objective criteria, filed a report in July 2011.

- The petition said the report was without any objective criteria and simply confirmed the 69% reservation on the basis of the Amba Shankar Commission report of 1985.

First Indian to get elected as ICANN ccNSO council member

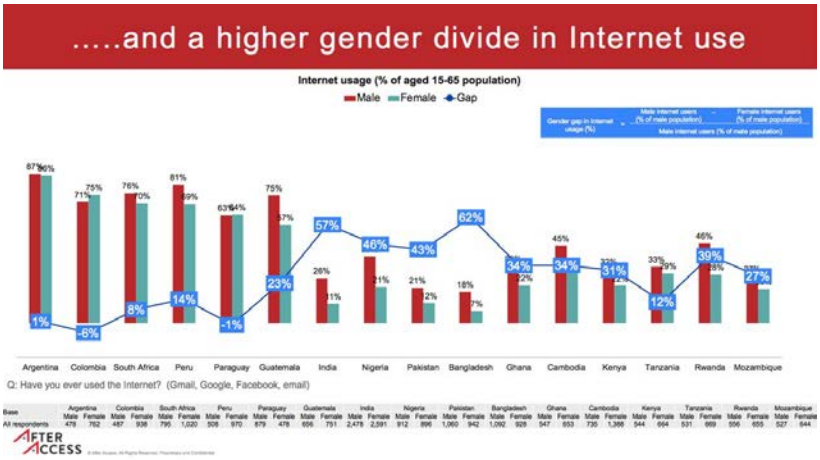
- The nominating committee of Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has selected Ajay Data as a new council member of Country Code Supporting Organisation (ccNSO).
- With this, he becomes first Indian to get selected as a member of ccNSO.
- ccNSO is policy development body of ICANN for ccTLD (country code top-level domains) issues and represents all country code top-level domain operators from around the world.
- He has been selected for a two-year term and will take up position during ICANN 63 Meet in Spain in October 2018.
- He will be representing India at the global level and will be also the custodian of Asia, Australia and Pacific Islands as a member of ccNSO.

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

- ICANN is a private (non-government) non-profit corporation with the responsibility of supervising domain names on the internet.
- It was founded in 1998 and is headquartered in Los Angeles, California, United States.

Highest gender gap in mobile phone ownership - India

- According to a recent study released by LIRNEAsia, India has the highest gender gap in mobile phone ownership amongst 18 comparable countries.
- India ranks among the lowest in women's access to the Internet.



- LIRNEAsia is an information and communications technology (ICT) policy think tank that is involved in pro-poor, pro-market research in Asia-Pacific since 2005.
- Only 43% of women in India own mobile phones compared to almost 80% of Indian males mostly because of lack of awareness.
- This difference of almost half surpasses all other countries in the survey, including Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Rwanda.
- The gender gap is accentuated in rural regions — a 52 percent gap — compared to 34 percent in urban areas.
- 64 % did not know about the Internet – (higher % than the other countries except Pakistan and Bangladesh.
- Internet use in India is 19% (lower than that of Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, and Cambodia)

Restricted Area Permit eased

- The Union Home Ministry has excluded 29 inhabited islands in Andaman and Nicobar from Restricted Area Permit (RAP) regime under the Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, 1963 till December 2022.
- This decision aims to increase footfalls and promote tourism.
- Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals having their origin in these countries will continue to require RAP to visit Union Territory.
- For visiting Mayabunder and Diglipur islands, citizens of Myanmar will also continue to require RAP.
- Besides, separate approvals of competent authority will be required for visiting reserved forests, wildlife sanctuaries, and tribal reserves.

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana

- The Union Ministry of Water Resources, the NABARD and the National Water Development Agency (NWDA) signed a revised Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for funding of central share of 99 prioritized irrigation projects under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY).
- The funding will be done through the Long Term Irrigation Fund (LTIF).
- The revised MoA will enable the Ministry of Water Resources to release Central Assistance to prioritized projects under PMKSY as per the requirements from time to time.

64th Foundation Day - Lalit Kala Akademi

- 64th Foundation Day Celebrations of Lalit Kala Akademi was held in New Delhi on Aug 7, 2018
- The institution was Inaugurated on August 5, 1954, and it was set up by the Indian government to build a national and cultural identity.
- A book on eminent artist Ganesh Pyne, "A Painter of Eloquent Silence" written by Pranav Ranjan Ray was released during the occasion.
- The book is a biographical work on the painter's life and works. It is co-published by the Akademi and Akar Prakar art gallery.
- The Minister released the logo of the 12th Triennale India, which is scheduled to be organized by the Akademi in December 2018.

Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Election

- National Democratic Alliance candidate Harivansh Narayan Singh won the Rajya Sabha deputy chairman elections held today with 125 votes.
- Opposition candidate B.K. Hariprasad of the Congress party received 105 votes.
- Singh is a Janata Dal (United) leader from Bihar and a former journalist.
- The post of the deputy chairman was lying vacant since June 2018 following the retirement of PJ Kurien, a Congress MP from Kerala.
- The current strength of the Rajya Sabha is 244 and support of 123 members is needed for a win in the full House.



- BJP is the largest party in the House with 73 members. Congress is the biggest opposition party with 50 MPs.

MoU on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

- The NITI Aayog and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and entered into 3-year partnership.
- The MoU was signed during Government and Business Partnership Conclave held in New Delhi.
- It was jointly organised by NITI Aayog, CII and United Nations.
- On sidelines of this conclave, CII also launched report—Indian Solutions for the World to Achieve SDGs.

Telangana signs MoU with ICRISAT

- Telangana has signed MoU with 'International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics' (ICRISAT).
- Its objective is to conduct a research on the impact of Mission Kakatiya programme.
- Kakatiya programme is a program for restoring all the minor irrigation tanks and lakes in Telangana.

Representation of People (Amendment) Bill, 2017

- Lok Sabha has passed Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill, 2017 by voice vote to extend the facility of 'proxy voting' to overseas Indians, on the lines of service voters.
- The Bill seeks to amend Representation of People Act (RPA), 1950 and Representation of People Act (RPA), 1951 to allow for proxy voting and make certain provisions of these Acts gender-neutral.
- The Bill replaces the term 'wife' with 'spouse' in both Acts.
- Currently, only service personnel are permitted to vote through proxy.

4 additional battalions of NDRF

- Union Cabinet has given approval for raising of four additional battalions of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to strengthen the India's disaster response set up.
- These four battalions will initially be raised as
    - 2 battalions in Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and
    - 1 battalion each in Assam Rifles (ARs) and Border Security Force (BSF).
- Later these four battalions will be converted into NDRF battalions.
- These battalions will be placed in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Delhi National Capital Region based on their disaster vulnerability profile.

Post Matric Scholarship for OBC Students

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved continuation and revision of Post Matric Scholarship for Other Backward Classes Students for studying in India (PMS-OBC) till 2020.

- PMS-OBC is flagship scheme of Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, in operation since 1998-99.
- It fully centrally sponsored scheme.
- It aims to provide financial assistance to OBC students studying at post-matriculation or post-secondary stage to enable them to complete their education.

New HIV hotspots

- According to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Tripura have emerged as the new hotspots for HIV.
- In terms of PLHIV who are on ART,
    - Maharashtra has the highest number (with 2.03 lakh persons)
- It is followed by
    - Andhra Pradesh (1.78 lakh) and Karnataka (1.58 lakh persons).
- The HIV Sentinel Surveillance (HSS), a biennial study conducted by the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), is one of the largest regular studies in the world dealing with HIV in high risk groups of the population.

Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2018

- The Lok Sabha has passed Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2018 to help India become hub for domestic and global arbitration for settling commercial disputes.
- It seeks to amend e Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 which contains provisions to deal with domestic and international arbitration and defines law for conducting conciliation proceedings.
- The Bill establishes ACI (Arbitration Council of India) as an independent body for promotion of arbitration, mediation, conciliation and other alternative dispute redressal mechanisms.
- It will consist of Chairperson who is either Judge of Supreme Court or Judge of High Court or Chief Justice of High Court or eminent person with expert knowledge in conduct of arbitration.
- The Bill proposed to remove time restriction for international commercial arbitrations. The earlier one was within the period of 12 months.

Amendment bill for speedy disposal of commercial disputes

- The Rajya Sabha on August 10, 2018 passed the Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

- The Bill allows state governments
    - To establish Commercial courts at the district level, even in territories where high courts have ordinary original civil jurisdiction.
    - May establish Commercial appellate courts at the district level where high courts do not have original jurisdiction.
- The amendment reduces the pecuniary jurisdiction of commercial courts from Rs 1 crore to Rs 3 lakh.
- This would bring down the time taken (presently 1445 days) in resolution of commercial disputes of lesser value and thus further improve India's ranking in the Ease of Doing Business.

All-Women SWAT team

- The Delhi Police has inducted an all-woman Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team, consisting of 36 commandos – the first ever by any police force in India – for anti-terrorist operations.



- All the 36 women commandos in the new team are from India's northeast states.
- The women commandos will be deployed at Red Fort and India Gate during Independence Day celebrations on Aug 15, 2018.
- The SWAT team is the brainchild of Amulya Patnaik, the Delhi Police Commissioner.

Operation Madad and Operation Sahyog

- Indian Navy has launched Operation Madad, major rescue and relief operation in flood-hit Kerala.
- Indian Army also has launched Operation Sahyog to rescue people in flood-hit Kerala.



- Both operations will support rescue and relief efforts of civil administration and National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF).

A.K.Bhutani - CEO of PMFPY

- Senior bureaucrat Ashish Kumar Bhutani has been appointed Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) till May 9, 2020 by the Personnel Ministry.
    - PMFBY is in line with one nation – one scheme theme launched in 2016
    - It incorporates the best features of all previous schemes and at the same time, all previous shortcomings and weaknesses have been removed to ensure faster insurance services or reliefs to farmers.

Appointment of Chairman to Marine Products Export Development Authority

- IAS officer K S Srinivas has taken over as the Chairman of the city-based Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA), an agency under the Union Commerce Ministry.

North India's First Space Research Center

- In a significant development, Jammu is all set to be the first city in North India to get a full-fledged Space Technology Research Centre, devoted to research, academics and post-graduation degree course.

- Another town selected for opening a Space Technology Research Centre is in the Northeast in Tripura, where it would function under the aegis of National Institute of Technology (NIT) Agartala.

NITI Aayog - Pitch to MOVE competition

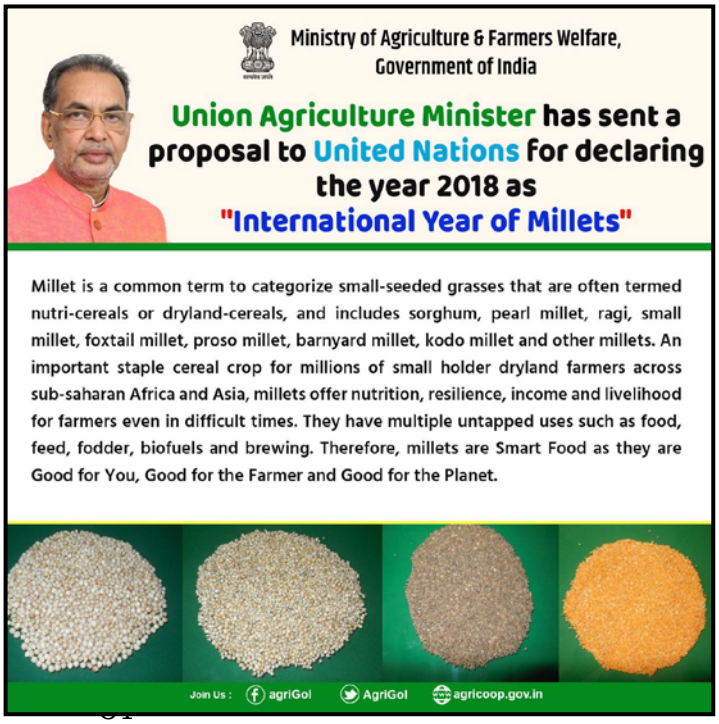
- NITI Aayog has launched mobility pitch competition Pitch to MOVE to provide budding entrepreneurs of India unique opportunity to pitch their business ideas to distinguished jury.
- Using this platform, start-ups working in various fields of mobility can pitch their ideas to industry leaders and venture capitalists for raising investments
- It is organised by NITI Aayog in collaboration with Invest India and Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM).

Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal - Final verdict

- Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal delivered its final verdict to ending 50-year-old dispute over sharing of Mahadayi or Mandovi River between Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra.
    - The tribunal was constituted in November 2010 under Interstate River Water Disputes Act, 1956 to resolve water sharing dispute between riparian states.

"International Year of Millets"

- India has written to Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of United Nations (UN) proposing declaration of year 2019 as "International Year of Millets".
- It has requested inclusion of this proposal in agenda of 26th session of the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) meeting, scheduled to be held in October 2018 in Rome, Italy.
- Adoption of this proposal by FAO with support of its member nations will enable it to be moved to UNGA for declaration of

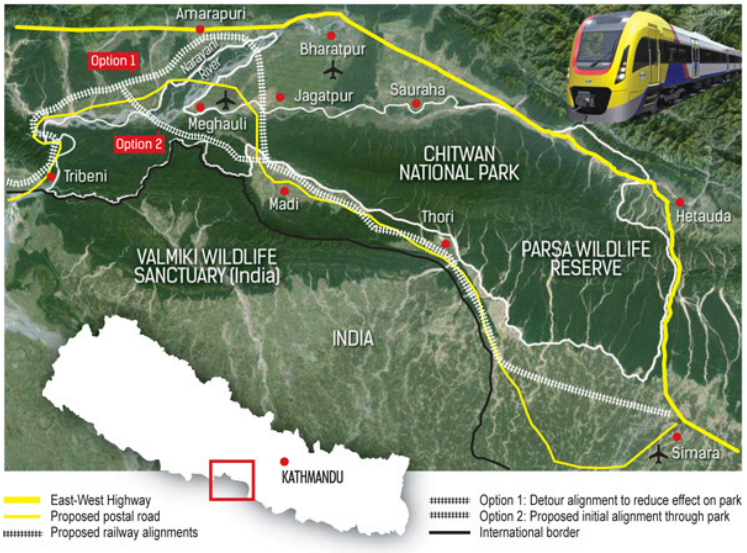


2019 as "International Year of Millets."

- India is celebrating 2018 as National Year of Millets. Observation of Year of Millets will help to promote production and consumption of millets.

Postal Highway Project

- India has released additional Rs. 470 million (Nepali) for Phase I of Postal Highway Project being constructed in Southern Plains of Nepal.
- It is also called Hulaki Rajmarg which runs across Terai region of Nepal, from Bhadrapur in east to Dodhara in west, cutting across entire width of the country.
- It is oldest highway in Nepal to aid transportation and facilitate postal services throughout the Himalayan nation.
- The Package 1 of the Project comprising two road sections Dhangadhi-Bhajaniya-Satti road and Lamki-Tikapur-Khakraula have already been completed and were opened for service in January 2017.



Swadesh Darshan Scheme

- The first project under Swadesh Darshan Scheme 'North East Circuit: Imphal and Khongjom' was inaugurated in Manipur.
- The project covers two sites i.e. Kangla Fort and Khongjom in Manipur.
- Under this project, Union Tourism Ministry has carried out restoration works.
- The scheme was Union Tourism Ministry with an objective to develop theme-based tourist circuits in the country.
- It is 100% centrally funded scheme for the project components undertaken for public funding.
- It also has provision for leveraging voluntary funding under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- Kangla fort had served as tradition seat of past Meetei rulers of Manipur till 1891.

- The old Govindajee Temple is the largest Hindu, Vaishnav temple in Imphal city in Manipur.

First manned space mission by 2022

- Indian Prime Minister as part of his 72nd Independence Day speech said that India will send a human to space by 2022 under manned space mission on board 'Gaganyaan'.
- If successful, India will become fourth nation in the world to send astronaut into space after US, Russia and China.
- Former Indian Air Force (IAF) pilot Rakesh Sharma was first Indian to travel to space.
- He was part of the Soviet Union's Soyuz T-11 expedition, launched on April 2, 1984, as part of the Intercosmos programme.
- Some of the Successfully tested technologies required for human spaceflight programme are,
    - In December 2014, experimental flight of GSLV Mk-III was successfully tested.
    - It also had successfully tested experimental crew module, demonstrating re-entry capability.
    - In June 2017, first developmental flight of GSLV Mk-III was successfully conducted.
    - In July 2018, first successful flight of crew escape system was tested.

Bhaskar Ramamurthy Committee

- Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) has proposed to set up 5-member committee to suggest changes to JEE (Advanced).
- The move comes in the wake of an inadequate number of candidates qualifying entrance test this year.
- The mandate of committee is to,
    - Develop robust and scientifically designed entrance exam system to test potential of candidates as well as to reduce their dependence on coaching institutes.
- The committee will be headed by IIT-Madras director Bhaskar Ramamurthy.
- Other members of the committee will include
    - Abhay Karandikar (Director of IIT-Kanpur),
    - Vineet Joshi (Director General of National Testing Agency) and
    - Professor Kannan Moudgalya of IIT-Bombay.

B Sesikeran committee

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has constituted three-member committee to look into draft food labelling and display regulations-Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations 2018.
- The committee will be headed by B Sesikeran, former director of National Institute of Nutrition (NIN)and comprises of current NIN director Hemalatha and AIIMS' endocrinologist Nikhil Tandon.
- FSSAI had released draft Food Safety and Standards (Labelling and Display) Regulations 2018 in April 2018.
- It had proposed mandatory red-label marking on such packaged food products which are high in fat, sugar and salt contents.
- But, Union Health Ministry had put on hold on the draft regulations, and formed the committee of experts to look into t draft regulations.

Rural income from farming

- According to the National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development's (NABARD) All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey 2016-17, agricultural households receive only 43 % of their average income from cultivation of crops and rearing of animals.

AVERAGE MONTHLY INCOME OF RURAL HOUSEHOLDS

Income Source	Agricultural Households	Non-Agricultural Households	All Households
Cultivation	3,140	NA	1,494
Livestock Rearing	711	NA	338
Other Enterprises	489	851	679
Wage Labour	3,025	3,940	3,504
Govt/Pvt Service	1,444	2,326	1,906
Other Sources	122	152	138
All Sources	8,931	7,269	8,059

Figures in Rupees

- According to the survey, whose reference period is 2015-16, the average net monthly income of Indian rural households — after deducting expenses incurred in the course of economic activity — was Rs 8,059.
- Agriculture income from crop cultivation and livestock rearing contributed only Rs 1,832.

Sahyadri on a good will visit to Fiji

- Indian Naval Ship (INS) Sahyadri was on a good will visit to the Republic of Fiji, in an attempt to strengthen bilateral relations.
- The naval ship is visiting the island nation en route to India after participating in the Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC)-2018 organised at Hawaii.



- INS Sahyadri (F49) is the third and latest ship among the Shivalik Class of indigenously built stealth frigates and forms a part of the Eastern Fleet of Indian Navy.

Coordination committee constituted

- The Central government has constituted a coordination committee headed by the Central Water Commission Chairman "Narendra Kumar"
- Its objective is to coordinate the discharge of floodwaters from inter-State projects involving Kerala and Tamil Nadu, including Mullaperiyar and Aliyar.
- The Chairman of the CWC will monitor the situation at Mullaperiyar dam in view of rising water level and continued heavy inflow.

Relaxation in Agreement on Repatriation of Bru

- Union Home Ministry has agreed to relax conditions laid down in 'four-corner agreement' signed with Bru migrants for their repatriation from Tripura to Mizoram.
- The agreement was signed between Government of India, Governments of Mizoram and Tripura and Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) in July 2018.
- Relaxtions
- The period of stay for cash assistance of Rs 4 lakh for Bru refugees will be relaxed from 3 years to 2 (or even one and half years).

- They can withdraw 90% of the Rs 4 lakh assistance as bank loan immediately after their return. Moreover, conditions in place for financial assistance may be also relaxed. T
- The building assistance will be in single or two instalments.

Barak 8 missile defence system

- Israeli Navy has announced to procure multi-purpose Barak 8 missile defence system, jointly developed by India and Israel.
- It will be used by Israeli Navy's Sa'ar-6 corvettes to expand its operational capabilities of Israeli navy.
- Barak-8 (Lightning 8 in Hebrew), also known as also known as LR-SAM or as MR-SAM is an operational air and missile defense system.



- It has maximum speed of Mach 2 with maximum operational range of 70 km (which has been increased to 100 km)
- The missile provides broad aerial and point defence against wide range of threats to marine arena from the air, sea or land.

National Nutrition Month

- Union Ministry of Women and Child Development has announced to observe September 2018 as the National Nutrition Month to mark the country's fight against malnutrition.
- The month-long intensive campaign will be undertaken with an aim of reaching every household with a message of nutrition 'Har ghar poshan tyohar' (every house a celebration of nutrition).

New sets of specified health warnings

- Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has notified new sets of specified health warnings for all tobacco product packs.
- In this regard, it has made amendments in Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labeling) Rules, 2008.
- The amended rules will be applicable w.e.f. 1st September 2018.
- Under it, Government has released two separate set of images.
- Besides, images quitline number is also a pertinent feature of the new warning.

International Buddhist Conclave 2018

- The International Buddhist Conclave (IBC), 2018 was held in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind.
- It was the sixth edition of International Buddhist Conclave. Its theme was 'Buddha Path – The Living Heritage".
- The Conclave was organized by Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with State Governments of Maharashtra, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh.
- Japan is Partner Country for IBC-2018.
- Union Ministry of Tourism has been organizing International Buddhist Conclave biennially.
- Earlier conclaves were organized in Bodhgaya and Varanasi (September 2014) and in Sarnath/Varanasi and Bodhgaya (October 2016).
- ASEAN countries were guest of honor during IBC, 2016.

President appoints Governors of seven states

- President appointed Governors of seven 7 including Bihar, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir, Sikkim, Meghalaya, and Tripura by exercising his authority under Article 156.
    - Satya Pal Malik - Jammu and Kashmir
    - Lal Ji Tandon - Bihar
    - Ganga Prasad - Sikkim
    - Tathagata Roy - Meghalaya
    - Kaptan Singh Solanki - Tripura
    - Satyadev Narayan Aryav - Haryana
    - Baby Rani Maurya – Uttarakhand

Online child pornography and sexual violence

- Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has designated the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) as the nodal authority to curb online child pornography, sexual violence, and rape videos.
- NCRB can act on such online child pornography, sexual violence and rape videos content either on the basis of complaints or by taking suo moto cognizance.
- It also has been mandated to launch an online portal for receiving complaints and acting on them.

Use of NOTA option scrapped in Rajya Sabha elections

- Supreme Court scrapped the use of NOTA (none of the above) option for Rajya Sabha elections, saying it defeats fairness in indirect elections, destroys democratic values.
- The ruling was given by three judges bench of SC comprising of Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, Justices A M Khanwilkar, and D Y Chandrachud.
- It quashed June 2014 notification of Election Commission that allowed the use of NOTA option in Rajya Sabha elections.
- NOTA was introduced in Lok Sabha polls (direct election) by Election Commission of India (ECI) following 2013 Supreme Court decision.
- It was extended to Rajya Sabha election (i.e. indirect elections) via notification in January 2014.

3 Member Committee formed - Sterlite

- National Green Tribunal has announced the formation of an Independent 3-member to look into the future operations of Sterlite company.
- The committee will be
    - Headed by a Retired Judge and
    - Comprises of 2 technical officials,
    - 1 from Ministry of Environment and Forests and another from Central pollution control board.
- The committee will submit its report within six weeks



BNHS to open its first regional center

- The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) will start operating its first regional center on the campus of Wetland Research and Training Centre near Chilika Lake, Odisha.
- The avifauna observatory will carry out research on the avian disease by collecting samples and monitor Nalabana Bird Sanctuary.
- BNHS is one of the largest non-governmental organizations in India engaged in conservation and biodiversity research.
- It was founded on 15 September 1883 and headquartered at Hornbill House, Mumbai.

1st 'Make in India' project under 'Strategic partnership' policy

- The Defence Ministry approved procurement of 111 utility helicopters for the Indian Navy at a cost of over Rs 21,000 crore.
- This is the 1st project under the MoD's prestigious Strategic Partnership (SP) Model that aims at providing a significant fillip to the government's Make in India programme.
- The 'SP' seeks to boost the Indian private sector's role in the production of advanced weapon systems in a tie-up with the foreign arms majors.

National Electoral Transformation (NETA) mobile application

- Former President Pranab Mukherjee launched the National Electoral Transformation (NETA) mobile application to rate Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs).

- 'Neta - Leaders' Report Card' App, the brainchild of 27-year-old entrepreneur Pratham Mittal, is a platform where voters can review and rate their elected representatives
- The App was first used during the February 2018 bypolls in Rajasthan's Ajmer and Alwar constituencies, and later, it was used in Karnataka ahead of the Assembly Elections in May 2018.

NGT appoints S.J.Vazifdar Committee

- National Green Tribunal has appointed S.J.Vazifdar, Retired Judge as the Head of the 3-member committee to decide Vedanta's plea challenging closure of Sterlite Copper Plant.
- S J Vazifdar is a former Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Courts
- The committee also includes representatives of the Central Pollution Control Board and the Ministry of Environment and Forests
- The committee will commence work within two weeks and will submit the report within six weeks.



3rd Indian Ocean Conference

- The third edition of Indian Ocean Conference was held in Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam.
- The third edition of the Conference was organized by India Foundation in association with
  - Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam,
  - S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS),
  - Sri Lanka and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies.
- Its theme was "Building Regional Architectures".
- It is an annual conference which has been initiated by Delhi based think tank India Foundation along with its partners from Singapore, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh.
- So far, two successful editions of the conference were hosted in 2016 and 2017 in Singapore and Sri Lanka respectively.

FAME India – II

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the second phase of the FAME India scheme on September 7, offering incentives for mass adoption of electric vehicles.
- The scheme would be unveiled at the inaugural session of the 'MOVE' -- a global mobility summit to be organized at New Delhi.
- The first phase of the scheme was initially proposed for two years till March 31, 2017, but was extended twice for six months up to March 31, 2018.
- FAME India Scheme which stands for Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles.
- It was launched in 2015 under National Electric Mobility Mission (NEMM), strives at promoting eco-friendly vehicles in the country and is looked by Heavy Industries Ministry.

E21 campaign

- The Entrepreneur Cell (E-Cell) of the Indian Institute Technology (IIT) Madras has launched the 'E21' campaign to provide students with the skills to handle the challenges of the 21st Century.
- Its objective is to focus on skills such as innovation, creativity, entrepreneurship, leadership, and risk-taking among 150 students from various schools in Chennai.

Government announces Regulations for Drones

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation has notified the 'Regulations for civil use of remotely piloted aircraft system' i.e., Drones.
- For registering and operating drones, India has formulated an all-digital process, The Digital Sky Platform.
- It is the first-of-its-kind national unmanned traffic management (UTM) platform that implements "No Permission, No Takeoff" (NPNT).
- Airspace has been partitioned into
    - Red Zone (flying not permitted),
    - Yellow Zone (controlled airspace), and
    - Green Zone (automatic permission).
- The drones are categorized into Nano, Micro, Small, Medium and Large.
- All drones, except nano and those owned by NTRO, ARC and Central Intelligence agencies, will be issued a "unique identification number" (UIN)

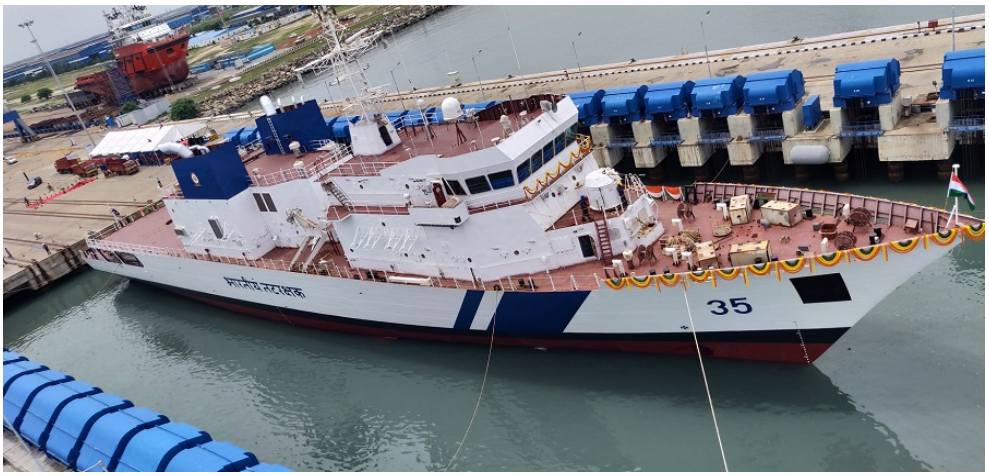
- The Drone Task Force has been constituted under the chairmanship of the Minister of State Shri Jayant Sinha and he will provide draft recommendations for Drone Regulations 2.0.

Injeti Srinivas Committee

- The Injeti Srinivas Committee, constituted by the government of India, has submitted its report to the Union Minister for Finance & Corporate Affairs.
- The committee was constituted to review framework dealing with offenses under the Companies Act, 2013.
- The main recommendations include,
    - Restructuring of Corporate Offences to relieve Special Courts from adjudicating routine offenses
    - The existing rigor of the law should continue for serious offenses.
    - lapses that are essentially technical or procedural in nature may be shifted to in-house adjudication process.

Trial Run of the Indigenous Patrol Vessel

- Veera ,The second Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) of Indian Coast Guard, part of a series of seven vessels was launched at the L&T shipyard, Kattupalli.



- It has to be recalled that Patrol vessels 'Vikram' (October 2017) and 'Vijaya' (January 2018) were the earlier Patrol vessels developed by L&T which is under trial run.

Third edition of Smart India Hackathon

- Third edition of World's Biggest Open Innovation Model - Smart India Hackathon 2019 was launched by the Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Shri Prakash Javadekar in New Delhi.

- This is a nationwide initiative to provide students a platform to solve some of pressing problems we face in our daily lives, thus creating a 'mindset of problem solving'.
- It is organised by MHRD, AICTE, Persistent Systems and i4c.
- This SIH also have 2 sub-editions
    - Software edition – 36-hour software product development competition
    - Hardware edition - 5 days long hardware product development competition.

Union Cabinet approved various MoUs

- MoU between India and Republic of Korea Railway Research bodies to strengthen and promote scientific and technical cooperation in the field of railways.
- MoU between India and United Kingdom (UK) and Northern Ireland for cooperation in the fields of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries.
- MoU between India and Bulgaria for strengthening cooperation in the field of Tourism.
- Union cabinet approved revised air services agreement to be signed between India and Morocco.
- Union cabinet given its ex-post facto approval for the trade cooperation framework between India and Rwanda. This trade cooperation framework will facilitate better trade and economic relations between the two countries.

INTERNATIONAL

1st Hindu to win the National Assembly seat

- Mahesh Kumar Malani of Pakistan People's Party became the first Hindu to win the National Assembly seat from Tharparkar in southern Sindh province.



- Malani defeated his nearest rival Arab Zakaullah of the Grand Democratic Alliance in the NA-222 constituency.
- Malani was a member of parliament from 2003-08 on a reserved seat, nominated by the PPP.
- In 2013 general elections, Malani was elected as Member Provincial Assembly (MPA) in Sindh.

Pakistan General Elections

- Cricket star Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party won 116 of 269 seats in the National Assembly
- Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party emerged as the winner of Pakistan's historic third consecutive election of a civilian government.
- But It didn't win an outright majority and must form a coalition.
- At the provincial level,
    - The Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N) remained the largest party in Punjab,
    - The Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP),
    - Pakistan People's Party (PPP) in Sindh and
    - Balochistan Awami Party (BAP) in Balochistan.
- A party or group can only form the government if it manages to clinch 172 seats in total.
- Shahbaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League won 64 seats.
- Third place in the National Assembly went to the left-of-center Pakistan People's party with 39 seats.

China launches high-resolution Earth observation satellite

- China successfully launched Gaofen-11, an optical remote sensing satellite, as part of the country's high-resolution Earth observation project.
- It was launched on board of Long March 4B rocket from Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in northern Shanxi Province.
- It was overall 282nd flight mission by Long March carrier rocket.



- Gaofen-11 is sub-meter resolution optical satellite. It was developed by China Academy of Space Technology (CAST).
- It is the 6th in Gaofen series launched this year, following triplet of Gaofen-1 satellites and larger Gaofen-5 and Gaofen-6, all placed in Sun-synchronous orbits.
- China High-resolution Earth Observation System (CHEOS) was initiated in 2010 to provide all-weather, all-day coverage by 2020 with optical and synthetic aperture radar satellites.

World Schools Debating Championship (WSDC 2018)

- Indian school students won the silver medal in the World Schools Debating Championship (WSDC 2018) held in Zagreb, Croatia.
- China beat India and the Gold medal.
- The five students who participated in the event,
    - Saranya Ravindran, Tejas Subramaniam and Hemanth Chakravarthy - PSBB school, Chennai,
    - Manya Gupta - Neerja Modi School, Jaipur.
    - Dhananjay Ashok - The International School, Bangalore.
- The WSDC is an annual English-language debating tournament for high school-level teams representing different countries.
- The championships were first held in 1988 in Australia. In 2017, Singapore won the championship held at Bali in Indonesia.
- World Schools Debating Championships (WSDC) 2019 is going to be held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

1st Nepal-India Think Tank Summit

- The first Nepal-India Think Tank Summit has begun in Kathmandu to foster greater collaboration and knowledge-sharing among the think tanks of the two countries.
- The summit is being jointly organized by the Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs and Nehru Memorial Museum Library.

EU moving anti-piracy HQ

- European Union countries have decided to move the headquarters of the bloc's anti-piracy Atalanta patrols from London to the Spanish port of Rota on March 29,2019.

- The London-based Maritime Security Centre Horn of Africa, which informs shipping about piracy threats off Somalia, is also to be shifted to the French Port of Brest.
- The EU launched Atalanta in 2008 to fight brazen acts of piracy off the coast of Somalia, including the spectacular hijacking of a Spanish tuna boat in 2009.

Independent commission panel

- The Myanmar Government has appointed an independent commission to investigate alleged human rights abuses against the ethnic Rohingya minority.
- The 4-member panel announced includes,
    - Kenzo Oshima - Former Japanese ambassador to the UN & former UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.
    - Rosario Manalo - Former Philippine Vice Foreign Minister.
    - Mya Thein - Former chief of Myanmar's Constitutional Court.
    - Aung Tun Thet, An Economist and Former UN official.

UAE launches visa amnesty programme

- The UAE has launched a landmark three-month visa amnesty programme which will benefit hundreds of illegal foreign workers.
- It will also benefit Indians, overstaying their permits, by allowing them to leave the country without penalties and giving them 6 months to find a job.
- Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship (ICA), the entity responsible for entry and residence of foreigners in the UAE.
- The UAE is home to 2.8 million Indian expatriates, the largest expatriate community in the country.
- This is the third such amnesty announced by the UAE government in just over a decade and it will end on October 31.

Zimbabwe election

- Zimbabwe's president and leader of the ruling Zanu-PF party, Emmerson Mnangagwa, has won the country's historic and hotly contested presidential election.
- Mr. Mnangagwa won 50.8% of votes, compared to 44.3% for opposition leader Nelson Chamisa.
- By narrowly winning more than 50% of the vote, Mr Mnangagwa avoids a run-off election against Mr Chamisa.

UK unveils new organ donation plan

- United Kingdom has announced new plans to change the law for organ and tissue donation to address the urgent need for organs within Indian-origin communities in the country.
- The amendment in existing law will propose a new system of consent for organ and tissue donation.
- This will be known as Max's Law after Max Johnson, a 10-year-old boy who was saved by a heart transplant.
- The changes in law will try to incorporate an opt-in system similar to India, whereby families' decision to donate organs of their loved one after death is discretionary.
- Under this, those who do not want to donate their organs will be able to record their decision on state-funded National Health Service (NHS) Organ Donor Register (ODR).

India to operate "World's emptiest airport"

- Sri Lankan Civil Aviation Minister announced that India would operate Sri Lanka's loss-making Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport in Hambantota.
- India would operate the airport as a Sri Lanka-India joint venture.
- Mattala International Airport is called as 'World's Emptiest Airport' due to lack of flights



- It may be recalled that Hambantota Port has been earlier leased to China.

Venezuela to remove 5 Zeros from its Currency (Bolivar)

- Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has already decided to eliminate three zeros off the country's inflation-ridden currency, the bolivar. Now he decided to eliminate two zeroes totaling five zeroes.
- The move came after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimated that the country would see 1 million% inflation by the end of 2018.

- Venezuela's economic fall was among the world's deepest in the past six decades.
- The OPEC nation's economy has been steadily collapsing since the 2014 crash of oil prices left it unable to maintain its socialist economic system that for years provided lavish subsidies while enforcing strict price controls.

Pakistan - Russia signs agreement

- Pakistan and Russia have signed contract on admission of service members of Pakistan in Russia's Military Training Institutes.
- The agreement was signed at conclusion of first meeting of Russia-Pakistan Joint Military Consultative Committee (JMCC), the highest forum of defence collaboration between both countries held in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.
- This will be for first time; Pakistani soldiers will undergo training at Russian military institutes.

UN high commissioner for human rights

- UN (United Nations) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has chosen former two-time Chilean President Michelle Bachelet to be new UN high commissioner for human rights.
- She would replace Jordanian diplomat Zeid Ra'ad al-Hussein
- She was the first woman to be elected to Chile's highest office.
- After her first term, she served in 2010 as the first director of UN Women, the UN agency promoting gender equality worldwide.

Maitree 2018

- Joint military exercise Maitree 2018 between Indian Army and Royal Thai Army was conducted in Thailand from 6 to 19 August 2018.
- It contributed immensely in developing mutual understanding and bonhomie between armies of both countries in order to counter terrorism.
- Maitree 2018 was platoon level exercise that comprises of infantry component.

Pacific Endeavor-2018 (PE-18)

- The communication exercise "Pacific Endeavor-2018 (PE-18)" under the Multinational Communications Interoperability Program (MCIP) has started in Kathmandu, Nepal on August 6, 2018.

- The basic objective of 12-day exercise is to develop common communications operating procedures to enable military forces in the Asia Pacific region to collectively work in the wake of disaster.
- It is jointly organised by the Nepali Army and United States Pacific Command (USPC).
- The Pacific Endeavor began in 2005 and it focuses on establishing rapid and effective inter-operable communication systems to jointly act in disaster relief operations.
- The Pacific Endeavor began in 2005.

Palestine recognized as a sovereign state - Columbia

- Colombia recognized Palestine as a sovereign state in the days before new President Ivan Duque took office
- Colombia was the only South American nation that had not recognized Palestine as a sovereign state.
- Colombia would become the 137th nation to recognize Palestinian statehood.
- Palestine has been recognized as a sovereign state by the UN General Assembly, the International Criminal Court, and at least 136 other countries.
- It seeks to create a state in Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem – lands Israel captured in the 1967 war.

SCO Peace Mission Exercise 2018

- SCO Peace Mission Exercise 2018 will be conducted by Central Military Commission of Russia at Chebarkul, Chelyabinsk, Russia from 22nd August to 29th August 2018.
- SCO Peace Mission Exercise is conducted as part of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) initiatives.
- It is conducted biennially for SCO member states.
- India is participating for the first time in the exercise after becoming a full member of the SCO in June 2017.
- The exercise will involve tactical level operations in an international counter insurgency or counter terrorism environment under SCO Charter.

World's First Blockchain Bond

- The World sell the first-ever bond to be issued entirely using blockchain technology.

- The technology is most often associated with cryptocurrencies — like bitcoin which often raise suspicion about their reliability and volatility, as well as their use for criminal purposes.
- The transaction is the brainchild of the World Bank's innovation lab together with the Commonwealth Bank of Australia.
- use of blockchain will improve transparency, since it is public, and cut down on transaction time since the bonds eventually will be exchanged instantaneously for cash.

2018 Global Livability Index

- Austrian capital Vienna was ranked as world's most liveable city among 140 major cities in 2018 Global Liveability Index released by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

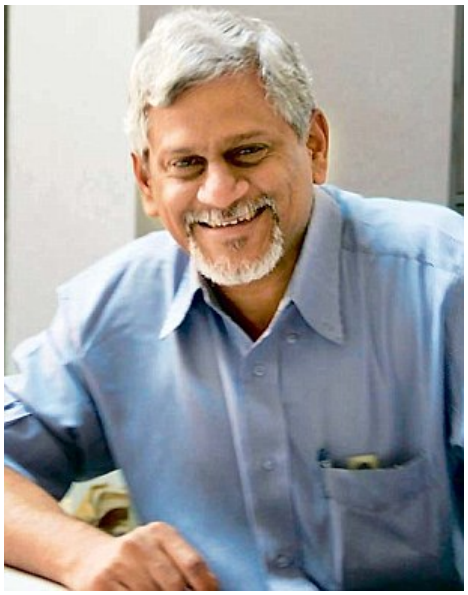
The world's most liveable cities

1. Vienna, Austria
2. Melbourne, Australia
3. Osaka, Japan
4. Calgary, Canada
5. Sydney, Australia
6. Vancouver, Canada
7. Toronto, Canada
8. Tokyo, Japan
9. Copenhagen, Denmark
10. Adelaide, Australia

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit Global Liveability Index 2018

Chair of International Nitrogen Initiative

- Indian scientist-academician N Raghuram became first Indian and Asian to get elected as Chair of International Nitrogen Initiative (INI), a global policy making initiative.
- He will succeed Mark Sutton of the UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology, Edinburgh.
- Besides, him David Kanter of the New York University was elected as Vice-Chair. The



new chairs will formally take up their roles on January 1, 2019.

- Their responsibility will be to steer network of six regional centres each under INI Regional Director (East Asia, South Asia, Africa, Europe, Latin America, North America).

International Nitrogen Initiative (INI)

- INI is international program, set up in 2003 under sponsorship of the Scientific Committee on Problems of Environment (SCOPE) and from International Geosphere-Biosphere Program (IGBP).
- INI is coordinated by Steering Committee, led by chair and six regional centre directors.
- INI is also currently sustained partner of Future Earth - an international research organisation.

24th World Congress of Philosophy

- The 24th World Congress of Philosophy (WCP) was held in Beijing, China from August 13 to 17, 2018.
- It was organized by the International Federation of Philosophical Societies, and Peking University. Its theme was "Learning To Be Human".
- This was first time that the quinquennial (once in five year) event was held in China.
- It was first organized in 1900 in Paris, France and since it has become one of the largest philosophical events in the world.
- Each World Congress is sponsored by one of member societies in different country, which assumes responsibility for organization of that Congress.

Iran Action Group

- US secretary of state, Mike Pompeo has announced the formation of the Iran Action Group (IAG) to coordinate and run the country's policy towards Iran.
- Pompeo has named Brian Hook, the State Department's director of policy planning, as the group's head.
- Brian Hook has been formally named as the 'Special Representative for Iran'.
- The basic aim behind the formation of IAG is to change the Iranian regime's behavior.

Committee to provide Relief to Kerala flood victims

- Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of UAE has formed a special committee to provide Relief to Kerala flood victims

- The Chair of the committee will be
  - Emirates Red crescent and
  - Representatives from UAE's humanitarian organizations.

Saudi Arabia introduces free sleep pods for Hajj pilgrims

- Saudi Arabia is introducing free sleep pods for Hajj pilgrims in the city of Mina.
- The free nap pods will be rolled out in Saudi Arabia as a measure to modernise the centuries-old practice of Hajj.
- It aims at providing a place to rest for the pilgrims who cannot afford to book hotels on site during Hajj.
- They are part of measures to reduce the size of the sleeping unit at crowded places.



- These Nap-pods are inspired by Japan's famous 'Capsule hotels'.
- The government has also introduced apps for on-the-spot translation and emergency medical care.

Ibrahim Boubacar Keita Re elected as president of Mali

- Malian President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has been re-elected as president after beating opposition candidate, Soumaila Cisse, in a runoff vote.
- Cisse, a former finance minister, who also ran against Keita in 2013, secured 32 percent of the votes.
- Keita will serve his second five-year term as Malian leader.



Egypt passes New law to tackle Fake News

- Egypt's parliament has passed a law giving the state powers to block social media accounts and penalize journalists held to be publishing fake news.

- The Supreme Council for the Administration of the Media, headed by an official appointed by President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi, will supervise the law and take action against violations.
- The bill prohibits the establishment of websites without obtaining a license from the Supreme Council and allows it to suspend or block existing websites.
- Recently, Egypt was ranked 161 out of 180 countries in the 2017 Press Freedom Index

'Esala Maha Perahera' festival

- The 10-day festival of the historic Esala Maha Perehera has started in Kandy, Sri Lanka on August 17 with a grand procession.
- The Esala Perahera is one of the oldest and grandest of all Buddhist festivals in Sri Lanka.



- This is held in Esala (July or August) which is the month that is believed to commemorate the first teaching given by the Buddha after he attained enlightenment.
- This ritual is performed by carrying the sacred tooth relic of the Buddha through the streets and is considered as one of the most beautiful pageants in Asia.
- The festival ends with the traditional diya-kepeema ritual, a water cutting ceremony which is held at the Mahaweli River at Getambe, Kandy.

First domestically manufactured fighter jet – Iran

- Iran has unveiled first domestically manufactured fighter jet nicknamed Kowsar. It was unveiled at defense show held in the capital city of Tehran.



- It is a fourth-generation fighter with advanced avionics and multi-purpose radar. It was 100% indigenously made in Iran.
- Its name Kowsar means river in paradise in Islam and also the title of a chapter in Koran.
- Iran has unveiled several new fighter jets in the last few years. In 2013, it had unveiled domestically built fighter jet Qahar-313, which was compared to US F-22 and F-35.

Greece exits eurozone bailout program

- Greece emerged from the eurozone bailout programme after 8 years, successfully completing its 3rd bailout programme worth €61.9 billion.
- The European Union, European Central Bank, and IMF had loaned Greece €289 billion under the three bailout deals, in support of macroeconomic adjustment and bank recapitalization.
- According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), only 4 countries have shrunk economically more than Greece in the past decade. They are,
  - Yemen
  - Libya
  - Venezuela and
  - Equatorial Guinea

Turkey initiates WTO dispute complaint about the U.S.

- Turkey has initiated a dispute complaint against the United States with the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- This follows the imposing of additional tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from Turkey by the United States.

- The tariff war is in response to Turkey's rejection of an American request to release an American pastor detained for the past 2 years for alleged involvement in an abortive military coup.

World's first-ever 4D printing for ceramics



- Researchers from the City University of Hong Kong (CityU) have successfully developed the world's first-ever 4D printing for ceramics that can be used to create complex, shape-changing objects.
- 4D printing is conventional 3D printing combined with the additional element of time as the fourth dimension.
- Researchers also have developed a novel 'ceramic ink', which is a mixture of polymers and ceramic nanoparticles.
- The printed ceramic precursors can be used in the manufacture of electronic devices.
- Ceramic materials have much better performance in transmitting electromagnetic signals than metallic materials.

Sweden Launches "feminist foreign policy"

- Sweden has launched the "feminist foreign policy" manual to highlight the nation's flagship approach to promote women's rights globally.
- It has been led by Sweden's Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom since its inception in 2014.
- The policy's main goals include the promotion of economic emancipation, fighting sexual violence and improving women's political participation.
- It includes an action plan for 5 war-torn nations, Afghanistan, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, and the Palestinian Territories, to target women's empowerment.
- There has been a growing influence of Women in Sweden where the number of women ambassadors has risen from just 10 percent in 1996 to 40 percent in 2016.

G20 Digital Economy Ministerial Meeting

- The G20 Digital Economy Ministerial Meeting was held in Salta, Argentina from 23 to 24 August, 2018.

- It took place as part of Sherpa Track for 2018 G20 Leaders' Summit, which is to be hosted by Argentina by end of 2018.
- The theme of the meeting was 'Building consensus for fair and sustainable development '.
- Its three key issues for the agenda were future of work, infrastructure for development, and sustainable food future.

First container ship to navigate an Arctic sea route

- The Venta Maersk carrying 600 containers have become the World's 1st container ship to sail on the 'Warmer' Arctic route.
- Maersk has decided to use ultra-low sulfur fuel (ULSFO) for this trail to comply with the Emission Control Area or ECA requirements for the Baltic and Northern sea regions.



- It has left the Russian port of Vladivostok on the way to St Petersburg by late September
- It will collect the data to check the viability of the route for passage
- The route was once considered 'impossible' due to the presence of ice, but now higher Arctic temperatures combined with advances in shipping made it more viable

First female fighter pilot of Japan

- Japan has appointed its first female fighter pilot, the latest achievement in the national push for greater gender equality in the traditionally male-dominated country.
- First Lieutenant Misa Matsushima, 26, of Japan Air Self Defence Force has



become the first female fighter pilot.

- The Air Force decided in 1993 to open all positions to women, except for pilots of fighter jets and reconnaissance aircraft.
- But the limit was lifted in 2015.

4th Asian electoral stakeholders' forum

- In Sri Lanka, the fourth Asian electoral stakeholders' forum (AESF-IV) begins in Colombo to discuss the state of elections and democracy in the region.
- The theme is, 'Advancing Election Transparency and Integrity: Promoting and Defending Democracy Together'.
- India is being represented by Chief Electoral Officer of Maharashtra Ashwini Kumar and an NGO.
- The two-day forum is being held for the first time in South Asia with support from the Election Commission of Sri Lanka and the Asian Network for Free Elections (ANFREL).

1st SAARC Agri Cooperative Business Forum

- The First South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Agri Cooperative Business Forum has begun in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- The theme of three-day Forum is the 'Organizing and Strengthening Family Farmers' Cooperatives to attain the Sustainable-Development-Goals-1 and 2 in South Asia'
- It is being co-organized by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and Asian Farmers' Association with the support from the International Fund for Agricultural Development.

ECONOMY

Concessional Financing Scheme

- Union Cabinet has approved first extension of Concessional Financing Scheme (CFS) for another five years from 2018 to 2023
- The move comes in a bid to support Indian Entities bidding for strategically important infrastructure projects abroad.
- The scheme also has been liberalized, allowing any Indian company, irrespective of ownership eligible to benefits of it.

- Under CFS, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) selects specific projects keeping in view strategic interest of India and sends same to Department of Economic Affairs (DEA).
- The strategic importance of project to deserve financing is decided on case to case basis, by Committee chaired by Secretary, DEA
- Deputy National Security Adviser (Dy NSA) is also a member of this Committee.
- The Scheme is presently being operated through EXIM Bank, which raises resources from market to provide concessional finance.
- Union Government provides counter guarantee and interest equalization support of 2% to EXIM Bank
- EXIM Bank can extend credit at rate not exceeding LIBOR (avg. of six months) + 100 bps. The repayment of loan is guaranteed by foreign government.

25% safeguard duty imposed on import of solar cells

- Union Government has imposed safeguard duty of 25% on import of solar cells (whether or not assembled in modules or panels) from China and Malaysia.
- The move is aimed at helping domestic solar cell manufacturing sector.
- The decision by Union Government follows recommendation made by Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR).
- It will not be imposed on imports from developing countries other than China and Malaysia.



Digital Payments – Study by NITI Aayog

- NITI Aayog has done a study by 'Credit Suisse' and published a booklet titled 'Digital Payment: Trends, Issues and Opportunities'
- The digital payments market in India is expected to grow to US $ 1 trillion by 2023
- Mobile payments are slated to rise from $ 10 billion in 2017-18 to $ 190 billion by 2023.

- This is the 2nd annual edition of the booklet on Digital Payments which was published in July 2017.

20 percent cashback on digital payments

- The Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council recently cleared a pilot project to offer digital incentives, in the form of cashback of 20 percent of GST paid on business-to-consumer transactions using RuPay and BHIM platforms.
- The cashback offer is capped to RS 100 per transaction.
- Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Assam have opted to join the digital incentives pilot project

GST Council announces incentives

- The GST (Good and Services Tax) council in its 29th meeting held in national capital New Delhi has approved cash incentives to promote Digital transactions.
- The GST Council meeting was chaired by Interim Finance Minister Piyush Goyal.
- It has announced 20% cashback for digital transactions paid on business-to-consumer transactions using RuPay and BHIM platforms, subject to a cap of RS 100 per transaction.

GoM headed by Suresh Prabhu

- Union Government has constituted 4-member Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu to decide on 16-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations.
- It was constituted to advise Prime Minister on whether to continue with or withdraw from RCEP negotiations.
- The GoM also includes
    - Interim Finance and Power Minister Piyush Goyal,
    - Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and
    - Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri.
- It has been mandated to find a way forward from current deadlock over issues of joining RCEP or not.
- It will also help fine-tune India's strategy for the upcoming RCEP ministerial meet in August 2018 in Singapore.

Non-Official Directors

- Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC) has approved appointment of
  - Chartered Accountant Swaminathan Gurumurthy and
  - Businessman Satish Kashinath Marathe

  as another non-official director on Central Board of Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- They have been appointed for period of four years.

Central Board of Directors composition

- It comprises RBI Governor, Deputy Governors (maximum 4).
- 4 non-official Directors, nominated by Central Government (each Non-official director represents the local Boards located in Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai representing 4 regions of India).
- 10 Non-official Directors nominated by RBI itself (persons having expertise in various segments of Indian Economy).
- Besides, there is 1 representative (usually Financial Services Secretary) of Central Government nominated under Section 8 (1) (d) of the RBI Act.

National Payments Corporation of India Certification

- French company IDEMIA has become the 1st company to be given the certification to manufacture and personalise RuPay chip contact and contactless cards - on the qSPARC v2 platform.
- The certification is issued by the National Payments Corporation of India, after testing all payment scenarios.
- The qSPARC is a dual interface open loop payment specification, with the option of loading multiple payment applications – up to 20 payment applications – on a single card.

RBI transfers surplus dividend

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has transferred surplus (dividend) of Rs. 50,000 crores to Government for year ended in June 2018.
- It is over 63% more than Rs 30,659 crore which it transferred in 2017.
- RBI surplus forms sizeable chunk of revenue which government earns under head of 'non-tax', which is mainly dividends distributed by state owned firms.
- With this surplus, Centre's prospect of meeting fiscal deficit target (pegged at 3.3% of gross domestic product this financial year) has improved based on fiscal consolidation and budget assumptions.

First to introduce iris authentication - Axis Bank

- Axis Bank became first bank in the country to introduce Iris Scan Authentication feature for Aadhaar-based transactions through its micro ATM tablets.
- These micro ATM tablets are Standardisation Testing and Quality Certification (STQC) certified and UIDAI compliant registered devices with completely integrated iris sensors.

UAE top source of inward remittances in 2016-17

- Reserve Bank of India's survey of inward remittances for 2016-17 has stated that, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is the top source of inward remittances, and Kerala has received the maximum funds sent from abroad.
- UAE's share in total remittances was 26.9%. It is followed by the United States (22.9%), Saudi Arabia (11.6%), Qatar (6.5%) and Kuwait (5.5%).
- As per the survey, 82% of the total remittances received by India originated from 8 countries,
    - UAE, the U.S., Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, the United Kingdom and Malaysia.
- Kerala has the highest share with 19%, among destinations. It is followed by Maharashtra (16.7%), Karnataka (15%), Tamil Nadu (8%) and Delhi (5.9%).
- Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu altogether received 58.7% of total remittances.
- Responses for the survey were received from 42 major authorised dealers (ADs), that account for 98.3% of total remittances in 2016-17.
- The rupee drawing arrangement (RDA) is the most popular channel of remittances. RDA accounts for 75.2% of remittances.
- It is followed by SWIFT (19.5%), direct transfers (3.4%) and cheques and drafts (1.9%).
- The share of Private banks in total remittances is 74.1%. Share of public sector banks is 17.3% and the remaining are foreign banks.

First PSU to transact on TReDS

- The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) has become the first Public Sector Unit (PSU) to make a transaction on the "TReDS platform".
- The transaction was financed by Bank of Baroda (BoB) and since stands settled.

- The TReDS platform is an online electronic institutional mechanism for facilitating the financing of trade receivables of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) through multiple financiers.
- The acronym 'TReDS' stands for Trade Receivables Discounting System.
- In October 2017, the central government mandated all major PSUs to join TReDS platform to facilitate payments to MSME vendors.
- RXIL (Receivables Exchange of India), which is India's first TReDS platform, is promoted by the
    - National Stock Exchange,
    - Small Industries Development Bank of India,
    - State Bank of India,
    - ICICI Bank and Yes Bank.

India Banking Conclave 2018

- India Banking Conclave (IBC) 2018 was held in New Delhi from 23-24, 2018.
- It was organized by the Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) along with its knowledge partner and government Think Tank, NITI Aayog.
- The conclave was aimed at making India's banking sector more adaptable to face multiple future challenges in the coming years.
- CEPR was founded in 1983 and is based in London, United Kingdom. It is funded by a registered, European charity founded in 1983 by Richard Portes.
- It aims to enhance the quality of economic policy-making within Europe and beyond.

Bond-I

- The World Bank launched the world's first public blockchain bond named Bond-I created, allocated, transferred and managed by using blockchain technology.
- Bond-I is an acronym standing for Blockchain Offered New Debt Instrument and also refers to tourist famous Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia.
- Funds raised from this bond will go towards sustainable development initiatives.
- Bond-I is Ethereum blockchain bond denominated in Australian dollars, making it Kangaroo bond (referring to foreign bonds issued in Australia in local currency).
- World Bank had chosen Commonwealth Bank of Australia (the largest bank in Australia) was chosen as sole arranger for this bond.

- The bond has a two-year maturity and had raised Australian $100 million (US$73.16 million) after its issuance.

1st Indian company to cross Rs 8 lakh crore market capitalization

- Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) became first Indian company to cross Rs 8 lakh crore ($114 billion) market capitalization.
- This record m-cap of RIL also bumped up Mukesh Ambani's (India's richest man) wealth to over $48 billion (according to Bloomberg Billionaires Index).
- M-cap is the value of a company that is traded on the stock market, calculated by multiplying a total number of shares by present share price.

International Arbitration Award

- Reliance Power has announced that its wholly-owned subsidiary Reliance Power Netherlands BV has won an international arbitration award of $56 million against Prestige Capital Holdings (a Seychelles-based company) and Kokos Jiang.
- The arbitration was related to a contractual dispute in the context of the company's coal mines in Indonesia.
- Kokos Jiang is the owner of Sugico Group in Indonesia, from whom Reliance Power had acquired the entire economic interest in three coal mining concessions in Indonesia in 2010.
- The Arbitration Tribunal was constituted under Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) rules in Singapore.

Goldman Sachs appoints Prachi Mishra as MD & CIE

- Global investment bank Goldman Sachs has appointed Prachi Mishra as the managing director and chief India economist.
- Prior to joining Goldman Sachs, Mishra was the deputy division chief of the Western Hemisphere Department at the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- Goldman Sachs has been operating in India since 2004 when it first opened its office in Bengaluru.
- However, the company has been serving Indian clients since 1990s and is an active investor in the country.

RBI's report on Educational Loans

- A recent report by RBI shows that a large part of lending to the education sector in the country has been done by public sector banks.

- The share of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) in lending to the education sector is 91.42%.

❖ It shows that students in southern states, in the order of,

- Tamil Nadu,
- Kerala,
- Karnataka,
- Andhra Pradesh

pursue their studies by taking education loans more than students in the rest of the country.

RBI Annual Report for 2017-18

❖ As per the report

- 99.3% of all currency in circulation came back to banking system after demonetisation
- Agricultural production likely to remain strong for 3rd consecutive year
- Large-scale adoption of digital modes of payments was done in 2017-18
- Number of Fake Rs 2000 notes increased significantly in 2017-18 FY

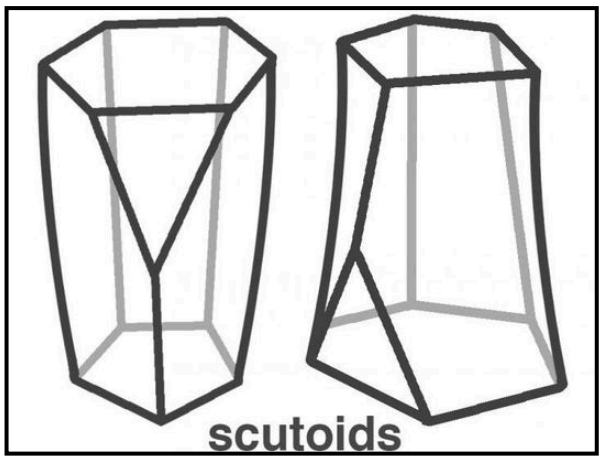
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

New shape discovered – Scutoid

❖ Scientists have identified a new shape called Scutoid while studying epithelial cells.

❖ Epithelial tissue is one of four kinds of tissue that forms a human body which acts as a safety shield of the body that makes up cell walls lining our blood vessels and organs.

❖ The Scutoid shape has five sides on one end and six on the other and a triangular surface on one of its longer edges.

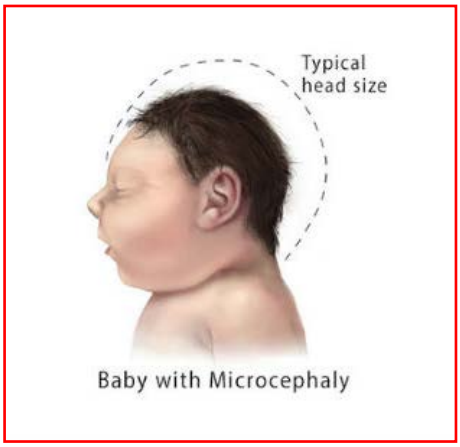


❖ It is completely new to geometry and resembles beetle's scutellum (shield-like structure) from a top-down view.

- As tissues and organs develop, epithelial cells squish together, twisting and turning into highly efficient and complex 3-D structures of scutoid shape.
- This complex shape help block microbes from entering our skin or organs. It also makes the packing stable and "energetically efficient."

Zika virus causes microcephaly deciphered

- Scientists from National Brain Research Centre (NBRC) have successfully identified molecular and cellular mechanisms by which Zika virus causes microcephaly.
- Babies born with microcephaly have significantly smaller head size compared with normal babies.
- The researchers found envelop protein (Eprotein) of Zika virus, which is responsible for entry of virus into brain stem cells, was responsible for arresting proliferation of human foetal neural stem cells and also killing cells that were becoming neuron-like.



Baby with Microcephaly

- The study shows that neutralising E protein of Zika virus can help prevent or reduce its harmful effects in developing foetus.

E-Aksharayan

- The IT ministry launched a desktop software e-Aksharayan in a conference for Indian Languages Technology Industry 'Bhashantara', in New Delhi.
- E-Aksharayan is free, desktop software for converting scanned printed Indian Language documents into a fully editable text format in Unicode encoding.
- The software supports editing in seven Indian languages - Hindi, Bangla, Malayalam, Gurmukhi, Tamil, Kannada & Assamese.

Supersonic interceptor missile successfully test-fired

- India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed supersonic interceptor missile, capable of destroying any incoming hostile ballistic missile, from a test range off Odisha coast.
- The test was to validate some improved features incorporated into the system.
- The endo-atmospheric missile, developed as Ballistic Missile Interceptor Advanced Air Defence (AAD), is yet to get a formal name.

- The interceptor is a 7.5-metre long single stage solid rocket propelled guided missile equipped with a navigation system
- DRDO has spearheaded India's double-layered interceptor ballistic missile defence (BMD) programme.
- It consists of 2 interceptor missiles,
    - Advanced Area Defence (AAD) missile for endo-atmosphere or lower altitudes
    - Prithvi Defence Vehicle for exo-atmospheric ranges.
- DRDO expects deployment of this indigenous BMD shield by 2022.
- It will make India fourth country in the world after US, Russia and Israel to successfully built effective anti-ballistic missile system.

Shaur Nahin mobile application

- Himachal Pradesh has launched 'horn not ok' awareness campaign and 'shaur nahin' (no noise) mobile application in state capital Shimla.
- The first phase of campaign has been launched in Shimla and Manali.
- The mobile application is initiative of department of environment science and technology in association with National Informatics Centre (NIC), Himachal Pradesh.
- The app will enable general public to report cases of noise pollution.

WOW (Wellness of Women) mobile application

- FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO), the women's wing of Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has launched WOW (Wellness of Women) mobile application.
- It is aimed at creating awareness on preventive healthcare for women across the country.
- WOW app is backed by Chennai-based Apollo Hospitals Group that offers access to renowned doctors and provides health tips.
- It provides easy to use platform that allows users to talk to doctors through video conferencing or connect with them via voice or email.
- FICCI is the largest and oldest apex business organization in India, headquartered in New Delhi.
- It is a non-governmental and non-profit organization. It was established in 1927.

NASA's commercial spacecraft

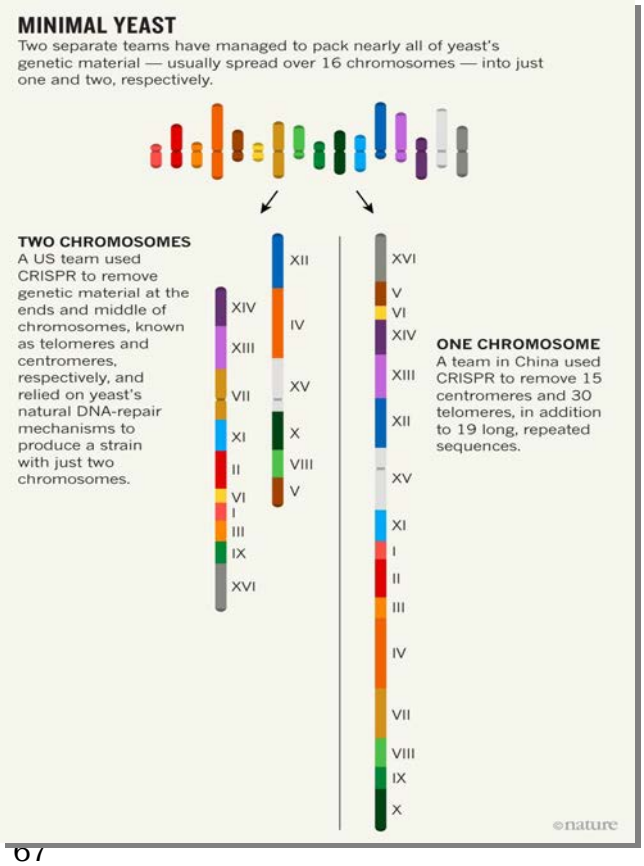
- Indian-origin US astronaut Sunita Williams is among the nine astronauts named by NASA for its first human spaceflight programme since the retirement of the space shuttle in 2011.



- The space agency announced that the nine astronauts will launch on the first crewed test flights and missions of new commercial spacecraft built and operated by The Boeing Company and SpaceX.
- The astronauts will launch on Boeing CST-100 Starliner and SpaceX Dragon capsules to the International Space Station beginning in 2019.

Single Chromosome Yeast

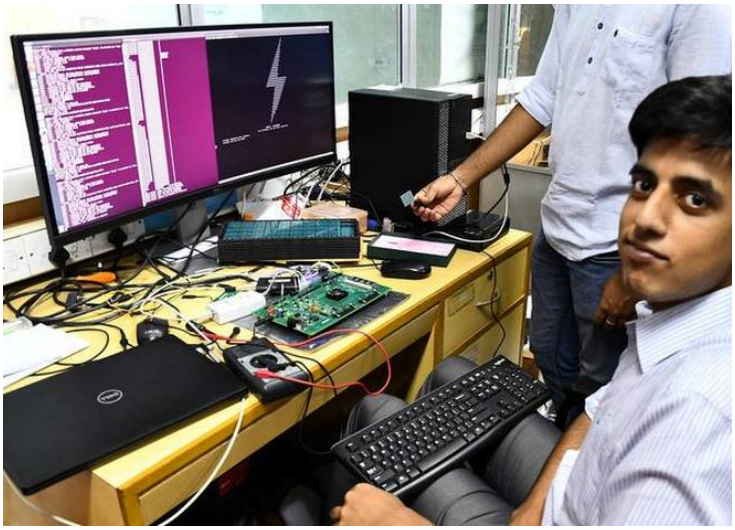
- Researchers from China's Centre for Excellence in Molecular Plant Sciences have claimed to have created the world's first single-chromosome yeast.
- The experiment was conducted on Brewer's yeast having 16 chromosomes and which shares its one-third genome ancestry with humans.
- Researchers had used CRISPR-Cas9 genome-editing technology to create a single-chromosome yeast strain.
- The research had revealed that number of chromosomes of eukaryote has no correlation with amount of genetic information they possess.
- It also showed that all genetic information can be



concentrated in just one chromosome.

RISECREEK

- Computer scientists from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras have developed first of a family of six industry-standard microprocessors under Project Shakti.
- The initial batch of 300 chips have been named RISECREEK and have been fabricated at Intel's facility at Oregon, the US for free to run Linux operating system.



- Project Shakti was started in 2014 as an IIT-M initiative and its part of the project was funded by the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
- Their design is open source and can be adapted by others.
- At a frequency of 350 MHz, RISECREEK can meet the demands of defense and strategic equipment such as NAVIC (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite) and the Internet of Things (IoT) electronics.

World's first thermal battery plant

- The world's first-ever thermal battery plant was unveiled at Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh by the state's Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu.
- It was Manufactured by the Bharat Energy Storage Technology Private Limited (BEST).
- The first-of-its-kind batteries will aim to boost renewable sources of energy production and reduce the dependence on non-renewable fossil fuel-based energy generation.
- The technology, which will help in mitigating carbon emissions, is best suited for grid balancing and stabilizations.
- The device, known as High Energy Density Storage (HEDS), is a technology that was invented and patented by Dr.Patrick Glenn in 2016.

First Olympics to deploy facial recognition technology

- Tokyo 2020 will be the first Olympics to use facial recognition technology to increase security around all venues.
- For this, games organizers have partnered with Japanese telecommunications and information technology giant NEC to develop the first system of this kind to be implemented at an Olympics games.
- The technology takes only 0.3 seconds to match up to face with pre-registered photo, making it world's fastest such system.

IT initiatives of the Road Transport & Highways Ministry

- The Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has launched
  - Bidder Information Management System (BIMS),
  - Bhoomi Rashi and Public Financial Management System (PFMS) linkage,

  two IT initiatives of the Road Transport & Highways Ministry.
- It is aimed at expediting pre-construction processes relating to bidding and land acquisition respectively.
- BIMS - streamlining the process of pre-qualification of bidders for EPC Mode of contracts for National Highway works.
- The portal, Bhoomi Rashi, was developed by MoRTH and NIC and it comprises the entire revenue data of the country.
- Integration of PFMS with Bhoomi Rashi - one of the key functionalities to facilitate payment related to compensation for land acquisition to all the beneficiaries directly.

Android 9.0 named 'Pie' launched

- Google has officially launched Android 9.0 named 'Pie' –with Artificial Intelligence embedded in it for 'Digital wellbeing' of the user.
- It succeeds Android Oreo.
- It includes an Adaptive Battery feature that maximizes battery power by prioritizing the apps.
- It also introduces a new gesture-based system interface like the swipes in iPhone X, for navigating through the operating system.



- It has been rolled out in its own Pixel phones and will be available to other devices later this year.

Niryat Mitra mobile app

- Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry has launched Niryat Mitra mobile application for exporters and importers of the country.
- The app developed by Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO), the largest exporters organisation of the country.
- FIEO is apex and largest trade promotion organisation in India, responsible for representing and assisting Indian entrepreneurs and exporters in foreign markets.
- It was jointly established in 1965 by Ministry of Commerce and private trade and industry, headquartered in New Delhi.

Multi Option Payment Acceptance Device (MOPAD)

- India's largest bank State Bank of India (SBI) has launched its Multi Option Payment Acceptance Device (MOPAD) for digital payments convenience of merchants and consumers.
- It aims at providing digital convenience to customers and ease of doing business for merchants at the same time.
- It will allow customers to make payments through cards, Bharat QR, UPI and SBI Buddy (e-wallet) on single Point–of–Sale (PoS) terminal.
- It provides convenience to merchants by eliminating multiple machines that they keep in order to facilitate transaction from different sources.

China successfully tests first hypersonic aircraft

- China successfully tested its first cutting-edge hypersonic "waverider" flight vehicle (aircraft) Xingkong-2 (Starry Sky-2).
- Waverider is flight vehicle that flies in atmosphere and uses shockwaves generated by its own hypersonic flight with air to glide at high speed.
- Currently, United States and Russia have been carrying out similar experiments.
- The hypersonic waverider flight vehicle was designed by
    - state-run China Academy of Aerospace Aerodynamics (CAAA) in collaboration with China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation.
- It can carry can carry both conventional and nuclear warheads.

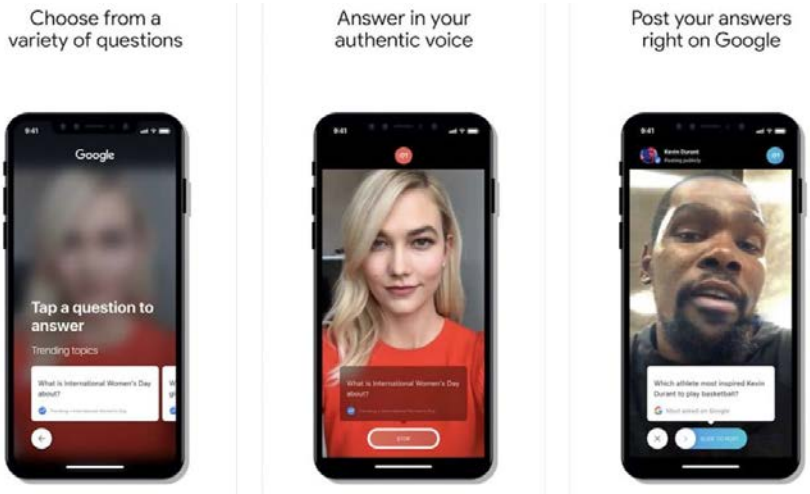
- It has capability to penetrate any current generation anti-missile defence systems due to its high speed and unpredictable trajectory.

GPS enabled watches for MP employees

- The Indore Municipal Corporation (IMC) in Madhya Pradesh will track its 10,000-odd employees through Global Positioning System (GPS)-enabled wrist watches that will be provided to them
- It is the first of its kind initiative in the country.

Cameos

- Google has launched a new video-based Q&A app called 'Cameos' on the App Store.
- It allows people to answer questions about themselves, then share those answers directly on Google.



- The app is aimed at celebrities and other public figures, who are often the subject of people's Google searches.
- With the Cameos app, they can address fans' questions in their own voice, instead of leaving the answers up to other websites.

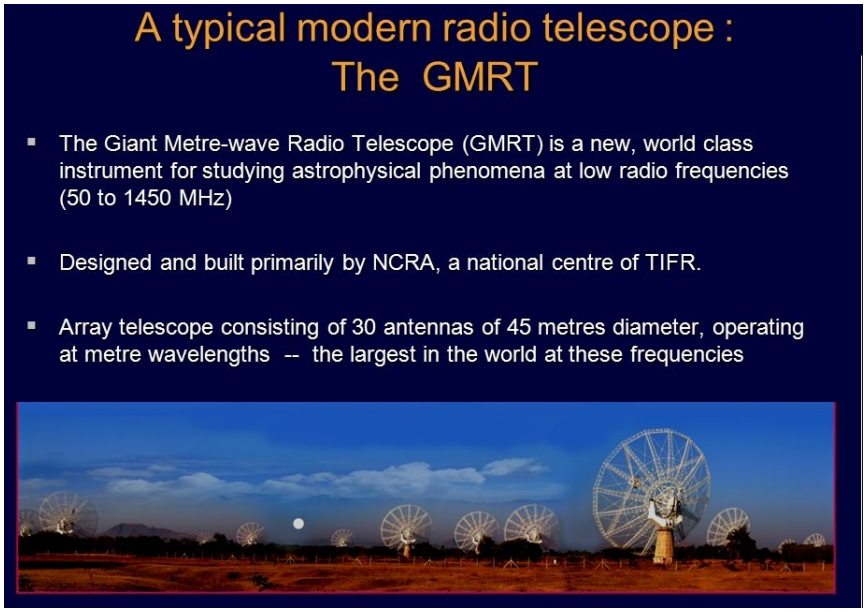
Science Technology and Innovation portal

- Vigyan Prasar a wing of Union science ministry has launched "India Science Technology and Innovation portal" to keep a track on information about the organisations carrying out research.
- The portal follows a launch of India Science (indiascience.in), an Internet-based science channel, to showcase the developments in science and technology in India.

- Vigyan Prasar (VP) is an autonomous organization under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India.

Most distant radio galaxy

- Astronomers, from Pune, used an Indian telescope, Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT), and discovered the most distant radio galaxy ever known.
- It is located at a distance of 12 billion light-years. Radio galaxies are very rare objects in the universe.



- The radio galaxy belongs to a time when the universe was only seven per cent of its current age.
- GMRT is an array of thirty fully steerable parabolic radio telescopes of 45 metre diameter.
- It is operated by the National Centre for Radio Astrophysics.
- The distance to this galaxy was then determined using the Gemini North telescope in Hawaii and the Large Binocular Telescope in Arizona.

Scientists develop super-insulating transparent gel

- Scientists have developed Aerogel, a transparent heat-resistant super-insulating gel using beer waste. It may be used to build greenhouse-like habitats for human colonised on extra-terrestrial habitats such as Mars or Moon
- It could be used on buildings on Earth to help make huge savings on energy costs, it can be also used in windows and extra-terrestrial habitats.

- It enables to harvest sunlight through that thermally-insulating material and store energy inside, thus protecting from big oscillations in temperature especially on Mars or on the moon.

NPCI launches UPI 2.0

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has launched Unified Payments Interface (UPI) 2.0, an upgraded and renewed version of Unified Payments Interface (UPI).
- UPI 2.0 includes a feature wherein users can
  - Check an invoice sent by a merchant prior to making the payment.
  - Link their overdraft account to UPI.
  - Creation of one-time mandates and pre-authorisation of transactions for payment at later date.
  - Make payments by scanning signed QR codes which avoids QR tampering.
- UPI is payments system that allows multiple bank accounts belonging to any participating bank to be controlled via single mobile app.
- It was launched by NPCI in April 2016.

ATGM HELINA successfully test fired

- Indigenously developed Helicopter launched Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) 'HELINA' was successfully flight tested from Indian Army Helicopter at Pokhran range.
- The weapon system was tested for its full range.
- HELINA is helicopter launched version known of NAG ATGM, designed and developed indigenously for Indian Army under integrated guided missile development programme (IGMDP).
- It is manufactured by India's sole missile producer, state-owned Bharat Dynamics Limited.
- HELINA is one of the most advanced Anti-Tank Weapons in the world.



- It works on "fire and forget" principle and operates in Lock on Before Launch mode. It has operational range of 7-10km (after air-launched).

Smart Anti Airfield Weapon successfully flight tested

- DRDO has successfully tested indigenously developed light weight glide bomb Smart Anti Airfield Weapon (SAAW) dropped from an Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft.
- SAAW project is India's first fully indigenous anti-airfield weapon project sanctioned by Government in September 2013.
- It was indigenously developed by state-run Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in collaboration with IAF and the Research Centre Imarat (RCI).
- SAAW is long-range lightweight high precision-guided anti-airfield weapon.

Complex wheat genome decoded

- Team of international researchers including 18 Indian scientists for first time have decoded wheat genome.
- The reference genome decoded covers 94% (14.5 Gb) of entire wheat genome.
- This project was financially supported by Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology.
- The bread wheat has a complex hexaploid genome which is 40 times larger than that of the rice genome and 5 times larger than the human genome.
- The availability of high quality reference genome would accelerate the breeding of climate-resilient wheat varieties to feed the ever-increasing world population and help address global food security.

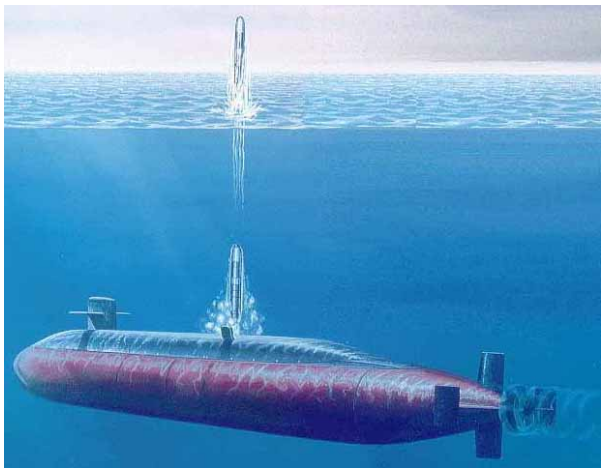
Most wear-resistant metal alloy in the world

- US Scientists from Sandia National Laboratories have developed a platinum-gold alloy, which is 100 times more durable than High strength Steel
- It is in the same class of Sapphire and Diamond
- It has been claimed that if a set of tires been made from this alloy, it has to go around the Earth 500 times before wearing out

Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM)

- India has operationalised its 1st indigenous Nuclear capable, Submarine Launched Ballistic Missile (SLBM) after 2 decades of development.
- It was secretly test fired back-to-back from indigenously built nuclear powered submarine, INS Arihant, off Visakhapatnam coast.

- It was code-named, B-05 and was inducted in the Navy. It is 10m in length and has a strike range of about 750 km weighing 10 tonnes.
- The successful mission has made India a member of the very exclusive club of six nations which is capable of firing nuclear-tipped missiles from land, air and undersea.
- Others being Russia, USA, France, UK and China.



Re-Water Research Center

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Kharagpur has decided to set up Re-Water Research Centre to replenish and rejuvenate water resources.
- It will be seed-funded by two alumni members – Aneesh Reddy & Aditya Choubey and named after them as Aditya Choubey Center for Re-Water Research.
- The purpose of this center will be to tackle the challenge of resolving two burning issues faced by urban India – sewage disposal and access to clean potable water.

Low-cost exhaust emission controller

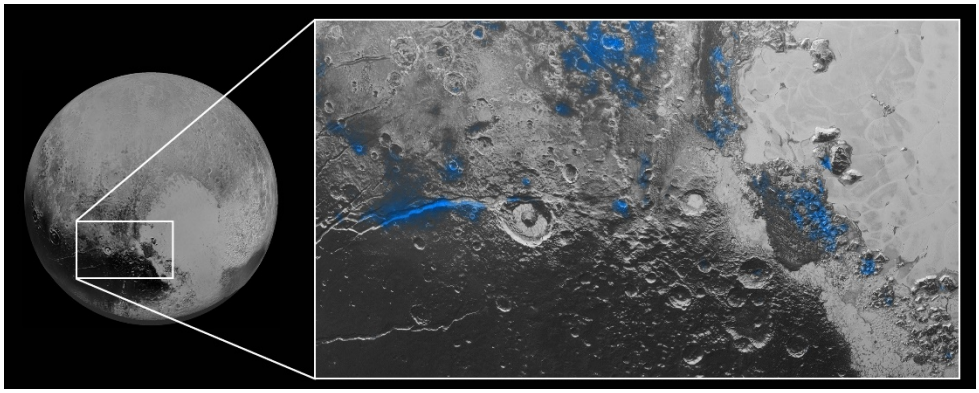
- Researchers from IIT Madras have developed a diesel exhaust emission-control equipment
- It can be connected to the tailpipes of old diesel vehicles in use.
- It is designed to reduce the exhaust pollution from diesel vehicles.

'ReMix' - 'in-body GPS' system

- Scientists have developed a wireless 'in-body GPS' system that can pinpoint the location of ingestible implants and track tumors inside the body.
- Researchers from Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) named the system as 'ReMix' and it was found to easily track the implants with centimeter-level accuracy.
- The major drawback of this system is that it is not providing accurate clinical data yet for real-time implementation.

Frozen water deposits in moon

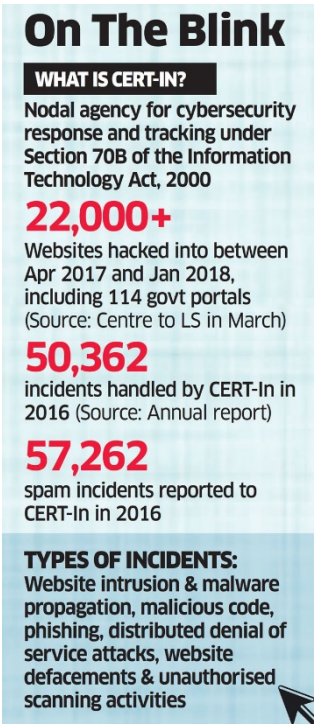
- The NASA scientists, using data from the Chandrayaan-I spacecraft, confirmed that there are frozen water deposits in the darkest and coolest parts of Moon's Polar Regions.



- Most of the newfound water ice lies in the shadows of craters near the poles, where the warmest temperatures never reach above minus 156 degrees Celsius (-250 degrees Fahrenheit).
- Due to the very small tilt of the Moon's rotation axis, sunlight never reaches these regions.
- Chandrayaan-1 was India's first mission to the moon launched on October 22, 2008.

CERT-In report

- According to a recent report by the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), a maximum number of cyber-attacks on official Indian websites are from China, US, and Russia.
- China accounted for largest 35% of a total number of cyber-attacks on official Indian websites followed by US (17%), Russia (15%), Pakistan (9%), Canada (7%).
- The report was forwarded to the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) and other security agencies.
- CERT-In is the nodal agency for information technology (cyber) security under the aegis of Department of Information Technology, Ministry of Electronics and IT.
- It was established in 2004. Its mandate is to protect Indian cyberspace and software infrastructure against destructive and hacking activities.



5G steering committee - AJ Paulraj

- The 5G steering committee chaired by Stanford University's Professor Emeritus AJ Paulraj submitted its recommendations to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).
- The committee was set up by Government in September 2017 to suggest a roadmap for the adoption of 5G.
- Its aim was to push participation in the process of defining global standards for the next generation of wireless technology.
- It expects the commercial rollout of 5G in India by 2020. It expects that economic impact of 5G to be over $1 trillion.
- It recommended that the deployment of 5G in India should be classified into three phases based on technologies and use cases.

European wind survey satellite launched

- The "Aeolus" satellite, named after the guardian of wind in Greek mythology, has been launched by Europe from French Guyana.
- The satellite will probe the lowermost 30 kilometers of the atmosphere in measuring winds around the Earth.
- The satellite is equipped with a single instrument: a Doppler wind lidar -- an advanced laser system
- It is part of the "Copernicus project", a joint initiative of the European Union and the European Space Agency (ESA) - to track environmental damage and assist disaster relief operations
- The launch is Ariane space's 50th launch for the European Space Agency
- Aeolus is the 5th of the ESA's planned Earth Explorer missions.

Fabless Chip Design Incubator

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Hyderabad launched the Fabless Chip Design Incubator (FabCI), dedicated exclusively to help startups in this sector.
- Its goal is to incubate at least 50 'Make-in-India' chip design companies that can compete globally and generate Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs)
- FabCI is said to be the first-of-its-kind in India that focuses on creating an ecosystem for grooming startups in chip design
- FabCI is funded by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and its technology partners are Cadence Design Systems, Inc. and Mentor Graphics.

OSIRIS-Rex Spacecraft

- NASA's asteroid sampling spacecraft OSIRIS-REx has captured 1st images of its target asteroid Bennu and began its final approach towards it after the almost 2-year journey.
- OSIRIS-Rex stands for Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer.
- The first glimpses of the targeted asteroid were captured by Poly Cam camera OCAMS on board of OSIRIS-Rex from a distance of 2.1 million kilometres.
- OSIRIS-Rex mission was launched in September 2016 for studying 101955 Bennu, a carbonaceous asteroid.
- It is NASA's first asteroid sampling mission i.e. it will survey surface, collect a sample and deliver it safely back to Earth.
- Bennu is a near-Earth carbonaceous asteroid about the size of a small mountain in the Apollo group. It was discovered in September 1999 by the LINEAR Project.

NASA's two virtual reality apps

- NASA has created two virtual reality apps that allow users to take selfies in front of gorgeous cosmic locations.
- The apps are named as
  - NASA Selfies
  - NASA's 'Exoplanet Excursions'
- NASA Selfies app users can take selfies in a virtual spacesuit in front of various cosmic locations
- NASA's Exoplanet Excursions takes the users on a virtual guided tour of the TRAPPIST-1 planetary system, around 5 planets
- The Selfies app and Exoplanet Excursions virtual reality app were released to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the launch of NASA's Spitzer Space Telescope.

New online portal launched - GAIL

- The Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill Development & Entrepreneurship has launched a new online portal, www.gailonline.com
- It is the first of its kind in the natural gas sector of the country.
- It strives to enable easy, efficient and transparent booking of common carrier capacity for natural gas transmission services under GAIL's pipelines

- It is the first step to facilitate gas trading on a hub or exchange-traded platform in India.
- It provides gas consumers the facility to register pipeline capacity bookings "online" on a first-come-first-serve basis.

CBSE launches Digital Academic Repository

- The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) along with National e-Governance Division has developed 'Parinam Manjusha', digital academic repository.
- It acts as a digital repository to provide digital mark sheets, migration certificates and pass certificates to students from CBSE-affiliated schools in Kerala, whose academic documents have been lost or damaged in the recent floods.
- This academic repository has been integrated with DigiLocker.
- The students can visit https://digitallocker.gov.in and https://digitallocker.gov.in and download their academic documents using the login-id / password
- The digital academic documents are digitally signed by the Controller of Examinations of CBSE which make them legally valid digital document as per the IT Act.
- These documents are also having QR codes and such documents can be verified for the authenticity using the DigiLocker mobile app.

Innovation Advisory Council

- Union Government has constituted a new 21-member advisory panel on science, technology and innovation called the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC).
- It will replace earlier Scientific Advisory Committee to Prime Minister and to Cabinet.
- It will be headed by Principal Scientific Advisor to government K Vijay Raghavan.
- The council will advise the PM on science, technology, as well as innovation.
- It will also coordinate implementation of PMs scientific vision.
- It will actively aid in the formulation and timely implementation of major science and technology missions and evolve interdisciplinary technology development programmes.
- It will also advise the government on developing 'Clusters of Excellence' in science including city-based R&D clusters.
- It has nine members, including Chairperson.

- Apart from nine members, it will also have twelve special invitees
    - eleven ex-officio secretaries 10 central ministries, related to science, technology, energy, and education, are special invitees to the panel.

India, EU join hands for research program

- Union Government and European Union (EU) have collaborated for a research programme named 'Horizon 2020' to develop Next Generation Influenza Vaccine to protect citizens across the globe.
- Under this project, a cost-effective and affordable influenza vaccine will be developed. It aims at advancing the efficacy, safety, duration of immunity, and reactivity against an increased breadth of influenza strains.



- The outcome of this project is expected to contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 3 (SDG-3) to ensure health and well-being for all.
- It will also help the international community to better prepare in the event of an influenza pandemic. It will also give boost India's National Health Mission.

Russia's new interceptor missile test

- Russian military has successfully conducted a test launch of a new interceptor missile for Russia's missile defence system at the test site of Sary-Shagan (Republic of Kazakhstan).
- The new interceptor missile is capable to reach a speed of four km per second, has no equal in the world.
- So that the enemy's warhead will be successfully destroyed at the maximum height and distance from the protected object.

Largest military exercise - Vostok-2018

- Russia is going to conduct Vostok-2018 (East-2018) military exercise in central and eastern Russian military districts from September 11 to 15, 2018.
- It will be biggest war games ever conducted by Russia since Zapad-81 (West-81) exercise conducted by erstwhile Soviet Union in 1981 which had seen involvement about 100,000 to 150,000 troops.
- China and Mongolia will also participate in this exercise with participation of units from Russian Army, Air Force and Navy.
- Vostok-2018 exercise is being conducted in response to aggressive and unfriendly attitudes towards Russia by NATO and West countries.



World's Smallest Medical Robot

- Student at the University of Texas has built the world's smallest medical robot that cannot be seen with the human eye.
- The robot measures 120 nanometre and has entered the Guinness Book of World Records for its negligible size, Fast Company reports.
- The robot is capable of interacting with biological cells, it would help in cancer and Alzheimer's treatments in future.

ENVIRONMENT

First State to implement biofuel policy

- Rajasthan became first state in the country to implement National Policy on Biofuels unveiled by Union Government in May 2018.
- Its implementation was approved by high-power Biofuel Authority.
- It was also decided that Government will release Biofuel Rules, 2018.

- Under this policy, State Government will lay emphasis on increasing production of oilseeds and establish Centre for Excellence in Udaipur to promote research in fields of alternative fuels and energy resources.
- The policy categorises of biofuels into first generation (1G), second generation (2G) and third generation (3G) to enable extension of appropriate financial and fiscal incentives under each category.

Blueprint of Deep Ocean Mission unveiled

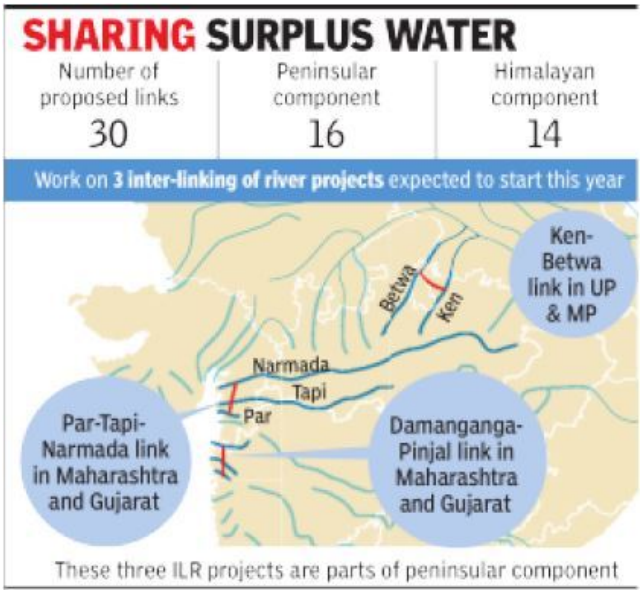
- Union Ministry of Earth Sciences has unveiled blueprint of Deep Ocean Mission (DOM).
- The mission proposes to explore deep-ocean by emulating success of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in designing and launching satellites.
- Two key projects planned under it include
  - Desalination plant powered by tidal energy and
  - Submersible vehicle that can explore depths of at least 6,000 metres.
- India has been allotted site of 1,50,000 sq. km in Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB) by United Nations International Sea Bed Authority (UN-ISBA) for exploitation of polymetallic nodules (PMN).
- These are rocks scattered on seabed containing iron, nickel, manganese and cobalt.
- It is envisaged that 10% of recovery of that large reserve can meet energy requirement of India for next 100 years.
- It has been estimated that 380 million metric tonnes of polymetallic nodules are available at the bottom of the seas in CIOB.

Air Quality Study - C40 Air Quality Network

- According to the April issue of the Indian Journal of Pediatrics, the number of children affected with a chronic cough has risen from 8% in 1999 to 21.25% in 2017.
- Almost 23% of all global deaths are linked to environmental pollution.
- These findings were announced at the inaugural meeting of C40 Air Quality Network, a global initiative to tackle air pollution.

5 river inter-linking projects within FY19

- Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Nitin Gadkari announced that 5 river inter-linking projects will commence in the current fiscal.



- It will secure financial assistance from the World Bank and the ADB for the Rs 2 lakh crore project.
- A cabinet note has been moved seeking to accord recognition to it as a National Project.
- The 5 projects include
  - Ken-Betwa
  - Godavari-Cauvery
  - Tapi-Narmada
  - Daman Ganga-Pinjal

Panel to monitor rejuvenation project of Ganga

- The National Green Tribunal has constituted a committee, to be headed by a former Allahabad High Court judge, for monitoring the rejuvenation project of Ganga from Haridwar to Unnao in Uttar Pradesh.
- The green panel has asked Chief Justice of Allahabad HC to nominate a former judge who will head the committee.

Earth at risk of becoming an irreversible hothouse

- According to a recent study, Earth is at the risk of entering an irreversible hothouse condition – where the global temperatures will rise by 4 to 5 degrees even if targets under 2015 Paris climate deal are met.
- A "Hothouse Earth" climate will in the long-term stabilize at a global average of 4-5 degrees Celsius higher than pre-industrial temperatures with sea level 10-60 meters higher than today

- Currently, global average temperatures are just over 1 degree Celsius above pre-industrial and rising at 0.17 degree Celsius per decade.
- Keeping global warming to within 1.5-2 degrees Celsius as agreed in 2015 Paris climate agreement by around 200 countries may be more difficult than previously assessed.
- The study considered ten natural feedback processes, some of which are tipping elements that lead to abrupt change if a critical threshold is crossed.
- These feedbacks include,
    - Permafrost thaw,
    - Weakening land and ocean carbon sinks,
    - Loss of methane hydrates from the ocean floor,
    - Increasing bacterial respiration in oceans,
    - Boreal forest dieback - Amazon rainforest dieback,
    - Reduction of northern hemisphere snow cover/Antarctic sea ice/polar ice sheets.
    - Loss of Arctic summer sea ice

Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve in UNESCO's list

- India's Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve, one of the highest ecosystems in the world, has been added to UNESCO's list of World Network of Biosphere Reserve (WNBR).
- The International Coordinating Council (ICC) of Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme, UNESCO, had designated Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve for inclusion in the World Network of Biosphere Reserve in its 30th session, which was held from July 23-27, 2018 at Palembang, Indonesia.
- In total, India has 18 biosphere Reserves, among which 11 have been internationally designated WNBR.
- The remaining seven are domestic designated biosphere reserves.

Gurugram - India's most polluted city

- Gurugram has been declared as India's most polluted city out of 62 cities in the country by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) in its Air quality index (AQI).
- The AQI of Gurugram has crossed 300 mark marking it in the 'Very Poor' category of AQI.
- Peak level of Particulate Matter (PM)2.5 rose to 189 microgm/m3. The permissible limit is 60microgm/m3.

- The rise of the PM is due to the location of the city which gets a huge influx of Arabian dust storms and due to its humidity, which traps the dusts.
- 6 cities have been marked as 'Poor', 1 City (Gurugram) has been marked as 'Very Poor',
- 2 cities – Thane and Pune has been marked as 'Good', 26 cities marked as 'Satisfactory' and 27 cities as 'Moderate'.



Colour-coded stickers on vehicles

- The Supreme Court has accepted the suggestions of the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) to have hologram-based coloured stickers on vehicles which would indicate the nature of fuel being used.
- The apex court has asked government to implement use of coloured stickers on vehicles plying in Delhi-NCR by September 30, 2018.
- It also clarified that this colour-coding will only be applicable in Delhi and NCR. This move aims to counter air pollution in national capital.
- With this approval, Delhi will be first city in India to have hologram-based coloured stickers on according to fuel they run on.
- Under this colour scheme proposed by MoRTH,
    - Light-blue colour will be used for vehicles running petrol and CNG-run vehicles
    - Orange colour sticker will be used for diesel-driven vehicles.
- These hologram-based stickers will also contain registration date of the vehicle.

RUCO initiative

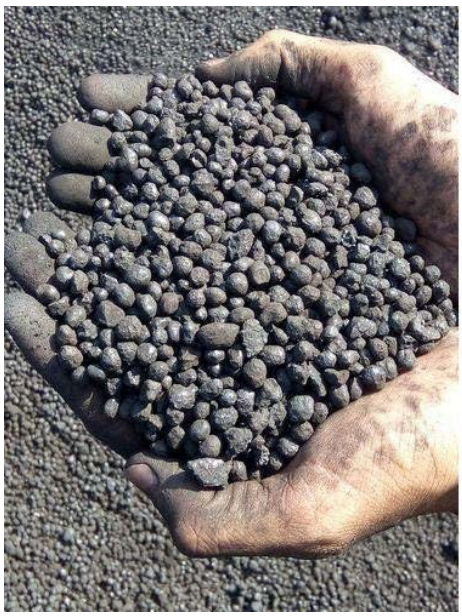
- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil) initiative to enable collection and conversion of used cooking oil to biodiesel.



- The initiative was launched nearly month after FSSAI notified standards for used cooking oil.
- According to FSSAI regulations,
  - Maximum permissible limits for total polar compounds (tpc) have been set at 25%,

  beyond which the cooking oil is unsafe for consumption.
- Beside this, FSSAI is also working in partnership with Biodiesel Association of India (BAI) and food industry to ensure effective compliance of used cooking oil regulations.

Pet coke import for fuel use



- Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) under Ministry of Commerce and Industry has banned import of petcoke for use as fuel.
- But it has allowed its import of only for use as feedstock in some select industries such as cement, lime kiln, calcium carbide and gasification industries.
- These industries were earlier affected by petcoke-related policy flip-flops, which began after Supreme Court judgment (Oct 2017) banning use its in and around New Delhi to curb pollution.
- There are two kinds of pet coke produced viz.
  - Fuel grade pet coke (80%) and
  - calcined pet coke (20%) during oil refining.

- Petcoke is much more potent pollutant than coal and causes greater harm to the environment and health.
- It contains whopping 74,000 PPM of sulphur content which is released into atmosphere as emissions which is much higher than vehicular emissions.

Fall Armyworm (FAW)

- The deadly agricultural insect-pest "Fall Armyworm (FAW)" has been recently spotted at a few places in the districts of Karimnagar, Kamareddy, Sangareddy, Medak and Gadwal in Telangana.
- It is known to attack and destroy several varieties of crops, but it prefers maize and sorghum because of the sweetness in their leaves.



- The Fall Armyworm (or Spodoptera frugiperda) is a species in the order of Lepidoptera and is the larval life stage of a fall armyworm moth.
- The lifespan of the pest is 30 to 60 days and each generation can migrate to a distance of more than 400 km.
- It is considered deadly as it has caused massive agricultural losses in several countries in Africa.
- The worm was first found in Karnataka in the country and later spread to Tamil Nadu.

Cyclone Warning Centre in Kerala

- Union Ministry of Earth Sciences has announced to set up Cyclone Warning Centre in Kerala's capital Thiruvananthapuram.
- It also proposed to set up C-band Doppler weather radar at Mangalore, Karnataka.
- This comes in view of recent heavy rainfall and concerns over extreme weather activities in future.
- At present, IMD has six cyclone warning centers,
    - 4 along the east coast at Chennai, Visakhapatnam, Bhubaneswar, and Kolkata.
    - 2 along west coast at Ahmedabad and Mumbai.

Kerala Heritage Rescue Initiative

- International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) launched Kerala Heritage Rescue Initiative to assess damage to rich cultural and built heritage sites in flood-devastated Kerala.
- ICOMOS is a global monument conservation body.
- The initiative aims at setting up a platform for emergency response to cultural heritage damaged by the floods in Kerala.
- The Central Government has declared this calamity of 'severe nature'.
- ICOMOS has also approached International Centre for Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM) to partner in post-disaster work.
- ICCROM based in Rome (Italy) is an inter-governmental organization dedicated to the preservation of cultural heritage worldwide.
- ICOMOS is a global monument conservation body (non-government organization), headquartered at Paris in France.
- It was founded in 1965 in Warsaw (Poland) as a result of the Venice Charter of 1964.
- It is also the advisory body to UNESCO for cultural heritage, in particular for implementation of World Heritage Convention.

5 Thematic Reports on Sustainable Development in Himalayan Region

- NITI Aayog has released 5 Thematic Reports on Sustainable Development in Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) recognizing the uniqueness of Himalayas and challenges for sustainable development.
- These reports list challenges in all defined 5 thematic areas and discuss significance, challenges, ongoing actions and future roadmap.
- These reports were prepared by five working groups which were set up by NITI Aayog in June 2017.
- These areas were
    - Inventory and Revival of springs in the Himalayas for Water Security
    - Sustainable Tourism in Indian Himalayan Region
    - Transformative approach to shifting cultivation
    - Strengthening Skill and Entrepreneurship Landscape in the Himalayas
    - Data/Information for Informed Decision Making

India's first biofuel-powered flight

- SpiceJet flew the country's first biofuel-powered flight, which took off from Dehradun for Delhi.
- India is 1st among the developing nations to test the biofuel-powered flights, after the earlier successful attempts by the US and Australia
- The bio-jet fuel was prepared by CSIR & Indian Institute of Petroleum, Dehradun.
- The jet fuel has been recognized by American Standard Testing Method (ASTM) and meets the specification standards of Pratt & Whitney and Bombardier for commercial application in aircraft.
- It is made from vegetable oils, sugar, animal fats and waste biomass.
- It can be used on existing engines without necessitating any other modifications.
- Biofuel flights make air travel cleaner and more efficient by reducing carbon emissions and also reduce the cost of airline operations.

Cheetah Reintroduction Project

- Madhya Pradesh forest department has written to National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to revive its Cheetah Reintroduction Project.
- The move is to reintroduce Cheetahs in Nauradehi sanctuary located in Sagar district of the state.
- The ambitious project was conceived in 2009 but had hit a roadblock for want of funds.
- Cheetah was declared extinct in India in 1952. India's last spotted Asiatic cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus venaticus) had died in Chhattisgarh in 1947.
- National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) is a statutory body under Union Environment Ministry.

Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) Survey

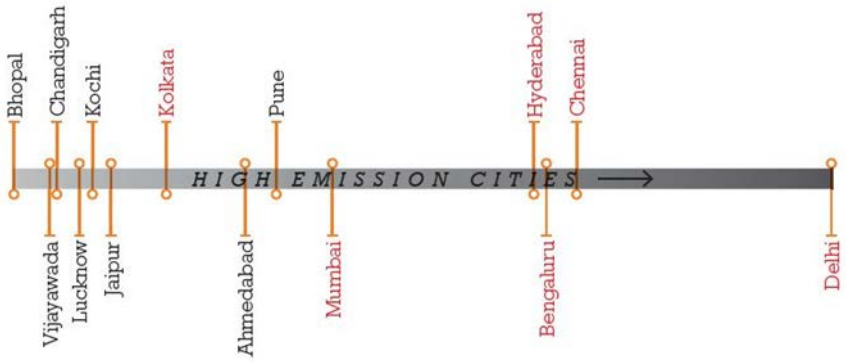
- According to the analysis titled The Urban Commute, by Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), Bhopal tops for lowest overall emissions and energy use from the urban commute.
- Kolkata emits least among six megacities due to high usage of public transport and walking.
- Delhi ranks to the bottom as overall emissions and fuel use are highest.
- The study ranks the 14 cities on the basis of
    - Emissions of heat-trapping carbon dioxide and
    - Toxic pollutants like particulate matter and nitrogen oxides, as well as

- Energy-guzzling from urban commuting.

❖ Top 3 in Overall emissions and energy consumption,

- Bhopal
- Vijayawada
- Chandigarh.

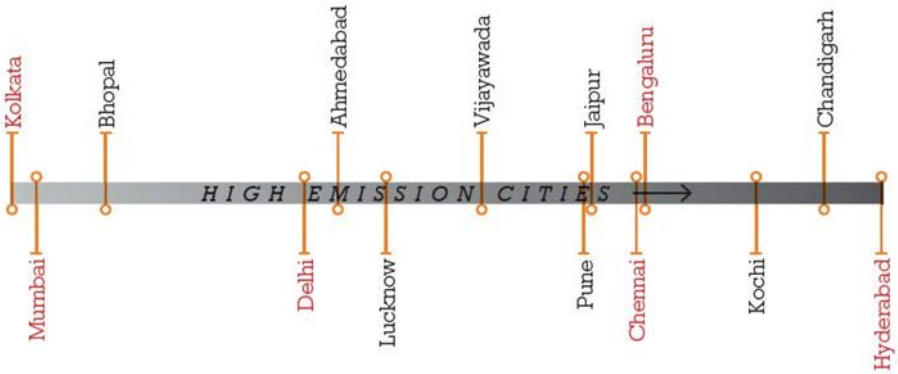
Graph 29: Based on overall emissions and energy consumption



❖ Top 3 in Per-travel trip emissions and energy consumption,

- Kolkata
- Mumbai
- Bhopal.

Graph 30: Based on per travel trip emissions and energy consumption



STATE

B-Hub

- The Telangana government is going to set up B-Hub for biotech and biopharma sector in Genome Valley, Hyderabad.
- It will be set up through Public-Private Partnership in Genome Valley, which is India's first organized cluster for life sciences R&D and clean manufacturing activities.
- B-Hub will be the first-of-its-kind initiative in the country, aimed at providing much needed support to the biopharma research and development activities.

UNESCO World Heritage recognition

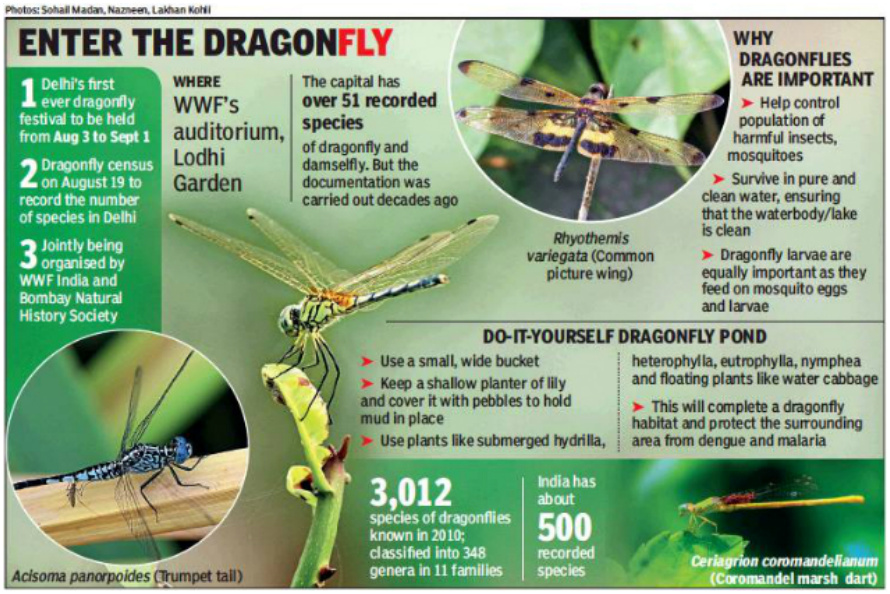
- "The Walled City of Jaipur, Rajasthan, India" has been proposed for the UNESCO World Heritage recognition.
- As per UNESCO's Operation Guidelines 2017, only one site can be nominated each year.
- It impacts the local economy by giving a boost to domestic and international tourism.
- There are 37 World Heritage sites in India at present.

Mukhya Mantri-Yuva Nestham

- The Andhra Pradesh government has launched an unemployment allowance scheme named 'Mukhya Mantri-Yuva Nestham'.
- Through this scheme, an allowance of Rs 1000 per month will be provided to unemployed youth in the state.
- The money will be credited directly into the bank accounts through biometric authentication.

First-ever dragonfly festival - Delhi

- Delhi will celebrate its first-ever dragonfly festival from August 3 to September 1. This is First-ever festival for insects that help maintain ecosystem.
- The festival is being organized jointly by WWF (World Wide Fund) India and the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS).



- This will culminate towards a dragonfly census on August 19.

Assam Releases Final NRC Draft

- Assam government has released its final draft of National Registry of Citizens of Assam.
- According to the release, out of 3.29 crore total applicants, 2.9 crore people have been found eligible to be included in the National Register of Citizens.
- 40.07 lakh people who have not made their name to the list have been declared 'illegal immigrants'.
- Assam is the first Indian state where the NRC is being updated after 1951, with March 24, 1971 as the cut-off date, to include names of genuine Indian citizens.
- The first NRC draft, with 1.9 crore names, was released during the intervening night of December 31 and January 1 this year.

Mughalsarai Railway Station

- The Mughalsarai Junction railway station in Uttar Pradesh was formally renamed after Deen Dayal Uphadyay
- Mughalsarai station got a new name after Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik gave his assent to the proposal of renaming.
- Deen Dayal Upadhyay was found dead in mysterious circumstances near the Mughalsarai station in February 1968.
- Mughalsarai is also the birth place of former prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.

Terminator train

- The Delhi division of Northern Railway launched the mosquito terminator special train, which will help in preventing mosquito breeding along the railway tracks.
- The 'Mosquito Terminator on Wheels' will cover a distance of 150km in each cycle over a period of two days.
- The South Delhi Municipal Corporation has provided a high-power sprayer and insecticide to the train, launched to control and mitigate the menace of mosquito breeding in the burrow pits along the railway tracks.

'GOAMILES'

- Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar and Tourism Minister Manohar Ajgaonkar flagged off the Goa Tourism Development Corporation's app-based taxi service called 'GOAMILES' in Panaji.
- It would ensure that commuters are not cheated as there would be transparency in fares for the customers.

Dog squad of City Armed Reserve Police

- Karnataka has become the 1st state in the country to have two Belgian Malinois into the dog squad of its City Armed Reserve Police



- This particular breed is used by the police in other countries including the U.S.
- They have more Sniffing power than other breeds and hence used for bomb detection, contraband goods detection, and crime scene investigations.

World's largest bird sculpture

- The Jatayu sculpture at the Jatayu Earth Center (JEC) at Chadayamangalam in Kollam district, Kerala, said to be world's largest bird sculpture, will be inaugurated on August 17 by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.



- This Rs 100 crore-project is a creation by film director and sculptor Rajiv Anchal.

1st state to give ID cards to Gau Rakshaks

- Uttarakhand has become the 1st state in the country to issue ID cards to Gau Rakshaks.
- The initiative has been taken to distinguish genuine Gau rakshaks from others who resort to violence in the name of cow protection.

Sashi Bhusan Behera Committee

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik set up a ministerial committee headed by Finance Minister Sashi Bhusan Behera to draft policies for the development of Odia film industry, known as Ollywood.
- It would suggest the steps to be taken to revive the film industry and also for the renovation of the Kalinga Studio, located on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar.

Begging decriminalized in the national capital

- Delhi High Court has declared 25 sections of Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959 which have been extended to Delhi, as "unconstitutional".
- With this, it has struck down legal provision criminalising begging in national capital.

- The Bombay Prevention of Begging Act prescribes penalty of more than 3 years of jail in case of first conviction for begging and person can be ordered to be detained for 10 years in subsequent conviction.

Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana

- Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar launched 'Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana', a scheme for the girl child.
- The scheme will provide Rs.54,100 for a girl child from her birth until she graduates.
- This is to express the State government's resolve for the empowerment of women.
- The 'scheme will be run by three departments namely education, health and social welfare.
- The Chief Minister also made several other announcements like
    - Increasing the amount under the 'Bicycle Yojna' from ₹2500 to ₹3000.
    - Doubling of amount for purchase of sanitary napkins to ₹300 from existing ₹150 under the 'Kishori Swasthya Yojna'.

Swachha meva Jayate

- The Karnataka government has launched a rural cleanliness and sanitation campaign "Swachhameva Jayate" to make every citizen in rural Karnataka take a pledge of cleanliness.
- The aim of the campaign is to boost the Swachh Survkekshan Grameen 2018 (SSG 2018) survey in all the districts with the help of school children.

'One District One Product' Summit

- President Ram Nath Kovind on August 10, 2018, inaugurated the 'One District One Product' Summit in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- The summit, which aims to give a boost to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), is a consequence of the UP Investors Summit held in UP in February 2018.
- The summit was held with a tagline of 'Nayi Udaan, Nayi Pehchan'.
- The 'One District One Product' (ODOP) scheme aims to promote one traditional industry in every district such as lock industry in Aligarh, Banarasi silk-weaving in Varanasi and biscuit-making in Amethi.

Additional Advocates Generals - Karnataka

- The Karnataka government has appointed 4 Additional Advocates Generals (AAGs) to represent the government in the Principal Bench of the High Court of Karnataka.
- The AAGs are A.S. Ponnanna, N. Dinesh Rao, Sandesh J. Chouta, and Nitin Ramesh. The permanent Benches are at Dharwad and Kalaburagi.
- Advocate I.S. Pramod Chandra has been appointed as Special Public Prosecutor-II in the vacancy created by the appointment of Mr.Chouta as AAG.

Family income ceiling for 'Kanyashree'

- The West Bengal government has widened the reach of its flagship women welfare scheme 'Kanyashree' by lifting the ceiling on annual family income.
- As per the scheme, unmarried girls above 13 years are offered cash incentive for remaining unmarried till 18.
    - Kanyashree was launched in 2013 to prevent child marriage in economically weaker sections with an annual household income of Rupee1.2 lakh.
    - Successful applicants got Rupee 1,000 a year scholarship from 13 to 18 years and a one-time grant of Rupee 25,000 on remaining unmarried till 18 years.

Shaheed Saman Diwas

- The Shaheed Saman Diwas will be observed in all districts of Madhya Pradesh to honour families of martyrs of Madhya Pradesh origin.
- The schools and government buildings located in the native village of a martyr, where he was born or his family is residing currently, will be named after him.

Telangana launches Disaster Response Force

- Telangana Government for the first time has launched Disaster Response Force (DRF) vehicles in the capital city of Hyderabad.
- The main aim to start this DRF is that state should have its own Disaster force to swiftly deal with emergency situations.
- DRF vehicles provided to this force will be parked at 24 locations with Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC).

1st ever workshop to prevent Cybercrime threats

- Punjab Police have organized the 1st ever workshop to prevent Cybercrime threats on a real-time basis.
- It was organized in collaboration with National Critical Information Infrastructure Protection Centre, New Delhi.

Disrespect of religious texts made punishable

- The state Cabinet has approved amendments to the Indian Penal Code (IPC) to make sacrilege of all religious texts punishable with life imprisonment in order to preserve communal harmony.
- The State Cabinet approved the Code of Criminal Procedure (Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2018, and the Indian Penal Code (Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2018.
- A new section 295AA has been inserted in IPC to provide that whoever causes disrespect or damage to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Srimad Bhagwad Geeta, Holy Quran and Holy Bible, shall be subjected to Life imprisonment.

Chhattisgarh to rename Naya Raipur as Atal Nagar

- In the memory of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Chhattisgarh Government has decided to rename Naya Raipur as Atal Nagar.
- It intends to institute awards known as 'Atal Sushashan Awards' to honor people who have rendered excellent service to the society.
- These awards would be given on November 1, the foundation day of the state of Chhattisgarh.
- It plans to name a state battalion of the police force as 'Pokharan battalion'
- It has also approved the naming of the second phase of the CM's 'Vikas Yatra' as 'Atal Vikas Yatra'.

India's biggest techno-hub

- Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje inaugurated the Bhamashah Techno Hub in Jhalana Industrial Area of Jaipur.
- It can accommodate around 700 entrepreneurs under one roof
- It has to be recalled that the State had launched "i-start" a year ago to provide a digital solution to the startups
- Raje also inaugurated an online payment app, Bhamashah Wallet.

Bundelkhand Expressway to be named as 'Atal Path'

- The Uttar Pradesh government has decided to name the upcoming Bundelkhand Expressway as 'Atal Path'.
- It is proposed as a 289-km, 4-lane, access-controlled highway. It starts at Jhansi and joins Agra-Lucknow expressway.
- It is proposed to be developed by the Uttar Pradesh Expressway Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA).

Free power units for SC/ST families

- Telangana State Government has increased the free electricity supply to the families of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for domestic purpose up to 101 units.
- Currently, the state government is supplying free electricity to these families up to 50 units.

Other welfare measures

- Honorarium being paid to Imams and Moazins of Masjids has been increased to 5000 rupees from the current 1500 rupees per month.
- The government also decided to increase the retirement age of Archakas in Temples to 65 years from the current 58 years.

First interstate connected wind power project

- 126 MW wind power capacity, part of India's first inter-state transmission system (ISTS) auction, was commissioned in Bhuj, Gujarat.
- It was part of India's first ISTS auction was conducted by state-run Solar Energy Corporation of India Ltd (SECI) in February 2017.
- The project is undertaken by Ostra Kutch Wind private Limited.
- Through ISTS, power generated from one state can be transmitted to other deficient states.
- The energy generated from this project in Gujarat is purchased by Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.

'Mu Hero Mu Odisha'

- Odisha Chief Minister has launched the 'Mu Hero Mu Odisha' (I am hero; I am Odisha) campaign to recognize exemplary works by Odia boys and girls towards social transformation.
- The aim of this initiative is to identify the potential among the youth and recognize them in society.

ADB approved loan to West Bengal

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved financing package of $245 million to implement a project for providing safe, sustainable drinking water service to million people in three districts of West Bengal affected by arsenic, fluoride, and salinity.
- This project will play a pivotal role in reducing the burden of disease from arsenic and fluoride while preserving groundwater and enhancing climate resilience.
- The project will provide continuous potable water through metered connections to about 390,000 individual households in three districts of North 24 Parganas, Bankura and Purba Medinipur.

Google partners with AP State Fiber Net

- Google has partnered with Andhra Pradesh State Fiber Net Ltd (APSFNL) to facilitate Internet access to more than 12,000 villages, benefitting around 10 million people.
- also rebranded its 'Tez' as 'Google Pay' as part of its efforts to take the digital payments app to more online and retail merchants across the country.
- Already Google had partnered RailTel to offer Wi-Fi access across 400 railway stations in India.
- Also, through 'Google Station' it provides Wi-Fi services in public locations in partnership with various entities.

Amendment Bill to Set Up State Security Commission

- Punjab Has Passed the Police (Amendment) Bill 2018 To Set Up "State Security Commission" For Selection of The Director General of Police (DGP).
- The bill amended the Punjab Police Act, 2007.
- The State Security Commission shall comprise
    - Chief minister - chairperson,
    - home minister – vice chairperson
    - Leader of the opposition
    - Retired high court judge
    - Chief Secretary
    - Principal secretary to state government, department of home affairs and justice
    - State advocate general

India Signs Loan Agreement with World Bank

- Central Government along with Government of Rajasthan has signed $250 million Development Policy Loan (DPL) agreement with World Bank for Electricity Distribution Sector Reforms in Rajasthan.
- The loan will be provided by World Bank's lending arm International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD).
- Key areas that the programme will support include, strengthening governance in the distribution sector by establishing annual performance MoUs between the DISCOMs and the State Government.
- Also, to address the concerns of affordability and access to electricity for the poor, and supports the Government of India's Domestic Efficient Lighting Program (DELP).

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

Akshay Venkatesh gets prestigious Fields Medal

- India-origin mathematician Akshay Venkatesh was awarded the prestigious Fields medal at the International Congress of Mathematicians in Rio de Janeiro.



- The 36-year-old was chosen as one of the four winners of the prize, which is commonly referred to as the Nobel prize for mathematics.
- The other three winners are,
    - Caucher Birkar (Iranian Kurdish origin),
    - Germany's Peter Scholze,
    - Italy's Alessio Figalli
- The Fields medals are awarded every four years to the most promising mathematicians under the age of 40.
- The prize was inaugurated in 1932 at the request of Canadian mathematician John Charles Fields, who ran the 1924 Mathematics Congress in Toronto.

- Each winner receives a 15,000 Canadian-dollar cash prize. At least two, and preferably four people, are always honoured in the award ceremony.

Rajiv Sadbhavana Award

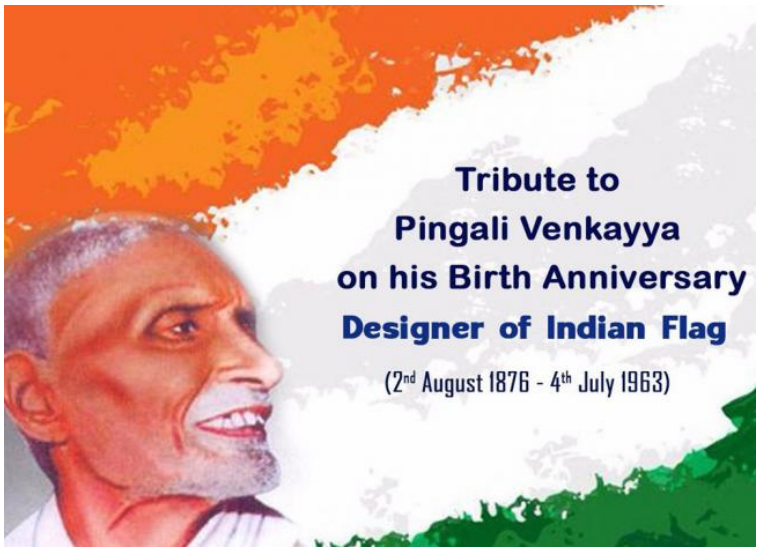
- Former West Bengal Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi has been chosen for the 24th Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Award for promoting communal harmony and peace.
- The award was Instituted in 1992 and it carries a citation and a cash award of Rs.10 lakh.
- The award will be presented on August 20, the birth anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi, which is celebrated as Sadbhavna Diwas (Harmony Day).
- The recipients of the award for the year 2017 were Former Captain of India Cricket Team Mohammad Azharuddin and retired IAS officer M.Gopala Krishna.

Outstanding Parliamentarian Awards

- President Ram Nath Kovind has conferred Outstanding Parliamentarian Awards on five Members of Parliament.
- The 5 MP's who received the award,
  - Najma A Heptulla, Manipur's governor (2013)
  - Hukumdev Narayan Yadav, BJP's Lok Sabha member (2014)
  - Ghulam Nabi Azad, Congress leader (2015)
  - Dinesh Trivedi, Trinamool Congress leader (2016)
  - Bhartruhari Mahatab of the Lok Biju Janata Dal (2017)
- The award was established in 1992 by Shivraj Patil who was then Speaker of Lok Sabha.
- So far 18 eminent MPs have received the award.
- Chandra Shekhar of the Samajwadi Janata Party was the 1st member to receive this award.

Pingali Venkayya - 141st birth anniversary

- 141st birth anniversary of freedom fighter and designer (architect) of Indian National Flag Pingali Venkayya was observed on August 2, 2018.



- India's National Flag (tricolor) is based on Swaraj flag of Indian National Congress designed by Pingali Venkayya.

AIBD President

- The Asia-Pacific Institute of Broadcasting Development (AIBD) has elected Fayyaz Sheheryar, Director-General of All India Radio, as its new President.
- This is the first time India has been elected for the position of president of AIBD.
- India's presidency is for two years.

AIBD

- AIBD was established in 1977 under auspices of UNESCO.
- It is hosted by Malaysia and its secretariat is located in Kuala Lumpur
- AIBD is a regional inter-governmental organisation servicing country of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) in the field of electronic media development.
- The elections were held at the 44th annual meeting of AIBD in Colombo.

Fortune's '40 Under 40' Rankings

- Fortune's 2018 '40 Under 40' has released an annual ranking of the most influential young people in business under the age of 40 years.
- Co-founder and CEO of Instagram Kevin Systrom shares rank 1 on the 40 under 40 lists with CEO and Co-founder of Facebook Mark Zuckerberg.



- According to Fortune, the pair Logan Green & John Zimmer has been ranked second on the list.
- Chinese businessman Wang Xing, CEO of Meituan-Dianping, has been ranked 3rd on the list.
- The four persons of Indian-origin has been featured on the list and they are
  - Dhivya Suryadevara, Rank 4 (Chief Financial Officer of the General Motors)
  - Anjali Sud, Rank 14 (Chief Executive Officer of Vimeo)
  - Bajju Bhatt, Rank 24 (Co-Founder and co-CEO of Robinhood)
  - Anu Duggal, Rank 32 (Founding partner of Female Founders Fund)

Kolkata man tops IQ world list

- Amit Sahai, a 43-year-old senior professional from Kolkata has topped the prestigious Intelligence Quotient (IQ) World list along with two other Americans with a score of 148.
- He has a background in international sales of software, IT, ITes services and high-end audio and engineering products.
- He is also a member of the International High IQ Society.



White House Correspondents Association

- Indian American Anita Kumar has become the first Indian-American to be elected to the board of The White House Correspondents Association"

- White House Correspondents Association 'is a top union of journalists covering the presidential news.
- Kumar is covering the White House since 2012 and has been elected unopposed for the WCA Board.

National Commission for Women (NCW)

- Rekha Sharma (54) was appointed as chairperson of the National Commission for Women (NCW).
- Prior to this appointment, she was a member of the Commission and was holding the additional charge of chairperson after Lalitha Kumaramangalam had demitted office in September 2017.
- NCW is a statutory body established under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990. It was established in January 1992.
- It is an apex national level organization of India the mandate of protecting and promoting the interests of women.
- It regularly publishes a monthly newsletter, Rashtra Mahila, in both Hindi and English.

International Geography Bee World Championship

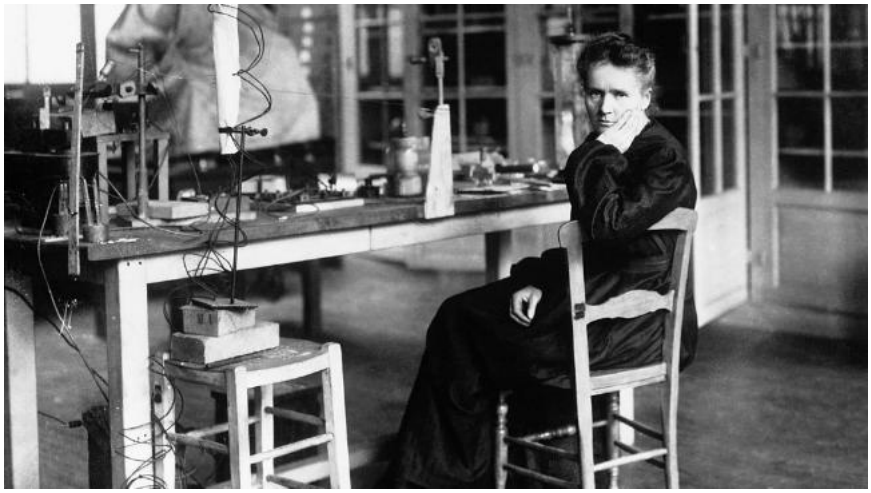
- Indian-American high school student Avi Goel has won the world championship at the International Geography Bee's junior varsity division which was held in Berlin, Germany.
- 14-year old Avi is a tenth grader at Silver Creek High School in Evergreen, San Jose, California.
- He topped the overall medal table with winning seven gold and 2 silver medals in the 10 medal events.
- The student also bagged the top spot in all the three events counting towards the world championship title.
- The three events are,
    - The International Geography Exam
    - The International Geography Bee
    - The International Geography Showdown
- Founded in the year 2016, The competition was held by International Academic Competitions and is overseen by the International History Bee and Bowl (IHBB).

First woman Chief Justice of J&K High Court

- Justice Gita Mittal became the first-ever woman Chief Justice of Jammu and Kashmir High Court.
- she was administered the oath of office by Governor N N Vohra in Srinagar.
- She succeeded Ramalingam Sudhakar.

Most Influential Woman in history - BBC

- Nobel Prize-winning scientist Marie Curie was adjudged the most influential woman in history, through a poll conducted by BBC History Magazine.



- Marie Curie was nominated by Patricia Fara, president of the British Society for the History of Science.
- Marie Curie had won Nobel Prize in Physics in 1903 and Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 1911.
- Marie Curie is the,
    - First woman to win a Nobel Prize in physics
    - First female professor at the Sorbonne in France
    - First person to win a second Nobel Prize
    - Only person to have won Nobel Prizes in two sciences

2018 Albany Medical Center Prize

- Three US scientists
    - James Allison,
    - Carl June and
    - Steven Rosenberg

were declared winners 2018 Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research.

- They will receive the award at ceremony to be held in September 2018 in Albany, New York.
- They were awarded in recognition of their research in immunology and translation of their ideas into effective therapies that have led to innovative treatments for cancer, HIV and other diseases.
- It is United States' second highest value prize in medicine and biomedical research, awarded by the Albany Medical Center.
- It was established in 2000 by late Morris "Marty" Silverman. It is awarded annually and carries monetary award of $500,000.

India's wealthiest women

- Smitha V. Crishna, a third-generation heir of the Godrej family, ranks 1st in the Kotak Wealth Hurun-Leading Wealthy Women 2018 list (INR 37,570 crore).
- Roshni Nadar, CEO and executive director at HCL, ranks 2nd on the list (INR 30,200 crore).
- The chairperson of the Times Group, Indu Jain, ranks 3rd on the list. Her wealth is estimated at INR 26,240 crore.
- Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, founder and MD of Biocon, ranks 4th in the list, whereas, Kiran Nadar, wife of HCL founder Shiv Nadar, ranks 5th.
- The women in the Hurun India Rich List have increased from 4% in 2012 to 9% in 2017.
- Industry wise, pharmaceuticals leads with 22 women from that sector on the list.
- It is followed by Software & Services with 12 individuals, and Food & Beverages with 8 individuals featured in the list.
- City wise, with 25 women each, Mumbai and New Delhi are the leading cities for India's super-rich women, followed by Bengaluru (14).

Calcutta Sports Journalists' Club annual awards

- India football captain Sunil Chhetri awarded the 'Best Sportsperson of the Year' honour at the Calcutta Sports Journalists' Club annual awards function held at Kolkata.



- The other award winners,
  - Best Junior Sportsperson of the Country: Ishan Porel
  - Lifetime Achievement awards: Aroon Ghosh, Arun Lal, Akhtar Ali
  - Best athlete (men): Safiqul Mondol
  - Best athlete (women): Bhairabi Roy.

WHO World No Tobacco Day 2018 Award

- Delhi government's additional director of health S.K. Arora has been awarded the prestigious WHO World No Tobacco Day 2018 Award for his extraordinary contribution towards tobacco control.
- Tobacco prevalence in Delhi has come down by 6.5% in the past six years, which is more than the rest of India average figures.
- The National Health Policy 2017 has set targets of relative reduction in tobacco prevalence by 15% by 2020 and 30% by 2025.
- Delhi has already achieved these targets before 2017.

Former UN General Secretary Kofi Annan passes away

- Former United Nations General Secretary and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Kofi Annan (50) passed away in Bern, Switzerland.
- He had served as seventh Secretary-General of UN for two terms reigning from 1997 till 2006.
- He was first black African to become Secretary-General of UN and also the first to be elected from UN staff itself.
- In 1999, he had launched UN Global Compact initiative, which is now world's largest effort to promote corporate social responsibility (CSR).



- He was also founder and chairman of Kofi Annan Foundation and chairman of 'The Elders', an international organisation founded by Nelson Mandela.
- He was co-recipient of 2001 Nobel peace prize along with the United Nations.
- He had played major role in the formation of two new intergovernmental bodies in 2005 within UN: Peacebuilding Commission and Human Rights Council.

3 awards to be named after Vajpayee

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced that the state government will name 3 awards after former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.



- 1st Award is for the Poets
- 2nd Award is for the outstanding contribution in the field of Journalism
- 3rd Award is for the good work in Administration

United States 'Legion of Merit' (Degree of Commander) Award

- General Dalbir Singh Suhag, Retired chief of the Army staff, Indian Army – Conferred with United States 'Legion of Merit' (Degree of Commander) Award 2018 in Pentagon, Washington DC.

- The award was given to Gen Dalbir for his following contributions to the Indian Army and for his contribution in India-US Army bilateral engagements
- This is the 2nd time that an Indian military officer has been awarded this award. Earlier, General Rajendrasinghji Jadeja was awarded this in 1946
- The Legion of Merit Award is conferred in 4 different categories –
    - Degree of Chief Commander
    - Degree of Commander
    - Degree of Officer and
    - Degree of Legionnaire.

Most Patriotic Brand



- As per a survey conducted by UK-based online market research and data analytics firm YouGov, the State Bank of India (SBI) has been ranked as the most patriotic brand.
- In terms of sectors, the financial sector topped the chart followed by auto, consumer goods, food, and telecom sectors.
- The survey results as per the sectors are,
    - Financial Sector - SBI, LIC.
    - Auto sector - Tata Motors, Bharat Petroleum, Maritu Suzuki.
    - Food sector - Amul.
    - Personal care - Patanjali.
    - Oral Care - Colgate, Dabur, Vicco.
    - Telecom sector - BSNL, Reliance Jio.
    - Homecare products - Nirma.
    - Beverages category - Tata Tea, Taj Mahal.

Highest paid women sportspersons

- India's ace Shuttler and Rio Olympics silver medallist PV Sindhu (23) was ranked 7th on Forbes list of highest-earning women sportspersons in the world (between June 2017 and June 2018).

THE TOP 10

PLAYER	SPORT	TOTAL EARNINGS	PRIZE MONEY	ENDORSEMENTS
Serena Williams	Tennis	$18.1 million	$62,000	$18 million
Caroline Wozniacki	Tennis	$13 million	$7 million	$6 million
Sloane Stephens	Tennis	$11.2 million	$5.7 million	$5.5 million
Garbine Muguruza	Tennis	$11 million	$5.5 million	$5.5 million
Maria Sharapova	Tennis	$10.5 million	$1 million	$9.5 million
Venus Williams	Tennis	$10.2 million	$4.2 million	$6 million
P. V. Sindhu	Badminton	$8.5 million	$500,000	$8 million
Simona Halep	Tennis	$7.7 million	$6.2 million	$1.5 million
Danica Patrick	NASCAR	$7.5 million	$3 million	$4.5 million
Angelique Kerber	Tennis	$7 million	$3 million	$4 million

- The list was topped by tennis legend Serena Williams with total earning of $18.062 million including $62,000 as prize money.
- Eight of the 10 top highest-earning women sportspersons were tennis players, remaining two were badminton player and professional racing driver.

Raveena Tandon - brand ambassador of Sanjay Gandhi National Park

- Maharashtra Government has appointed Bollywood actor Raveena Tandon as the brand ambassador of Mumbai city-based Sanjay Gandhi National Park (SGNP).
- She was appointed to spread awareness among fellow citizens as she is an environmentally-conscious citizen.
- It is a protected area near Mumbai in Maharashtra. It was formerly known as Borivali National Park (renamed to present name in 1996, after Sanjay Gandhi).
- It is notable as one of the major national parks existing within the metropolis limit and is one of the most visited parks in the world.
- Kanheri Caves, 2000-year-old complex of some 160 rock-cut caves (important Buddhist learning center) is situated within the national park and is protected the archeological site.

V.S.Naipaul passes away

- Nobel prize-winning author V S Naipaul, known for his critical commentary on colonialism, idealism, religion and politics, passed away at the age of 85 on 11th August.
- Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born on August 17, 1932, in Trinidad.



- Naipaul wrote more than 30 books of fiction and nonfiction. His first book was 'The Mystic Masseur'.
- His most celebrated novel, A House for Mr. Biswas, was published in 1961.
- He is the recipient of numerous honors, including the Man Booker Prize in 1971 and a knighthood for services to literature in 1990.
- Naipaul was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001.

National award for best teacher for 2017



- R.Sathy, the headmistress of the Madukkarai Panchayat Union Primary School in Malumichampatti village in Coimbatore district, has won the national award for best teacher for 2017.
- The accolade included a certificate of merit, a cash award of ₹50,000 and a silver medal.
- The award is given by the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD)
- The award would be presented by Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu on September 5, which coincides with Teachers Day.
- Ms. Sathy is the only teacher from Tamil Nadu among the 45 candidates nominated for the national award.
- Recently, The Ministry of HRD has issued fresh guidelines for Selection of Teachers for National Awards.
- Teachers of Government schools can now send their entries directly for the National Award for Teachers.

- This is a new initiative; as earlier entries were selected by the State Government.

Sri Lanka National Efficiency Awards 2018

- Forbes Marshall Lanka has won the 'Golden Flame award' in the 'Energy Efficiency Improvement category' of the Best Energy Services Company
- The Sri Lanka National Efficiency Awards 2018 are instituted by Sri Lanka Sustainable Energy Authority.

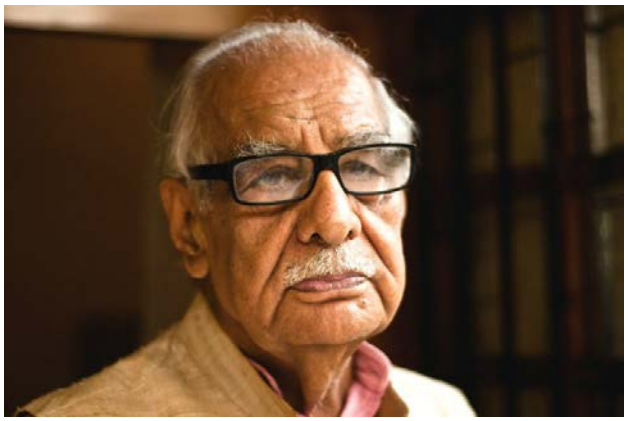
Satheesh Reddy –New Chairman of DRDO

- Renowned aerospace scientist Dr. G Satheesh Reddy has been appointed the new chairman of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for a period of 2 years.
- He will also be secretary in the Department of Defence Research and Development (DDR&D) for the same period.
- Prior to this appointment, he was a scientific adviser to the defense minister and director general, Missiles & Strategic Systems (DG MSS).
- post of DRDO chief was lying vacant since May 2018 after the then Chief Dr. S. Christopher stepped down.
- Dr. Reddy is the first defense scientist working in India to receive the Silver Medal of Royal Aeronautical Society, UK.
- He has also been selected for the first IEI (India) and IEEE (USA) joint award for Engineering Excellence.



Kuldip Nayar passes away

- Kuldip Nayar (95), the Veteran journalist, author and human rights activist, has passed away in New Delhi on August 23, 2018.
- Nayar, a former editor of the Indian Express, was also the author of 15 books including "Without Fear: The Life and Trial of Bhagat Singh", "India after Nehru" and "Emergency Retold".



- During Emergency, he was jailed under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act for leading a protest against the excesses of the administration.
- In 2015, he was honored with 'Lifetime Achievement Award' for his contribution to journalism at the 8th edition of the Ramnath Goenka Excellence awards.
- Nayar also served as High Commissioner of India to the UK in 1990 and as a member of the Rajya Sabha.

Asia Game Changer award

- PepsiCo's India-born Chairman and CEO Indra Nooyi will be honored with the 2018 Asia Game Changer of the Year award by global cultural organization Asia Society.



- Nooyi has been selected in "recognition of her pioneering business achievements, humanitarian record, and advocacy for women and girls".
- She recently announced that she would be stepping down as PepsiCo's CEO after 12 years.
- The 2018 Asia Game Changer Awards will be given in October to individuals and institutions who have broken barriers, defined courage, worked miracles, and in turn inspired their fellow citizens of the world.

Assistant Secretary-General of UNEP - Satya S. Tripathi

- United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Satya S. Tripathi of India as Assistant Secretary-General and Head of the New York Office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- He will succeed Elliott Harris of Trinidad and Tobago. Tripathi becomes the 3rd Indian to be appointed at the senior levels of UN.
- Mr. Tripathi has since 2017 served as Senior Adviser on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at UNEP.



- Previously, he was the Director and Executive Head of the United Nations Office for Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation in Developing Countries (REDD).
- Atul Khare, the Under-Secretary-General who heads the Department of Operational Services, is the senior-most Indian at the UN.

Exercise KAKADU 2018

- The 14th edition of multilateral regional maritime engagement exercise "KAKADU 2018" has started in Darwin, Australia from August 29 to September 15.



- Exercise KAKADU is a biennial, multilateral regional maritime engagement exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and supported by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).
- INS Sahyadri is participated behalf of Indian navy.
- Indian Navy's participation is a significant milestone in towards strengthening mutual confidence among regional navies and is expected to further boost India's contribution in ensuring peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Best Hindi Book of the Year 2018

- Vairamuthu's "Kallikaattu Idhigaasam" Wins Best Hindi Book of The Year 2018 as Announced by FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry).



- It had earlier received the 'Sahitya Akademy Award'.
- The Hindi translation of the book launched last year under the title, 'Nagaphani Van ka itihaas' was done by translator H Balasubramaniyam.

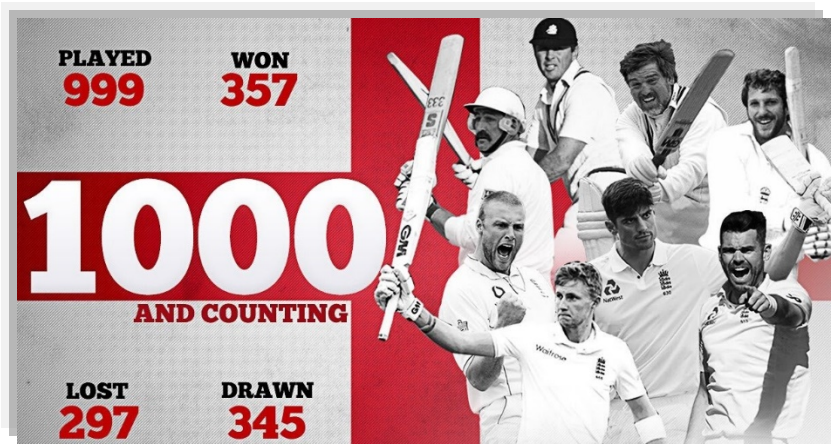
SPORTS

IAAF Diamond League

- Kenya's Beatrice Chepkoech smashed the world record in the women's 3,000 meters steeplechase with a time of 8 minutes 44.32 seconds at the Monaco Diamond League meeting.
- She broke the previous record mark of 8 minutes 52.78 set by Bahrain's Ruth Jebet in 2016.

1000th Test - England

- England became the first country to play the 1000th Test.



- England achieved this milestone in the series-opener against India at Edgbaston.

- Out of the 999 men's Tests that England have played till date since their debut Test against Australia in March, 1877, they have won 357 Tests and lost 297 Tests with 345 ending in draws.

2018 RBC Canadian Open Golf Title

- Dustin Johnson won the 2018 RBC Canadian Open at the Glen Abbey Golf Club in Oakville in Canada.
- He is currently in world number one position.
- He became the first player after Tiger Woods (2005-09) with at least three wins in three consecutive seasons.

BRICS U-17 football 2018

- BRICS U-17 girls football tournament for the year 2018 was held at Johannesburg in South Africa.
- Brazil finished as champions and China emerged runners-up in the 2018 edition of the tournament
- The 1st historic edition was played in Goa, India in 2016 on the occasion of the 8th BRICS summit that was held in India.
- Brazil finished as champions while South Africa emerged runners-up in the inaugural edition.
- The Tournament will take place once every year and each edition will be held in a BRICS nation.
- Brics Football Cup was not held in 2017 during the Xiamen Summit.

Badminton World Championships

- Carolina Marin of Spain won the BWF World Championship held in Nanjing, China.
- With this victory Marin created history as the only woman to win three World titles
- This is Sindhu's second silver and fourth medal at the Worlds
- Sindhu lost her second consecutive World Championships final
- Kento Momota became the first Japanese man to win the badminton World Championships.



Virat Kohli – ICC Ranking

- Kohli's tally of 200 runs in the first Test against England took him to first place in ICC Test Rankings.



- He pushed former Australia captain Steve Smith to second spot.
- Kohli scored his 22nd Test century with a knock of 149 in the first innings of the Edgbaston Test against England.
- He followed it up with 51 in the second innings.
- The achievement made Kohli the first Indian batsman to be No. 1 in Test cricket since Sachin Tendulkar in 2011.
- Besides Tendulkar and Kohli, Gavaskar, Dilip Vengsarkar, Rahul Dravid, Virender Sehwag and Gautam Gambhir have been the other Indian batsmen to achieve the top spot in ICC Test Rankings.



Gay Games – Paris

- Gay Games aims to raise awareness about gay and transgender rights.
- The 10th Gay Games was held in Paris, France.
- Gay Games are held every four years since they debuted in 1982 in San Francisco.
- The Federation of Gay Games (FGG) has selected Hong Kong for the 11th edition of the event.

Women's Hockey World Cup 2018

- Netherlands has been crowned the world champions for a record 8th time in Women's Hockey World Cup 2018.

- The defending champions recorded a stunning 6-0 victory over Ireland in the summit clash at London, UK.
- Kitty van Male was the top scorer at the Women's Hockey Tournament.
- Spain won the 3rd-place match by beating Australia 3-1 to claim their first ever World Cup medal.
- India finished the tournament at the 8th spot.
- The Netherlands were crowned Women's Hockey World Cup winners for a record eighth time after their 6-0 victory over Ireland in 2018 Hockey Women's World Cup finals.



- This is the first time ever that an Irish team has reached the final of any hockey world cup and it was also the team's first appearance in 16 years at the tournament.
- Ireland team has ever reached a semi-final at the World Cup. But on August 3 they managed to book their place in the final four by beating India on shootouts.

World Championships Badminton 2018 – Winners from other events

Men's singles



- Kento Momota of Japan won the title (gold medal) with a victory over China's Shi Yuqi.
- With this victory, he became the first Japanese man to win the Championships.

Men's doubles

- Chinese pair of Li Junhui and Liu Yuchen won the title by defeating Japanese pair of Takeshi Kamura and Keigo Sonoda

Women's doubles

- The Japanese pair of Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara won the title by defeating another Japanese pair of Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota.



Mixed doubles

- Chinese pair of Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqiong won the title by defeating another Chinese pair of Wang Yilü and Huang Dongping.

COTIF Cup 2018

- India's U-20 football team clinched a historic 2-1 win over six-time U-20 World Cup champions Argentina in the ongoing COTIF Cup 2018 in Spain.
- India was playing in the tournament for the first time.

West Asian Football Federation Cup

- The under-16 team of India defeated under-16 champions team of Iraq by 1-0 in the West Asian Football Federation Cup held at Amman in Jordon.
- This is the first-ever victory for any Indian football team against Iraq in any format and among all age groups.

World Junior Squash Championships 2018

- World Junior Squash Championships 2018 was held in Chennai, India.
- The individual's event for men and women are held every year since 2009.
- The team event is biennial.
- Egypt national junior squash team defeated England 2-0 in the final and emerged as the 2018 World Junior Squash Champions.



- India finished in 11th position.

Event	Winner	Runner-up
Men's Individual	Mostafa Asal (Egypt)	Marwan Tarek (Egypt)
Women's Individual	Rowan Elaraby (Egypt)	Hania El Hammamy (Egypt)
Men's Team	Egypt	England

Asian Nations Cup 2018

- The Indian women chess team clinched the gold in the Blitz event at the Asian Nations Cup 2018 held in Iran.



- It's India's first gold-medal finish at the event since 2014.
- They also won silver and bronze in the Rapid and Classical categories, respectively.

Washington Open (tennis) 2018

- Washington Open (tennis) 2018 or Citi Open 2018 was held at Rock Creek Park Tennis Centre in Washington DC, United States from 28th July to 5th August 2018.
- Washington Open (tennis) is an annual hard-court tennis tournament. This is the 50th edition of the tournament.
- **Alexander Zverev (Germany)** won the Men's Singles by beating Alex de Minaur (Australia).



- **Svetlana Kuznetsova (Russia)** won the Women's Singles by defeating Donna Vekić (Croatia).
- Men's Doubles - **Jamie Murray (UK), Bruno Soares (Brazil)** defeated Mike Bryan (United States), Édouard Roger-Vasselin (France)
- Women's Doubles - **Han Xinyun (China), Darija Jurak (Croatia)** defeated Alexa Guarachi (Chile), Erin Routliffe (New Zealand)



European Tour Title

- Indian golfer Gaganjeet Bhullar claimed his maiden European Tour title by winning over Anthony Quayle of Australia at the Fiji International.
- It was Bhullar's first win on the European Tour, ninth Asian Tour and 10th crown overall.



- He thus became the most successful Indian player on Asian Tour and the first Indian to win on Australasia Tour.

Nepal – Netherland ODI

- Nepal created history by defeating the Netherlands to record their first ever one-day international victory.
- At 15 years and 335 days, Rohit Kumar Paudel (Nepal) becomes the 4th youngest cricket player in the history to play One Day Internationals.
- Pakistan's Hasan Raza remains the youngest to play an ODI. He made his debut against Zimbabwe in 1996, when he was just 14 years and 233 days.

Messi - Captain of Barcelona

- Lionel Messi has been named as Barcelona's new captain for the 2018/19 season.
- The Argentine 31-year-old takes over the role following the departure of Andres Iniesta to Japanese club Vissel Kobe.



- Sergio Busquets will be the vice-captain. Messi joined the club in 2001 and is their record goal-scorer.

ITF men's Futures tennis tournament

- India's Niki Poonacha beat Australia's Michael in the final and won the men's singles title of ITF men's Futures tennis tournament in Indonesia.
- This was his first singles title.
- He has won 3 doubles titles including one with Davis Cup winner Ramkumar Ramanathan.
- Men's Doubles - Justin Barki & Christopher Rungkat (Indonesia).



Toronto Masters

- Rafael Nadal won the 80th title of his career with victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas at the Toronto Masters.
- The win gave the 32-year-old Spaniard a record-extending 33rd trophy at the elite Masters level as well as his 80th title.



- He now owns five titles this season and has clinched the first spot in the year-end finals in London.

Youngest Indian golfer

- Indian golfer Viraj Madappa won his maiden title on the Asian Tour at Take Solutions Masters in Bengaluru.



- The earlier record was held by Gaganjeet Bhullar, who won the Indonesia Invitational
- Apart from becoming the youngest Asian Tour winner from India, Madappa is also the first rookie and youngest player to win on the continental Tour this season.

India's 53rd Grandmaster

- Nihal Sarin became India's 53rd Grandmaster after attaining his third and final GM-norm in the Abu Dhabi Masters.
- His current ELO rating is 2556 and he is the twelfth youngest grandmaster in chess history.

- It may be recalled that in June, R. Praggnanandhaa became the second youngest GM on the all-time list.
- Sarin also becomes Kerala's third Grandmaster, following G. N. Gopal and S. L. Narayanan.



Woman Grandmaster

- 17-year-old R. Vaishali became a Woman Grandmaster, completing her final norm in the Riga Technical University Open chess tournament in Riga, Latvia.
- She is the elder sister of R. Praggnanandhaa, who recently became the second youngest GM on the all-time list.
- Vaishali has joined an elite list, which also includes Padma Shri Koneru Humpi, Subbaraman Vijayalakshmi, and Harika Dronavalli.
- For a Grandmaster title, a player needs to earn three norms and a combined Elo rating of 2500.



SAFF Under-15 Women's Championship

- India won South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Under-15 Women's Championship.
- In the final match held in Thimpu, Bhutan, India defeated Bangladesh by 1-0 score.
- This was 2nd edition of SAFF Under-15 Women's Championship.
- Bangladesh had won the inaugural edition in 2017 by beating India.
- SAFF U-15 Women's Championship is association football tournament for women's national teams under the age of 15 from 7 south Asian countries.

Asian Games - 18th edition

- The 18th edition of Asian Games has begun in Jakarta, Indonesia. It is going to be held from August 18 to September 2, 2018.
- For the first time, eSports, a form of competition using video games, and canoe polo will be contested as demonstration sports.
- The Indian contingent at the games was led by Javelin Thrower Neeraj Chopra, who was also India's flag-bearer at the glittering opening ceremony.

India's maiden medal at the world level - track cycling

- Indian Teen cyclist Esow Alben (17) created history by winning the country's maiden medal in track cycling at the world level.
- He achieved this feat by winning silver medal in Men's Keirin event of UCI Junior Track Cycling World Championships held in Aigle, Switzerland.



- In the final sprint of this event, Esow finished just 0.017 seconds behind gold medallist Jakub Stastny (Czech Republic).
- Esow hails from Andaman and Nicobar. He is currently ranked world No. 1 in junior sprint category of cycling
- Esow had won hat-trick of gold medals at 2018 Asian Track Cycling Championships in Malaysia.

4th Indian wicket-keeper to take five catches

- Rishabh Pant became 4th Indian wicket-keeper to take five catches on Test debut during the second day of the third Test against England.
- With this feat, Rishabh Pant joins the club of other Indian wicket-keepers who have taken five catches on Test debut.



- They are Naren Tamhane, Kiran More, and Naman Ojha.
- It also makes him Pant first Asian wicket-keeper and third in the world to take five catches in an innings on Test debut.
- Earlier, he became the first Indian batsman and 12th overall, to open his account in Test cricket with a six.

Shooting World Cup 2020

- New Delhi has been granted hosting rights of the Combined ISSF World Cup, to be held before the 2020 Tokyo Olympics
- The International Shooting Sport Federation's Combined World Cup involves events in rifle, pistol, and shotgun.
- This would be the seventh continental or global multi-nation shooting competition to be staged in the country since 2012.

YONEX-SUNRISE Vietnam Open 2018

- The 2018 Vietnam Open officially known as YONEX-SUNRISE Vietnam Open 2018, was held at Nguyen Du Cultural Sports Club in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.
- The tournament was organized by Hochiminh City Badminton Association.
- This was the 6th Super 100 tournament of the 2018 BWF World Tour. It is also part of the Vietnam Open championships initiated in 1996.

Event	Winner	Runner-Up
Men's Singles	Shesar Hiren Rhustavito (Indonesia)	Ajay Jayaram (India)
Women's Singles	Yeo Jia Min (Singapore)	Han Yue (China)
Men's Doubles	Ko Sung-Hyun, Shin Baek-Cheol (South Korea)	Lee Sheng-mu, Yang Po-Hsuan (Chinese Taipei)
Women's Doubles	Misato Aratama, Akane Watanabe (Japan)	Nami Matsuyama,Chiharu Shida (Japan)
Mixed Doubles	Nipitphon Phuangphuapet, Savitree Amitrapai (Thailand)	Alfian Eko Prasetya, Marsheilla Gischa Islami (Indonesia)

Jhulan Goswami retires from T20I

- Jhulan Goswami, the veteran Indian women cricketer, has retired from the T20 Internationals.
- In 2010, she received the "Arjuna Award" and 2 years later, became only the 2nd woman cricketer to be conferred the "Padma Shri", after Diana Edulji.



- She won the International Cricket Council"s (ICC) Women"s "Cricketer of the Year" award in 2007, the first Indian player to win it.

Kho-Kho gets OCA recognition

- The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) has given recognition to India's indigenous sport of Kho-Kho.
- The decision to recognize Kho-Kho was taken at the General Assembly of the OCA held AT Jakarta.
- Kho-Kho will now be included as a demonstration sport in the Asian Indoor Games.

FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup France 2018

- Japan defeated Spain in the final of the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup France 2018, taking down the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup title for the first time in Japanese football history.
- Takarada Saori was named as the Player of the match with her goal and an assist.
- Takarada was also awarded the Adidas Bronze Boot as well as the Adidas Silver Ball, while Minami was awarded the Bronze Ball.



- Japan received the Fair-play award as a team and the FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup France 2018 has closed its curtains.
- England secured third place and it is their highest-ever finish at this tournament.

Belgian Grand Prix

- Ferrari's Sebastian Vet tel beat the Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton at the Belgian Grand Prix.
- Netherlands Max Verstappen finished third place for Red Bull
- This was Ferrari's first win here since 2009.



Most economical bowler in the T20 history

- Pakistan fast bowler Mohammad Irfan has set a new record of being the most economical bowler in the T20 history.
- He has achieved the bowling figures of 4-3-1-2, bowling 23 dot balls, while playing for Barbados Tridents in the Caribbean Premier League 2018
- This record was previously shared by South Africa's Chris Morris and Sri Lanka's Chanaka Welegedara (2 for 2)



IMPORTANT DAYS

World Day Against Trafficking in Persons – 30 July

- World Day against Trafficking in Persons is observed every year on July 30 to raise awareness of the plight of human trafficking victims, and promote and protect their rights.
- This year, theme chosen by United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is 'responding to the trafficking of children and young people'.
- It draws attention to issues faced by trafficked children and to possible action initiatives linked to safeguarding and ensuring justice for child victims.
- United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) had designated July 30 as the World Day against Trafficking in Persons by adopting a resolution in 2013.

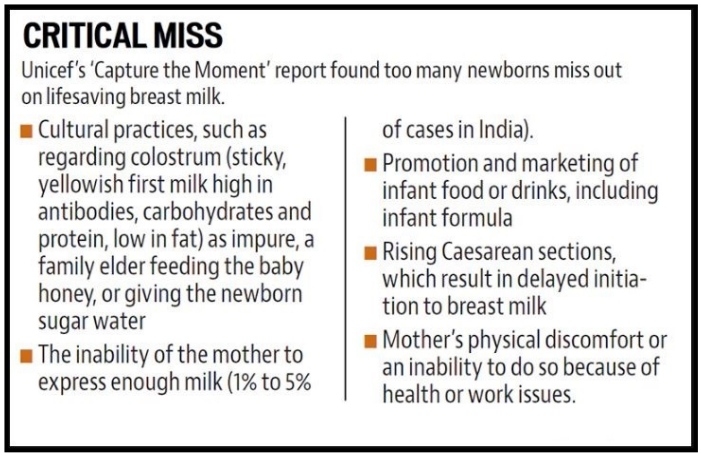




World Breastfeeding Week 2018

- World Breastfeeding Week 2018 is celebrated every year, from August 01 – 07, to promote awareness regarding the importance of Breastfeeding.

- According to the UNICEF and WHO Report on Breastfeeding, an estimated 7.8 crore newborns are not breastfed within the first hour of life globally – mostly from Low and middle income countries, including India.
- Breastfeeding initiation within an hour after birth,
- India - Increased from 23.4% in 2005 to 41.5% in 2015.
- Global – Increased from 37% to 42 % in 2015
- It is highest in Eastern and Southern Africa (65 per cent) and lowest in East Asia and the Pacific (32 per cent)



CRITICAL MISS

Unicef's 'Capture the Moment' report found too many newborns miss out on lifesaving breast milk.

- Cultural practices, such as regarding colostrum (sticky, yellowish first milk high in antibodies, carbohydrates and protein, low in fat) as impure, a family elder feeding the baby honey, or giving the newborn sugar water
- The inability of the mother to express enough milk (1% to 5% of cases in India).
- Promotion and marketing of infant food or drinks, including infant formula
- Rising Caesarean sections, which result in delayed initiation to breast milk
- Mother's physical discomfort or an inability to do so because of health or work issues.

- It says that the newborns who began breastfeeding between two and 23 hours after birth had a 33 % greater risk of death compared with those who began breastfeeding within one hour of birth.

International Day of Friendship – July 30

- The International Day of Friendship is an initiative that follows on the proposal made by UNESCO and taken up by the UN General Assembly in 1997.
- It defines the Culture of Peace as a set of values, attitudes and behaviours that reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by addressing their root causes with a view to solving problems.



- The International Day of Friendship was proclaimed in 2011 by the UN General Assembly with the idea that friendship between peoples, countries, cultures and individuals can inspire peace efforts and build bridges between communities.
- The Day is also intended to support the goals and objectives of the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace and

the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World (2001-2010).

World Ranger Day - 31 July

- World Ranger Day is being celebrated every year on 31st July, acknowledging the critical work of rangers on the front-line of conservation across the globe
- It Objectives is to honour Rangers killed or injured during duty and to safeguard earth's natural treasures and cultural heritage.



- It was Initiated by International Ranger Federation (Estd -1992) and it is being Celebrated Since – 2007.

National Watermelon Day – 03 August

- Watermelon Day is an annual holiday which celebrates everyone's favourite summer fruit, Water Melon
- It has almost 92% water with full of Vitamins A, C, and antioxidants, carotenoid and lycopene, which can reduce the risks of some types of cancer.



- Watermelon is an ancient food that is believed to have originated in tropical Africa, 4000 years ago
- Watermelon is the official vegetable of the state of Oklahoma in the United States.

Friendship Day – August 05

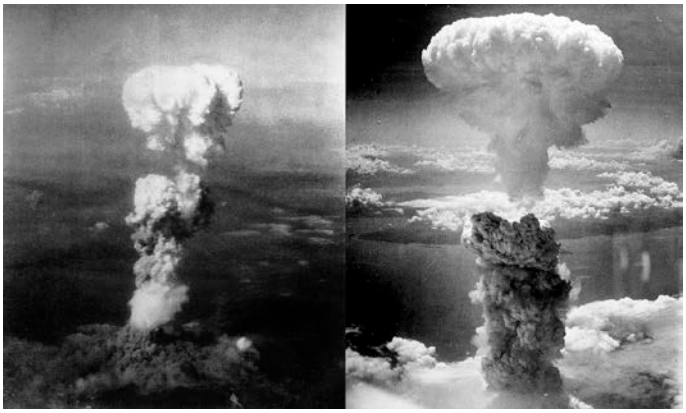
- The first International Friendship Day was proposed in 1958 in Paraguay.
- After the World Friendship Crusade proposed July 30, 1958 as the first Friendship Day, the General Assembly of the United Nations declared this date as the official day of celebrations.
- Following the success of the day in US, Nane Annan, the wife of UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan, declared *Winnie the Pooh* as the global Ambassador of Friendship at the UN in 1998.



- Friendship day celebrations actually take place on different dates across different countries.
- But nowadays, it is celebrated on the first Sunday of August, including India and US.
- Friendship Day in India is celebrated on the first Sunday in the month of August.
- This year it falls on August 5.

Hiroshima Day – August 06

- Hiroshima Day commemorates 6 August 1945, the day when an atomic bomb was dropped on the Japanese city of Hiroshima.
- It marks the 73rd anniversary of atomic bombing in World War II.
- On August 6, 1945, the US bomber Enola Gay dropped the first atomic bomb nicknamed 'Little Boy' ever used in military combat on Hiroshima.



National Handloom Day – August 07

- The National Handloom Day is being observed every year on 7 August to honour the handloom weavers in the country.
- This year it was third edition of the National Handloom Day.

Background

- The Union Government had declared 7 August as the National Handloom Day in July 2015.
- The date August 7 was chosen to commemorate the Swadeshi Movement which was launched on this date in 1905 in the Calcutta Town hall to protest against partition of Bengal by the British Government.



- The first National Handloom Day was inaugurated on 7 August 2015 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

76th anniversary of Quit India movement – August 08

- 76th anniversary of Quit India movement was observed on August 8th, 2018.
- On this day in 1942, Mahatma Gandhi (father of the nation) had given the clarion call of Do or Die to all Indians to drive away Britishers from the country.



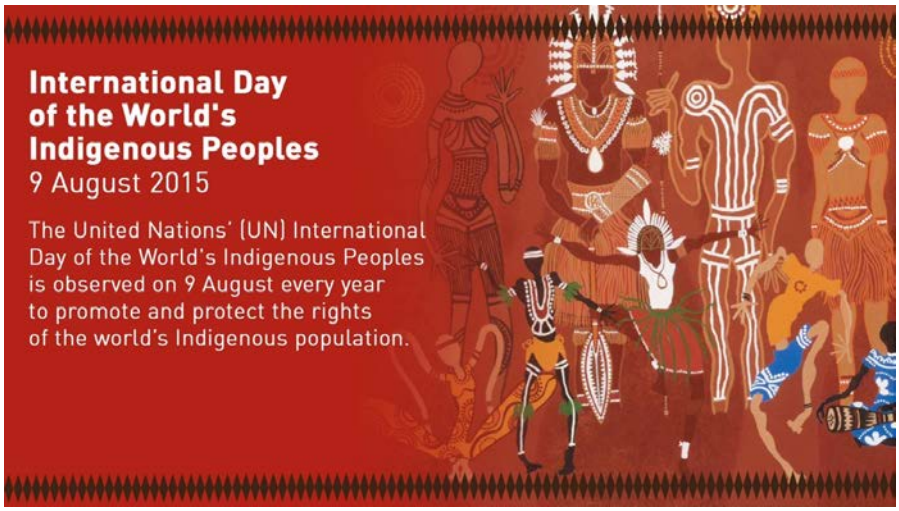
- Quit India Movement (Bharat Chhodo Andolan or August Movement or August Kranti) was an important milestone in the Indian freedom struggle.
- It was civil disobedience movement launched at Bombay session of the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) by Mahatma Gandhi on 8 August 1942 demanding an end to British Rule of India.

International Cat Day – August 08

- International Cat Day is a celebration which takes place on 8 August, every year.
- It was created in 2002 by the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples – August 09

- The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was observed across the world on August 9.
- Its aim is to strengthen international cooperation for solving problems faced by indigenous peoples in areas such as human rights, the environment, education, health and social development.
- The theme of 2018 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples was 'Indigenous peoples' migration and movement'.

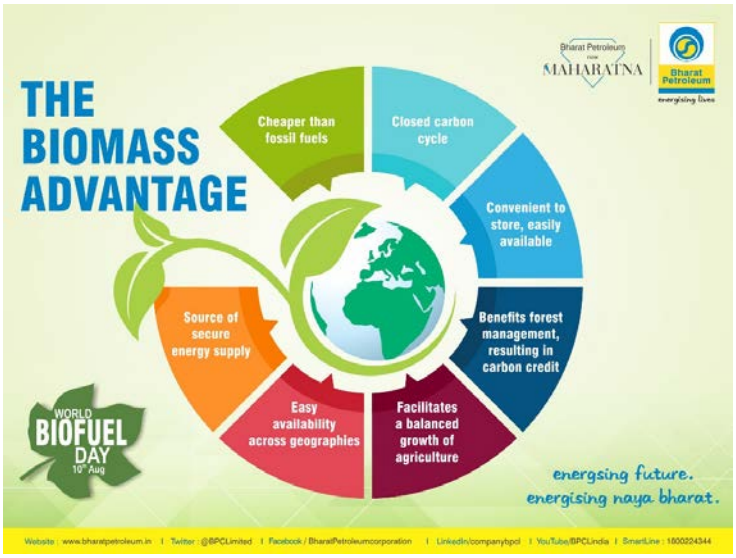


- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) through its Resolution on 'Rights of Indigenous Peoples' proclaimed the year 2019 as the 'International Year of Indigenous Languages'.
- The UNGA on December 23, 1994 proclaimed 9 August as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples through its resolution.
- The date marks the day of the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in 1982.

World Biofuel Day - August 10

- World Bio-fuel Day (The International Biodiesel Day) is observed every year on August 10 to create awareness about the importance of non-fossil fuels.
- On this day in 1893, Sir Rudolph Diesel (inventor of the diesel engine) for the first time successfully ran the mechanical engine with Peanut Oil.

- In India, World Biofuel Day is being observed by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.



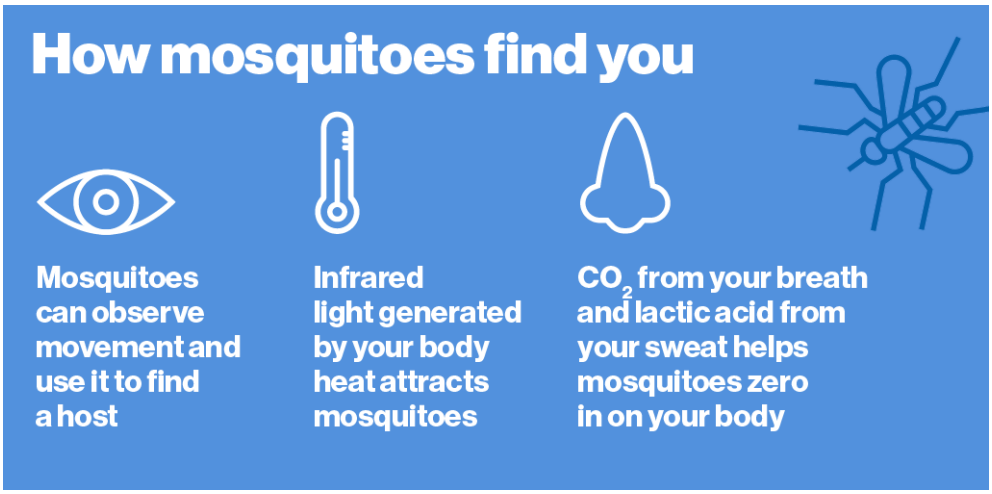
- This year it had organized World Biofuel Day programme at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

World Photography Day - August 19

- The World Photography Day (WPD) is observed every year on August 19 to inspire photographers across the planet to share a single photo with a simple purpose: to share their world with the world.

World Mosquito Day – August 20

- World Mosquito Day is observed annually on 20 August.



- It is a commemoration of British doctor Sir Ronald Ross's discovery in 1897 that female mosquitoes transmit malaria between humans.

Sadbhavana Diwas (Harmony Day) - August 20

- The day commemorates the birth anniversary of Rajiv Gandhi, Former Prime Minister of India.
- On this day, Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Award is presented to commemorate the contribution made by Rajiv Gandhi for promoting the communal harmony, peace and national integration
- This year, Gopalkrishna Gandhi was conferred with 24th Rajiv Gandhi Sadbhavana Award.

World Senior Citizens Day – August 21

- The World Senior Citizens Day is celebrated every year on 21 August across the world.
- Its aim is to raise awareness of the condition of elder people and support them through the process of senescence.
- The day was officially established by the former president of United States Ronald Reagan after he had signed Proclamation on August 19, 1988, declaring August 21 as National Senior Citizens Day in the US.
- Other countries later adopted the day to pay respect to the elderly community.
- Later United Nations General Assembly on 14th of December 1990 proclaimed to observe 21 August as World Senior Citizens Day.

International Day of Remembrance and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism – August 21

- The United Nations General Assembly established 21 August as the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism.
- This is the 1st Terrorism victims Remembrance Day.



- The day is observed to honor and support the victims and survivors of terrorism and to promote and protect the full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.

International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition – August 23

- The International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and Its Abolition was observed across the world every year on 23 August.
- The day designated by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to memorialize the transatlantic slave trade.
- Observance of this day marks the anniversary of 1791 insurrection of enslaved men and women in a western part of the island of Santo Domingo, which is now known as Haiti.



- These men and women torn from Africa and sold into slavery had revolted against the slave system.
- This Haitian Revolution had led to their freedom and independence in 1804.
- The Day was first celebrated in a number of countries, particularly in Haiti on in 1998 and in Senegal in 1999.

International Water Color Festival 2018 – August 23

- On August 23, the International Water Colour Festival 2018 has started at Audrey House in Ranchi.
- The aim of the 5-day fest is to bring local artists in touch with the international art and promote the rich art and culture of Jharkhand.



- It is organized by the Jharkhand Art Culture and Tourism Department.

Sanskrit Diwas 2018 – August 26

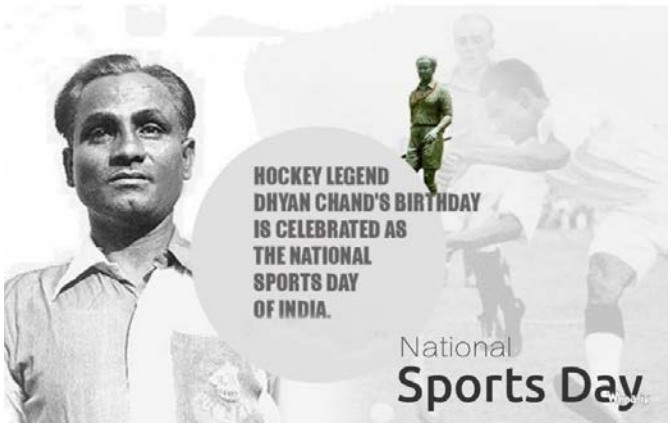
- Sanskrit Diwas is celebrated every year on Shravana Purnima (full moon day in the month of Shravana according to the Hindu calendar).
- This year, it falls on 26th August 2018. The previous year, it was celebrated on 6th and 7th August.
- Sanskrit Diwas was first celebrated in 1969 and comprises various events which talk about the impact and importance of Sanskrit.

Telugu Language Day - August 29

- "Day of the Telugu Language" is observed on 29 August every year in the State of Andhra Pradesh
- This date was chosen to coincide with the birthday of the Telugu poet Gidugu Venkata Ramamurthy.
- The Government of Andhra Pradesh provides funds and presents awards with the objective of the betterment of the Telugu language
- The Department of Culture is responsible for organizing the day on behalf of the Andhra Government

National Sports Day – August 29

- The National Sports Day is celebrated every year on August 29 on the birth anniversary of Indian hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand.



- Every year on this day, Arjuna and Khel Ratna awards are conferred by the President of India to celebrate the achievements of exceptional athletes in the country.

International Day Against Nuclear Tests – August 29

- The 64th session of the United Nations General Assembly declared 29 August the International Day against Nuclear Tests.
- 2010 marked the inaugural commemoration of the International Day against Nuclear Tests



- The main mechanism for eradicating nuclear weapons testing is the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT).
- It was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 10 September 1996.
- To date, 183 countries have signed the treaty and 166 have ratified it.
- After CTBT was opened for signature in September 1996, 10 nuclear tests have been conducted:
    - India conducted two tests in 1998 (India had also conducted one so-called peaceful nuclear explosion in 1974.)
    - Pakistan conducted two tests in 1998.
    - The Democratic People's Republic of Korea conducted nuclear tests in 2006,2009, 2013 and 2016.

MISCELLANEOUS

Digital Literacy Library

- Facebook announced the launch of a "Digital Literacy Library" to help young people build the skills they need to safely enjoy online technology.
- The interactive lessons and videos are developed at the Berkman Klein Centre for Internet and Society at Harvard University for educators of youth aged 11 to 18.

Santhali

- Santhali has become the first Indian tribal language to get a Wikipedia edition in its own script.
- The home page of the Santhali edition of Wikipedia carries an article on Raghunath Murmu, who created the Ol Chiki script.

Santhali Language

- It is one of the 22 scheduled languages of the Indian constitution.
- It is written in Ol Chiki script and spoken by 6.4 million people, according to the 2001 census, in India alone.
- Major speakers are from Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Assam. It is also spoken in Bangladesh and Nepal.

'Our Safety, Our Rights' campaign

- Amnesty International India has launched a new campaign 'Our Safety, Our Rights'.
- It is aimed at creating awareness among children to help them understand and identify sexual abuse.
- Amnesty International India will manage the campaign in collaboration with Bharat Gyan Vigyan Samiti, People's Action for Rural Awakening (PARA) and Institute of Social Education.
- The campaign will culminate on October 11 - International Day of the Girl Child.

Raj Bhavan of Karnataka Governor

- Karnataka Governor Vajubhai Vala has opened his official residence, Raj Bhavan, for public viewing from August 16 to August 31

- It was formerly known as "Bangalore Residency", built by Sir Mark Cubbon, who was the commissioner of Mysuru territory of the British empire between 1840 and 1842
- It has to be noted that the 19 bedrooms in the Bhavan were named after famous Indian rivers and mountains

World's oldest cheese discovered

- Researchers have found the world's most ancient solid cheese in a 3,200-year-old Egyptian tomb, as well as evidence of a potentially deadly disease.
- The cheese was discovered from the tomb of Ptahmes, mayor of Memphis, Egypt during the 13th century BC.
- It was initially unearthed in 1885, but got lost under drifting sands, and rediscovered in 2010.



"Sea Prayer" by Khaled Hosseini

- Khaled Hosseini, the bestselling author of The Kite Runner, is soon to release his latest book "Sea Prayer".
- It is a tribute to Alan Kurdi, the 3-year-old Syrian boy whose body was washed up on a beach in Turkey in September 2015
- The book will be published by Bloomsbury.



- Earlier, "Sea prayer" was produced as a "Virtual film" in collaboration with "United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees" (UNHCR)
- Khaled Hosseini is an Afghan-born American novelist
- He has written books like "The Kite Runner", "A Thousand Splendid Suns" and "And the Mountains Echoed"
- He was earlier appointed as UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador" in 2006