

CURRENT AFFAIRS



MARCH 2018

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Current Affairs – March 2018

This is a guide to provide you a precise summary and a huge collection of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) covering national and international current affairs for the month of **March 2018**.

This guide will help you in preparing for Indian competitive examinations like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade and Officer Grade, etc.

Audience

Aspirants who are preparing for different competitive exams like Bank PO, Banking, Railway, IAS, PCS, UPSC, CAT, GATE, CDS, NDA, MCA, MBA, Engineering, IBPS, Clerical Grade, Officer Grade, etc.

Even though you are not preparing for any exams but are willing to have news encapsulated in a roll, which you can walk through within 30 minutes, then we have put all the major points for the whole month in a precise and interesting way.

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Appointments

1. Journalist Rahul Mahajan appointed as Rajya Sabha TV Editor-In-Chief

A selection committee headed by Prasar Bharti Chairman A Surya Prakash and Vice-President of India M Venkaiah Naidu appointed veteran television journalist Rahul Mahajan as editor-in-chief of the television channel Rajya Sabha TV. Rahul Mahajan is a well-known journalist with experience of more than 12 years in the media industry. He has worked with various channels such as Jansatta, Zee News, AjTak, Star News, News 24 and Bhaskar News.



Rajya Sabha TV is owned and operated by the Upper House of Indian Parliament that covers the proceedings of the Rajya Sabha.

2. Ajay Rastogi sworn in as Chief Justice of Tripura High Court

Former Rajasthan High Court judge Justice Ajay Rastogi was sworn-in as the Chief Justice of Tripura High Court. Governor Tathagata Roy administered the oath of office and secrecy to the new Chief Justice in presence of dignitaries following the retirement of Justice T. Vaiphei. He was appointed in the place of T Vaiphei who served in the post since 2016.



Tripura is a hilly state in the Northeast India, bordered on 3 sides by Bangladesh.

3. Air Marshal RKS Shera took over as Air Officer-in-Charge Maintenance at Air Headquarters

Air Marshal RKS Shera AVSM VSM took over as Air Officer-in-charge Maintenance of Indian Air Force. He was commissioned in the Aeronautical Engineering Electronics Branch of Indian Air Force. He has been trained in Russia on MIG-29 aircraft at the time of fleet induction in 1986.



The Air Officer was Senior Maintenance Staff Officer at HQ Maintenance Command before taking over as Air Officer-in-charge Maintenance at Air HQ. During his career of 37 years, the officer has held several

important commands that include Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Engg A), SMSO HQ WAC and Station Commander TETTRA School.

4. Gina Haspel appointed as the first female CIA Director

US President Donald Trump has appointed Gina Haspel as the new Director of CIA. She, thus, became the first female director of CIA. She took over Mike Pompeo who was appointed as the Secretary of State.



Haspel joined the CIA in 1985 and is a career spymaster. She reportedly ran the CIA's first overseas detention site in Thailand. Haspel has received several prestigious awards, including the George H. W. Bush Award for excellence in counterterrorism, the Donovan Award, the Distinguished Career Intelligence Medal and the Presidential Rank Award.

5. Larry Kudlow appointed as Chief Economic Advisor to President Donald Trump

President Donald Trump has appointed Larry Kudlow as the new Chief Economic Advisor. He would replace Gary Cohen as director of the National Economic Council (NEC).



Kudlow served in the Regan administration when he helped to craft the economic policy. Kudlow worked for decades in the financial sector, rising to become the chief economist at Bear Stearns. The National Economic Council director advises the US president on economic issues and works to implement policy goals.

6. Yi Gang appointed as the new Governor of People's Bank of China

China has appointed Yi Gang as the Governor of its central bank, People's Bank of China. Mr Yi has been the deputy governor of the bank since 2008. Mr Yi will replace incumbent governor Zhou Xiaochuan. The Chinese government appointed Liu He as a vice premier of the central bank.



Mr Yi earned a business degree at Hamline University in St. Paul, Minnesota, and a Ph.D. in economics at the University of Illinois.

7. Government nominated Professor J S Rajput as India's Representative to the Executive Board of UNESCO

The Government of India has nominated Professor J S Rajput, former Director NCERT, as India's representative to the Executive Board (EXB) of UNESCO. Professor J S Rajput is an eminent educationist with rich experience in various fields including UNESCO.



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

8. Shekhar Kapur appointed as the Chairman of central panel of 65th NFA

Veteran director Shekhar Kapur has been appointed as the Chairman of the central panel of the 65th National Film Awards. Mr Kapur is known for his work in Hindi cinema and International cinema.



The central panel comprises a Chairperson and 10 other members, including five regional chairpersons who head the respective regional panels. Film writer Imtiaz Hussain will be the regional Chairperson of South 1- panel. Imtiaz Hussain, Mehboob, Gautami Tadimalla, Rahul Rawail and P Sheshadri are the regional Chairpersons for South 1- panel, South -2 panel, North panel, Western panel and Eastern panel respectively.

9. Lt Gen Harpal Singh appointed as Director General Border Roads

Lt Gen Harpal Singh is appointed as Director General Border Roads (DGBR). He is an alumnus of National Defence Academy, Khadakwasla. He has been the Chief Engineer of Project Dantak (BRO) at Bhutan, Chief Engineer (Navy), Mumbai and Chief Engineer HQ Eastern Command. The General is a graduate of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, the Higher Command and National Defence College courses.



During his 34 years of distinguished career, the General Officer has held several prestigious assignments to include Gde 2 at Army HQ, Gde 2 and Gde 1 at Comd HQ, DDG DV at Army HQ and Dy MS at Central Command.

10. Indu Bhushan appointed the CEO of Ayushman Bharat mission

The government has appointed Indu Bhushan as the Chief Executive Officer of the Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission (ABNHPM). He has been appointed in the post for a period of two years.



Mr Bhushan is currently the Director General of East Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Manila, Philippines. Prior to his appointment to EARD, Bhushan was the Director General of the Strategy and Policy Department. He has been with the ADB since 1997.

11. Former Karnataka High Court Judge Jawad Rahim appointed as acting Chairperson of NGT

The Supreme Court appointed Justice Jawad Rahim as the acting Chairman of the National Green Tribunal (NGT). He was currently a judicial Member of the NGT. He will replace Justice Swatanter Kumar, a former Supreme Court judge, who retired in December 2017.



The National Green Tribunal has been established on 18.10.2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.

12. Vijay Raghavan appointed as the Principal Scientific Advisor to Government

Krishnaswamy Vijay Raghavan has been appointed as the Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India for a period of 3 years. He will succeed nuclear physicist R Chidambaram. Prior to his appointment, VijayRaghavan was the Secretary in the Department of Biotechnology.



The Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA), a post created by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 1999, is the topmost advisor to the government on all matters related to scientific policy. Vijay Raghavan is one of the most distinguished biologists of the country.

Awards

1. President presented Nari Shakti Award to 29 women

President Ram Nath Kovind presented Nari Shakti Awards for 2017 on the occasion of International Women's Day. The awards were presented to 29 women and 9 institutions in recognition of their efforts in rendering distinguished services for the cause of women, especially vulnerable and marginalized women.

The Awards were initiated in the year 1999. Ministry of Women and Child Development announces these national awards every year for eminent women, organizations and institutions.



2. Oscar Awards 2018 held at USA

Los Angeles, the USA hosted the 90th Annual Academy Awards (also known as Oscar Awards).

Best Picture	The Shape of Water
Best Director	Guillermo del Toro, The Shape of Water
Best Actor	Gary Oldman – Darkest Hour
Best Actress	Frances McDormand, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
Best Foreign Language film	A Fantastic Woman
Best actor in supporting role	Sam Rockwell, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
Best actress in supporting role	Allison Janney, I, Tonya

3. Shatrughan Sinha honoured with lifetime achievement award in UK

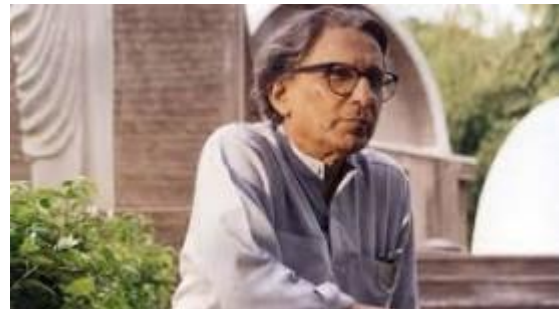
UKs Parliament honoured Indian actor 'Shatrughan Sinha' with the lifetime achievement award for his immense contribution to the fields of arts, movies and politics. It is an award given by Britain's Asian Voice weekly newspaper to honour individuals who show valuable impact on public life or make a difference in their local communities.



Shatrughan Sinha is an Indian film actor turned politician. He has served as the Union Cabinet Minister of Health and Family Welfare (Jan 2003-May 2004) and Shipping (Aug. 2004). He has received various awards such as Bengal Film Journalists' Association Awards, IIFA award, Zee Cine Award etc.

4. Indian architect Balkrishna Doshi won 2018 Pritzker Prize

Balkrishna Doshi became the first Indian to win the Pritzker Prize, the premier global award for architecture. The Pritzker Prize is also known as the Nobel for architects.



Doshi won the Pritzker Prize 2018 for being able to interpret architecture and transform it into buildings that respect Eastern culture. He is widely known for designing extensive low-cost housing projects and public institutions. Previous winners include world-renowned architects like Zaha Hadid, Frank Gehry, IM Pei, and Shigeru Ban.

5. India Won "Best Exhibitor Award" at ITB – Berlin

India has won the "Best Exhibitor Award " at ITB – Berlin. 'ITB- Berlin World Tourist Meet' was convened at Berlin, Germany from 7th March to 10th March, 2018. More than 100 countries participated in the ITB- Berlin meet with their respective Tourism Ministers.



India's Incredible India (Ministry of Tourism) presented a short film named "Yogi of the Racetrack " in the meet. The said short film has got 3.2 million hits in 60 hours.

6. India-UK Joint Team won the Newton-Bhabha Fund

An India-UK Joint Team has won the Newton-Bhabha Fund for a project on Groundwater Arsenic Research in Ganga River Basin. The Department of Science and Technology has undertaken the project with the Natural Environment Research Council, UK.



The Newton Bhabha Fund aims to bring together the UK and Indian scientific research and innovation sectors. The British Council provides the fund. The project will be conducted from three sites - Bijnor and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Nadia in West Bengal.

7. ICMR won the 2017 Kochon Prize for TB research

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has won the 2017 Kochon Prize for establishing the India TB Research Consortium to accelerate R&D efforts in the country. ICMR won \$65,000 as prize money. It merged the winner from amongst 18 nominations.



The Kochon Prize has been given annually for the past 11 years to individuals and/or organizations that have made a highly significant contribution to end TB. It is given by Kochon Foundation, a non-profit organisation from Korea. ICMR is India's agency specializing in funding coordination and promotion of biomedical research.

8. DRDO Pavilion adjudged as most informative at the 105th Indian Science Congress

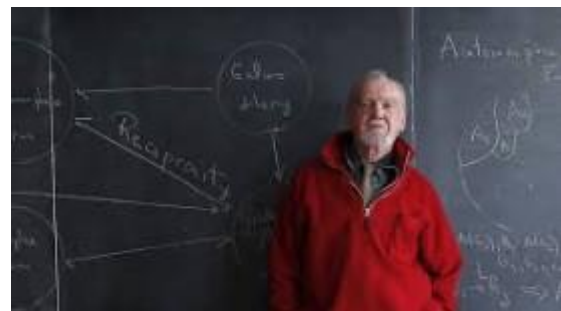
Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) received the 'Most Informative Pavilion' Award in Pride of India Expo organized as a part of the 105th Indian Science Congress held at Imphal.



DRDO participated in the expo showcasing cutting-edge indigenous defence technologies with over 150 exhibits and models from 18 DRDO laboratories. The participation of DRDO in the Indian Science Congress reaffirmed the message to masses that strength of 'science and knowledge' and the resultant self-reliance by converting this knowledge into technologies and systems through innovation were essential to ensure peace and national security.

9. Canadian Mathematician Robert Langlands Wins Abel Prize

The Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters honored the Abel Prize for 2018 to Canadian mathematician Robert Langlands of the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, USA, for his visionary program connecting representation theory to number theory.



The Norwegian government in 2002 on the 200th anniversary of Niels Henrik Abel's birth established the Abel Prize. The Abel Prize recognizes contributions to the field of mathematics that are of extraordinary depth

and influence. The Abel Prize is a Norwegian prize awarded annually by the Government of Norway to one or more outstanding mathematicians.

10. NHA I received best design Pavilion Award at the 105th Indian Science Congress

The NHA I pavilion at the 105th Indian Science Congress- Pride of India Expo held at Imphal was adjudged as BEST DESIGN PAVILION. The NHA I had put up an exhibition stall to display its Projects and other initiatives like Electronic Toll Collection, Wayside Amenities, Incident Management, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Road Safety etc.



Apart from displaying the Projects, a Selfie Point was created with a good Highway Projects at the background. Besides this, NHA I Exhibition stall at "Destination Bihar Expo 2018" held at Patna was ranked at third position in "Government Sector category".

Books & Authors

1. Dr Jitendra Singh launched “Namaste Shalom”

Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region launched the social media of “Namaste Shalom”, a magazine devoted to India-Israel relations. Former MP Shri Tarun Vijay edited the magazine. The magazine describes natural bond between Israel and India, who shared rich cultural and economic relations. They had faced similar hardships as well as successes in the past which obviated the need for making any extra effort for bonding the two peoples.



A food-processing centre with the collaboration of Israeli expertise will be inaugurated in Aizwal, Mizoram.

2. Sri Lanka Cricket released book on Jagmohan Dalmiya

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) paid a glowing tribute to former BCCI President Jagmohan Dalmiya by releasing a book, titled 'A Tribute to Jagu' on the occasion of the 70th independence of the island nation. SLC felicitated him posthumously as the greatest non-Sri Lankan contributor to their country's cricket.



Jagmohan Dalmiya was the President of the Board of Control for Cricket in India as well as the Cricket Association of Bengal. He had previously served as the President of the International Cricket Council.

Committees

1. Government constituted a Steering Committee on Fintech Related Issues

A Steering Committee was constituted under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance. The Steering Committee will also focus on how Fintech can be leveraged to enhance financial inclusion of MSMEs and consider various issues relating to development of Fintech space in India.



Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) member would be the Chairperson of committee. It would also comprise four secretaries, one CEO from UIDAI, deputy governor from RBI and one joint secretary.

2. Centre constitutes Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal

The Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has constituted the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal. The Tribunal will have its headquarters at Delhi and will have the following members nominated by the Chief Justice of India:



1. Mr Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, Judge, Supreme Court of India as Chairman
2. Dr Justice Ravi Ranjan, Judge, Patna High Court as Member
3. Mrs Justice Indermeet Kaur Kochhar, Judge, Delhi High Court as Member

3. Government constituted committee to probe illegal cultivation of HT Cotton

The Union Government has constituted a committee to investigate into illegal cultivation of Herbicide Tolerant (HT) or BG-III cotton in the four states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Maharashtra. Department of Biotechnology in the Ministry of Science and Technology has constituted a Field Inspection and Scientific Evaluation Committee (FISEC).



Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of the Ministry of Environment has not approved the cultivation of BG-III or HT cotton.

4. EAG submits report for Improvement and Strengthening of Internal Audit Systems and Processes in Rural Development Schemes

An Expert Advisory Group (EAG) was constituted by the Ministry of Rural Development for recommending measures aimed at expanding and deepening the application of the internal audit function across programmes at all levels of implementation. The EAG has submitted its report to Shri Narendra Singh Tomar, Minister for Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Mines.



The Expert Group has given a road map for establishing the internal audit function as an instrument for enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of MoRD schemes. It suggests measures for strengthening internal audit as an instrument of management control across programmes up to grassroots level.

5. Government sets up task force to draft new Direct Tax Law

The Union Government has constituted a task force to review the Income-tax Act, 1961 and to draft a new Direct Tax Law in consonance with the economic needs of the country. The convenor of the eight-member committee will be Arbind Modi, Member, Central Board of Direct taxes (CBDT). Arvind Subramanian, Chief Economic Advisor to the Finance Ministry will be a permanent Special Invitee in the Task Force.



The new legislation will be drafted keeping in mind the direct tax system in other countries, international best practices and the economic needs of the country.

Deaths

1. Veteran historian Prafulla Das died

Noted freedom fighter, Odia literateur and historian Prafulla Das passed away at the age of 91 years. He was known for his writings in Odia language. His famous literature 'Banhimana', the biography of freedom fighter Smt. Malati Chaudhury, owned him "Sarala Award" in 2014. He was honoured with Kendriya Sahitya Akademi award.



He authored various books on India's freedom struggle and the role of Odisha. Some of his best writings were Kalapanira Angisikha', 'Agnujugar Aahwan', 'Bharatara Sasastra Mukti Sangram', 'Sahid Basu Bisnini', 'Kanika Prajaandolan Itihas' and 'Netaji Aao feri Nahanti'.

2. Veteran actor Shammi passed away

Noted bollywood actress Shammi passed away at the age of 89. She worked in more than 200 films. She was popularly known as 'Shammi Aunty' but her real name was Nargis Rabadi. She had also worked in television shows like Dekh Bhai Dekh, Zabaan Sambhal Ke, and Shriman Shrimati.



Shammi made her debut in Bollywood in 1949 starring in Ustad Pedro. She worked in various films like Purab Aur Paschim, Samaj Ko Badal Dalo, Pehli Jhalak (1955), Bandish (1955), Azaad (1955), Halaku (1956), Son of Sinbad (1955), Raj Tilak (1958), Khazanchi (1958), Ghar Sansar (1958) and Aakhiri Dao (1958).

3. Famous sufi singer Pyare Lal Wadali died

Famous sufi singer Pyare Lal Wadali died in Amritsar at the age of 66 years. He was the younger brother of Puran Chand Wadali of the Wadali brothers.



Wadali Brothers are famous for their Punjabi Sufi music. The duo began performing at Harballah temple in Jalandhar. They were born into the fifth generation of musicians. Wadali was honoured with several state and national level awards along with his elder brother.

4. Noted film and television actor Narendra Jha passed away

Noted film and television actor Narendra Jha passed away at the age of 55 years. The actor is best known for his performances in films such as "Raees", "Kaabil" and "Haider".

Narendra Jha will reportedly be seen next in the upcoming Salman Khan starrer 'Race 3' which now turns out to be his last appearance on the silver screen. Jha began his acting career on TV with hit shows like "Shanti", "Ithihass", "Captain House".



5. Renowned British scientist Stephen Hawking passed away

Renowned British scientist Stephen Hawking passed away at the age of 76 years. The theoretical physicist is known for his groundbreaking work with black holes and relativity. He was the author of several popular science books, including 'A Brief History of Time', which sold more than 10 million copies and was translated into 40 different languages.

Mr Hawking had won the Albert Einstein Award, the Wolf Prize, the Copley Medal, and the Fundamental Physics Prize. His life story was the subject of the 2014 film 'The Theory of Everything'.



6. Eminent Hindi poet Kedarnath Singh passed away

Jnanpith awardee and renowned Hindi poet Kedarnath Singh passed away at the age of 84 years. Kedarnath won the Sahitya Akademi Award in Hindi in 1989 for his poetry collection Akaal Mein Saras and the Jnanpith Award in 2013.

Kedarnath Singh had been a professor and head of the Department of Hindi Language at Jawaharlal Nehru University's Indian Languages Centre. Some of his best-known works include "Bagh", "Abhi Bilkul Abhi", "Zameen pak Rahi Hai", "Yahan se Dekho", "Tolstoy aur cycle" among many others.



7. Pulitzer Prize Winner Les Payne passed away

Pulitzer Prize winner journalist Les Payne passed away at age of 76. He served as an editor and columnist at Newsday. He won a Pulitzer Prize in 1974 for a 33-part series titled "The Heroin Trail." He was known for his journalistic excellence that brought attention to problems, and sometimes helped solve those problems via Newsday reporting.



He was a founding member and the ex-president of the National Association of Black Journalists and a Vietnam War veteran.

Defence

1. ATGM NAG was successful flight-tested

Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) NAG was successfully flight-tested in desert conditions against two tank targets at different ranges and timings. The ATGM Nag missile had successfully hit both the targets under different ranges and conditions with better accuracy as desired by the Armed forces.



Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has developed NAG ATGM. With this, the developmental trials of the missile have been completed and it is now ready for induction. With the successful test flights, the technologies pertaining to ATGM to engage targets in different conditions were established.

2. Defence Acquisition Council approved procurement of weapons costing over Rs. 9,000 crore

The Defence Acquisition Council approved to Capital Acquisition Proposals of the Services and Coast Guard valued at approximately Rs. 9,435 crore. In a major boost to the Make in India initiative, the Council accorded approval for procurement of 41,000 Light Machine Guns and over 3.5 Lakh Close Quarter Battle Carbines under 'Buy and Make (Indian)' category.



The DAC also accorded approval for procurement of essential quantity of High Capacity Radio Relay for the Indian Army and Indian Air Force. These weapons are an essential component of a soldier's fighting equipment.

3. Tata-Boeing joint venture established aerospace facility in Hyderabad

Tata and Boeing Aerospace limited has rolled out its state of the art production facility at Adibatla on the outskirts of Hyderabad in the presence of the Defence Minister Nirmala Sitaraman. The facility is the joint venture between Boeing and Tata Advanced Systems and Boeing's first equity joint venture in India.



Set up in over 14000 square meters, the joint venture will co-produce Boeing AH-64 Apache helicopter fuselages and other aero-structures, as well as pursue integrated systems in aerospace. The Hyderabad production facility will eventually be the sole producer of AH-64 fuselages globally.

4. DefExpo 2018 highlighted 'India: The emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub'

DefExpo 2018 will, for the first time, project India's Defence manufacturing capabilities to the world. DefExpo 2018 branded India as a defence exporter of several defence systems and components for all three Services - Army, Navy and Air Force.



The Expo promoted domestic private industry and aero-components industry. India will also display its Missile and Rocket manufacturing capabilities, including BrahMos missiles. DefExpo 2018 provided a boost to overall defence manufacturing capabilities in the country and to its export potential.

5. Bharati Defence handed over 5th interceptor boat to coast guard

A high-speed interceptor boat ICG C-162 was delivered to Indian Coast Guard (ICG) at BDIL jetty in Mangaluru, Karnataka by Bharati Defence and Infrastructure Ltd. It is considered to be fifth interceptor boat. ICG C-162 has a vessel that can manage 11 crewmembers for patrolling purposes. The capacity of 28-m-long with 1650 KW engine vessel was tested for its speed. Modern technology Arneson Surface Drive propulsion system is inserted in the vessel.



ICG C-162 is 6th in the series of 15 high-speed interceptor boats being delivered by the ICG.

6. India-US team test-fired M777 ultra-light howitzers in Pokhran

An M777 ultra-light howitzer (ULH) was test fired at Pokhran firing range in Rajasthan by United States officials. The test firing was carried out to test critical data like trajectory, speed and frequency of fire of the M-777 A-2 ultra-light howitzers (ULH). The US team will supply three more guns to the Indian Army for training purpose.



The M777 howitzer is a 155 mm artillery piece, which replaced M198 howitzer in the United States Marine Corps and United States Army in 2005. The M777 ultra-light howitzer is also used by the ground forces of Australia, Canada, India and Saudi Arabia.

7. 1st ever-multilateral naval exercise at sea held in Andaman

The first-ever multi-nation naval exercise at sea, MILES-18, was held at the Andaman Sea. 11 naval ships of 8 countries and 9 Indian ships participated in the three-day exercise. The exercise was conducted as a part of 10th edition of MILAN 2018.



The exercise aimed to hone search and rescue procedures, maritime interdiction operations, core operational skills and exercise a variety of maritime security scenarios along with enhancing inter-operability.

8. IAF's largest transport aircraft C-17 Globemaster makes historic landing in Arunachal's Tuting

The Indian Air Force's largest transport aircraft, the C-17 Globemaster, landed at Arunachal Pradesh's Tuting Advanced Landing Ground. Tuting is only 30 km from China, making the landing strategically very important from defence perspective.



The C-17 Globemaster is commonly used to perform strategic airlift missions, transporting troops and cargo. The aircraft has already made a successful landing at Mechuka in West Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

9. Five-day multilateral air exercise 'Samvedna' concluded

A five-day multi-national air exercise titled 'Samvedna' was organized by the Southern Air Command of the Indian Air Force off the coast of Kerala. The air forces of India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and the UAE participated in the Multi-Lateral Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise.



The aim of the exercise was to share procedures and capabilities of air forces to improve disaster response.

10. Indian Navy hosts Bilateral Exercise 'Varuna' with French Navy

The Indo-French joint naval exercise, "Varuna-18" was held in the Arabian Sea off the Goa coast. It includes anti-submarine, air defence and asymmetric engagement exercises. The second phase will be held off the Chennai coast in April and the third near La Reunion Island in May.



The Indian Navy and the French Navy have conducted bilateral maritime exercises since May 1993. Since 2001, the exercises have been named VARUNA and there have been fifteen editions of the same till date. The last edition of VARUNA was conducted off the French Coast in April 2017.

11. Brahmos test fired successfully

BrahMos, the formidable supersonic cruise missile with indigenous seeker was successfully flight tested in Rajasthan. The supersonic cruise missile and the seeker have been developed jointly by DRDO and BrahMos Aerospace.



The precision strike weapon with indigenous seeker flew in its designated trajectory and hit the pre-set target. The flight test was conducted by the scientists of DRDO and BrahMos along with the Indian Army. Programme Director Dr Dashrath Ram and Project Director Mrs V Prameela who had led the effort for development of the indigenous seeker were also part of the team.

12. Navy warship INS Ganga decommissioned in Mumbai

INS Ganga, an indigenously built frigate of the Indian Navy, was decommissioned in Mumbai after over three decades of service. The ship was commissioned on December 30, 1985.



INS Ganga (F22) was a Godavari-class guided-missile frigate of the Indian Navy. The ship was built in Mumbai by Mazagon Dock Limited. The ship represented a big step forward in the nation's warship building capability. INS Ganga along with INS Godavari and INS Shakti were deployed to Mogadishu in December 1994 to support the withdrawal of the Indian Army's 66 Brigade.

1. India's exposure to US government securities touches \$144.7 bn in 2017

India's exposure to US government securities rose sharply to a high of 144.7 billion US dollars at the end of 2017. India has been raising its holding of American government securities during last year except for a few months when the total exposure had declined.



Figures compiled by the US Treasury Department show that the holding of India went up to 144.7 billion dollars, an increase of little over 26 billion dollars compared to the year-ago period. In 2017, neighboring China was the largest holder of US government securities with holdings to the tune of 1.18 trillion dollars, followed by Japan at 1.06 trillion dollars.

2. Moody's Investors Service reported India's GDP at 7.6% for 2018

Moody's Investors Service estimated India's GDP at 7.6% in 2018 and 7.5% in 2019. Such estimates were given on basis of demonetization undertaken in 2016 and introduction of Goods and Service Tax. However, Moody has reported that there are measures of recovery advised by government in budget 2018-19. Moody had estimated India's real GDP growth to moderate to 6.7%.



GDP growth forecasts for the US, Japan, Germany, France, UK, South Korea, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Turkey for 2018 have been observed to increase.

3. India-China bilateral trade hits historic high of USD 84.44 billion in 2017

The India-China bilateral trade has reached 84.44 billion US dollar in 2017, an historic high. There was a 40% increase of Indian exports to China in 2017 totaling to 16.34 billion dollar.



The bilateral trade in 2017 rose by 18.63% year-on-year to reach 84.44 billion dollar. The volume of bilateral trade for the first time touched 80 billion dollars, well above the USD 71.18 billion registered in 2016.

4. Direct tax collections register growth of 19.5% till Feb 2018

Direct tax collections have registered a growth of 19.5% till February of the current FY 2017-18 as compared to corresponding period of 2016-17. The Direct Tax collections until February stood at Rs 7.44 lakh crore.



The net Direct Tax collections represent 74.3% of the revised estimates of Direct Taxes for the financial year 2017-18 which is Rs 10.05 lakh crore. The gross collections before adjusting for refunds have increased by 14.5% to Rs 8.83 lakh crore during April 2017 to February 2018. The growth rate of net collections for corporate income tax is 19.7% and for Personal Income Tax is 18.6%.

5. BHEL secured order worth Rs 736 crore from NPCIL

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited BHEL has secured significant orders worth Rs 736 crore, after competitive bidding, for supplying Steam Generators for the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL).



The generators will be manufactured at the Tiruchirappalli plant of BHEL and will be installed at the Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR), Gorakhpur, Haryana. BHEL is the only company associated with all the three stages of the Indian Nuclear Power Programme, which include the Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR), Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR) and the Advanced Heavy Water Reactor (AHWR) stages.

6. Retail inflation dips to 4.4% in February from 5.07% in January

According to the Central Statistics Office data, retail inflation has dipped to 4.44% in February from 5.07% in January. Inflation in vegetables was 17.57% as against 26.97%, and for fruits, it was 4.80%, down from 6.24%.



Inflation for the fuel and light category was at 6.80% in February as against 7.73% in January. The rate of price increase was, however, higher for transport and communication services at 2.39% as against 1.97%.

7. Industrial Production grows 7.5% in January

According to the Central Statistics Office data, the Industrial Production expanded by 7.5% in January 2018 compared to 3.5% in January 2017.

The growth was mainly on the account of uptick in manufacturing sector which constitutes 77.63% of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP). It grew by 8.7% during the month as compared to 2.5% in January last year. IIP had grown at 7.1% in December 2017.



8. Milk Production up 20% in 2014-2017

India's Milk production has increased by 20% from 137.7 million tonnes to 165.4 million tonnes between 2014 and 2017. Also, the per capita availability of milk has risen by 15.6% from 307 gms a day to 355 gms per day between 2013-14 and 2016-17.

The Union Government has set up an Animal Husbandry Infrastructure Development Fund (AHIDF) for financing infrastructure requirement of animal husbandry sector with a corpus of Rs 2450 crore. The government has also initiated the "National Mission on Bovine Productivity" in order to help the benefits of animal husbandry schemes reach the farmers directly.



9. GST Council approved rollout of e-way bill from April

The GST Council has approved staggered rollout of the intra-state e-Way Bill from April 15. The states have been divided into four lots for the rollout. It will cover all the States by June 1.

Businesses will continue to file summary sales return GSTR-3B till June. For December 56.30 lakh GSTR-3B were filed which fetched Rs 86,703 crore revenue to the exchequer, while in November 53.06 lakh returns were filed with total revenue of Rs 80,808 crore. Collections topped Rs 95,000 crore in the initial month of July.



10. Wholesale inflation eases to 7-month low of 2.48% in February

Inflation based on wholesale prices eased to a seven-month low of 2.48% in February on cheaper food articles, including vegetables. On the basis of Wholesale Price Index (WPI), inflation was 2.84% in January and 5.51% in February 2017.



Inflation in food articles slowed to 0.88% in February from 3% in the preceding month. Inflation in vegetables softened with annual inflation at 15.26% as against 40.77% in January. Inflation in pulses remained in the negative zone at minus 24.51%.

11. World Bank projects India's GDP growth at 7.3% for the next financial year

The World Bank has projected India's GDP growth at 7.3% for the financial year 2018-19. It also predicted that the growth will accelerate further to 7.5% in 2019-20.



The World Bank's biannual publication, India Development Update - India's Growth Story, expects the economy to clock a growth rate of 6.7% in the current fiscal ending 31st March, 2018. The Economic Survey tabled in Parliament has projected a growth rate of 7% to 7.5% in the 2018-19 financial year.

12. Exports in February up 4.5% to \$25.8 billion

India's exports grew by 4.5% in February-2018 to 25.8 billion dollar. It was 24.7 billion dollar during the same period of last year. The trade deficit narrowed to a five-month low of USD 12 billion. During April to February period of the current fiscal 2017-18, exports recorded a growth of 11% to \$273.7 billion.



Imports also rose by 10.4% to \$37.8 billion during February 2018. The imports grew by 21% to USD 416.87 billion for April-February 2017-18 period. The trade deficit was USD 143.13 billion.

13. IIP rose to 7.5% in January 2018

According to data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the Index of Industrial Production rose to 7.5% in January 2018. The IIP growth was 7.1% in December 2017. Cumulative IIP growth for the period of April-January over the corresponding period of the previous year stands at 4.1%.



The Index of industrial production (IIP) measures the factory output and it is the closest approximation for measuring economic activity in the country's business landscape.

14. India attracts \$209 bn FDI during Apr 2014 to Dec 2017

Foreign Direct Investment has reached \$208.99 billion during April 2014 to December 2017 period. The main sectors that received maximum foreign inflows include services, computer software and hardware, telecommunications, construction, trading and automobile.



According to a census by the Reserve Bank of India, Mauritius was the largest source of foreign investment in India, followed by the USA, the UK, Singapore and Japan whereas Singapore (19.7 per cent) was the major ODI destination, followed by the Netherlands, Mauritius, and the USA.

15. GST second highest tax rate in world

According to a World bank report, the goods and services tax (GST) implemented from 1 July, 2017 is one of the most complex with the second highest tax rate in the world among a sample of 115 countries which have a similar indirect tax system.



The GST has four tax slabs that are, 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28%. Currently, around 49 nations use a single GST slab of GST, while 28 countries use two slabs. Besides India, there are only five countries, which use four non-zero slabs.

16. BHEL commissions first unit of Kishanganga HEP in Jammu & Kashmir

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has successfully commissioned the first 110 MW generating unit of the prestigious 330 MW Kishanganga Hydro-Electric Project (HEP) in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), being developed by NHPC Ltd. The project is located on the river Kishanganga, a tributary of the river Jhelum.

Once all the three units are commissioned, the project will generate 1,350 Million Units (MU) of clean electricity annually. In the state of J&K, BHEL has so far commissioned 31 Hydro sets with a cumulative capacity of 1,257 MW.



17. IRCTC tied up with Ola

IRCTC has announced a partnership with cab aggregator Ola. Commuters can book the taxi on IRCTC website and App. The tie-up is a six-month pilot project. The partnership will aim to provide last-mile connectivity to commuters.

The Ola cab facility will provide all the services offered such as Ola Micro, Ola Mini, Ola Auto, Ola Share etc. on the same price available directly on the IRCTC Rail Connect App and website.



18. BHEL enters into TCA with Republic of Korea for in-house design, manufacture of specialized components

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) as entered into a Technology Collaboration Agreement (TCA) with HLB Power, Republic of Korea for in-house design and manufacture of Large size Gates and Dampers for use in Coal fired power plants, to be commissioned or retrofitted with high capacity emission control equipment.

BHEL has been supplying conventional Gates and Dampers manufactured at its Boiler Auxiliaries Plant, Ranipet for over three decades. This TCA will help in establishing the capability for in-house design, manufacture and testing of very large size Gates and Dampers.



19. India to borrow Rs 2.88 lakh crore in first half of 2018-19

The Union Government has planned to undertake borrowings of Rs 2.88 lakh crore in the first half of 2018-19. This is 47.56% of the budgeted gross borrowing programme of over Rs 6.05 lakh crore. The government had borrowed Rs 3.72 lakh crore rupees for the same period in 2017-18.

The government also plans to come out with inflation-indexed bonds linked to Consumer Price Index or retail inflation. Government securities of 1 to 4 years duration will also be introduced.



20. BHEL won 75MW solar photovoltaic plant in Gujarat

Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has won an order for setting up a 75 MW Solar Photovoltaic (SPV) Power Plant on Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) basis, in Gujarat. It will be BHEL's largest Solar PV project till date. Gujarat Industries Power Company Limited (GIPCL) has placed the order on BHEL.

With this order, BHEL's solar portfolio has risen to 545 MW. The company is presently executing over 150 MW of ground-mounted and rooftop Solar PV projects across the country.



Environment

1. New species of water strider discovered in Nagaland

A team of scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) discovered a new species of water strider from Intangki River in Peren district in Nagaland. The species has been named 'Ptilomera nagalanda Jehamalar and Chandra' after Nagaland state.

Water striders are a group of insects adapted to life on the surface of water, using surface tension to their advantage. The discovery was published in the science journal Zootaxa.



2. Global carbon emissions hit record high in 2017

According to the International Energy Agency (IEA), Global energy-related carbon emissions rose to a historic high of 32.5 gigatons in 2017 on account of higher energy demand. Global energy demand rose by 2.1% in 2017.

Asian countries accounted for two thirds of the global increase in emissions. China's emissions rose by 1.7%. Most major economies saw an increase, but Britain, the United States, Mexico and Japan experienced declines.



3. Study shows plastic patch in Pacific Ocean growing rapidly

According to a scientific report, 79000 tons of plastic debris, in the form of 1.8 trillion pieces, known as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, now occupy the Pacific Ocean between California and Hawaii.

The researchers used boats and planes to map this area of the North Pacific, where rotating currents and winds cause marine debris, including plastic, seaweed and plankton, to converge. The study was led by the Ocean Cleanup Foundation and the report was published in the journal Scientific Reports.



4. Snow leopard population witness a rise

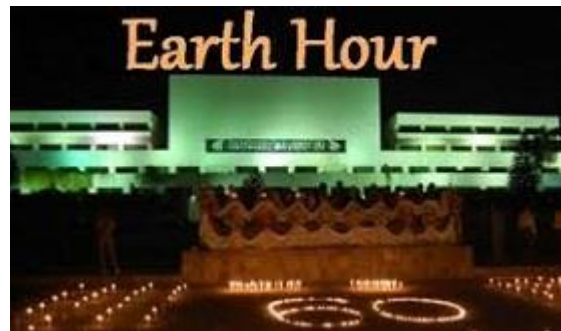
The population of endangered snow leopards has witnessed a surge in the Himalayas in the recent times. The wildlife wing of Himachal Pradesh's forest department worked in collaboration with the Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysore (NCF) and carried out research and conservation activities in the Valley.



The wildlife wing of Himachal Pradesh's forest department suggests that the cause of a surge in the population of endangered snow leopards is due to the prey-base available to them. The snow leopard is the state animal of Himachal Pradesh.

5. Earth Hour observed from 8:30 to 9:30 pm

Earth Hour was observed from 8:30 to 9:30 pm across the world on 24th March. It is the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment where people around the globe take a stand against climate change by turning off non-essential lights for one hour. It is a global initiative of the World Wide Fund for Nature India or WWF-India.



This year, WWF-India is launching the "Give Up to Give Back" initiative. The campaign includes taking steps like giving up single-use plastics, fossil fuels, e-waste etc.

1. Paytm introduced insurance for Paytm wallet

In order to protect the money of Paytm customers, digital payments company Paytm has come up with two kinds of insurance covers for its wallet users. The two insurances are Paytm Life Insurance and Paytm General Insurance. Customers with limit of Rs. 20,000 or their wallet balance, whichever is lower will be insured at free of cost, based on the condition that Paytm customers will have to inform Paytm customer care within 12 hours of phone loss or theft happened.



Paytm is an Indian e-payments and e-commerce brand based out of Delhi NCR, India.

2. RBI tightened PSL norms for banks by directing them to create sub-targets

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) tightened the priority sector lending (PSL) norms for foreign banks by directing them to mandatorily create sub-targets of 7.5% so that they lend a portion of their loans to small and marginal farmers as well as micro enterprises (MSMEs).



The move is directed at foreign banks with over 20 branches and will come into force from 2018-19. The PSL norms mandate foreign banks to eventually lend 40% of their total loan book to the priority sector, such as agriculture, rural infra, and MSMEs among others from April 2020.

3. RBI imposed Rs 40 lakh penalty on SBI for flouting fake note norms

The Reserve Bank of India imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 40 lakh on State Bank of India for non-compliance of its directions on detection and impounding of counterfeit notes, at two of the bank's currency chests.



The regulator had carried out an inspection of currency chests at two branches of the country's largest lender and noticed certain violation, following which a show cause notice was issued. Earlier, RBI had imposed monetary penalties on Axis Bank for violation of non-performing asset classification norms and Indian Overseas Bank for not complying with the KYC regulations.

4. IndusInd Bank united with Ripple for cross-border remittances

IndusInd Bank united with Ripple for cross-border remittances as Ripple platform will provide enhanced experience with its instant settlements and instant confirmations to IndusInd bank customers. Ripple is famous for its block-chain technology which provides services at reduced cost and lesser transfer times for their customers.



Ripple connects banks, payment providers, digital asset exchanges and corporates via RippleNet to provide one frictionless experience to send money globally. RippleNet eases decentralized network of independent banks and payment providers – that connect through Ripple's technology.

5. RBI to conduct longer term variable rate repo operations

In order to address additional demand for liquidity and with a view to provide flexibility to the banking system in its liquidity management towards March-end, RBI has decided to inject adequate additional liquidity using a combination of appropriate instruments and conduct additional variable rate repo operations for longer tenors to provide additional liquidity support to the banks during March 2018.



Reserve Bank of India will conduct 4 variable rate Term Repo auctions in March 2018. These auctions will be conducted in addition to the regular 14-day variable rate Term Repo auctions and will be held every Tuesday.

6. RBI removed per-borrower loan limit for MSMEs

Reserve Bank of India removed per borrower loan limits to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (Services) for classification under priority sector lending. Initially, loan limits of Rs5 crore and Rs10 crore per borrower to MSMEs were defined in the services sector for classification under priority sector norms. In other words, all bank finance to MSMEs engaged in providing or rendering services as defined in terms of investment in equipment under the MSME Act, 2006, will qualify for priority sector without any credit cap.



	MICRO	SMALL	MEDIUM
SERVICE SECTOR	Upto 10 lakhs	10L-2cr	2cr-5cr
MANUFATURING	Upto 25 lakhs	25L-5cr	5cr-10cr

7. European Bank approved India’s membership for Reconstruction and Development

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development board members gave nod to India's Membership for European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD). With this approval, purchase of shares by India is allowed at an estimated cost of around €1 million, so as to build ties between EBRD and India.



EBRD is a multilateral development bank meant to promote private and entrepreneurial initiative in emerging Europe. EBRD's core operations pertain to private sector development in their countries of operation which would help India leverage the technical assistance and knowledge of the bank for the benefit of development of private sector.

8. Government makes passport mandatory for bank loans of Rs. 50 crore & above

The Union Government has made providing passport details mandatory for taking loans of Rs 50 crore and above to ensure a swift action in case of fraud and prevent fraudsters from fleeing the country. The government has asked banks to collect passport details of borrowers within 45 days.



The Cabinet has approved the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill to impound and sell assets of escapees. The proposed law will also apply to defaulters who have an outstanding of Rs 100 crore or more and have escaped from the country.

9. Paytm Money received SEBI approval as Registered Investment Adviser

Paytm Money, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Financial services platform Paytm, has received Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) approval to become a registered investment advisor. It can now roll out investment and wealth management products to consumers across the country.



Paytm Money has planned a limited rollout of investment products, starting with direct plan mutual funds' investments with zero commissions. It will have a separate app available for both Android and iOS users.

10. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India signed a MoU with RBI

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).



The MoU provides for:

- Sharing of information between the two parties, subject to the limitations imposed by the applicable laws;
- Sharing of resources available with each other to the extent feasible and legally permissible;
- Periodic meetings to discuss matters of mutual interest, including regulatory requirements
- Cross-training of staff
- Capacity building of insolvency professionals and financial creditors
- Joint efforts towards enhancing the level of awareness among financial creditors

11. RBI discontinued Letters of Undertaking, Letters of Comfort for trade credit

The Reserve Bank of India discontinued Letters of Undertaking (LoUs) and Letters of Comfort (LoCs) for Trade Credits for imports into India by AD Category -I banks with immediate effect.



The circular added that the Letters of Credit will be continued to be issued subject to compliance with the provisions contained in Department of Banking Regulation Master Circular on

'Guarantees and Co-acceptances' dated July 1, 2015.

12. ICICI Bank launched country's first online and instant overdraft facility for MSMEs

ICICI Bank has launched an instant overdraft 'InstaOD' facility for MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) customers where they can get overdraft facility up to Rs 15 lakh for a year anytime, anywhere using the bank's Internet and mobile banking app.



The online facility will enable pre-qualified current account customers of the bank to instantly avail of the facility in a completely online and paperless manner. ICICI Bank will also offer the facility for instant online sanction of overdraft facility to MSME customers of other banks shortly.

13. SBI inked MoU with IMGIC

The State Bank of India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation (IMGIC) to offer mortgage guarantee scheme for prospective non-salaried and self-employed home loan customers. It will help increase home loan eligibility up to 15% within the regulatory norms.



Under this product applicant can avail higher finance based on risk grade of the borrower, by opting for IMGIC default guarantee cover. IMGIC is a joint venture between National Housing Bank, Genworth Inc International Finance Corporation and Asian Development Bank.

14. Axis Bank opened its 3rd Representative Office in UAE

Axis Bank opened a representative office in Sharjah, UAE. The representative Office in Sharjah is the third such Axis Bank office in the UAE after Dubai and Abu Dhabi.



The new representative office will engage primarily in promoting the Bank's retail products and services to non-resident Indians (NRIs). The UAE has the largest NRI community in the world. The remittances market size between the UAE and India is about USD 12 billion with Axis Bank having a market share of about 20%.

15. Linking of SWIFT to the Core Banking System made mandatory

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has informed that it has reiterated its instructions regarding “Cyber Security Controls - SWIFT” and “Cyber Security Controls – frauds related to trade finance transactions – misuse of SWIFT”, and mandated banks to implement the prescribed measures for strengthening the SWIFT operating environment in banks within the stipulated deadlines.



These instructions aim to strengthen SWIFT-related operational controls and reinforce fraud prevention and detection frameworks in place in banks, with a view to avoid misuse of SWIFT. The Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication provides a network that enables financial institutions worldwide to send and receive information.

16. Agricultural credit target for FY 2018-19 up to Rs 11 lakh crore

The government has fixed the agriculture credit target of 11 lakh crore rupees for the year 2018-19 against last year’s target of 10 lakh crore rupees. The government fixes agriculture credit disbursement targets for the banking sector every year and banks have consistently surpassed these targets.



The government is implementing an interest subvention scheme for short-term crop loans up to three lakh rupees. The scheme provides interest subvention of 2% per annum to banks on use of their own resources. Besides, additional 3% incentive is being given to the farmers for prompt repayment of the loan thereby reducing the effective rate of interest to 4%.

17. MCX launched world’s first brass futures contracts

Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) has launched futures trading in brass, a first of its kind in the world. It will facilitate brass stakeholders to hedge their price risk.



The trading commenced on March 26th. There are three contracts in offer ending in April, May and June for trading, with a lot size of one tonne. MCX Brass Futures is the first non-ferrous contract with compulsory delivery option.

18. Exim Bank extended \$500 million loan facility to 15 African nations

Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) has extended a Line of Credit (LOC) of USD 500 million to ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID), for financing various development projects in the ECOWAS region.



With the signing of the above LOC Agreement, Exim Bank, until date, has extended four LOCs to EBID, with the support of the Government of India, taking the total value of LOCs to USD 1,000.00 million. The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) has a mandate to promote economic integration in all fields of activity of the constituting countries.

19. SWIFT introduced universal real-time payment tracking

SWIFT is extending its GPI Tracker to cover all payment instructions sent across the network. This will enable GPI banks to track all their SWIFT payment instructions at all times, and give them full visibility over all their payment activity.



The Tracker, available since May 2017, enables banks that have signed up to SWIFT GPI to track their GPI payments in real-time. The introduction of the unique end-to-end transaction reference (UETR) in payment instructions will be effected through the mandatory annual Standards MT Release in November 2018.

Important Days

1. World Wildlife Day observed on 3rd March

World Wildlife day is observed annually on 3rd March 2018 Wildlife day was based on theme "Big cats: predators under threat". Big cats are among the most widely recognized and admired animals across the globe. However, their populations are declining at a disturbing rate due to loss of habitat and prey. In an effort to reach as wide an audience as possible, big cats here include lion, tiger, leopard, jaguar, cheetah, snow leopard, puma, clouded leopard, etc.



World Wildlife Day reminds us of the urgent need to step up the fight against wildlife crime.

2. World Consumer Rights Day

The World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) is observed every year on 15th March for celebration and solidarity within the international consumer movement. The theme for this year is 'Making digital marketplaces fairer'.

The WCRD is an opportunity to promote the basic rights of all consumers, for demanding that those rights are respected and protected, and for protesting the market abuses and social injustices which undermine them. In India, besides the World Consumer Rights Day, we observe the National Consumer Day on 24th of December every year.



3. International Day of Happiness

The UN International Day of Happiness is celebrated annually on 20th March. The United Nations has celebrated the International Day of Happiness as a way to recognize the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world.

The theme for International Day of Happiness 2018 is "Share Happiness" - focusing on the importance of relationships, kindness and helping each other. In 2012, the United Nations (UN) declared March 20 to be observed as the International Day of Happiness.



4. World Sparrow Day

The World Sparrow Day is observed around the globe annually on 20th March. The day aims to raise awareness of the house sparrow and then other common birds to urban environments, and of threats to their populations.



The theme for WORLD SPARROW DAY is I LOVE Sparrows. The theme has been inspired by the hope that more and more people will celebrate the relationship between PEOPLE AND SPARROWS. It is an international initiative by the Nature Forever Society of India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France).

5. World Water Day observed on 22nd March

The World Water Day is celebrated on March 22 every year. The day highlights the importance of freshwater and promotes sustainable management of freshwater resources.



The theme of 2018 World Water Day was 'Nature for Water'. It aimed at exploring nature-based solutions to the water challenges the world faces in the 21st century. Planting new forests, reconnecting rivers to floodplains, and restoring wetlands will rebalance the water cycle and improve human health and livelihoods. World Water Day is coordinated by UN-Water – the UN’s inter-agency collaboration mechanism for all freshwater related issues - in collaboration with governments and partners.

6. International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination 2018 observed

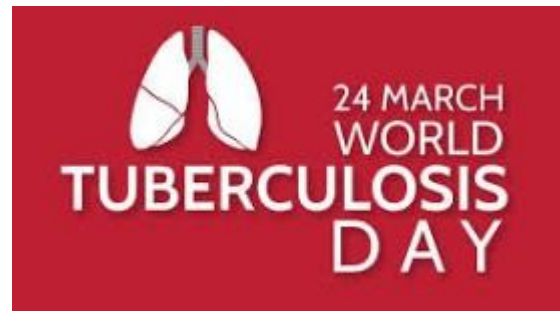
The United Nations’ (UN) International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed every year on March 21 2018 Theme: Promoting tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity in the context of combating racial discrimination.



It creates awareness among people of racial discrimination’s negative consequences. It also encourages people to remember their obligation and determination to combat racial discrimination. It was on this day in 1960, police opened fire and killed 69 people at a peaceful demonstration in Sharpeville, South Africa, against the apartheid pass laws.

7. World Tuberculosis Day

The World Tuberculosis Day is observed annually on March 24. The theme of World TB Day 2018 - "Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free world". The date marks the day in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this disease.



The day aims to raise public awareness of tuberculosis and the efforts made to prevent and treat this disease. It is one of eight official global public health campaigns marked by the World Health Organization (WHO).

8. International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is observed annually on 25th March. It honors the lives of those who died as a result of slavery or experienced the horrors of the transatlantic slave trade.



The theme for 2018 is "Remember Slavery: Triumphs and Struggles for Freedom and Equality". The theme celebrates the gains of people of African descent from slavery to present. It also acknowledges the challenges that have been overcome in the movement towards freedom and equality in all professions.

9. World Down Syndrome Day (WSDS)

The World Down Syndrome Day (WSDS) is observed on March 21 every year. The theme for 2018 is #WhatIBringToMyCommunity - how people with Down syndrome can and do make meaningful contributions throughout their lives, whether in schools, workplaces, living in the community, public and political life, culture, media, recreation, leisure and sport.



Down syndrome is a naturally occurring chromosomal arrangement that has always been a part of the human condition, exists in all regions across the globe and commonly results in variable effects on learning styles, physical characteristics or health.

10. World Theatre Day

The World Theatre Day is celebrated annually on 27th March. This day is a celebration for those who can see the value and importance of the art form "theatre", and acts as a wake-up-call for governments, politicians and institutions which have not yet recognized its value to the people and to the individual and have not yet realized its potential for economic growth.



The International Theatre Institute (ITI) initiated World Theatre Day in 1961.

1. China selected as the vice-chair of FATF

China was selected as the Vice President of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an inter-governmental body to combat money laundering and terror financing among other financial crimes. The decision was announced at FATF plenary meeting held in Paris.



The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

2. Michael McCormack selected as Australia's new Deputy Prime Minister

Leader of Australia's National Party, Michael McCormack was selected as Australia's new deputy prime minister replacing Barnaby Joyce. Michael McCormack is a former newspaper editor from Wagga Wagga and veteran affairs minister.



Michael Francis McCormack is an Australian politician who has been a member of the House of Representatives since 2010, representing the Division of Riverina for the National Party. He has worked as an assistant minister to the deputy Prime Minister and defence minister.

3. China to introduce its first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Liaoning by 2025

China's first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier named as Liaoning will be made to function by 2025. China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation will insert modern and updated technology in the aircraft carrier such as nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, new-type nuclear submarines, quiet submarines, maritime unmanned intelligent confrontation systems, maritime three-dimensional offensive and defensive systems and naval warfare comprehensive electronic information systems.



Apart from China, French Navy's flagship, the Charles de Gaulle, is the only non-US aircraft carrier powered by nuclear reactors.

4. Armen Sarkisian selected as President of Armenia

Armen Sarkisian got selected as new President of Armenia succeeding Serzh Sarkisian who is set to retire from his duties in April 2018. There were some constitutional amendments made recently so as to turn form of government from a semi-presidential to a parliamentary republic.

As a result, presidential veto powers got dismissed and the presidency got downgraded to a position elected by parliament in every seven years. Armen Sarkisian will be called as the fourth President of Armenia.



5. Marshall Islands became first country to introduce its own cryptocurrency as legal tender

Marshall Islands became first country to launch its own digital currency and first country to recognize a cryptocurrency as legal tender. It is done with an aim to raise its value of money and boost economy.

The new cryptocurrency named as SOV, will be accepted legally to buy everything or anything and pay bills. SOV will be known as first digital legal tender. SOV will be sold to public through an initial coin offering and its limit is capped at 24 million tokens to prevent inflation. Venezuela has already released its digital currency called as Petro.



6. Iraq replaced Saudi Arabia as India's biggest oil supplier

Iraq became India's top crude oil supplier replacing Saudi Arabia. According to report of government, Iraq supplied 38.9 MT of crude oil in 2017-18 financial year to India, which forms 80% of the country's oil needs. Out of this 38.9 million tonne, 184.4 MT of crude oil was imported during April-January. It has been for the first time that Iraq became top crude oil supplier to India.



Venezuela is India's fourth largest supplier, followed by Nigeria at 5th place, Iran at 6th place and Kuwait at 7th place.

7. Neil Basu was appointed as new chief of Scotland Yard's counter-terrorism unit

Senior Indian-origin Scotland Yard officer Neil Basu was selected as the new chief of Scotland Yard's counter-terrorism unit, replacing Mark Rowley who is set to retire in April 2018. With this appointment, he became the first person of Asian heritage to be appointed as Counterterrorism Chief.



He has done specialization in counter-terrorism policing for the past three years. Prior to this appointment, Neil Basu was a Metropolitan police deputy assistant commissioner, who used to lead counter-terrorism policing nationally.

8. Iran inked deal with China to connect key port to rail network

China has signed a 700 million USW dollar deal with IRAN to build a train line connecting the Iranian port of Bushehr to the rest of the country's railway network. The China Machinery Industry Construction Group will build a 400-kilometre railway line between the Gulf port and the southern city of Shiraz.



This would complete the "North-South Railway Corridor" in line with Iran's goal of becoming a transport hub for goods between the Gulf, the Indian subcontinent, Russia and Central Asia. China is Iran's biggest economic and trading partner.

9. Prince Charles appointed Indian-origin steel tycoon as UK skills ambassador

Prince Charles has appointed Indian-origin steel tycoon Sanjeev Gupta as an official ambassador for the Industrial Cadets programme designed to nurture manufacturing skills. The Industrial Cadets annual awards ceremony was held in London.



Gupta was appointed to the flagship programme to give children and young people the direct structured experience of the industry at school or college level. Mr Gupta is the Executive Chairman of UK-based GFG Alliance which is a London-headquartered international group of businesses.

10. China's Parliament abolished two-term limit for the President

China's Parliament has abolished the two-term limit for the President. The new provision now allows Xi Jinping to remain as the country's leader for life.



The constitutional changes were passed in Beijing by the annual sitting of the National People's Congress - the country's legislature - with two-third majority. Earlier, the seven-member Standing Committee - the top most body of the ruling Communist Party of China - had unanimously approved the amendment.

11. ISA-ADB, NDB, GCF, AfDB and AIIB joint declarations of Financial Partnership

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the African Development Bank (AfDb), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Green Climate Fund (GCF), and the New Development Bank (NDB) signed Joint financial partnership Declarations. The International Energy Agency (IEA) also signed a Joint-partnership Declaration with the ISA.



ISA is working for deployment of over 1000 GW of solar energy and mobilizing more than US\$ 1000 billion into solar energy by the year 2030.

12. President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated World Hindi Secretariat in Mauritius

President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated World Hindi Secretariat in Mauritius capital, Port Louis. The Secretariat is fully financed by India and a grant of 33 crore rupees was provided. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone of this building in 2015.



The president also launched the World Hindi Secretariat's logo, an Early Digital Learning Programme as well as unveiled foundation stones of a social housing project and a large ENT hospital being built with Indian assistance.

13. Shahbaz Sharif elected as PML-N chief

Pakistan's ruling PML-N elected Punjab Chief Minister Shahbaz Sharif as its President. Mr Sharif is the younger brother of ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. Shahbaz Sharif was elected unopposed as no one filed nomination papers against him during the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) general council meeting held in Punjab province.

Nawaz Sharif was barred from leading the party following his disqualification by the Supreme Court in the Panama Papers scandal in July 2017.



14. Maldives Parliament approved anti-defection bill

The Maldives Parliament has approved the anti-defection bill with retrospective effect amidst boycott by opposition MPs. According to the bill, MPs elected on political party tickets will lose their seat if they leave their party, get expelled, or switch parties.

The bill was passed with 35 votes as opposition MPs continued to boycott the sittings. The bill would take effect from 13th July 2017. The bill will give powers to election commission to unseat MPs in case of defections.



15. India announced USD 100 ml LoC for Mauritius

India has announced a new Line of Credit of USD 100 million for defence procurement by Mauritius on the second day of President Ram Nath Kovind's visit. The two sides also signed agreements/MoUs:

1. MoU on cooperation between Nalanda University in Bihar and Mauritius
2. MoU on the establishment of an Ayurveda Chair at the University of Mauritius
3. MoU between the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) in India and the Public Service Commission of Mauritius
4. Agreement to facilitate cultural exchanges between the two countries



16. Angela Merkel elected to fourth term as German chancellor

Germany's Parliament elected Angela Merkel for her fourth term as chancellor, putting an end to nearly six months of political drift in Europe's biggest economy. Lawmakers voted 364-315 to re-elect Merkel, Germany's leader since 2005, who ran unopposed.

The 63-year-old Merkel will now begin her fourth term as German chancellor and her third as the leader of a grand coalition. President of Germany is Frank-Walter Steinmeier.



17. Bidya Devi Bhandari re-elected President of Nepal for second term

Nepal's first woman President Bidya Devi Bhandari has been re-elected for a second term in office with an overwhelming majority. Fifty-six-year old Bhandari, the Left alliance's candidate, defeated her Nepali Congress rival Kumari Laxmi Rai.

Ms Bhandari secured 39,275 votes while the NC's Rai garnered 11,730 votes. She became Nepal's first woman President in 2015. Ms. Bhandari was elected twice in parliamentary elections in 1994 and 1999.



18. Saudi Arabia cabinet approved nuclear power program national policy

Saudi Arabia's Cabinet approved the national policy of its atomic energy programme as the kingdom prepares to award contracts for its first nuclear power plants. The policy insists on limiting nuclear activities to peaceful purposes and calls for enhanced safety measures as well as the use of best practices for radioactive waste management.

The kingdom has accelerated plans to build 16 nuclear reactors over the next two decades, officials and analysts say, at a cost of some 80 billion US dollars.



19. WHO-SEARO nations adopt ‘Delhi End TB Summit Statement of Action’

The Member Countries of World Health Organization - Regional Office for South-East Asia (WHO - SEARO) signed and adopted the 'Delhi End TB Summit Statement of Action' at the end of the Summit to end Tuberculosis (TB). All the countries committed to further intensifying efforts to ensure rapid and concrete progress to End TB by 2030.



The Delhi End TB Summit was held in Delhi jointly organized by the Government of India, Stop TB Partnership and WHO South East Asia Regional Office (SEARO).

20. US challenged India’s export subsidy program at WTO

The United States has challenged Indian export subsidies schemes at the World Trade Organization. The US Trade Representative (USTR) identified at least half a dozen Indian programs and called them “unfair” and sought dispute settlement consultations at the WTO.



These programs are Merchandise Exports from India Scheme; Export Oriented Units Scheme and sector specific schemes, including Electronics Hardware Technology Parks Scheme; Special Economic Zones; Export Promotion Capital Goods Scheme; and a duty-free imports for exporters program.

21. Russia 'test-fires hypersonic Kinzhal missile'

Russia has successfully launched its new hypersonic Kinzhal missile. The nuclear-powered cruise missile has a "practically unlimited" range and high speed and maneuverability allowing it to pierce any missile defense.



The high-precision Kinzhal (Dagger) missile was launched from a MiG-31 supersonic interceptor jet. It can travel at 10 times the speed of sound. The first air unit equipped with Kinzhal system was deployed in Russia’s Southern Military District in December 2017.

22. Oklahoma to become first US state to use nitrogen gas for executions

Oklahoma would be the first state in the United States to use nitrogen gas for executions. The state would use nitrogen hypoxia – asphyxiation by breathing in the inert gas – as its primary means of execution once a protocol had been finalized for the process.

Nitrogen is an odorless and tasteless gas that makes up about 78% of the air humans breathe but causes death when inhaled without any oxygen.



23. Philippines formally withdraws from International Criminal Court

The Philippines has formally withdrawn from the International Criminal Court (ICC) as a "principled stand against those who politicize and weaponize human rights".

Under Article 127 of the Rome Statute, a state party's withdrawal from the treaty can only take effect a year after the written notification is received by the UN Secretary-General. India never ratified the treaty and is not part of the Hague-based court.



24. India, Madagascar sign umbrella agreement in defense sector

India and Madagascar have signed an umbrella agreement in the field of defence during the visit of President Ram Nath Kovind to the nation. Both the nations also amended an air service agreement. The two countries will have co-sharing agreement with Air Seychelles through Air India and Air Madagascar.

India donated 1000 tonnes of rice and a cash grant of 2 million dollars towards multiple calamities relief in Madagascar. The President of Madagascar is Rajaonarimampianina.



25. Vladimir Putin won historic fourth term as President

Vladimir Putin won Russia's presidential election for a fourth term, giving him another six years in power. Mr. Putin won more than 75% of the vote. Pavel Grudinin, came second with 11.8% of the vote, and third was Vladimir Zhirinovsky (5.6%).

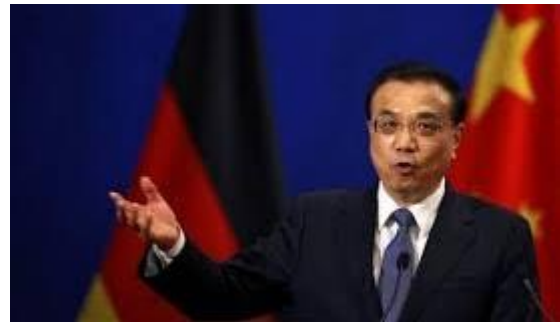
Putin's new fourth term, which expires in 2024, will make him the longest-serving leader of Russia since Soviet dictator Josef Stalin. Putin was first elected to the Kremlin in 2000, and again four years later. He won the elections again in 2012.



26. Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang Re-Elected for Second Five-Year Term

Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang was re-elected for a second five-year term by the Chinese parliament. Li secured 2,964 votes in favor and two against during the annual session of the National People's Congress at Beijing's Great Hall of the People.

The lawmakers also approved the appointment of Xu Qiliang and Zhang Youxia as vice chairmen of the apex Central Military Commission (CMC), which imparts strategic direction to the People's Liberation Army (PLA).



27. British Parliamentary committee asked Facebook Chief Mark Zuckerberg to testify in data misuse case

A UK parliamentary committee has summoned Facebook Chief Mark Zuckerberg amid a growing row over data breaches linked to the popular social media company.

The letter has come as the UK's Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham said she would be applying to court for a warrant to search the offices of the UK-based political consulting firm Cambridge Analytica. The firm is accused of using the data of 50 million Facebook members to influence the 2016 US presidential election.



28. UN launched \$951 mn appeal for Rohingya refugees

To meet the urgent needs of nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees and more than 330,000 vulnerable Bangladeshis in the communities hosting them, United Nations agencies and their humanitarian partners appealed jointly on Friday for \$951 million.

Fifty-four per cent of the appeal is to ensure food, water and sanitation, shelter and other basic aid, with food alone accounting for 25 per cent of the total. So far, the emergency response from September 2017 to February 2018 has received \$321 million of the \$434 million required.



29. US launched WTO challenge against China

The US has launched a challenge at the World Trade Organization (WTO) against China over intellectual property breaches. The United States is taking action at WTO to address China's unfair technology practices that run counter to WTO rules.

US President Donald Trump hit China with tariffs up to 60 billion Dollars of imports to retaliate against the theft of American intellectual property. China too warned the US that it was not afraid of a trade war as it threatened tariffs on 3 billion dollar worth of US goods in retaliation over the US measures.



30. 44 African countries sign free trade agreement

44 African nations have signed the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) at a summit of the African Union in Kigali, Rwanda. The deal is expected to come into force within six months. But 10 countries, including Nigeria, have refused to sign the deal.

The agreement commits countries to removing tariffs on 90 percent of goods, with 10 percent of "sensitive items" to be phased in later.



31. Venezuela deletes three zeros off its currency to fight inflation

Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has announced to eliminate three zeros off the nation's currency, the bolivar, taking effect from June 4.



Socialist Venezuela is going through a crisis that has left people struggling to pay for food and find medicines. The largest bill in circulation, the 100,000 note, can hardly buy a cup of coffee. Venezuela's inflation rate was more than 6,000% in the 12-month period ending in February. The International Monetary Fund expects inflation to top 13,000% this year.

32. US added seven Pakistani companies to list of foreign entities posing risk to national security

The United States Bureau of Industry and Security has added seven Pakistani companies to a list of foreign entities that pose a significant risk to the national security and policy interests of the country.



According to the End-user Review Committee (ERC) of the US Department of Commerce, three companies are listed for their involvement in the proliferation of unsafeguarded nuclear activities. Two are for procuring supplies for nuclear-related entities and the remaining two are for acting as fronts for listed entities.

33. UAE's first nuclear reactor complete

The United Arab Emirates has moved closer to becoming the first Arab nation to produce atomic power after one of four nuclear reactors at its debut plant has been completed. The project cost of the Barakah plant is expected to be around \$20-billion.



The plant is being constructed by a consortium led by the Korea Electric Power Corporation. When operational, the four reactors will produce 5,600 megawatts of electricity which will be around 25% of the country's needs.

34. ISA and India sign the Host Country Agreement

The International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), signed the Host Country Agreement. The Agreement will give ISA a juridical personality and gives it power to contract, to acquire and dispose-off movable and immovable properties, to institute and defend legal proceedings.



The International Solar Alliance is an initiative jointly launched by the Prime Minister of India and President of France at Paris on the side lines of COP21 UN Climate Change Conference.

35. Win Myint elected as Myanmar's new President

Myanmar's Parliament has elected Win Myint as the country's new President, following the resignation of his predecessor Htin Kyaw. Win Myint is a close aide of Aung San Suu Kyi and has also been a Speaker in the Lower House since 2012.



Htin Kyaw resigned as President amid growing health concerns. Parliament voted Myint from a short-list of the three vice-presidents. Win Myint had been made a Vice-President.

36. North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited China

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited China and had a meeting with President Xi Jinping in Beijing. Kim paid a four-day unofficial visit at the invitation of the President.



China said Kim has pledged to denuclearize the Korean peninsula. The trip was Kim's first known journey abroad since he assumed power in 2011. Kim is set to attend a summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in the next month, and will later meet US President Donald Trump.

37. Ethiopia's ruling coalition elected Abiye Ahmed as new PM

Ethiopia's ruling coalition has elected Abiye Ahmed as new Prime Minister, following the resignation of Hailemariam Desalegn in February 2018. The 180-member council of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front elected Abiye with over 60% votes. Abiye is the chairperson of the Oromo Peoples' Democratic Organisation.



The ruling coalition has struggled to contain persistent and violent unrest since 2015. Legislative elections have been scheduled for 2020. Abiye also briefly served as science and technology minister in Hailemariam's cabinet.

38. North & South Korea agree to hold historic leaders' summit on April 27th

North and South Korea have agreed to hold a summit of their leaders on 27th of April, 2018. The agreement came after a ministerial-level inter-Korean meeting held in Panmunjom, North Korea. South Korean President Moon Jae-in and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will meet at a South Korean facility in Panmunjom.



Kim is also scheduled to meet U.S. President Donald Trump in May to discuss denuclearization, although a time and place have not been set for that summit. Mr Kim met Chinese President Xi Jinping in March 2018.

39. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi re-elected for second term with nearly 92% of votes

Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has been re-elected for a second term with nearly 92% of the total votes. More than 23 million Egyptians voted for him.



His sole challenger, the little-known centrist politician and al Ghad party Chief Moussa Mostafa Moussa, is estimated to have obtained 3% of the votes. Sisi overthrew Islamist president Mohammed Tosi in 2013 following mass protests against his rule. He was elected for a four-year presidential term in 2014.

Miscellaneous

1. Animal Welfare Board of India headquarters shifted from Chennai to Ballabgarh
2. Saposhi: Threat of new malware looms over cyberspace
3. First-ever Dalit Hindu woman to get elected as Senator, member of upper house (Senate) of Pakistan - Krishna Kumari Kohli
4. "**I-METROS**", an association of all Indian Metro Rail companies was launched at the Conference on "Indian Metros: Collaborating for Excellence" held at Metro Bhawan in New Delhi.
5. Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off a train between Manduadih Railway Station in Varanasi, and Patna. He also launched various development projects in Varanasi.
6. The Maharashtra government may bring in a law to make the adulteration of milk a non-bailable offence, with a punishment of up to three years in jail.
7. The country's largest lender, SBI has slashed charges for non-maintenance of Average Monthly Balance (AMB) in savings accounts by nearly 75%.
8. Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) has undertaken development of a coded drug AYUSH QOL-2C for improving the quality of life in cancer patients.
9. India B won the Dodhar Trophy after they defeated Karnataka by six wickets in the final in Dharamsala.
10. Amazon.com Inc launched its first-ever debit card in Mexico with an aim to promote e-shopping.
11. Indian filmmaker Nila Madhab Panda's "Halkaa", which had its world premiere at the 21st Festival International du Film Pour Enfants de Montreal Film (FIFEM), has bagged the Grand Prix de Montreal at the gala.
12. Sangeeta Bahadur has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Belarus.
13. The President of India appointed Shri Satya Pal Malik, Governor of Bihar to discharge the functions of the Governor of Odisha.
14. Actor Jackie Shroff's short film 'Shunyata' has won an award at Best of India Short Film Festival in Los Angeles, US. The prize includes a cash prize of \$1,000. The film was directed by Chintan Sarada.
15. Indian para-athlete Deepa Malik won a gold medal in the F-53/54 category javelin event at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix in Dubai.
16. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and World Health Organization (WHO) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) to further strengthen collaborative work between India and WHO in achieving improved health outcomes.
17. The largest Informal WTO Ministerial Meeting was held in New Delhi.
18. The 7th Women Science Congress was inaugurated during the 105th session of Indian Science Congress in Imphal.
19. Indian actress Katrina Kaif has been named as the new ambassador of the international award-winning non-profit organisation, Educate Girls.
20. India Post paid tribute to theoretical physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking by issuing a special cover on him.
21. Unseeded Naomi Osaka became the first Japanese player to win the Indian Wells final, routing Russian Daria Kasatkina for her first WTA Tour title.
22. The first National workshop on POSHAN Abhiyan involving all the states and union territories was held at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra, New Delhi.

23. Shri Atul M. Gotsurve (IFS: 2004), currently Director in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
24. Elavenil Valarivan won gold in junior ISSF World Cup shooting in Sydney.
25. Vivaan Kapoor bagged the trap bronze medal in the ISSF junior World Cup at Sydney, Australia.
26. The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Zambia in the field of Judicial Cooperation.
27. US President Donald Trump announced another change to his cabinet by sacking embattled Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin and nominating White House doctor Ronny Jackson as his successor.
28. India And China agreed to continue to take forward the initiatives identified in the Five Year Development Programme for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and India signed in September 2014.
29. Google has acquired Tenor, a GIF platform for Android, iOS and desktop. Tenor will operate as a separate brand within Google.

National

1. Cabinet apprised of a MoU between India and Fiji on Cooperation in Renewable Energy

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has been apprised of a MoU on Cooperation in Renewable Energy between India and Fiji.

Both sides aim to establish the basis for a cooperative institutional relationship to encourage and promote technical bilateral cooperation on new and renewable issues on the basis of mutual benefit equality and reciprocity.

The MoU envisages establishing a Joint Working Committee to review, monitor and discuss matters relation to areas of cooperation. It provides for exchange of expertise and networking of information.



2. Cabinet approved MoU between India and Macedonia on cooperation in the field of Health

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved signing of a MoU between India and Macedonia on cooperation in the field of health.

The MoU covers exchange & training of medical doctors, capacity building and short term training of human resources in health, setting up of health care facilities and any other area of cooperation as may be mutually decided upon. A working group will be set up to further elaborate the details of cooperation and to oversee the implementation.



3. Cabinet approved MoU between India and Jordan on cooperation in the field of manpower

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal for signing of a MoU between India and Jordan on cooperation in the field of manpower.

The MoU aims at enhancing collaboration between the two sides in promoting best practices in the administration of contractual employment, reflects the latest reforms in recruitment processes and enhances the protection and welfare of Indian workers in Jordan. The MoU will incorporate provision of automatic renewal and a monitoring mechanism through a Joint Technical Committee.



4. Cabinet approved agreement between India and Jordan on cooperation and mutual administrative assistance in customs matters

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the signing and ratifying an agreement between India and Jordan on cooperation and mutual administrative assistance in customs matters.



The agreement will help in the availability of relevant information for the prevention and investigation of customs offences. The agreement is also expected to facilitate trade and ensure efficient clearance of goods traded between the countries. The agreement would provide a legal framework for sharing of information and intelligence between the customs authorities of the two countries.

5. Cabinet approved doubling of government guarantee from Rs 9,500 crore to Rs. 19,000 crore for procurements of pulses and oilseeds

The Cabinet Committee approved the regularization and extension of Government Guarantee provided to lender bank for providing credit limit to National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) Rs. 19,000 crore from earlier Rs.9,500 crore for undertaking procurement operation of pulses and oilseeds under Price Support Scheme (PSS) and to Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) for Rs. 45 crore for meeting their existing liability and settlement of extant claims.



These Government Guarantees are provided for a period of five years i.e. till 2021-22 by the Govt. of India and with a waiver of 1% Government Guarantee fee.

6. Cabinet approved continuation of Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) to 2019-20

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved the continuation of Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) beyond 12th Plan for three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20 with a total outlay of Rs.5,500 crore.



Scheme will create sustainable estimated employment opportunities for 15 lakh persons in three financial years. A minimum target of 75 project/district is awarded to all districts of the country to achieve Inclusive Growth. PMEGP is a major credit-linked subsidy programme being implemented by the Ministry of MSME since 2008-09 The Scheme is

aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises.

7. Cabinet cleared Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill 2018

Union Cabinet approved Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill - 2018 to deal with those escaping overseas to avoid being caught. The Bill will help in laying down measures to deter economic offenders from evading the process of Indian law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian Courts.



The new Bill defines the category of fugitive economic offenders against whom an arrest warrant has been issued and who have left India to avoid criminal prosecution and refuse to return to face the law. Bill also incorporates the provision of dis-entitlement of the fugitive economic offender from defending any civil claims.

8. BDT entered into seven more APAs

The Central Board of Direct Taxes has entered into 7 more Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs). This included 185 Unilateral APAs and 18 Bilateral APAs. The APA scheme endeavors to provide certainty to taxpayers in the domain of transfer pricing by specifying the methods of pricing and setting the prices of international transactions in advance.



The progress of the APA scheme strengthens the Government's resolve of fostering a non-adversarial tax regime. The international transactions covered in these agreements include Manufacturing, Provision of Software Development Services, Provision of IT-enabled Services, Payment of Royalty, Provision of Contract Research and Development Services.

9. NIT Tiruchirapalli CEDI incubated 10 innovative business ideas in diverse areas

The Center for Entrepreneurship Development and Incubation (CEDI) of the National Institute of Technology, Tiruchirapalli, has successfully incubated ten innovative business ideas in diverse areas including ICT and Electronics.



The CEDI has created a comprehensive Entrepreneurial Eco-system under which seed fund up to 25 lakhs is being allocated for technology-oriented innovative business ideas. The Centre has called for applications

from potential entrepreneurs all over the country for the second round of incubation funding.

10. List of MoUs signed during the visit of the King of Jordan to India

S. No.	Name of MoUs	Description
1	MoU on Defence Cooperation	Purpose of the MoU is to promote cooperation between India and Jordan in the field of Defence by defining the scope of such cooperation.
2	Cultural Exchange Programme	This programme provides for exchanges between India and Jordan in the areas of music and dance
3	Manpower Cooperation Agreement	This MoU provides for cooperation between India and Jordan with a view to promote best practices in the administration.
4	MoU for cooperation in the field of Health	To establish and encourage cooperation in the fields of health.

11. List of MoUs signed during the State visit of President of Vietnam to India

1. MoU on Economic and Trade Cooperation for enhancing economic and trade promotion
2. MoU on Cooperation between the Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership, India (GCNEP) and the Vietnam Atomic Energy Institute (VINATOM).
3. MoU on technical cooperation in the field of atomic energy for peaceful purposes
4. MoU to promote cooperation in transfer of technology and exchange of visits of technical experts in the fields of agriculture and allied
5. Work Plan for the years 2018-2022 between the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam.



12. India, Russia and Bangladesh signed pact for Rooppur atomic plant

A tripartite memorandum of understanding was signed between India, Russia and Bangladesh for cooperation in construction of Rooppur nuclear power plant near Dhaka, Bangladesh. It is done in order to let Indian companies participate in construction and installation works in the "non-critical" category for the Rooppur nuclear power plant in Bangladesh and Russian atomic energy agency Rosatom.



The Rooppur project is considered as the first of such initiatives under an Indo-Russian agreement. Since India is not a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group and cannot involve directly in construction of atomic power reactors, it had to sign MoU.

13. Empowered Committee under Nirbhaya Fund approved Rs 2,919 crore projects

The Empowered Committee of Officers under the Nirbhaya Fund responsible for appraising and recommending proposals for women's safety and security, held their 14th meeting and approved 8 proposals for women's safety in 8 major cities of India at the cost of Rs. 2,919.55 crores in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Bengaluru and Lucknow.



Various projects include setting up of a centre for development and empowerment of women, ABHAYAM Vans for quick response to women in distress, model forensic science lab at Chandigarh, GIS mapping of criminal hotspots, video surveillance and one stop crisis centres of women for surveillance.

14. Over Rs. 5600 crore sanctioned under Swadesh Darshan Scheme

A total amount of Rs. 5638.87 crore was sanctioned with release of Rs. 2148.17 crore since 2014-15 under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism. Under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, 13 thematic circuits have been identified, for development.

Under the PRASHAD scheme, 23 projects have been sanctioned to 15 States for a total amount of Rs.687.92 crore with a release of Rs.241.28 crore since 2015-16. The objective of the 'National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD)' is of holistic development of identified pilgrimage and heritage destinations.



15. UNICEF lauded India for 20% decline in child marriages

India saw a sharp decline of 20% in child marriages in the last decade. The United Nations children's agency UNICEF reported that as against 47% of the girls getting married before the age of 18, a decade ago, 27 percent girls are getting married, now.

The largest reduction was seen in South Asia with India being at the forefront. The UN children's agency attributed the improvement to the increased rate of girls' education, proactive government investments in adolescent girls, and strong public awareness about the illegality of child marriage and the harm it causes.



16. Sukhad Yatra app and emergency number for highway users launched

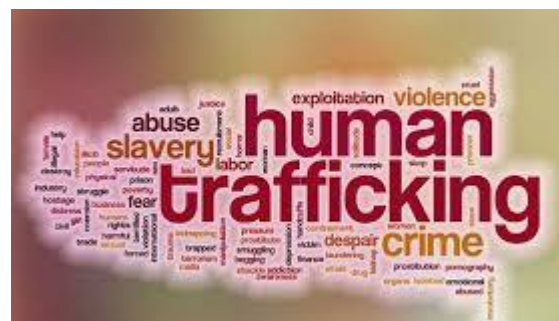
Minister for Road Transport launched 24x7 toll-free assistance number National Highways in 1033 along with Sukhad Yatra Mobile App in New Delhi. The key feature of the app includes provision for the user to enter road quality-related information or to report any accident or pothole on the highway. It also provides users with real-time data related to waiting time expected at Plazas and various facilities available nearby.



A toll-free number, 1033, will enable users to report an emergency condition, or highway-related feedback, across the highway. The service has also integrated with ambulance services.

17. Union Cabinet approved anti-trafficking bill draft

Government approved trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill. The bill ensures to empower the NIA to probe trafficking cases by making alterations in National Investigation Act, 2008 and jail term of seven to 10 years to criminals. The bill also imposes punishment of life imprisonment for repeat offenders. It details various offences into "trafficking" and "aggravated trafficking".



National Investigation Agency (NIA) will be designated as nodal authority for probing cases of human trafficking.

18. Smriti Irani inaugurated FICCI Frames 2018 in Mumbai

The Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting and Textiles, Smt. Smriti Zubin Irani inaugurated FICCI Frames 2018 in Mumbai. FICCI frames focussed on the need for collaboration between media & entertainment industry and mobile manufacturers in order to enhance and personalize audio and video experience of consumers. It aimed to promote students to pursue courses in technology, music, mathematics and philosophy and still be a film-maker.



Government departments relating to films will be brought under one umbrella organization, so that a film-maker with a new concept can get the necessary support for the same from one desk.

19. Government launched #YesIBleed menstrual hygiene campaign

On the occasion of women’s day, Union Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi launched a menstrual hygiene campaign named as #‘YesIBleed’. Under this campaign, women and girls will be made aware of proper menstrual hygiene practices, menstrual products and disposal of sanitary pads in clean manner. "#Yes I Bleed" will be promoted formally across all multi-media platforms, including Facebook and YouTube.



According to a survey, 35 crore women menstruate and it is estimated that only 12% use proper menstrual hygiene practices and menstrual products.

20. NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant launched Women Entrepreneurship Platform

NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant launched the Women Entrepreneurship Platform, WEP, on the occasion of International Women's Day. The initiative is aimed at building an ecosystem for women across India to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations.



WEP aspires to substantially increase the number of women entrepreneurs who will create and empower a dynamic New India. It aims to promote women entrepreneurship and provide industry linkages and partner support to women entrepreneurs.

21. Cabinet approved for promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for in-situ Management of Crop Residue

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for in-situ Management of Crop Residue in the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. The total outgo from the Central funds in this regard would be around 1152 crore rupees. Of the total funds, over 591 crore rupees have been earmarked for in 2018-19 and 560 crore rupees for 2019-20.



The component of the scheme includes establishing farm machinery Banks for Custom hiring of in-situ crop residue management machinery.

22. Government announced launch of 'SUVIDHA' Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin under PMBJP

The Department of Pharmaceuticals under the Union Government has launched 'Suvidha', the 100% Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin, under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP). The napkin will be available for Rs. 2.50 per pad at over 3200 Janaushadhi Kendras. It would ensure 'Swachhta, Swasthya and Suvidha' for the underprivileged Women of India.



About 58% of women aged between 15 to 24 years use locally prepared napkins, sanitary napkins and tampons. Further, about 78% women in urban areas use hygienic methods of protection during menstrual period; only 48% women in rural areas have access to clean sanitary napkins.

23. Udyam Sakhi Portal Launched for Women Entrepreneurs

The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has launched a portal for women entrepreneurs of India: www.udyamsakhi.org on the occasion of International Women's Day. The portal is a network for nurturing entrepreneurship and creating business models for low cost products and services in order to empower women.



The portal provides assistance through its platform for entrepreneurship learning tools, incubation facility, training programs for fund raising, providing mentors, one-on-one investor meet, provide market survey facility and technical assistance.

24. Cabinet approved signing of Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement with France

The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement between India and France. The Agreement represents a major milestone in enhancing people-to-people contacts, fostering mobility of students, academics, researchers and skilled professionals and strengthening cooperation on issues related to irregular migration and human trafficking between the two sides.



The Agreement is initially valid for a period of seven years, incorporates provision for automatic renewal and a monitoring mechanism through a Joint Working Group.

25. Cabinet approved signing of an Agreement with France to facilitate "Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications"

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for signing of an Agreement between India and France to facilitate Mutual Recognition of educational qualifications and periods of study undertaken by students in duly approved, recognized and/or accredited educational Institutions within the two countries.



The signing of the agreement will help in deepening the educational ties between India and France and will go a long way in boosting the educational relationship between the two countries.

26. Cabinet approved MoU between India and Hellenic on Renewable Energy Cooperation

Union Cabinet has been apprised of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy between India and Hellenic. The MoU envisages establishing a Joint Working Group to review, monitor and discuss matters relation to areas of cooperation. The MoU aims for exchange of expertise and networking of information.



Both sides aim to establish the basis for a cooperative institutional relationship to encourage and promote technical bilateral cooperation on new and renewable issues on the basis of mutual benefit equality and reciprocity.

27. Cabinet approved an agreement with France to prevent illicit consumption and reduction of illicit traffic in Narcotic Drugs

The Union Cabinet has approved an Agreement between India and France on the Prevention of the Illicit Consumption and Reduction of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Chemical Precursors, and related offences.

The Agreement is aimed at enhancing mutual cooperation between the two countries in the prevention of the illicit consumption of, and reduction of illicit traffic, in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and chemical precursors and related offences through exchange of information, expertise and capacity building.



28. Cabinet approved the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2018

The Union Cabinet has approved the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2018 for introduction in the Parliament. It is a part of the efforts of the Government to encourage institutional arbitration for settlement of disputes and make India a centre of robust Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism.

The Amendments will facilitate achieving the goal of improving institutional arbitration by establishing an independent body to lay down standards, make arbitration process more party friendly, cost effective and ensure timely disposal of arbitration cases.



29. Cabinet approved Recommendations of Inter-Ministerial Group on Stressed Assets in Telecom Sector

The Union Cabinet has approved two key measures in telecom sector to facilitate investments, consolidation in the sector and enhancing ease of doing business. These include:

1) Restructuring the deferred payment liabilities of spectrum auction of telecom service providers: It will increase in the immediate timeframe providing them some relief.

2) Revising the limit of the cap for spectrum holding for telecom service providers: It will facilitate consolidation of telecom licensees and may encourage the participation in the future auction.



30. Cabinet approved a Memorandum of Cooperation with France in the field of environment

The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Cooperation between India and France in the field of environment. The MoC is expected to bring in the latest technologies and best practices suited to bringing about better environment protection, better conservation, better management of climate change and wildlife protection/conservation.



The Memorandum of Cooperation will enable establishment and promotion of closer and long-term cooperation in the field of environment protection and management of natural resources on the basis of equity, reciprocity and mutual benefits.

31. Dedicated Venture Fund for the North Eastern Region (NER) with a corpus of Rs.100 crore

The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region has supported North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd (NEDFi) to set up a dedicated Venture Fund for the North Eastern Region (NER) with a corpus of Rs.100 crore.



NORTH EASTERN COUNCIL
Ministry of DoNER

The 'North East Venture Fund' is a joint initiative of Ministry of DoNER and North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. The objective of the fund is to promote entrepreneurship and Start up in the North Eastern Region.

32. PM inaugurated two-day National Legislators Conference on 'We For Development'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a two-day National Legislators Conference at the Central Hall of Parliament House. The theme of the conference is - "We For Development".



The motive of the conference was to bring MPs and MLAs on a single platform where ideas and plans for development can be exchanged. About 175 public representatives participated in the conference. The conference also held discussions on how women help in the development work being done for the country.

33. India's Biggest M&E Services Market, enTTech 2018 inaugurated

India's biggest Media & Entertainment Services Market – enTTech 2018 was inaugurated in Mumbai. The market, spread over two days (March 7 – 8, 2018) saw fast matchmaking between 100 international delegates and their Indian counterparts.



The event was organized by SEPC in association with MEAI (Media & Entertainment Association of India) and TVAGA (Telangana VFX, Animation and Gaming Association) and supported by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India.

34. National Conference on Counterfeiting & Role of Enforcement Agencies

The Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM), a professional body under the aegis of the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India, organized a National Conference on Counterfeiting and Role of Enforcement Agencies on 13th-14th March, 2018 in New Delhi.



The conference was organized in collaboration with European Union (EU). The conference intends to bring together national and international experts on the same platform to have a dialogue and exchange best practices as well as provide fresh ideas for further strengthening the IPR protection ecosystem.

35. Government launched SWAYAM Portal

The Government has launched the SWAYAM (<https://swayam.gov.in/>) portal for providing online learning courses offered by the best teachers to anyone desirous of learning, at anyone, anytime and anywhere from School to Universities level.



National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) through SWAYAM Portal also delivers all Secondary Courses and Diploma in Elementary Education (D.El.Ed) programme. Total fund spent on e-learning by NIOS during the last three years is Rs. 1,92,14,565/-

36. Government increased budget allocation for NAM

Government has marginally increased the budget allocation for NAM. Total budget allocation for the year 2018-19 is Rs. 504.43 Crores and it was Rs. 490.50 Crores in 2017-18 at Revised Estimate (RE) stage. No State-wise specific targets have been fixed by the Central Government for the States/UTs under NAM.



National AYUSH Mission (NAM) provides cost effective AYUSH Services, with a universal access through upgrading AYUSH Hospitals and Dispensaries.

37. CCEA approved continuation of Urea Subsidy Scheme till 2020

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the continuation of Urea Subsidy Scheme from 2017 to 2020. The estimated cost on this will be around Rs 165000 crore. The Cabinet also approved implementation of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for disbursement of fertilizer subsidy.



The continuation of the urea subsidy scheme will ensure that adequate quantity of urea is made available to the farmers at statutory controlled price. Implementation of DBT in Fertilizer Sector will reduce diversion and plug the leakages.

38. Cabinet approved the MoU between India and Iran in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine

The Union Cabinet has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between India and Iran in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine. The MoU will enhance bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the areas of Traditional Systems of Medicine. This will be of immense importance to both countries considering their shared cultural heritage.



The Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India has taken effective steps by entering into MoU with China, Malaysia, Trinidad & Tobago, Hungary, Bangladesh, Nepal, Mauritius and Mongolia for cooperation in Traditional Medicine. Another MoU is proposed to be signed with Sri Lanka.

39. Cabinet approved Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion between India and Iran

The Union Cabinet has approved an Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on income between India and Iran.

The Agreement will stimulate flow of investment, technology and personnel from India to Iran & vice versa, and will prevent double taxation. The Agreement will provide for exchange of information between the two Contracting Parties as per latest international standards. It will thus improve transparency in tax matters and will help curb tax evasion and tax avoidance.



40. Cabinet apprised of an MoU between India and Sri Lanka in the field of Information Technology and Electronics

The Union Cabinet has been apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Sri Lanka for promoting cooperation in the field of Information Technology and Electronics. The MoU intends to promote closer co-operation in the areas of e-Governance, m-Governance, e-Public Services Delivery, cyber security, software technology parks, start-ups ecosystem etc.

The MoU shall be implemented by establishing a Working Group on IT&E composed of representatives of the two Parties. Bilateral Cooperation in ICT domain both B2B and G2G will be enhanced.



41. Cabinet approved MoU between India and Iran in the field of agriculture and allied sectors

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post-facto approval for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Iran for cooperation in the field of agriculture and allied sectors.

The MoU provides for cooperation in the areas of agricultural crops, agricultural extension, horticulture, machinery, post-harvest technology, plant quarantine measures, credit and cooperation. It also provides for cooperation in soil conservation and water management, integrated nutrients management, seed technology and agricultural marketing. The MoU will be valid initially for a period of five years.



42. Cabinet approved MoU between India and Iran in the field of Health and Medicine

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post-facto approval for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Iran on cooperation in the field of Health and Medicine.



The MoU covers the following areas of cooperation:-

1. Exchange experience in training of medical doctors and other health professionals;
2. Assistance in development of human resources and setting up of health care facilities;
3. Regulation of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and cosmetics and exchange of information thereon;
4. Cooperation in the field of medical research, new technologies and knowledge based initiatives

43. Nuclear Cooperation with Canada

The Government of India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Department of Natural Resources of Canada concerning cooperation in the fields of science, technology and innovation during the visit of Prime Minister of Canada H.E. Mr. Justin Trudeau to India.



The MoU is a broad framework arrangement for enhancing cooperation in research and development activities with Canada. The MoU facilitates mutual consultations on the areas of new material development and testing, design of advanced Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs). The MoU will be valid for a period of 5 years and can be renewed further through mutual consultations.

44. Parliament passed Gratuity (Amendment) Bill, 2018

The Parliament has passed the Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill, 2017. The bill aims at increasing the upper ceiling of the gratuity from the present 10 lakh rupees to 20 lakh rupees for employees in the private sector and in Public Sector Undertakings at par with Central Government employees.



The Bill also notifies the period of maternity leave as part of continuous service. Recent amendment in the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 enhanced the maximum maternity leave period to 26 weeks.

45. MDWS Bags Award for best implementation of E-office

The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS) has bagged a Certificate of Appreciation from Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions for implementation of e-office software. The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has the distinction of making 100% use of e-Office.



E-Office is one of the Mission-mode Projects under the Digital India programme. The e-Office solution enables core operations of the Government at all levels to be performed in a 'paper-less' environment, including the E-leave, E-tour, Knowledge Management, Notice Board, Download Forms, Inventory Control etc.

46. Government in the process of formulating KUSUM Scheme

The Government of India is in the process of formulating a Scheme 'Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM)' which, inter alia, provides for:



1. Installation of grid-connected solar power plants each of capacity up to 2 MW in the rural areas;
2. Installation of standalone off-grid solar water pumps to fulfil irrigation needs of farmers not connected to grid;
3. Solarisation of existing grid-connected agriculture pumps to make farmers independent of grid supply and also enable them to sell surplus solar power generated to DISCOM and get extra income; and
4. Solarisation of tube-wells and lift irrigation projects of Government sector

47. GIFT City signed MoU with Deloitte to promote IFSC operations

Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP (DTTILLP) for mutual cooperation in areas related to international financial services.



The MoU aims to assist domestic and international clients to set up operations in GIFT - International Financial Services Centre (IFSC). Both entities will also cooperate in training and organizing seminars and conferences on select topics to promote IFSC.

48. PM Modi launched TB Free India campaign

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched TB-free India Campaign to eradicate tuberculosis (TB) from India by 2025, five years ahead of a globally-set deadline.

TB was responsible for 1.7 million deaths in 2016, despite most cases being curable while over 10 million people contract TB every year. The Union Government is implementing a national strategic plan (NSP) to end TB by 2025 with funding of over Rs12,000 crore for the next three years.



49. India and ADB Sign \$120 Million Loan to Improve Rail Infrastructure

Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed a \$120 million loan agreement for completion of works for double-tracking and electrification of railways tracks along high-density corridors to improve operational efficiency of Indian railways.

The tranche 3 loan is part of the \$500 million multi-tranche financing facility for Railway Sector Investment Program approved by the ADB Board in 2011. The loan amount will be used to complete the on-going works commenced under earlier tranches.



50. NITI Aayog Released SATH-Education Roadmaps 2018-2020

NITI Aayog released the roadmaps for the Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E) Project, being undertaken in partnership with three participating States of Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha.

SATH-E has been envisaged as a programme which aims to transform elementary and secondary school education across these three states. SATH-E roadmap refers to a time-bound, goal-driven exercise that will reach its logical culmination by the end of the academic year 2020.



51. IATA partnered with civil aviation ministry in India

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is partnering with India's Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and Rajiv Gandhi National Aviation University (RGNAU) to enhance human resource development to support the tremendous growth of India's aviation market. The terms of the understanding includes:



1. IATA and RGNAU developing closer links on academic cooperation, such as the possibility of including IATA Training programs and modules within RGNAU's future offerings.
2. Cross-recognition of training programs offered by each of the partners to the MoU
3. Leveraging the existing infrastructure for training in India, to expand the reach of vocational training in aviation disciplines

52. NCRB launched Mobile App useful for Citizens

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) released "Citizen Services" Mobile App on the occasion of its 33rd Inception Day. The app is a bouquet of 9 police related services, for the citizen. These services will provide smooth interface between Citizens and Police.



States/UTs upon customization can host this App on their CCTNS platform through which citizens can register Police Complaint, and can check the Status of their complaint. Another feature of the App also enables a complainant to download FIR (except those categorized as "Sensitive").

53. Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of IACP

Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the two-day Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in New Delhi. The theme was "Challenges to Policing in 2020- How is Cyber Space shaping our approach to Cybercrime & Terrorism, how do we perform within it and take advantage of it".



The regional conference was organized by the Asia-Pacific World Regional Office (APWRO) of the IACP in partnership with the Intelligence Bureau. The IACP is the world's largest organization of Police and law enforcement executives.

54. Rs.231.50 Crore released for ‘Strengthening Education among ST Girls in Low Literacy Districts from 2012-13 to 2017-18

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has been implementing the scheme, ‘Strengthening Education among ST Girls in Low Literacy Districts’. A total of Rs.231.50 Crore has been released during last six years from 2012-2013 to 2017-2018 under the scheme.



Also, from 2012-2013 to 2016-2017, a sum of Rs 194359.31 lakh have been released for setting up “(Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs)” to 27 states including 7 North Eastern states.

55. Government scrapped export duty on sugar to boost shipments

The Union government has scrapped export duty of raw and refined sugar to boost shipments. The Central Board of Excise and Custom has reduced the export duty on raw sugar, white or refined sugar from 20% to Nil.



Sugar output of India is estimated to rise sharply to 29.5 million tonnes in the 2017-18 marketing year from 20.3 million tonnes in the previous year. Earlier, the government had doubled import duty on sugar to 100% to check imports.

56. India and EU sign an agreement on sharing earth observation data from each other's satellites

India and the European Union (EU) have signed an agreement that will enable them to share earth observation data from each other's satellites. Under this arrangement, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will share data from its earth observation satellites.



The European Commission will provide India with free, full and open access to the data from the Copernicus Sentinel family of satellites using high bandwidth connections from data hub to data hub. This will provide both the sides, the data on climate change, weather forecasting and natural disasters.

57. ICFRE signed MOU With TIFAC

The Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun and Technology Information, Forecasting & Assessment Council (TIFAC), New Delhi signed an MoU. The MoU is valid for a period of 10 years has following salient features:

1. Prioritization of technologies developed by ICFRE in consultation with stakeholders
2. Creating patent awareness in the field of forestry and environment including wood science and allied subjects for ICFRE and its institutes
3. Patent searching and filing in the field of Forestry and allied subjects
4. Identifying technology gaps and commercialization of technologies
5. Forest based technologies extension and transfer through stakeholder consultations



58. Rs. 37 Crore allocated for “Scheme of Financial Assistance for Creation of Cultural Infrastructure” for 2018-19

Proposed Budgetary allocation in 2018-2019 for “Scheme of Financial Assistance for Creation of Cultural Infrastructure” is Rs.3700 lakh. The Scheme has the following two components:-

Component-I : Financial Assistance for Building Grants including Studio Theatres.

Component-II : Financial Assistance for Tagore Cultural Complexes (TCC).



During financial year 2017-2018, as on 14-03-2018, total of Rs.2.34 Crores have been utilized under both the scheme components.

59. Four MoUs signed with Airbnb under aegis of DoNER for promotion of tourism in the NE

Four MoUs were signed with Airbnb under the aegis of the Ministry of Development of North East Region (DoNER). The MoUs aim at creating hospitality micro-entrepreneurs across key destinations in the North East of India.



Under the MoUs, the NEC, NETDC and Airbnb agree to:

1. Expand tourism in the North East of India through Airbnb's global platform
2. Improve the quality of homestay facilities and unique properties in the North East of India
3. Provide and promote outstanding tourism resources in the North East of India, and
4. Cooperate to improve the regulatory environment for home sharing in the North East of India

60. First India-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction inaugurated

The Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog, Dr. Rajiv Kumar inaugurated the First India-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction in New Delhi. The two-day workshop was jointly organized by the Ministry of Home Affairs, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Government of Japan. The workshop will identify possible areas of cooperation of India with Japan in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction.



The workshop "marked the beginning of formal implementation of the initiatives agreed under the Memorandum of Cooperation signed between the two countries on Disaster Risk Reduction in September 2017".

61. GIAN launched to enable foreign faculty to teach specific courses in Higher Educational Institutions

The Government has also launched the Global Initiative for Academic Networks (GIAN) to help foreign faculty to teach some courses in the higher educational institutions. The Government has decided to allow faculty working under the Central Government or Central Autonomous Bodies, to join the newly set up Central Educational Institutions on long-term deputation, for a period of 10 years.



Further, steps such as outstanding young faculty awards, appointment of Non-Resident

Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) to permanent faculty positions have been taken.

62. Cabinet approved launch of Ayushman Bharat

The Union Cabinet has approved the launch of a new Centrally Sponsored Ayushman Bharat -National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM). The Scheme has a benefit cover of 5 lakh rupees per family per year. The target beneficiaries under the scheme will be over 10 crore poor and vulnerable population based on SECC database.



AB-NHPM will subsume the on-going centrally sponsored schemes -Rashtriya SwasthyaBimaYojana (RSBY) and the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS).

63. Cabinet approved North-East Industrial Development Scheme 2017

The Union Cabinet has approved the North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS), 2017 with a financial outlay of Rs.3000 crores up to March, 2020. Government will provide necessary allocations for the remaining period of scheme after assessment before March 2020. NEIDS is a combination of the incentives covered under the earlier two schemes with a much larger outlay.



The overall cap for benefits under all components of incentives will be of Rs. 200 crores per unit. The newly introduced scheme shall promote industrialization in the States of the North Eastern Region and will boost employment and income generation.

64. Cabinet approved revision of the Agreement between India and Qatar for the avoidance of double taxation

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for revision of the Agreement between India and Qatar for the avoidance of double taxation and for the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income.



The revised DTAA updates the provisions for exchange of information to latest standard, includes Limitation of Benefits provision to prevent treaty shopping and aligns other provisions with India's recent treaties. The revised DTAA meets the minimum standards on treaty abuse and Mutual Agreement Procedure.

65. Cabinet apprised of an MoU between India and Guyana on cooperation in Renewable Energy

The Union Cabinet has been apprised of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation in Renewable Energy between India and Guyana. Both sides aim to establish the basis for a cooperative institutional relationship to encourage and promote technical bilateral cooperation on new and renewable energy issues on the basis of mutual benefit, equality and reciprocity.



The MoU envisages establishing a Joint Working Committee to review, monitor and discuss matters relation to areas of cooperation. The MoU aims for exchange of expertise and networking of information.

66. Cabinet approved formation of 100% owned C Corporation of Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd. (TCIL) in USA

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for formation of 100% owned C Corporation of Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd.(TCIL) in USA as per the details given below:



1. Formation of C Corporation of Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd. (TCIL) in the state of Texas, USA with authorization for registering in other states of USA for doing business subsequently.

2. TCIL's Equity Investment of 100% in the C Corporation amounting to USD 5 Million in a phased manner

C Corporation will be earning precious foreign exchange for the country and increasing profitability of TCIL which is a Government PSU.

67. Tripartite MoU for Rooppur Nuclear Plant

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed at Moscow, Russia between the State Atomic Energy Corporation 'Rosatom'; the Ministry of Science and Technology of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and the Department of Atomic Energy, India on trilateral cooperation in implementation of the Rooppur Nuclear Power Project in Bangladesh.



The MoU envisages rendering of consultancy to Bangladesh in performance of work related to Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant construction and executing transfer and exchange of knowledge and expertise to the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant.

68. Lok Sabha passed amendment to stonewall scrutiny of foreign poll funding

The Lok Sabha has passed an amendment to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 that bans overseas corporations from funding political parties. The amendment will exempt political parties from scrutiny of funds they have received from abroad since 1976.



The retrospective amendment will help BJP and Congress escape the fallout of a 2014 Delhi High Court judgement that held both guilty of violating the FCRA.

69. PM Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of Navi Mumbai Airport

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the Navi Mumbai International Airport, Mumbai's second airport to be built at Rs16,700 crore. GVK Group were the successful bidders for the airport project. GVK Group is building the airport in association with state-run infra development agency Cidco in a 74:26 equity structure.



Prime Minister also inaugurated the country's largest container terminal at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), built at a cost of Rs 4,719 crore.

70. NCAA becomes the World's First Trusted Digital Repository

National Cultural Audiovisual Archives (NCAA) project of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, implemented by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) has been certified as the world's first Trusted Digital Repository as per ISO 16363:2012 standard, granted by Primary Trustworthy Digital Repository Authorisation Body Ltd. (PTAB), United Kingdom.



The primary objective of the NCAA is to identify and preserve the cultural heritage of India available in audiovisual form through a process of digitization.

71. BIRAC celebrated its 6th Foundation Day

The Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) celebrated its 6th Foundation Day themed as 'Sustaining Innovation – A Market Driven Pathway'. BIRAC has supported over 650 projects, more than 500 start-ups, & entrepreneurs, and 30 incubators across the country, resulting in over 100 products and technologies and 150 Intellectual property rights being generated.



Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India set up Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), to empower the emerging biotech industry.

72. NITI Aayog signed agreement with Piramal Foundation

The NITI Aayog and Piramal Foundation entered into a Statement of Intent (SoI) to improve healthcare, education and nutrition of 'Aspirational Districts'. The collaboration is for a duration of four years, with the option to continue, based on a mutual agreement. The Piramal Foundation will work closely with the District Collectors and Key officers of 'Aspirational Districts'.



NITI Aayog has identified 115 districts as 'aspirational districts' for rapid transformation by 2022 in line with Government's vision to create 'New India'.

73. India inked double taxation avoidance agreement with Hong Kong

India and Hong Kong signed a double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA) that seeks to improve transparency in tax matters and help curb tax evasion and avoidance. The agreement will also stimulate flow of investment, technology and personnel from India to HKSAR (Hong Kong Special Administrative Region) and vice versa.



Investors will get an advantage of a lower withholding tax of 10% on interest or royalties. It also provides for capital gains taxation of indirect transfers.

74. India hands over 18 high-end diesel locos to Myanmar

India handed over the 18th diesel-electric locomotive to Myanmar, thereby completing the first project under the current Indian line of credit (LoC) to the eastern neighbor. These locos are built by Diesel Locomotive Works, Varanasi.



These 18 locos are fitted with the microprocessor control based system. 1350 HP AC/DC main line diesel locomotives with a maximum speed of 100 KM PH have been customized for the Myanmar Railways.

75. Indian Railways plans to use GIS portal to monitor, maintain and manage its assets

All Indian Railways assets are to be mapped and these will be subsequently used to develop Indian Railways' GIS portal. As railway operations have wide spatial coverage, GIS mapping of assets on Indian Railways can be used for better management.



MOU between Ministry of Railways and ISRO has been signed for mutual cooperation in various phases. After development of GIS portal, it may be possible to identify new encroachment all around station by comparing the images of Satellite Imagery which are updated by ISRO after a regular interval.

76. Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways launched Inland Ferry Services in Goa

Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Shri Nitin Gadkari launched the Inland ferry services in Goa. Inland Ferry Services is offered by the government for people to travel through boat so as to promote tourism. India has about seven thousand five hundred kilometers of seashore which can help the development of the country while giving tourism the much-required boost. Goa owes its emergence as a tourism state due to its coastal belt.



The services are launched with an aim to save time and money and avoid pollution and ease the road congestion.

77. Exhibition on “Nature for Water” Delhi zoo to mark World Water Day

National Museum of Natural History, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change organized an exhibition on the theme - “Nature for Water”, in collaboration with National Zoological Park Delhi. About 150 students along with their teachers took part in the programme.



Students raised slogans to promote awareness about the need to save water at a rally taken out on the occasion. Students were encouraged to undertake small, Green Good Deeds to save and conserve water, especially drinking water. A documentary on the importance of conservation of water was also screened.

78. MEA launched unique regional media outreach campaign

The External Affairs Ministry launched a campaign, 'Videsh Aaya Pradesh ke Dwaar', for its engagement with regional media. It aims to enhance public diplomacy outreach and take foreign policy benefits close to people at the grass roots level.



The initiative involves MEA's engagement with the regional media based in different cities across India who have carved their own space and have a unique and wide readership profile. The initiative was launched in Hyderabad.

79. First Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary launched

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot launched the first Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary of 3000 words in New Delhi. The basic aim of the ISL Dictionary is to remove communications barriers between the deaf and hearing communities.



ISL dictionary consists of various categories of words for example legal terms, medical terms, academic terms, technical terms and daily use words. The videos are subtitled. Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre under Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities have developed the dictionary.

80. Government to declare 2018 as National Year of Millets

The Union Government has decided to declare 2018 as 'National Year of Millets to boost the cultivation of millets like ragi and jowar on a mission mode to achieve nutritional security.

The millet cultivation has declined due to change in dietary habits and unavailability of millets. Hence millets are being promoted under the National Food Security Mission (NFSM). The push will promote cultivation of jowar, bajra, ragi. Under NFSM, maize and jau are also promoted separately.



81. Allocation of funds for RISE

The Union Government has set up Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) to mobilize funds from the market as per requirements of the centrally funded higher educational institutions set up in all the States.

An announcement in the Budget 2018-19 has been made to step up investments in research and related infrastructure in premier educational institutions to launch a major initiative named "Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education (RISE) by 2022" with a total investment of Rs 1,00,000 Crore in next four years by structuring HEFA.



82. Cabinet approved amendments in the "Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016"

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for moving official amendments in the "Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016". The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2016 proposes to regulate surrogacy in India by establishing National Surrogacy Board at the central level and, State Surrogacy Boards and Appropriate Authorities in the States and Union Territories.

The proposed legislation ensures effective regulation of surrogacy, prohibit commercial surrogacy and allow altruistic surrogacy to the needy Indian infertile couples.



83. Cabinet approved opening of 18 new Missions in Africa

The Union Cabinet has approved the opening of 18 new Indian Missions in Africa over a four year period from 2018-2021. It will increase the number of Resident Indian Missions in Africa from 29 to 47.



The 18 new Indian Missions in Africa will be opened in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Mauritania, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Swaziland and Togo.

84. Cabinet approved closure of India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for the closure of India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI) to enhance synergies in channelizing Diaspora's contributions to Government of India's flagship programmes such as National Mission for clean Ganga and Swachh Bharat Mission.



IDF-OI was set up by Government of India with the approval of Cabinet in 2008 as an autonomous not-for-profit Trust, to facilitate Overseas Indian philanthropy into social and development projects in India.

85. Rural Development Minister inaugurated Saras Aajeevika Mela

Union Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated Saras Aajeevika Mela at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.



The SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2018 in New Delhi is an endeavour of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission. It aims to provide a national platform and an opportunity to the rural women producers to showcase their products and seek buyers, either individuals or bulk buyers for sale nationally or internationally.

86. Tribal Affairs Minister Shri Jual Oram launched “E-Tribes India”

Union Tribal Affairs Minister, Shri Jual Oram launched the “e-Tribes India”, which is Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India, TRIFED's websites. It includes www.tribesindia.com, www.trifed.in and Retail Inventory Software and M-commerce app.



TRIBAL COOPERATIVE
MARKETING DEVELOPMENT
FEDERATION OF
INDIA LIMITED -
TRIFED

TRIFED is promoting and marketing tribal products, tribal art and crafts within the country and abroad by providing marketing support to tribal products through its various network. TRIFED has entered into agreements with e-commerce platforms like Snapdeal, Amazon, Flipkart and Paytm.

87. Cabinet approved schemes worth Rs 4,500 cr for development projects in North East

Cabinet has approved Schemes of North Eastern Council (NEC) including continuation of existing Schemes worth Rs 4500 crore rupees for the scheme for three years upto March, 2020. The scheme will boost the development projects in North-East. The Scheme of NEC - Special Development Project will be changed to be a Central Sector Scheme with 100% grant.

NEC is also implementing North Eastern Road Sector Development Scheme - Programme Component for upgradation of the important and strategic inter-state roads.

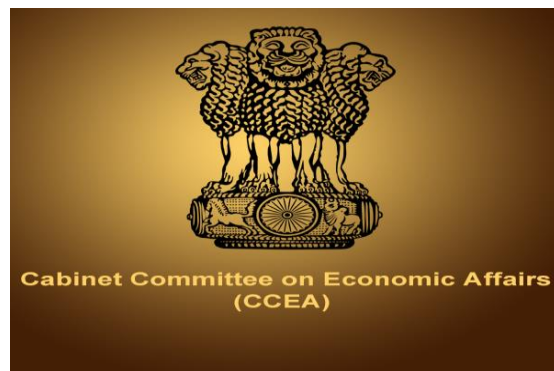


88. CCEA approved continuation of Nutrient Based Subsidy, City Compost Scheme till 2019-20

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, CCEA has approved continuation of Nutrient Based Subsidy and City Compost Scheme till 2019-20. The total expenditure for continuation of both the schemes will be around Rs 62000 crore.

The expenditure for the scheme will be on actual basis since national roll out of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) entails 100% payment of subsidy to fertilizer companies on sale of fertilizers to farmers at subsidized rates.

Government is making available fertilizers, namely Urea and 21 grades of Phosphatic and Potassic fertilizers to farmers at subsidized prices through fertilizer manufacturers and importers.



89. Cabinet approved proposal of Department of School Education & Literacy

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the proposal of Department of School Education and Literacy to formulate an Integrated Scheme on School Education by subsuming Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education from 1st April, 2018 to 31st March, 2020.



The government has approved an estimated allocation of Rs 75000 crore rupees over the period, with a 20% increase over the current allocations. The main emphasis of the Integrated Scheme is on improving quality of school education by focusing on the two T's - Teacher and Technology.

90. Cabinet approved export of all edible oils in bulk except mustard oil

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the proposal of Ministry of Commerce and Industry for removal of prohibition on export of all varieties of edible oils except mustard oil. Mustard oil will continue to be exported only in consumer packs up to 5 Kilogram and with a minimum export price of 900 dollar per tonne.



The CCEA has also approved empowering the Committee, chaired by Secretary, Department of Food and Public Distribution to review the export and import policy on all varieties of edible oils and consider measures such as quantitative restrictions, prior registration, imposition of Minimum Export Price (MEP) and changes in import duties.

91. Cabinet approved restructuring of NSDF, NSDC to strengthen governance

The Union Cabinet has approved restructuring of National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to strengthen governance, implementation and monitoring framework.



Transforming the skill landscape

The restructuring will ensure better corporate governance, transparency and accountability in operations of NSDC besides strengthening the oversight role of NSDF. The NSDC and the NSDF were set up by the Ministry of Finance for implementing coordinated action for skill development.

92. Cabinet approved continuation of Credit Guarantee Fund for Education Loan Scheme

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved continuation of the Credit Guarantee Fund for Education Loans Scheme and continuation and modification of Central Sector Interest Subsidy Scheme with a financial outlay of Rs 6,600 crore from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

This will provide education loans to 10 lakh students during this period. In order to promote quality education, the scheme would cover loans for pursuing professional and technical courses.



93. Cabinet approved enhancing scope of Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for enhancing the scope of Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY). The Government will now contribute the Employer's full admissible contribution for the first three years from the date of registration of the new employee for all the sectors including existing beneficiaries for their remaining period of three years.



The informal sector workers would get social safety net and there would be more job creation. The scheme has helped add about 31 Lakh beneficiaries to the formal employment involving an expenditure of more than 500 crore rupees.

94. Government signed \$80mn loan agreement with ADB to help modernize Technical Education in Himachal

Asian Development Bank, ADB and Government of India has signed 80 million dollar loan to help modernize Technical and Vocational Education and Training, TVET institutions and improve the skills ecosystem in Himachal Pradesh.

The project will support the skill initiatives of Himachal Pradesh. It will help improve employment prospects of nearly 65 thousand youths by 2022. The project will establish a polytechnic for women, six city Livelihood Centers and seven Rural Livelihood Centers, and upgrade 11 employment exchanges into model career Centers.



95. EPFO launched portal for pensioners

EPFO has launched the pensioner’s portal through which all EPFO pensioners may get the details of pension-related information. The pensioner’s portal will provide details like pension payment order number, payment order details, passbook information and other related information.



The portal provides help to pensioners to know the status of their life certificate. It also provides the details and the reason of stoppage of pension. The facility has been made available at EPFO’s website www.epfindia.gov.in.

96. Cabinet approved MoU between India, UK and Northern Ireland for cooperation against Organised Crime

The Union Cabinet has approved the MoU between India and United Kingdom and Northern Ireland regarding cooperation and Exchange of Information for the Purposes of Combating International Criminality and Tackling Serious Organised Crime. The MoU will reinforce the collaboration in the field of security that will be mutually beneficial.



India and U.K. already have an agreement concerning the investigation and prosecution of crime and the tracing, restraint and confiscation of the proceeds and instruments of crime (including crimes involving currency transfers) and terrorist funds, which was signed in 1995.

97. Cabinet approved MoU between India and South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme

The Union Cabinet has approved signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) for cooperation on the response to Oil and Chemical Pollution in the South Asian Seas Region.



The MoU intends to promote closer cooperation between India and other maritime nations comprising the South Asian seas region namely Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka for protection and preservation of marine environment in the region.

98. Cabinet approved MoU between India and Canada on IPRs

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post approval for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Canada to establish bilateral cooperation activities in the field of Intellectual Property (IP). The MoU is intended to promote innovation, creativity and economic growth in both countries.

The MoU establishes a broad and flexible framework through which both countries can exchange best practices and work together on training programs and technical exchanges to raise awareness on IPRs and better protect intellectual property rights (IPRs).



99. Cabinet cleared amendments to NMC Bill

The Union Cabinet has approved following certain official amendments to the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill:

1. Final MBBS Examination to be held as a common exam across the country and would serve as an exit test called the National Exit Test (NEXT)
2. Provision of Bridge course for AYUSH practitioners to practice modern medicine removed
3. Fee regulation for 50% seats in private medical institutions and deemed universities
4. Number of nominees from States and UTs in NMC increased from 3 to 6
5. Stringent punishment for unqualified medical practitioners



100. Government to divest 76% stake in Air India

Government has unveiled plans to sell up to 76% stake in Air India and transfer the management control to private players. The proposed disinvestment will include profit-making Air India Express and joint venture AISATS. The AISATS is an equal joint venture between the national carrier and Singapore-based SATS Ltd.

While the government will retain 24% stake in Air India, the winning bidder will be required to stay invested in the airline for at least three years. Four other subsidiaries of the airline - AIESL (Air India Engineering Services Ltd), AIATSL (Air India Air Transport Services Ltd),



HCI (Hotel Corporation of India) and AASL (Airline Allied Services Ltd) will be hived off through demerger or any other appropriate mechanisms.

101. 3,21,567 Affordable Houses sanctioned for Urban Poor under PMAY(Urban)

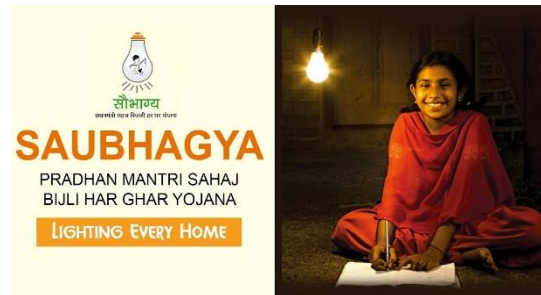
The Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has approved the construction of 3,21,567 more affordable houses for the benefit of urban poor under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) with an investment of Rs. 18,203 cr with central assistance of Rs. 4,752 cr.



The projects were sanctioned across 523 cities in the states of Haryana, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Mizoram, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab & Goa. The cumulative houses under PMAY(U) would become 42,45,792 after final approval from Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee.

102. Ministry of Power collaborated with Skill India to support electrification scheme 'Saubhagya'

The Ministry of Power has collaborated with the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship to train the manpower in six states for speedy implementation of its SAUBHAGYA scheme. The scheme is undertaken as a special project under the government's Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY). Around 47,000 Distribution Lineman-Multi Skills and 8,500 Technical Helpers will be trained to meet the requirement of power sector.



SAUBHAGYA (Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojna) aims to achieve universal household electrification in all parts of the country in a time bound manner.

Persons in News

1. Michael Bloomberg launched \$20 mn anti-tobacco watchdog

Philanthropist Michael Bloomberg launched 20 million US dollars anti-tobacco watchdog to detect and expose deceptive practices by the tobacco industry.



Mr Bloomberg, an Ambassador for the World Health Organization reported that tobacco control measures have saved nearly 35 million lives. Bloomberg's charitable giving organization accuses the tobacco industry of seeking to legitimize itself in the eyes of policymakers, of marketing to children, and pushing cigarette alternatives for which the health care remains inconclusive. Bloomberg launched the World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Cape Town.

2. MS Dhoni signed as brand ambassador of gaming platform Dream 11

Veteran Indian cricketer Mahendra Singh Dhoni was signed as brand ambassador of gaming platform Dream 11. Dream11 is India's biggest sports game with over 2 crore users playing fantasy cricket, football, kabaddi and basketball.



He was selected as brand ambassador because of his mastermind leadership as Indian cricket team captain. MS Dhoni is known for his outstanding decisions and management of team as Indian cricket team captain. He has been honoured with rank of Lieutenant Colonel. Mahendra Singh Dhoni has signed around 20 endorsements at present.

3. Virat Kohli named as Brand Ambassador for Uber India

Uber India has appointed Virat Kohli, Captain of the Indian Cricket team as its first brand ambassador in India, a first of its kind initiative across the Asia Pacific region.



Virat will be actively involved in a series of innovative marketing and customer experience initiatives to be rolled out by Uber India. Virat is currently valued at \$144 million in terms of brand value, more than anyone, according to a report titled 'Rise of the Millennials: India's most valuable celebrity brands.'

4. Steve Smith and David Warner banned for 1 year over the ball tampering case

Cricket Australia has handed a 12-month suspension to Steve Smith and David Warner for their involvement in the ball-tampering scandal. Cameron Bancroft has been handed a nine-month suspension.



Smith and Warner also stepped down as captains of Rajasthan Royals and Sunrisers Hyderabad respectively. Smith and Bancroft have also been banned from captaining Australia for at least the next two years, while Warner will not be considered for any team leadership positions in the future.

5. Anushka Sharma, PV Sindhu in Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia List

Bollywood actor-producer Anushka Sharma and India's badminton ace PV Sindhu have featured in the Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia 2018 list, which includes innovators who are reshaping their industries and changing Asia for the better.



The Forbes list highlights 300 young individuals driving change in Asia. Forbes has selected names in various sectors including entertainment, finance and venture capital, retail, social entrepreneurs and enterprise technology.

Places in News

1. Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav ends on a grand note in Indore

'Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav (RSM) -2018' a diversified cultural carnival organized by Ministry of Culture in Madhya Pradesh concluded in Indore. The festival received continuous gratitude for playing a major role to effectively connect the audience to the rich, diverse and undiscovered culture of India under the umbrella of Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.



The festival showcased a titanic variety of tribal and classical art forms from different cities and towns across the country accompanied by dance, music, drama, entertainment and food. A handloom and handicrafts-utsav was also a part of this Mahotsav.

2. 27th IJIRA held in Kolkata

27th Technological Conference of Indian Jute Industries' Research Association on Shaping the Future of Jute held in Kolkata. It was done to promote geotextile in the northeast region. The conference also discussed that women-centric employment opportunity in the production of the sanitary napkin should be encouraged. It was attended by Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani.



Geotextiles are permeable fabrics which, when used in association with soil, have the ability to separate, filter, reinforce, protect, or drain.

3. International Yoga Festival held in Rishikesh

29th International Yoga Festival was celebrated on the banks of the holy Ganges river, in the lap of the sacred Himalayas, the birthplace of yoga at Parmarth Niketan Ashram, Rishikesh, India. Around 80 famous saints, yogacharyas (yoga teachers), presenters and experts from nearly 97 countries around the world witnessed the event and participated for over 70 hours of Yoga classes. World class yoga teachers performed multiple styles of Yoga including Kundalini Yoga, Power Vinyasa Yoga, Iyengar Yoga and Kriya Yoga.



The participants also witnessed cultural programmes, satsang and divine words of veteran saints and spiritual masters from India.

4. 1st commercial flight of Spicejet lands successfully at Pakyong airport in Sikkim

The first commercial flight of Spicejet landed successfully at newly constructed Pakyong airport in Sikkim. The plane's landing is seen as a major boost to the state tourism prospect.

Pakyong is about 30 kilometers away from Gangtok. Pakyong Airport is 4,600ft above sea level. SpiceJet had bid for flying rights from the airport under the Centre's regional connectivity scheme called UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik).



5. 'WINGS INDIA 2018' held in Hyderabad

The four-day biennial event 'WINGS INDIA 2018', jointly organized by Ministry of Civil Aviation and Airport Authority of India and FICCI was held in Hyderabad. The theme of the event was 'India-Global Aviation Hub'.



WINGS INDIA 2018 is a platform for interactions, forging alliances, investments and air connectivity between the States and the global aviation players & stakeholders. About 125 exhibitors and 35 CEOs participated in the event.

6. Annual Krishi Unnati Mela held in Delhi

The three-day annual Krishi Unnati Mela was held in New Delhi with a focus on doubling the farmers' income. The objective of the fair was to create awareness among farmers about the latest agriculture-related technological developments.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Jaivik Kheti portal and laid the foundation stone of 25Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs). The mela had a theme pavilion on "Doubling Farmers income by 2022".



7. PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Indian Science Congress in Manipur

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 105th session of the Indian Science Congress, at Manipur University in Imphal. Imphal, thus became the second city in the North-East to host this prestigious event. Around 5000 delegates including three Noble laureates, scientists, scholars and researchers from all across the country participated in the conference.



The theme of the ISC 2018 is "Reaching the Unreached Through Science and Technology". The 106th Indian Science Congress will be held in Bhopal with the theme "Future India: Science and Technology".

8. First National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement held in New Delhi

A two-day first National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement was held in New Delhi on 23rd and 24th March, 2018. The conference was organized by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Ministry of Home Affairs.

More than 50 State and Central Law Enforcement Agencies involved in combating drug trafficking participated in the conference. Conference working sessions focused on various topics such as 'Wider context of drug trafficking in India', 'Financial Investigations' and 'Foreign & Cyber Investigations'.



9. 'National Conference on Down Syndrome' held in New Delhi

'National Conference on Down Syndrome' was organized by the National Trust under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in New Delhi on 26th March 2018. A book entitled "Twilights Children" based on the lives of person suffering from Down Syndrome was released on the occasion.

The objective of this conference was to provide excellent opportunities to the parents to obtain information about latest development in education and skilling and inclusive living of persons with Down Syndrome. Down Syndrome is a chromosomal condition associated with intellectual and learning disabilities.



Regional

1. First Mega Food Park organized in Maharashtra

First Mega Food Park named as M/s Satara Mega Food Park Pvt. Ltd was inaugurated in the state of Maharashtra. Mega Food Parks create modern infrastructure facilities for food processing along the value chain from farm to market with strong forward and backward linkages through a cluster based approach.



Mega Food Park will leverage an additional investment of about Rs. 250 crores in 25-30 food processing units in the park and would eventually lead to a turnover of about Rs. 450-500 crore annually. The Park will also provide employment and benefit about 25,000 farmers.

2. Odisha launched 'Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas' programme

The Odisha government launched a programme Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas (Our Village, Our Development) to reach out to the people in rural areas and involve themselves in the developmental activities.

**"Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas"
Yojana Programme Odisha**

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik flagged off mobile video vans for 'Ama Gaon Ama Vikas' programme that will move across the State to highlight various welfare schemes at villages in the state. Through these Wi-Fi enabled latest technology video wall vans, people can directly send their grievances to the Chief Minister's Office at the Secretariat in Bhubaneswar.



3. Delhi government appointed panel to inspect child care facilities

Delhi government appointed a six-member state inspection committee under the chairmanship of the director of Women and Child Development, WCD, department, who is also member secretary of state child protection society. The committee will conduct random visits to all facilities housing children in the national capital and get feedback from the kids there.



MINISTRY OF WOMEN & CHILD DEVELOPMENT | GOI

The committee will also interact with children during their visits to determine their well-being and get their feedback and submit report. The district child protection unit will take necessary follow-up action on the report of the inspection committee.

4. Karnataka to have world's largest solar park

Since Karnataka has emerged as the third-largest producer of renewable energy in India, it was decided by Government to inaugurate world's largest solar park in Karnataka, named as 'Shakti Sthala'. Karnataka's solar park will have 2,000 megawatt capacity and can generate 2000 MW power.



The project will involve 2,300 farmers as these farmers will provide their land for Rs 21,000 per acre per annum rent. The solar park will involve cost of Rs 165 billion at 13,000 acres spread across five villages.

5. Neiphiu Rio selected as Chief Minister of Nagaland

NDPP leader Neiphiu Rio took over as Chief Minister of Nagaland for 4th term. Governor PB Acharya administered the Oath of Office and Secrecy to the Council of Ministers. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Yanthungo Patton was selected as the Deputy Chief Minister. The new Chief Minister proved the majority and ensured that Nagaland's development will witness a new governance under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's growth agenda.



Neiphiu Rio participated from Northern Angami II constituency and was declared elected unopposed.

6. Conrad Sangma became 12th chief minister of Meghalaya

Chief of the National People's Party, Conrad Sangma became new Chief Minister of Meghalaya, replacing Mukul Sangma. He took oath in presence of Governor Ganga Prasad in Shillong. At present, he is a Lok Sabha MP from the Tura parliamentary constituency in Meghalaya.



Conrad Sangma became the 12th chief minister of Meghalaya with union of five parties, namely the National People's Party, United Democratic Party (UDP), People's Democratic Front, Hill State People's Democratic Party and the BJP. He was known as the youngest finance minister of Meghalaya in 2008.

7. Goa celebrated Shigmotsav 2018

Goa celebrated Shigmotsav 2018. The fest is also called as Shigmo. Shigmo fest is a folklore holiday of the oncoming spring season in Goa. It is one of the several cultural festivals of the coastal state and is celebrated with the performance of particular songs and dances with exact color of clothing, performances of significant Epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata etc.



Shigmo is the biggest Hindu festival in Goa with processions and festivities taking place all across the state every year.

8. Karnataka state launched 'Arogya Karnataka'

In order to ensure universal health coverage for all citizens of Karnataka state, Karnataka state unveiled 'Arogya Karnataka' programme. It is a health scheme to provide treatment of health at an affordable cost. It will provide medical cover to both Below Poverty Line and Above Poverty Line families in the state. The state will bear Rs. 2000 crore cost for 'Arogya Karnataka' programme to cover 1.4 crore families.



State government will bear 30% of bills up to Rs 1.5 lakh in case of ABL families and 100% of bills up to Rs 1.5 lakh for each BPL families.

9. Odisha state launched KHUSHI scheme

In order to promote hygiene and empower women, Odisha state launched a scheme named as KHUSHI scheme, so as to provide free sanitary napkins to school girls across the state. The scheme benefitting 17 lakh girls, will cost 70 crores annually to the health and family welfare department of the state. Under this scheme, sanitary napkins will be provided at reduced cost to rural women as well.



Odisha state had previously introduced benefitting schemes such as Mission Shakti and Mamata.

10. Biplab Deb became Tripura's new Chief Minister

Biplab Kumar Deb became new Chief Minister of Tripura and BJP MLA Jishnu Debbarma was selected as the deputy chief minister. Gadkari was appointed as observer by BJP president Amit Shah. As per demands of Indigenous People's Front of Tripura, the incumbent chief minister is from tribal community. Biplab Deb is the leader of Bharatiya Janata Party and will be known as 20th chief minister of Tripura. With this victory of Biplab Deb, BJP government has entered with power in Tripura state for the first time under the name of National Democratic Alliance (NDA).



Biplab Deb served as the state president of the Bharatiya Janata Party in Tripura since 7 January 2016.

11. Bengaluru launched its first helicopter taxi service

India's first helicopter taxi service took off for the first time in Bengaluru, which carried nine passengers from Kempegowda International Airport and to Electronic City in just 12 minutes. It saved time of about 2 hours. The service will cost Rs 3,500 plus GST to the passengers. The heli taxi service allows to carry 15 kg luggage.



At present, heli taxi service is launched for only one route, i.e. from KIA to Electronic City and vice-versa. The service was launched by Thumbby Aviation Private Limited.

12. Microsoft signed renewable energy deal for Bengaluru facility

Microsoft has inked its first renewable energy deal in India for powering its new facility in Bengaluru. As a part of the agreement, Microsoft will purchase 3 megawatts of solar-powered electricity from Atria Power for its new office building in Bengaluru. It will help meet 80% of the projected electricity needs at the facility.



The deal was Microsoft's first solar energy agreement in India. Microsoft's goal is to rely on wind, solar and hydropower electricity for at least 50 % of its energy usage worldwide by the end of 2018.

13. Rajasthan passed bill for death penalty for rape of girls below 12

Rajasthan Assembly approved a bill providing for death penalty to those convicted of raping girls under 12 years of age. The Criminal Laws (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill, 2018, seeks to add section 376-AA and 376-DD in the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Two amendments are proposed in the bill including that the convict cannot come out of prison for life even after completing 14 years of the sentence. By doing so, it became the second state after Madhya Pradesh to award death penalty to child rapists.



सत्यमेव जयते

Government of Rajasthan

14. Telangana launched Start-up incubator for women 'We-Hub'

The Government of Telangana has launched Women Entrepreneurship Hub (WE- Hub) in Hyderabad which is India's first state-led incubator exclusively for women entrepreneurs. WE Hub will be open for all kinds of startups led by women.



We-Hub is an entrepreneurial platform for aspiring women from rural and urban backgrounds helping them achieve being independent. Six MoUs were signed at the WE-Hub launch event. WE Hub will be temporarily based out of the office of T-SAT in campus in BR Ambedkar University in Hyderabad with 100 seats.

15. Karnataka unveils its own State Flag

The Karnataka state government unveiled the State flag (nada dhwaja) for Karnataka. If consequently approved by the Union Government, Karnataka will be the second State to have a flag after Jammu and Kashmir. A State has no powers to announce its own flag.

The flag is tri-colored in yellow-white-red with the State emblem "Gandaberunda" at the centre. A nine-member committee had in February submitted a favorable report recommending such a flag for the state.



16. Road Rehabilitation Projects approved for Punjab

The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has approved the rehabilitation and upgradation of the national highway - 148 in Punjab. The road stretch between Moonaktown – Jakhal – BudhlanaBhikhi shall be rehabilitated and upgraded to two-lanes with paved shoulder under EPC mode. The approximate length of this stretch is 46 kms. The project will cost about Rs 293.10 crore.



Two flyovers are proposed on the stretch, with six minor bridges. Existing 108 culverts will be reconstructed.

17. India's tallest flag hoisted in Karnataka's Belgaum

India's tallest national flag was hoisted in Belgaum in Karnataka. The 110 m tall flag post at Kote Kere lake front is near the historic Belagavi fort. It is taller than the post in Pune (107 m) and the one at the Indo-Pak border at Attari (105 m).



The flag also beats the one at the India-Pakistan border at Attari in Punjab in terms of the size at 9,600 sq ft wide.

18. Haryana passed bill to give death penalty to rapists of girls below 12

Haryana Assembly passed a bill proposing death penalty and rigorous imprisonment not less than 14 years in respect of rape/gang rape of girls below 12 years.

The punishment of 14 years may be extended to imprisonment for life that is for the remainder of the person's natural life, as per provisions in the Criminal Law (Haryana Amendment) Bill, 2018 also proposes punishment not less than 2 years and up to 7 years in case of assault with intent to outrage the modesty of the girl.



19. PM Modi, French President Macron Inaugurate UP's Biggest Solar Power Plant

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron today inaugurated Uttar Pradesh's biggest solar power plant (75 MW) in Mirzapur district's Chhanvey block.



The project has been built at a cost of Rs 500 crore by a French firm ENGIE at the Dadar Kalan village. 1,18,600 solar panels have been set up in over 380 acres. The plant will generate 15.6 crore units of electricity annually. Solar Energy Corporation of India has signed a Power purchase agreement for 25 years with the company.

20. Floating Lab set up to monitor Manipur's Loktak Lake

The Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Laboratory (IBSD), Imphal has set up a floating laboratory on Loktak lake to constantly monitor its water quality. Loktak is northeast India's largest freshwater lake.



The project is a joint venture between Loktak Development Authority (LDA) and ISBD. The project will help in conservation and sustainable development of the lake and further improve the life of the lake dwellers.

21. Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly passes 'AP Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill 2018

The Arunachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly has passed the Arunachal Pradesh Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill 2018. Now the state will have a two-tier Panchayati Raj System.



The 73rd amendment of the constitution allows states having population of less than 20 lakh to have a two-tier Panchayati Raj system, instead of a three. Arunachal Pradesh has a population of around 14 lakh only. The house also passed the Money Lending (Regulation) Bill 2018 to contain unregulated money lending prevalent in the state and The Arunachal Pradesh Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

22. Telangana government signed MoU with Kay Ventures

The Telangana government has signed a memorandum of understanding with Kay Ventures for setting up a ₹100-crore Apparel Super Hub in Sircilla. This will be set up in 20 acres of land and completed in three phases. The first and second phases will see the functioning of 1,000 sewing machines each, the third phase will add a 1,500 more.

The project is expected to be completely operational in 3 years. The entire capacity of the apparel hub is being tied up with leading national and international brands.



23. Odisha Government to collaborate with RIMES for disaster management

The Odisha government is set to collaborate with the Thailand-based Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES). The Odisha State Disaster Mitigation Authority and RIMES would partner in the field of drought monitoring and early warning for different natural disasters.

RIMES is expected to provide a one-stop risk management system for all OSDMA needs. RIMES is already working with the Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Authority.



24. Maharashtra banned plastic bags and single-use plastic items

According to the Maharashtra Plastic and Thermocol Products (Manufacture, Usage, Sale, Transport, Handling and Store) Notification 2018, the manufacture, usage, sale, storage and transport of products made from plastic and thermocol will be banned with immediate effect across the state.

The government has proposed fines of Rs 5,000, Rs 10,000 and Rs 25,000 for the first three offences. However, plastic used for packing and packaging will be exempted.



25. Centre approved to set up a plastic park in Deoghar district of Jharkhand

The Union Government has approved to set up a plastic park in Deoghar district of Jharkhand. The park is being set up at an estimated cost of Rs 120 crore and is spread over 150 acres of land.

The park will provide six thousand direct employments and 30 thousand indirect employments for the people. The Centre will also set up a plastic refining unit in the same area at the cost of Rs 3.5 crore.



26. Karnataka State Cabinet approved 'religious minority' status to Lingayats

The Karnataka state cabinet has approved separate religion status for Lingayat community in the state. The government granted the status on the basis of the recommendations of the seven-member committee headed by the high court retired judge Nagamohan Das. The government has forwarded the recommendation to the Centre.

Lingayats, a distinct Shaivite religious tradition, are followers of the 12th century poet-social reformer Basaveshwara who rebelled against established Hindu tradition by defying the caste system and vedic rituals.



27. Punjab government banned hookah bars permanently

In order to promote a healthy life, combat various smoking-related diseases and cease the use of tobacco, Punjab state permanently banned hookah bars in its state. State cabinet approved amendments to the Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA), 2003 for the prevention and control of diseases caused by the use of tobacco products.

The proposed amendment passed by Punjab state cabinet will be placed before the assembly and, once passed by the House, will be reserved for the President's assent. Prior to this, Gujarat has completely banned hookah bars and warned of stringent punishment if the orders are defied.



28. Indian Oil Corporation launched home-delivery of diesel for the first time

It has been for the first time that Indian Oil promises to deliver diesel at customer's doorstep. The services are launched in Pune on pilot basis. Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation approved the services. Since petrol ignites easily and diesel does not ignite easily without pressure being applied, this makes it easier to handle for home delivery.

IndianOil Corporation Ltd is India's largest commercial enterprise. The Indian Oil Group of companies owns and operates 10 of India's 20 refineries.



29. Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated Bihar Diwas celebrations

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated three-day Bihar Diwas celebrations in Patna. The Vice President also released four books- 'Ek Tha Mohan', 'Bapu Ki Chiththi', 'Champaran Ki Kahani' and 'Neel Ke Dhabbe' on this occasion.

Bihar celebrated its 106th foundation day on 22nd March 2018. It was on this day in 1912 that the state was carved out of a United Bengal. The theme for this year's celebrations was "Centenary of Champaran Satyagraha and Elimination of Dowry and Child Marriage."



30. AAP government presented Rs 53,000 cr Delhi Budget for 2018-19

AAP government presented 53,000 crore rupees budget for 2018-19 in the Delhi Assembly. 26% of total budget allocation or 13,957 crore rupees, have been earmarked for education.

A total of 403 crore rupees have been set aside for 100 mohallah clinics. 440 crore rupees have been allocated for construction of new hospital and modernization and 1500 crore rupees for infrastructure development of unauthorized colonies. 1000 electric buses will be purchased.



31. Andhra Government launched NAIPUNYA RATHAM or World on Wheels

The Andhra Pradesh Government launched, on 22nd March 2018, NAIPUNYA RATHAM or World on Wheels, a multi-utility vehicle which aims to bring technology to the remote corners. The Government will roll out 12 more Naipunya Rathams by May 2018.



As a part of the 'Smart village Smart Ward' Programme, the Naipunya Ratham will facilitate and look to improve digital literacy, digital skills and create an awareness on various government schemes that are underway in the new state of Andhra Pradesh.

32. World's longest sandstone cave discovered in Meghalaya

The world's longest sandstone cave at 24,583 metres in length has been discovered in Meghalaya. The cave is called Krem Puri. The cave system has fossils of dinosaurs, especially the Mosasaurus, a giant reptile that lived 66-76 million years ago.



Krem Puri cave is more than 6,000 metres longer than the world record-holder, the Cueva Del Saman in Edo Zulia, Venezuela. It has also become India's second longest cave in the general category after the limestone Krem Liat Prah-Umim-Labit system.

33. Assam government started construction of 1 lakh toilets under Swachh Bharat Mission

The Assam government has started construction of one-lakh toilets across the state under the Swachh Bharat Mission. The toilets will be completed in 10 days. The toilets will be constructed in 33 districts of the state that will cover around 219 blocks.



The Assam government has planned to make the state ODF within this year. As of date, six out of 35 districts in Assam have been declared ODF along with 857 villages and 50 tea gardens covering 23 lakh households.

34. AAI signed MoU with Assam government to develop villages in Kamrup

The Airport Authority of India (AAI) has signed an MoU with Assam government under its Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) initiative for sustainable development of human settlements at villages in Kamrup district.

AAI would provide financial assistance under its CSR initiative of Rs 4.58 crore for the Kamrup district as per the estimates prepared by the UNDP to improve the resilience of communities around Guwahati Airport.



35. UP Assembly passed UPCOCA bill

The Upper House of the State Legislature in Uttar Pradesh passed UP Control of Organised Crime Act, UPCOCA Bill amid opposition's protest. The stringent Bill aims to curb organized crime and deal strictly with those trying to foment terror.

The Act provides death sentence or life imprisonment with a penalty of up to two lakh fifty thousand rupees. In other cases of organised crime, the offence would be punishable with imprisonment for a term not less than 7 years and may extend to life imprisonment with a fine of one lakh fifty thousand rupees.



36. Puri Jagannath temple Ratna Bhandar to be opened after 34 years

The Odisha government has granted permission to the Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA) of Puri to open the Ratna Bhandar after 34 years for inspection by the Archaeological Survey of India. The Orissa High Court had ordered the ASI to inspect the structural condition of the Ratna Bhandar on March 26 and 27 and submit a status report on March 29.

The Ratna Bhandar was last inspected in 1984. The High Court is monitoring the repair work undertaken by the ASI over a PIL seeking judicial intervention for an effective repair and renovation of the temple.



37. India's first insect museum opened in Tamil Nadu

India's first insect museum was opened at the Department of Agricultural Entomology of Tamil Nadu Agricultural University. The museum is established at a 6,691 sqft area with a cost of Rs 5 crore. The museum is fully dedicated to insects and houses 20,000 insects from 50 species.



The museum would display insects preserved as specimens as also live ones depicting their different developmental stages, images, videos and models of their unique behavior, habits and habitats.

38. Rajasthan's first mega food park inaugurated in Ajmer

Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated the first mega food park of Rajasthan, at Roopangarh village near Ajmer. The Food Park is set up at an investment of Rs 113.57 crore. Center has given Rs 50 crore subsidy for this project.



The mega food park would attract an additional investment of about Rs. 250 crore in about 30 food processing units in the park and to a turnover of about Rs 500 crore per annum. Rajasthan is the fourth largest producer of food grains in India.

Reports

1. World Military rank topped by USA

Global Fire Power Index 2017 ranked USA at the first position and India at 4th position for its military strength. Russia was ranked the second and China's military strength was ranked the third. According to the report, India has more than 13,62,500 active militants whereas China has 37,12,500 active militants.

Global Fire Power Index 2017 also reported that India's defence budget is USD 51 billion as against China's USD161.7 billion and Pakistan's USD7 billion which was ranked 13th in the index. Global Fire Power Index relies on 50 factors to come to a conclusion.



2. Jeff Bezos tops Forbes Billionaires List 2018

According to Forbes Billionaires List 2018, Amazon's Jeff Bezos has topped the list with a net worth of \$112 billion, becoming the only person to appear in the Forbes list with a 12-figure fortune. Bill Gates was second in the list with a fortune of \$90 billion.

The others in the top five are Warren Buffet (\$84 billion), Bernard Arnault and family (\$72 billion), and Facebook founder-CEO Mark Zuckerberg (\$71 billion) respectively. India's Mukesh Ambani was 19th on the list with \$40.1 billion net-worth.



3. Delhi and Mumbai ranked as World's Best Airports

According to the Airports Council International (ACI) ASQ 2017 rankings, Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) of Delhi and Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport were ranked as the world's best airports.

The Airports Council International (ACI) had conducted a worldwide programme in which passengers were surveyed across airports for their feedback on 34 key performance indicators. ACI is a trade association of 1,953 airports in 176 countries.



4. Finland tops World Happiness Index 2018

According to the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network's (SDSN) 2018 World Happiness Report, Finland is the world's happiest country. India was ranked 133 out of 156 nations.

The top 10 nations included Finland, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden and Australia. The USA was 18th while UK was 19th. The African countries - Tanzania (153rd), South Sudan (154th), Central African Republic (155th) and Burundi (156th) occupied the bottom positions in the happiness index.



5. Pune ranked as the top city in terms of good governance

According to the Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS) report released by the Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy, a Bengaluru-based non-profit organization, Pune has been ranked as the best city in terms of good governance. Pune scored 5.1 points out of 10.

Kolkata, Thiruvananthapuram, Bhubaneswar and Surat were the other cities in the top five. Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Dehradun, Patna and Chennai constituted the bottom five cities. Bengaluru was ranked last in the list.



6. India ranks 78th on WEF Energy Transition Index

According to the "Fostering Effective Energy Transition" report published by the World Economic Forum, India has been ranked at 78th among 114 countries on the Energy Transition Index. The index was topped by Sweden. Brazil stood at the 38th place, Russia at 70th and China at 76th place.

Other countries on the top 10 include Norway, Switzerland, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, the UK, Austria, France and Iceland. India improved its performance score by 5.6% points between 2013 and 2018.



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7. Andhra Pradesh stands at 51st position in Global Multidimensional Poverty Index

According to Andhra Pradesh Multidimensional Poverty (MPI) Index Report 2017, the State secured an Index value of 0.0825 which is equivalent to 51st rank globally. The value ranges from 0 to 1; 0 being the best and 1 being the worst.



India, with an Index value of 0.1911, is at the 66th position. The Vision Management Unit (VMU) of the Planning Department in collaboration conducted the study with the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) of the University of Oxford.

8. Worldwide Cost of Living Report 2018

According to the Economist Intelligence Unit's (EIU) Worldwide Cost of Living 2018 survey, Singapore has been dubbed the world's most expensive city to live in for the fifth year running. The cheapest city this year was found to be Damascus in Syria.



Paris, Zurich, Hongkong, Oslo, Geneva, Seoul, Copenhagen, Tel Aviv and Sydney are the cities in the top ten most expensive cities. Caracas, Almaty, Lagos, Bangalore, Karachi, Algiers, Chennai, Bucharest and New Delhi are the other cities in the top ten cheapest cities.

9. Skytrax survey rated Singapore Airport as world's best airport for 2018

Skytrax survey rated Singapore Changi Airport as world's best airport for the sixth consecutive year. The Incheon International Airport in South Korea and Haneda Airport in Japan secured second and third place in the list. India's Mumbai airport was placed at 63rd position and the airports of Bangalore and Delhi were placed at 64th and 66th place respectively.



Tokyo Haneda was named as world's cleanest airport whereas Rome's Leonardo da Vinci-Fiumicino Airport was named as most improved airport. Incheon Airport was rated as world's best airport for "staff service" while London Heathrow's T2 was rated as "best terminal".

10. Brazzaville declaration signed to protect world's largest tropical peatland

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), the Republic of Congo and Indonesia jointly signed the Brazzaville declaration. The declaration will help to protect the Cuvette Centrale region in the Congo Basin, the world's largest tropical peatlands, from unregulated land use and prevent its drainage and degradation.



The Brazzaville Declaration aims to implement coordination and cooperation between different government sectors to protect the benefits provided by peatland ecosystems. Peatlands are wetlands that contain a mixture of decomposed organic material, partially submerged in a layer of water, lacking oxygen.

11. Independent Verification of Swachh Bharat Gramin confirms 93% usage of toilets

The National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) 2017-18, conducted by an Independent Verification Agency (IVA) under the World Bank support project to the Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G), has found that 93.4% of the households in rural India who have access to a toilet use it.



The other key findings of NARSS 2017-18 are as follows:

1. 77% of households were found to have access to toilets during the survey period
2. 95.6% of villages which were previously declared and verified as ODF were confirmed to be ODF
3. 70% of the villages surveyed found to have minimal litter and minimal stagnant water

Resignations & Retirements

1. Hope Hicks resigned as White House communications director

US President Donald Trump's Communications Director Hope Hicks has planned to resign and leave the White House.

The announcement of resignation came a day after Hicks testified before the House Intelligence Committee on allegations related to the Russian interference during the 2016 presidential campaign. Hicks is a trusted adviser and counsellor, and did a tremendous job overseeing the communications for the President's agenda, including the passage of historic tax reform.



2. Gary Cohn resigned as Trump's top economic advisor

White House's top economic adviser Gary Cohn resigned over his differences with US President Donald Trump on trade policy.

Cohn, who is a Former Goldman Sachs executive resigned as the White House National Economic Council director, after differences with the decision of Trump to impose a 25 per cent tariff on import of steel and 10 per cent on Aluminium. During his stay at the White House, he led coordination of Trump's pro-growth domestic and global economic policy agenda, including the passage of historic tax cuts and reforms in December 2017.



3. Ashok Gajapathi Raju and Y S Chowdary resigned from Union Cabinet

Union Civil Aviation Minister Ashok Gajapathi Raju and Minister of State for Science and Technology Y.S. Chowdary of the Telugu Desam Party resigned from the Union Council of Ministers.

The TDP has been demanding special category status for Andhra Pradesh while the Union Government is of the opinion that after the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission, the concept of special category status was abolished and hence AP could not be given the special category status.



4. Bhagwant Mann resigned as President of AAP's Punjab state unit

Aam Aadmi Party MP, Bhagwant Mann has resigned from the post of party's Punjab Chief after Delhi Chief Minister and AAP convenor Arvind Kejriwal tendered an apology to former Punjab Minister Bikram Singh Majithia for levelling unfounded allegations relating to his involvement in drugs trade. AAP Punjab unit co-president Aman Arora also resigned.



In May 2016, Majithia had filed a criminal defamation case against Kejriwal and other AAP leaders who had made allegations against him.

5. Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico resigned

Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico resigned after weeks of public protests over the murder of an investigative journalist who reported on tax evasion and fraud among Slovak businesses. Deputy Prime Minister Peter Pellegrini will form the new government.



Jan Kuciak and his fiancée, Martina Kušnírová, were found dead in Kuciak's apartment with bullet wounds. Kuciak had been investigating an alleged connection between Italy's 'Ndrangheta crime syndicate and high-ranking officials in the Slovak government.

6. Goa Congress President Shantaram Naik resigned

Goa Pradesh Congress Committee President Shantaram Naik resigned from his position inspired by Mr Rahul Gandhi's appeal at the party plenary meeting to make way for young leaders. He thus became the first senior Congress leader to resign after Rahul Gandhi's announcement.



Seventy-one-year-old Naik was appointed as the head of Goa Congress on July 7, 2017. Mr Naik was elected to Lok Sabha in 1984 from North Goa constituency and twice to Rajya Sabha later.

7. Myanmar's President U Htin Kyaw resigned

Myanmar's President U Htin Kyaw has resigned after two years in office due to health reasons. Mr Kyaw became the President in 2016 following landmark elections that saw the end of decades of military leadership in the country. According to the country's constitution, Vice President Myint Swe will move into the role until a new President is in place.

Htin Kyaw was the first Myanmar president since the 1962 coup to have no connections to the military.



8. Kevin Pietersen announced retirement from professional cricket

England batsman Kevin Pietersen announced his retirement from all forms of professional cricket. Pietersen has 8,181 runs in 104 tests, 4,440 runs in 136 ODIs and 1,176 runs in 37 Twenty20 internationals.

Pietersen played his last game for the Quetta Gladiators in the 2018 edition of the Pakistan Super League. He scored 23 centuries in 104 Test matches. Pietersen is England's second-highest run-scorer of all time across all three formats of the game.



9. Darren Lehmann announced resignation as head coach of Cricket Australia

Darren Lehmann has announced his resignation as head coach of Cricket Australia's men's team. The fourth Test against South Africa at the Wanderers was his last Test.

Lehman was cleared of any wrongdoing by Cricket Australia investigation in the ball-tampering scandal. Lehmann was appointed head coach just weeks out from the 2013 Ashes series in England after CA sacked South African Mickey Arthur. Lehman was the coach of the Australian team when they won the 2015 World Cup.



1. Researchers develop new thermoelectric compound

Bengaluru's Jawaharlal Nehru Centre developed a novel compound that exhibits poor thermal conductivity but shows good electrical conductivity for Advanced Scientific Researchers. This new compound is named as silver copper telluride (AgCuTe). AgCuTe can convert waste heat into electricity. According to a survey, 65% of utilized energy is wasted which can be converted into useful purpose. JNCASR researchers reported that efficiency of AgCuTe to convert heat into electricity is 14%.



Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) is a multidisciplinary research institute situated in Bangalore, to promote world-class research and training at the frontiers of Science.

2. India's First Cloned Assamese Buffalo Born

According to the Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes, a cloned Assamese buffalo male calf was born for the first time. The calf has been named Sach-Gaurav. It was born to a Murrah buffalo.

The calf is also the first to be born in the field, 100 kms from the cloning laboratory at Hi Tech Sach Dairy Farm in Hisar. Indian Council of Agricultural Research-CIRB is a central institute and it has a mandate to conserve superior animals of all buffalo breeds.



3. China developed artificial heart with rocket technology

China has developed an artificial heart using rocket technology, jointly by the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology and the Teda International Cardiovascular Hospital in North China's Tianjin.

The artificial heart has been sent for testing and inspection after thorough experiments on animals. The artificial heart uses magnetic and fluid levitation from a rocket system. The "aerospace heart" is expected to move to clinical trials during the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20).



4. Ministry of Environment and Forests cleared Neutrino project

The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has granted environmental clearance to set up India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) project in Bodi West hills, considering it as a special case. Neutrinos are key to understanding the evolution of the universe and energy production in the sun and other stars.



The country's biggest basic science facility, to be built at Rs1,500 crore, will study atmospheric neutrinos produced by cosmic rays in the earth's atmosphere.

5. ISRO–BHEL Tie up for the Production of Space Grade Lithium-Ion Cells

ISRO has entered into a Technology Transfer Agreement (TTA) with Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) to transfer the technology for the manufacture of space grade Li-Ion cells. ISRO uses Li-Ion batteries as power sources for satellite and launch vehicle applications due to their high energy density, reliability and long cycle life.



This Li-ion cell Technology Transfer will enable BHEL to produce space grade Li-Ion cells which can meet the country's space programme requirements. This technology can also be adopted to cater to the Li-Ion cell requirement for other national needs.

6. ISRO postponed Chandrayaan-2 launch to October

ISRO has postponed the launch of India's second lunar mission Chandrayaan-2 to October after experts suggested certain tests. The launch of the mission was originally slated for April.



Under the Chandrayaan-2 lunar mission, ISRO will, for the first time, attempt to land a rover on the moon's south-pole. It's a totally indigenous mission, which will comprise of an Orbiter, Lander and Rover. ISRO had launched its maiden lunar mission Chandrayaan-1 in 2008.

7. India successfully launched GSAT-6A communication satellite

India has successfully launched GSAT-6A communication satellite from Sathish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota. The satellite was placed in orbit by the GSLV (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle) F-08 in a three-stage launch.

The lifespan of the orbit is over 10 years. The purpose of the satellite is to provide mobile communication applications in S-band in five spot beams and C-band in one beam. The GSLV F 08 is a three-stage rocket.



8. K2-229b: Hot, metallic Earth-sized planet discovered

A team of astronomers have detected and characterized a hot, metallic, Earth-sized planet with a density similar to Mercury, situated 339 light years away. The planet has been named K2-229b.

K2-229b is almost 20% larger than Earth but has a mass which is over two-and-a-half times greater. It reaches a day side temperature of over 2000 degrees Celsius. K2-229b orbits this star every fourteen hours. The study, "An Earth-sized exoplanet with a Mercury-like composition," is published in Nature Astronomy.



1. India's Shahzar Rizvi sets world record in 10-meter air pistol event

India won three medals which include a gold and two bronze at ISSF World Cup held in Mexico. Shahzar Rizvi clinched the gold medal with a world record score in his maiden ISSF World Cup appearance. The Meerut-based Rizvi shot a world record 242.3 in the 10 metre air pistol event's final to beat reigning Olympic champion Christian Reitz of Germany to win the top prize.



Pistol ace Jitu Rai won the bronze in the event with a score of 219, as three Indians made it to the finals of the season's first World Cup.

2. India beat Pakistan to win Snooker Team World Cup

India have won the inaugural IBSF Snooker Team World Cup title. The Indian combine of Pankaj Advani and Manan Chandra defeated Pakistan -2 (Muhammad Asif, Babar Masih), 3-2 in the best-of-five final played in Doha. Advani and Chandra defeated the Iran in the semi-finals. Winners received USD15,000 prize money. It has been for the first time that Indian Snooker team has lifted the first edition of IBSF Snooker Team World Cup.



The IBSF is the snooker division of the World Confederation of Billiard Sports, which promotes cue sports in the form of carom, pool and snooker.

3. Tokyo unveiled 2020 Olympics and Paralympics mascot

The winning designs were officially unveiled by the Tokyo Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (Tokyo 2020). One of such mascot is a futuristic blue-checked, doe-eyed athletic character with pointy ears and second one is cherry blossom-inspired superhero with "special powers". His characters – dark blue for the Olympic Games and cherry blossom pink for the Paralympic Games – strove to combine traditional values with "innovation from peace" concept which is at the heart of the branding vision for Tokyo 2020.



The winning designs, declared as mascots were designed by a graphic designer from Fukuoka.

4. IOC restored Russia's Olympic membership

International Olympic Committee lifted ban on Russia and restored its organization's membership from Pyeongchang 2018 due to no violations found in doping tests. Russia was banned from February's Games by the IOC due to doping violations in December 2017.



The 2018 Winter Olympics, officially known as the XXIII Olympic Winter Games and commonly known as PyeongChang 2018, is a major international winter multi-sport event held in Pyeongchang County. It involved various events such as ice hockey, long track speed skating, alpine skiing, snowboarding etc.

5. Navjot Kaur created history in Asian Wrestling Championship

India's Navjot Kaur created history by becoming the first Indian woman to win gold at the Senior Asian Wrestling Championships held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. She defeated Japan's Miya Imai by 9-1 in the final in 65 kgs category whereas Sakshi Malik won bronze medal in the women's 62kg category by 10-7 defeating Ayaulym Kassymova of Kazakhstan.



Overall, India scored itself at 2nd position in the medals tally. The medals tally was topped by China, followed by India at 2nd place and Japan at 3rd place.

6. Eoin Morgan to captain ICC World XI against Windies

The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced that England ODI captain Eoin Morgan will lead an ICC World XI in a T20I against the West Indies at Lord's on 31 May 2018. The game will raise funds for two stadia in the Caribbean that were damaged following Hurricanes Irma and Maria in 2017.



The West Indies are the defending World T20 champions. The World XI squad is yet to be named while Windies will have the services of their T20 specialists like Sunil Narine, Chris Gayle, Andre Russell, Dwayne Bravo, Kieron Pollard etc.

7. Viswanathan Anand bagged Tal Memorial Rapid Chess title

Veteran chess player Viswanathan Anand won Tal Memorial rapid chess title in Moscow, Russia defeating Israel's Boris Gelfand. Viswanathan Anand defeated Ian Nepomniachtchi, Alexander Grischuk and Daniil Dubov to reach finals.



The Tal Memorial is a chess championship played every year in Moscow, Russia in the memory of former World Champion Mikhail Tal. 2018 Tal Memorial rapid chess title was 11th tournament. The tournament consist of Blitz chess title and Rapid Chess title. The Blitz chess title was bagged by Sergey Karjakin of Russia.

8. Rashid Khan became youngest captain in International cricket history

Afghanistan's 19 years and 165 days old Rashid Khan became the youngest captain in International cricket history. He became the youngest player to score first position in ICC bowlers ranking of ODIs and T20Is. Prior to him, the record was held by Bangladesh's Rajin Saleh (20 years and 197 days old). In such a small span of cricket journey, he has won four 'One Day International five-wicket hauls', once 'Twenty20 International five-wicket hauls' and thrice 'Man of the Match' award.



Rashid Khan played in the 2017 Indian Premier League for Sunrisers Hyderabad.

9. India finished with 3 Gold and 2 bronze in Asian Archery

Indian junior archers bagged three gold and two bronze medals in the Asia Cup Archery Stage 1 campaign in Bangkok. India had bagged Gold in the women's compound individual section after Muskan Kirar beat Nadhirah Zakaria Sazatul of Malaysia 139-136.



Promila Daimary won second individual gold medal for India on the final day as she defeated Natalia Erdynieva of Russia 7-3 in the women's recurve individual. Indian trio of Akash, Gora Ho and Gaurav Lambe defeated Mongolian rivals 27-26 in the tie-breaker to clinch the third gold.

10. Tejaswin Shankar broke his own National Record in High Jump

Indian High-jumper Tejaswin Shankar broke his own national record to claim the high jump gold on the third and penultimate day of the 22nd Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships.

Shankar jumped over the bar at 2.28m. Previously he had created a national record of 2.26m which he achieved in Coimbatore in 2016 during the Junior National Championships. Siddharth Yadav of Haryana delivered the performance of his career to also clear 2.25m and finish with silver.



11. Australia beat England 2-1 to win 27th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup

Australia defeated England 2-1 in the final to win the 27th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Malaysia and regain the title. Blake Govers and Lachlan Sharp scored for Australia while Samuel Ward scored for England.

Argentina claimed the bronze medal with a 3-2 win over hosts Malaysia. India finished a disappointing fifth after beating Ireland 4-1. Gonzalo Peillat of Argentina was the top scorer of the tournament with 8 goals while Daniel Beale was adjudged the Best Player Award.



12. Kagiso Rabada top-ranked bowler in ICC Test Rankings

South Africa's Kagiso Rabada has regained his top spot among bowlers in the International Cricket Council (ICC) latest Test Player rankings. Rabada crossed the coveted 900-point mark in ratings. He is the 23rd bowler to cross 900 points and the only fourth South African player to do so after Vernon Philander, Shaun Pollock and Dale Steyn.

Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin is ranked fourth while Ravindra Jadeja is at the third place. In the batsmen's list, Australian skipper Steve Smith is at the top while Indian captain Virat Kohli is in the second position.



13. Juan Martin del Potro won the Indian Wells Masters title

Juan Martin del Potro ended world number one Roger Federer's 17-match unbeaten run and bagged the Indian Wells Masters title in California. The eighth-seeded Argentine beat the veteran Swiss, 6-4, 5-7, 7-6 in the final.



It was Del Potro's maiden ATP Masters 1000 trophy. Del Potro also became the first player to beat Federer in 2018. Jack Sock and John Isner of the United States won the doubles finals of the tournament against the US pair of Bob Bryan and Mike Bryan.

14. IIFCL contributes Rs. 10 crores to NSDF

India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL) has made contribution of Rs 10.00 Crore to the National Sports Development Fund (NSDF). This is the third installment of contribution made by the IIFCL making the total contribution Rs 30.00 Crore.



The IIFCL contribution is being utilized for promotion of sports in the disciplines Badminton, Archery and Para Sports by way of support to sportspersons in these disciplines for their customized training and other services and setting up of Academies/Support to Academies in these disciplines.

15. Nepal Cricket Team gains ODI Status

Nepal marked its biggest accomplishment in cricket history after it secured the One-Day International status with a six-wicket victory over Papua New Guinea in the seventh place playoff semi-final under the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifiers in Harare, Zimbabwe.



Nepal will retain the ODI and the Twenty20 International status for the next four years. Nepali national team can now include on its calendar the InterContinental Cup, a four-day tournament between non-Test playing nations, and the World Cricket League Championship.

16. Purva Barve won Israel Junior 2018 badminton tournament

India's Purva Barve won the women's singles (Under-19) title at the Israel Junior 2018 held in Rishon LeZion. She was the defending champion of the tournament. She defeated Russian Anastasiia Pustinskaia 21-19, 19-21, 21-13 in the final match.

This was Purva's first title in 2018 and third overall. Earlier she won the Israel Junior 2017, Italian Junior International 2017 apart from a bronze at the Russian Junior White Nights 2017. She is currently ranked No. 20 on BWF Junior Rankings charts.



17. HS Prannoy regains world no 12 in latest badminton rankings

According to the latest badminton rankings released by BWF, Indian shuttler HS Prannoy jumped four places to regain the world number 12 spot. Second-ranked Kidambi Srikanth narrowed his gap with world no 1 Viktor Axelsen. P V Sindhu was static at the third spot.

Saina Nehwal, who was ousted on the opening day of All England, remains static at the 12th spot. Sai Praneeth slips to 15th spot.



18. Mohammed Shami cleared of match-fixing allegations by BCCI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) cleared India fast bowler Mohammed Shami of corruption charges levelled by his wife Hasin Jahan. The inquiry was led by Mr Neeraj Kumar, former Police Commissioner of Delhi and Head of BCCI Anti-Corruption Unit.

Shami was also given a Grade 'B' annual contract and he can also play in the Indian Premier League for his franchise the Delhi Daredevils. Shami has taken 110 wickets in the 30 Tests he played so far while accounted 91 scalps in 50 ODIs.



19. Pankaj Advani retained Asian billiards title

Pankaj Advani has defended his Asian Billiards Championships title. In the summit clash at Yangon in Myanmar, Advani defeated his practice partner B Bhaskar 6-1. With this win, Advani remains the reigning Indian, Asian and world champion in billiards for 2017-18.



This is Advani's 11th gold medal at the Asian level of cue sports. His continental billiards title tally has gone up to seven, in addition to the back-to-back Asian Games gold medals in 2006 and 2010, one 6-red snooker title and a snooker team gold.

20. Afghanistan won ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier

Afghanistan defeated West Indies by seven-wickets to win the ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier held in Harare, Zimbabwe. Mohammad Shahzad of Afghanistan was declared the Man of the Match for his innings of 84 runs in the final. Sikandar Raza of Zimbabwe won the Player of the tournament award.



The 2018 ICC Cricket World Cup Qualifier decided the final qualification for the 2019 World Cup, to be played in England and Wales. The top two teams, Afghanistan and the West Indies, qualified for the World Cup.