

# CURRENT AFFAIRS



FEBRUARY 2018

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## Current Affairs – February 2018

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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 **February 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

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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. Indian-American Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen elected as VP of USISPF

Indian-American Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen has been elected as the Vice Chairman of the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum. The USISPF has 31 board members. USISPF is a new organisation set up to enhance business relations between the two countries. It was set up to promote bilateral trade.



Narayen was promoted as the CEO of Adobe Systems in December 2007. Barack Obama had appointed him as a member of his Management Advisory Board in 2011. He received an honorary doctorate from his alma mater, Bowling Green State University.

## 2. A K Prasad assumed charge as the new financial commissioner of railway board

A.K.Prasad was appointed as new Financial Commissioner (Railways), Railway Board and ex-officio Secretary to Government of India. He replaced B.N.Mohapatra, who superannuated on 31st January, 2018.



Prior to this assignment, Shri Prasad was Additional Member/Finance in Railway Board. He has earlier headed the Finance and Accounts wing as Principal Finance Adviser in Northern Railway, North Western Railway, North Central Railway etc. He has also worked as Divisional Railway Manager and as Financial Adviser NDMC.

## 3. Abhilasha Kumari sworn-in as Chief Justice of Manipur High Court

Justice Abhilasha Kumari was sworn-in as new Chief Justice of the High Court of Manipur. Governor Dr. Najma Heptulla administered the oath of office at Raj Bhavan in Imphal.



Justice Kumari obtained a law degree from the Himachal Pradesh University. She joined the Bar in 1984. She practised in the Himachal Pradesh High Court. She was designated as the Additional Advocate General for Himachal Pradesh. In December 2005, she was elevated as Gujarat High Court judge.

#### 4. Rear Admiral Mukul Asthana, NM takes over as Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Air)

Rear Admiral Mukul Asthana, NM has been appointed as the Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Air) at New Delhi. He was commissioned in 1986 in the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy. He is a graduate of the Naval Academy.

Rear Admiral Mukul Asthana is a recipient of the prestigious Nausena Medal. He was also conferred with the Tenzing Norgay National Award by HE the President of India in 2006.



#### 5. Hardayal Prasad appointed as the MD & CEO of SBI Card

Hardayal Prasad has been appointed as the new Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of SBI Card. Prasad has taken over from Vijay Jasuja.

Prasad joined SBI as a Probationary Officer in 1983. He has held multiple leadership positions at State Bank of India. SBI offers credit cards through its subsidiary SBI Cards & Payments Services Pvt Ltd, in which SBI owns 74% stake while Carlyle Group holds the rest.



#### 6. Biswamohan Mahapatra appointed as Chairman of NPCI

National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has appointed Biswamohan Mahapatra as Non-Executive Chairman of the Board for a period of two years, with effect from February 08, 2018. He succeeds Shri B. Sambamurthy, Interim Chairman.



NPCI had appointed Dilip Asbe as its Managing Director and CEO. National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) was set up in 2009 as the central infrastructure for various retail payment systems in India and was envisaged by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as the payment utility in the country.

## 7. Chandrashekar Kambar elected as President of the Sahitya Akademi

Kannada litterateur Chandrashekar Kambar has been elected as the President of the Sahitya Akademi. Hindi poet Madhav Koushik has been elected as Vice-President. Prof. Kambar secured 56 votes while Odia writer Prathiba Ray got 29 votes in the elections to the post.

Prof. Kambar has served as member of the Akademi executive board for over 10 years and was vice-president for 2013-18. The Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, is an organisation dedicated to the promotion of literature in the languages of India.



## 8. Haruhiko Kuroda reappointed as Chief of Bank of Japan

Japan's government has reappointed Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda for another term. Kuroda took over the BOJ's helm in March 2013. The government also appointed Masazumi Wakatabe as deputy governor.

The other deputy governor post went to BOJ Executive Director Masayoshi Amamiya. The central bank owns about 40% of outstanding Japanese government bonds. Its balance sheet is nearly the size of Japan's 549 trillion yen (\$5 trillion) economy.



## 9. Arvind Jamkhedkar to head Indian Council of Historical Research

Arvind P Jamkhedkar has been appointed as the new Chairman of Indian Council of Historical Research. He will replace Professor Y Sudershan Rao, who demitted office in June 2017. He is currently serving as the Chancellor of Deccan College, Pune.

Prof. Jamkhedkar completed his doctorate in Ancient Indian Culture from Deccan College in 1966. He was selected as National Lecturer in Archaeology by the University Grants Commission in 1984. He has conducted 19 excavations at different sites in Maharashtra.



# Awards

## 1. WHO conferred the prestigious IhsanDogramaci Family Health Foundation Prize to Dr Vinod Paul

The World Health Organisation (WHO) has awarded the prestigious IhsanDoğramaci Family Health Foundation Prize to Dr Vinod Paul, Member, NITI Aayog in recognition to his services in the field of family health.

Dr Paul is the first Indian to receive this global honour. Dr Paul has played a key role in formulating national child health guidelines and programmes in the country. Prior to joining as Member, NITI Aayog, Dr Paul was head of the Department of Pediatrics at AIIMS, New Delhi.



## 2. 5 MPs conferred Outstanding Parliamentary Awards

The Indian Parliamentary Group has decided to confer Outstanding Parliamentary Awards on five members of parliament. The awardees were selected on the basis of their experience, debating skills, awareness of issues and the depth with which issues were raised.

- i. Year 2013: Najma Heptulla, currently the governor of Manipur
- ii. Year 2014: BJP's Lok Sabha MP Hukumdev Narayan Yadav
- iii. Year 2015: Leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad
- iv. Year 2016: Lok Sabha member from TMC, Dinesh Trivedi
- v. Year 2017: BJD's Lok Sabha MP Bhartruhari Mahatab



## 3. Modi conferred 'Grand Collar of the State of Palestine'

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the 'Grand Collar of the State of Palestine' by President Mahmoud Abbas, recognising his key contribution to promote relations between India and Palestine.

The Grand Collar is Highest order given to foreign dignitaries — Kings, Heads of



State/Government and persons of similar rank. The previous awardees include King Salman of Saudi Arabia, King Hamad of Bahrain, President Xi Jinping of China, amongst others.

#### 4. Indian Engineer awarded Sci-tech oscar Award

Vikas Sathaye has been awarded with the Scientific and Engineering Academy Award at the Oscars Scientific and Technical Awards 2018 for his contribution towards conceptualisation, designing, engineering, and the implementation of the 'Shotover K1 Camera System'.



The Shotover K1 Camera System is a camera mount that is used in aerial filming. It helps eliminate any vibration from reaching the camera and thus getting steady footage.

#### 5. Bafta Film Awards 2018

The 71st British Academy Film Awards, more commonly known as the BAFTAs, were held at the Royal Albert Hall in London. The key winners are:



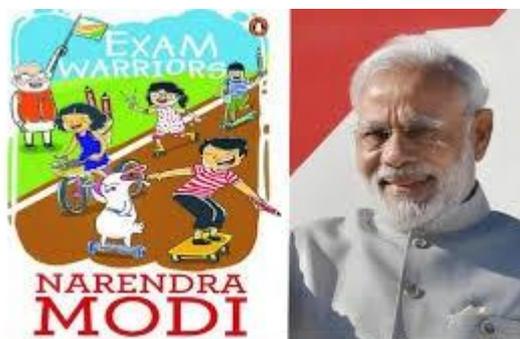
- i. Best Film: Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- ii. Outstanding British film: Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- iii. Leading actress: Frances McDormand - Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- iv. Leading actor: Gary Oldman - Darkest Hour
- v. Director: The Shape Of Water - Guillermo Del Toro
- vi. Animated film: Coco
- vii. Documentary: I Am Not Your Negro

# Books & Authors

## 1. 'Exam Warriors' - book authored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched

A book, 'Exam Warriors', which is authored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was launched at a function in Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi. The book aims to help spread smiles during examinations, viewing them as occasions to celebrate learning with festive joy.

The book is written in an interactive style with illustrations, activities and yoga exercises. It compiles nuggets from his radio addresses and anecdotes from his own life on how he coped with stress during exams.



## 2. Aadhaar is Oxford Dictionary's Hindi Word of 2017

Oxford Dictionaries has chosen 'Aadhaar' as the Hindi word of 2017. The announcement was made at a session "Oxford Dictionaries' Hindi Word of the Year" during the Jaipur Literature Festival.

Aadhaar is a 12-digit identification number assigned to all residents of India. Aadhaar means 'base' or 'foundation'. Hindi is the fourth most-spoken language in the world, with over 295 million native speakers. India is also home to hundreds of millions of English speakers.



## 3. HM Rajnath Singh released book titled "Mere Sapnon ka Bharat"

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh released a book titled "Mere Sapnon ka Bharat". It is a compilation of interviews of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee by Tarun Vijay, an ex-MP. The Home Minister described Mr Vajpayee as a distinguished personality who stands alone because of his stature. He is respected by all cutting across the political parties divides.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee is an Indian politician who was the 10th Prime Minister of India , first for 13 days in 1996 and then from 1998 to 2004.



# Committees

## 1. 8 member committee to review Flexi Fare Scheme

An eight member committee comprising General Manager/West Central Railway, Principal Financial Advisor/East Central Railway, Executive Director Passenger Marketing, Railway Board, Executive Director Traffic Commercial (Rates), Railway Board, Advisor (Transport)/Niti Aayog, Executive Director/Revenue Management & Marketing Automation/Air India, Director/Revenue/Le Meridian and Professor of Transport Economics/Walchand Hirachand was constituted to review the flexi fare scheme.



The terms of reference of the committee was to examine all options and recommend best option keeping in mind interest of passengers and Railways. The committee was mandated to examine impact on revenue generated for railways.

## 2. Defence Ministry constituted a committee to monitor and expedite capital acquisition projects

The Union Ministry of Defence has constituted a 13-member Raksha Mantri's Advisory Committee on Ministry of Defence (MoD) Capital Projects (RMCOMP) to monitor and expedite capital acquisition projects for the modernisation of the armed forces.



The committee will undertake an independent review and check the status of ongoing critical projects worth more than Rs 500 crore. The committee will be headed by Vinay Sheel Oberoi. The other members of the committee are R K Tyagi, R K Jain, Amber Dubey and R Anand.

## 3. Punjab Government sets up Revenue Commission

The Punjab state government has set up a six-member Revenue Commission to revisit the existing land Acts to make them relevant with the changed land use situation.



Justice (Retd) SS Saron of Punjab and Haryana high court will head the commission. The Commission has a term of one-year. It will propose new laws and procedures, along with other methods, to make revenue administration more transparent and responsive to the needs of the people.

#### 4. Government constituted Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) for NER

The Union Government has set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) on Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) for the North Eastern Region (NER). The IMC is to create synergy in various programmes of the Union Government to enable medicinal and aromatic plants sector become vibrant and develop the resources to its potential.



The Committee will review the existing mechanism or institutional arrangements for management and development of MAPs resources of NER. The IMC will comprise members from various Ministries, Departments and several organisations in the relevant fields.

#### 5. Union Government constituted committee to study Brahmaputra and Flood Control Measures in Assam

The Union Government has constituted a committee to study the Brahmaputra and flood control measures in Assam and neighbouring states. The Vice Chairman of the NITI Aayog, Mr Rajiv Kumar, will head the committee.



The Assam government has submitted required report on flood control measures to the committee. The Water Resource department has made measures to repair the damaged river embankment due to flood. Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his visit to Guwahati had announced to provide 100 crore rupees to find out permanent solution of flood in the state.

#### 6. Union Government sets up the “NITI Forum for Northeast”

The Union Government has issued order setting up the 'Niti Forum for North-East'. The forum will be co-chaired by the Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog and Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region (DoNER). It will have its Secretariat in the Ministry of DoNER.



The NITI Forum for Northeast will identify various constraints of economic growth in the NER and recommend suitable interventions for addressing these constraints.

## 7. UGC constituted committee to select top 20 educational institutions in India

The University Grants Commission has constituted a four-member empowered expert committee (EEC) headed by former chief election commissioner of India, N Gopalaswami, to shortlist the 20 institutions of eminence (IoE).

The other members of the committee are Tarun Khanna, Jorge Paulo Lemman Professor, Harvard Business School; Pritam Singh, former director of IIM, Lucknow and MDI, Gurugram; and Renu Khator, chancellor, University of Houston System. The 20 selected institutes will enjoy complete academic and administrative autonomy.



# Deaths

## 1. World's oldest man died at the age of 113 years

Francisco Nunez Olivera, the world's oldest man, has died at the age of 113 years. The supercentenarian became the world's oldest man after the death in August 2017 of Yisrael Kristal.

With Olivera's death, the oldest man in the world is now Japanese man Masazou Nonaka, who was born on July 25, 1905, and is currently 112 years and 189 days old.



## 2. Kathakali Maestro Madavoor Vasudevan Nair passed away

Veteran Kathakali maestro Madavoor Vasudevan Nair died at the age of 89 years. Madavoor Vasudevan Nair has been awardee of Padma Bhushan in 2011 and Sangeet Nataka akademi award in 1997. He has also received award by Kerala Kalamandalam.

Madavoor Vasudevan Nair was known for portraying characters such as Ravana, Duroyodhana, Keechakka and Kamsan through the style of Kathakali classical dance drama. He served as a faculty in the Thekkan Kalari (Southern school of Kathakali) of Kerala Kalamandalam.



## 3. British actor John Mahoney passed away

British-born actor John Mahoney passed away at the age of 77 years. The actor was best known for playing cranky father Martin (Marty) Crane on the US sitcom Frasier. He earned two Emmy nominations, two Golden Globe nominations and a Screen Actors Guild award for the role.

Mahoney won the Tony Award for his performance in John Guare's The House of Blue Leaves in 1986. His last screen appearance was in a 2015 episode of the British drama series "Foyle's War".



#### 4. Pakistani human rights lawyer Asma Jahangir passed away

Pakistani lawyer and human rights activist, Asma Jahangir, passed away at the age of 66 years. Asma co-founded and chaired the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan. Jahangir was the first woman to serve as president of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan.

Asma was imprisoned in 1983 for participating in the Movement for the Restoration of Democracy against the military dictator of Ziaul Haq.



#### 5. Award-Winning Music Composer Johann Johannsson, passed away

Acclaimed musician Johann Johannsson of Iceland who had created the soundtracks for films including "The Theory of Everything" and "Arrival," passed away at the age of 48 years.

Mr. Johannsson won a Golden Globe in 2015, as well as Grammy and Academy Award nominations, for his score for "The Theory of Everything" (2014). He was also nominated for an Oscar for scoring Denis Villeneuve's "Sicario" (2015). He was nominated for a Golden Globe, a Bafta award and a Grammy for "Arrival" (2016).



#### 6. Doyen of Odia literature, Chandrasekhar Rath, passed away

Eminent Odia litterateur Chandrasekhar Rath passed away at the age of 89 years. He was recently nominated for Padma Shri by the Union government this year for his contribution towards Odia literature.

Rath has written many novels, short stories, essays and poems. Yantrarudha (The Instrumented) 1967, Asurya Upanivesh (The Sunless Colony) 1974 and Nav Jatak (Regenesi) 1981 were his most popular novels. He had also received literary awards like Sahitya Akademi Award and Sarala Award.



## 7. Evangelist Billy Graham died

Billy Graham, one of the most widely heard Christian evangelist in history passed away at the age of 99 years. He is credited for transforming American religious life through his preaching and activism. His leadership summits and crusades in more than 185 countries and territories forged powerful global links among conservative Christians.



Dubbed America's pastor, Graham was a confidant to US Presidents from Dwight Eisenhower to George W. Bush. In 1983, President Reagan gave him the Presidential Medal of Freedom, America's highest civilian honour.

## 8. Kunwar Bai, icon for Swachh Bharat campaign, passed away

Kunwar Bai of Chhattisgarh who was chosen as a mascot for the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' passed away at the age of 106 years. She rose to fame in 2016 when the story of how she sold her goats to build a toilet at home got nationwide publicity.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi honored Kunwar Bai at Kurrubhat village. She was made a mascot for the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

## 9. Actress Sridevi passed away

Iconic Bollywood actress Sridevi passed away at the age of 54 years due to cardiac arrest. She had an illustrious career spanning over four decades. She made her Bollywood debut in 1978 with "Solva Sawan".



Sridevi's performance in Malayalam film Poombata (1971) won her the state award for best child artist. The government of India awarded her Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian honour, in 2013. Her most remarkable films include Sadma, Chandni, Himmatwala, ChaalBaaz, Mr India, Nagina, Mawali, Tohfa and Gumrah among others.

## 1. Third Scorpene submarine 'Karanj' Launched at Mazagon Docks

The third Scorpene class submarine named 'Karanj', constructed by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited for the Indian Navy, was launched in Mumbai. It is the third of the six Scorpene-class submarines being built under the P-75I project. INS Kalvari was the first Scorpene class submarine while INS Khanderi was the second.



Scorpene submarines can undertake multifarious types of missions — Anti-Surface warfare, Anti-Submarine warfare, intelligence gathering, mine laying, area surveillance etc.

## 2. Rear Admiral SJ Singh, NM appointed as the Flag officer Sea Training (Fost)

Rear Admiral Sanjay Jasjit Singh, NM has been appointed as the Flag Officer Sea Training, at Kochi.

Rear Admiral Sanjay Jasjit Singh was commissioned in 1986, in the Executive Branch of the Indian Navy. He was a graduate of the National Defence Academy, Pune, where he was adjudged the Best Naval Cadet. He has completed several post-graduate study programmes, including MSc and MPhil in Defence and Strategic Studies from Madras University.



## 3. Lt. Gen Anil Chauhan took charge as DGMO of Indian Army

Lt. Gen Anil Chauhan has taken over as the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of the Indian Army. He took over from Lt General A K Bhatt who will assume charge of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps.

Lt. Gen Chauhan is known for his expertise in counter-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast. Prior to his new appointment, he was commander of the Dimapur-based 3 Corps. He had also served as military observer for UN peacekeeping mission in Angola.



#### 4. India successfully test-fired nuclear capable Agni-1 missile

India successfully test-fired its short-range nuclear capable ballistic missile Agni-1 with a strike range of over 700 km from a test range off the Odisha coast. Defence officials indigenously developed surface-to-surface missile which was launched as a part of a periodic training activity by the Strategic Forces Command of the Army to consolidate operational readiness.



Weighing around 12 tonnes, the 15-metre-long Agni-I can carry payloads up to 1,000 kg and is capable of hitting a target beyond 700 km. The missile is also capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

#### 5. DRDO Successfully Test Flight Rustom 2

DRDO successfully flew its Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle Rustom 2 at its Aeronautical Test Range(ATR) at Chalakere at Chitradurga in Karnataka. It was the first flight in user configuration with higher power engine.



DRDO has developed the medium altitude, long endurance air vehicle for the three defence services. It can fly for 24 hours at a stretch. It can conduct sustained surveillance and can also carry weapons along.

#### 6. Indian test fired nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missile

Army test fired nuclear capable Prithvi-II missile with a strike range of 350 km from launch complex-3 of the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur. Missile is capable of carrying 500-1,000 kilogram of warheads because of its 2 liquid propulsion twin engines. Missile is designed with advanced inertial guidance system with maneuvering trajectory to hit its target.



Prithvi II will be monitored by Development Organisation (DRDO) and launch activities will be carried out by Strategic Force Command (SFC) of the Army.

### 7. Inauguration of Integrated Automatic Aviation Meteorological Systems (IAAMS) At INS Garuda

Rear Admiral RJ Nadkarni, VSM, Chief of Staff, Headquarters, Southern Naval Command inaugurated the 'Integrated Automatic Aviation Meteorological System (IAAMS)' at INS Garuda. INS Garuda is the fourth air station to have been installed with this integrated system.



IAAMS is an ambitious project of the Indian Navy to modernise the Meteorological infrastructure of the nine Naval Air Stations. IAAMS undertakes automatic and continuous recording of relevant weather parameters that are vital for accurate weather forecasting.

### 8. DAC cleared proposal worth Rs 15,935 Crore

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, accorded approval to Capital Acquisition Proposals of the Services valued at approximately Rs 15,935 crore.



- i. Procurement of essential quantity of Light Machine Guns for the three Services through the Fast Track Procedure at an estimated cost of over Rs 1,819 crore
- ii. Procurement of 7.4 lakh Assault Rifles for the three Services at an estimated cost of Rs 12,280 crore
- iii. Procurement of 5,719 Sniper Rifles for the Indian Army and Indian Air Force at an estimated cost of Rs 982 crore
- iv. Procurement of Advanced Torpedo Decoy Systems (ATDS) for the Indian Navy

### 9. India gets access to strategic Oman port Duqm for military use

India has secured access to the key Port of Duqm in Oman for military use and logistical support. PM Narendra Modi met Sultan of Oman Sayyid Qaboos bin Said Al Said during his visit to Oman.

Following the signing of an annexure to the Memorandum of Understanding on Military Cooperation, the services of Duqm port and dry dock will be available for maintenance of



Indian military vessels. The Port of Duqm is situated on the south-eastern seaboard of Oman, overlooking the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.

### 10. Western Command conducts tri-service maritime exercise Paschim Lehar

A tri-Service Maritime Exercise called 'Paschim Lehar' was held on the Western Seaboard. Ships, submarines and aircraft from the Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy participated in the exercise.



Units from Eastern Naval Command, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and the Indian Coast Guard are also participating to build interoperability. The exercise included a number of weapon firings, including missile, gun and torpedo firings during the initial phase.

### 11. India successfully test-fires Agni-II ballistic missile

India has successfully test-fired the surface-to-surface Agni-II ballistic missile from the Abdul Kalam Island, off Orissa coast. The missile has a strike range of 2000 kilometres. The Strategic Forces Command with logistics support from Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) carried out the test.



The Agni-II missile can carry a nuclear payload of 1000 kilograms. The range can also be increased to 3000 kilometres by reducing the payload. Agni missile series are being developed by DRDO.

### 12. Defence Acquisition Council approved procurement worth Rs 1850 crore

The Defence Acquisition Council, DAC, has cleared Capital Acquisition Proposals of the Services valued at over Rs 1850 crore. These include procurement of essential quantity of Infantry Combat Vehicle (BMPs-2/2k) for Mechanised Infantry and other Arms and Services at an estimated cost of over Rs 1125 crore from the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB).

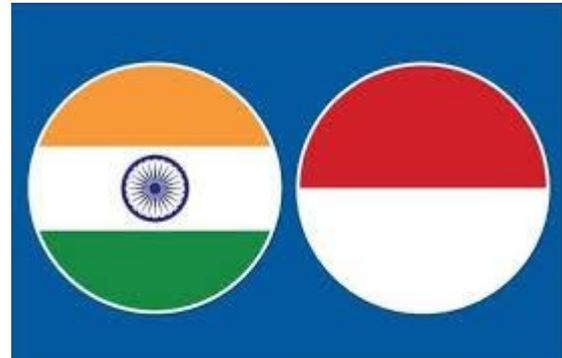


The DAC also accorded approval for procurement of one Survey Training Vessel for meeting the Navy's growing 'Hydrographic Survey' needs in ports, harbours and Exclusive Economic Zone. The construction of the vessel will be done at an estimated cost of Rs 626 crore.

### 13. Indo-Indonesia Joint Training Exercise Garuda Shakti VI

The sixth edition of the Indo-Indonesia Joint Training Exercise GARUDA SHAKTI was held at Bandung in the West Java province of Indonesia. The two-week long exercise included experience sharing in counter-terrorism operations, close quarter combat, and other areas of special operations.

The GARUDA SHAKTI is conducted on a reciprocal basis and its first edition was conducted in the year 2012 in India. The exercise is aimed at building and promoting positive relations between the two Armies of India and Indonesia.



### 14. Indigenous light transport aircraft SARAS completes second test-flight successfully

India's indigenous light transport aircraft SARAS has successfully completed its second test flight. This was the second of the 20 test flights planned for SARAS PT1N, before freezing the production version. The first successful test was carried out on January 24, 2018.

The design and development of the aircraft is being done by CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories, NAL. The cost of development and certification of Saras Mk2 will be around Rs. 600 crore with a time period of about 2 to 3 years.



### 15. India successfully test-fired the Dhanush missile

India successfully test-fired the nuclear-capable 'Dhanush' ballistic missile from a naval ship off Odisha coast. The surface-to-surface missile has a strike range of 350 km and is the naval variant of the indigenously developed 'Prithvi' missile.

'Dhanush' missile is capable of carrying a payload of 500 kg and hitting both land and sea-based targets. The Dhanush/Prithvi-III is part of the five missile platforms that have been developed by the DRDO. The others are Agni, Trishul, Akash and Nag.



## 1. Forex reserves surge by USD 3 billion to USD 417.789 billion

According to the Reserve Bank of India, country's foreign exchange reserves rose sharply by 3 billion dollars to touch a new all-time high of 417.789 billion dollars in the week to January 26, aided by a rise in foreign currency assets.



Expressed in US dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of the non-US currencies such as the euro, the pound and the yen held in the reserves. The gold reserves remained unchanged at 20.421 billion dollars.

## 2. Retail inflation for industrial workers rose to 4% in Dec

Retail inflation for industrial workers rose to 4% in December 2017 due to increase in the price of certain food items and electricity charges as compared to 3.97% of Nov 2017.



It was 2.23% during the same period of 2016. It also said, the food inflation stood at 4.32 per cent in December last year against 3.91 per cent of November. The All-India CPI-IW for December, 2017 decreased by 2 points and pegged at 286.

## 3. Paytm and AGTech Holdings to launch Gamepind

Paytm has partnered with Hong Kong-based Alibaba-owned gaming company AGTech Holdings to launch Gamepind, a mobile gaming platform. The platform will be available as a standalone app and in the Paytm app.



Paytm's parent company One97 invested \$8.8 million in the venture while AGTech Holdings invested \$7.2 million. Paytm owns 55% stake while AGTech Media holds 45%. Gamepind will offer a host of popular social, casual and sports games with an exclusive rewards programme.

#### 4. CSO revised GDP growth to 8.2% for FY16

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) has revised the gross domestic product (GDP) growth rate for 2015-16 to 8.2% from the earlier estimates of 8% and kept the 2016-17 growth unchanged at 7.1%.



The real GDP or GDP at constant (2011-12) prices for the years 2016-17 and 2015-16 stands at Rs121.96 trillion and Rs113.86 trillion respectively, showing growth of 7.1% during 2016-17 and 8.2% during 2015-16. According to advance GDP estimates of CSO, the GVA growth on 2011-12 price was estimated at 6.6 per cent for 2016-17.

#### 5. Government doubled import duty on sugar to 100%

The government doubled import duty on sugar to 100% and raised duty on chana to 40% to protect domestic farmers. At present, customs duty or import tax on sugar is 50% and on chana is 30%.



The move is aimed at curbing cheaper imports and ensures remunerative prices to domestic growers. In case of chana, the government has raised import duty to 40% as it wants to contain inward shipments in view of record production of pulses to nearly 23 million tonnes this year.

#### 6. CCI slapped Rs 136 cr fine on Google for unfair business practices

The Competition Commission imposed a fine of around Rs. 136 crore on search engine major Google for unfair business practices in the Indian market for online search.



Passing the order on complaints, filed in 2012, CCI imposed the penalty on Google for infringing anti-trust conduct. It was alleged that Google is indulging in abuse of dominant position in the market for online search through practices leading to search bias and search manipulation, among others. The ruling has come on complaints filed by Matrimony.com and Consumer Unity and Trust Society.

### 7. Direct tax collection grows Rs 6.95 lakh crore during April-January period

The government's direct tax collection has grown 6.95 lakh crore rupees during the April-January period of the current fiscal, a growth of 19.3% over the year-ago period. The net collections for Corporate Income Tax, CIT, showed a growth of 19.2% and for Personal Income Tax, PIT, at 18.6%.

The net direct tax collections represent around 69% of the revised estimates of 10 lakh five thousand crore rupees for direct taxes in 2017-18.



### 8. FDI in food processing sector likely to rise by 38% this fiscal

According to Food Processing Industries Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal, the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the food-processing sector is expected to rise by 38% to one billion dollar this fiscal.

FDI in food processing stood at 727 million dollar in 2016-17. In the first seven months of this fiscal, it has reached to 500 million dollar. The central ministry is also putting efforts to translate the proposals worth 14 billion dollar signed during the World Food India last year into actual investment.



### 9. Retail inflation eased to 5.07% in Jan; Industrial Production expands 7.1%

Retail inflation fell to 5.07% in January 2018 due to easing prices of vegetables, fruits and fuel components. The inflation was at 5.21% in December. It was at 3.17% in January 2017. The base year for the calculation of CPI is 2012.

The Industrial production expanded 7.1% in December 2017, compared to 2.4% a year ago. The growth in industrial output was due to robust performance by manufacturing as well as higher off-take of capital goods and non-durable consumer goods. The base for IIP calculation is 2011-12.



## 10. ONGC led Indian Consortium to acquire 10% Stake in Lower Zakum Concession, Offshore Abu Dhabi

ONGC Videsh Ltd, wholly owned subsidiary and overseas arm of ONGC, BPRL & IOCL signed a pact for acquisition of 10% participating interest in the Abu Dhabi National Oil Co's (ADNOC) offshore Lower Zakum Concession for 40 years from 2018 to 2057.



India will pay a sign-up bonus of \$600 million as part of the deal. The current production of this field is about 400,000 barrels of oil per day (20 million tonnes per annum) and Indian consortium's annual share shall be about 2 million tonnes.

## 11. Direct tax collections rise to 19.3% in April- Jan

Direct tax collection for the April-January period in the current Financial year 2017-18 grew by 19.3% to Rs 6.95 lakh crore. This amounts to 69.2% of the Revised Estimates of Direct Taxes for 2017-18 of ₹10.05 lakh crore.



The net collections for corporate income tax (CIT) grew by 19.2% while the personal income tax (PIT) mop-up rose by 18.6%. The number of effective taxpayers increased to 82.7 million in FY18 from 62.2 million a year ago.

## 12. 8.4% growth in foreign Tourist Arrivals in January, 2018 over January, 2017

Highlights of Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) and FTAs on e-Tourist Visa during the month of January, 2018:-

- The number of FTAs in January, 2018 was 10.66 lakh as compared to FTAs of 9.83 lakh in January, 2017 and 8.45 lakh in January, 2016.

- The growth rate in FTAs in January, 2018 over January, 2017 was 8.4%, compared to 16.4% in January, 2017 over January, 2016.



- During the month of January, 2018, a total of 2.40 lakh foreign tourists arrived on e-Tourist Visa as compared to 1.52 lakh during the month of January, 2017 registering a growth of 58.5%.

### 13. BHEL bagged order worth Rs 560 crore from NTPC

The Central Public Sector Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has bagged a major order worth Rs. 560 crore, from the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) National Capital Power Station in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh.

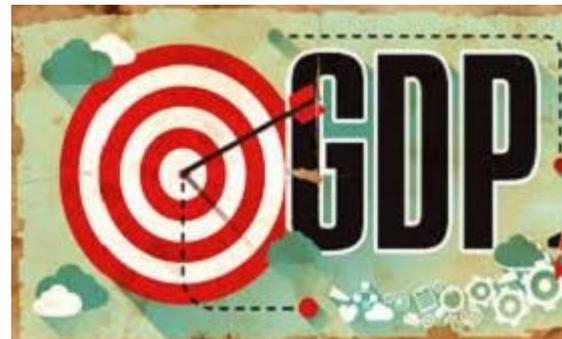
The order involves the installation of an indigenously developed Flue Gas Desulphurization system in the NTPC station. The system is aimed at controlling various harmful emissions, as per the more stringent emission norms declared by the Union Ministry for Environment.



### 14. Government to change base year for GDP, IIP to 2017-18

The government is considering to change the base year to 2017-18 for the calculation of gross domestic product, GDP, and Index of Industrial Production, IIP, numbers while for Consumer Price Index, CPI, the year will be revised to 2018.

The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has been allocated 4,859 crore rupees in the Union Budget 2018-19. A base year is the first of a series of years in an economic or financial index. It is typically set to an arbitrary level of 100.



### 15. Indian IT industry is expected to clock a revenue of 167 billion USD in the current financial year

According to NASSCOM President R. Chandrasekhar, the Indian IT industry is expected to clock a revenue of 167 billion USD in the current financial year and digital industry is growing at a fast pace of nearly 30%. Indian IT industry is poised to register a growth rate of 7-9% during next fiscal.

Start-ups sector grew by 25-30% with 700 more start-ups coming into being. E-commerce grew by 17% with focus on sectors like e-travel.



## 16. Airtel, Huawei conduct first 5G network trial in India

Airtel and Huawei have conducted India's first 5G network trial under a test set-up at Airtel's Network Experience Centre in Manesar (Gurugram).

During the test, a user throughput speed of 3Gbps was achieved. 5G services are expected to offer enhanced mobile broadband (eMBB) through R15 repeaters. Under 5G technology, users are expected to be able to experience premium video quality. It holds the key to growth of artificial intelligence (AI) systems and can enhance Internet of Things (IoT).



## 17. India imposes anti-dumping duty on import of ceramic tableware, kitchenware from China

India has imposed anti-dumping duty on import of ceramic tableware and kitchenware from China in a bid to protect domestic producers. Ceramic tableware and kitchenware shipped in from China will attract an anti-dumping duty of 1.04 US Dollar per kg, making the imports expensive.

All India Pottery Manufacturers' Association (AIPMA) and the Indian Ceramic Society had approached the Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD) for imposition of the levy on the items. The final duty has been imposed for five years starting June 2017.



The final duty has been imposed for five years starting June 2017.

## 1. 3-day International Bird Festival held in Dudhwa National Park

A 3-day International Bird Festival was held at the Dudhwa National Park in Lakhimpur Kheri (UP) from February 9-12 with an aim to promote eco-tourism in Dudhwa and give it a distinct international identity. Eminent documentary maker Mike Pandey was appointed as the brand ambassador of the festival.



Dudhwa is home to 456 bird species, including some rare ones such as the Bengal Pelican and the Adjutant Stork. The festival also highlighted its traditional Tharu arts, culture and heritage.

## 2. CSE among the top environment policy think tanks in India

Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP) of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania ranked various think tanks across the world. The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) was placed at 16th position in global rankings and topmost among the environment policy think tanks in India.



Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program is meant for organizing surveys on the role policy institutes play in governments and civil societies around the world. Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) is a public interest research and advocacy organisation that researches into, lobbies for and communicates the urgency of development.

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## 3. Three new eel species found in Bay of Bengal

A team of scientists led by Anil Mohapatra, a Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) scientist, have discovered three new species of eel along the northern Bay of Bengal. The description of all the three new species was published in the journal Zootaxa.



The three species are: *Gymnothorax pseudotile*, *Gymnothorax visakhaensis* and *Enchelycore propinqua*. While *Gymnothorax pseudotile* is about 1 feet to 1.5 feet long,

*Gymnothorax visakhaensis* is about a foot long. *Enchelycore propinqua* is the smallest of them measuring less than a foot.

#### 4. India among Top Ten Nations in the World in Terms of Forest Area

The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr Harsh Vardhan, released the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2017. According to the report, India ranks among the top ten countries of the world in terms of forest area.



India is ranked 10th in the world, with 24.4% of land area under forest and tree cover. India is placed 8th in the list of Top Ten nations reporting the greatest annual net gain in forest area. There is an increase of 8, 021 sq km (about 80.20 million hectare) in the total forest and tree cover of the country.

#### 5. Scientists discover new Shark species in Atlantic Ocean

A team of scientists, using genetic testing, has discovered a new shark species in the Atlantic Ocean. The new species has been named as the "Atlantic sixgill shark" or "*Hexanchus vitulus*". Toby Daly-Engel led the research team. Toby is the director of the Shark Conservation Lab at the Florida Institute of Technology.



The Atlantic sixgill sharks are relatively smaller than their Indo-Pacific relatives are. They have unique, saw-like lower teeth and six gill slits. The research was published in the journal *Marine Biodiversity*.

#### 6. New plant species identified in West Bengal

A team of scientists from the Botanical Survey of India has identified a new plant species from two protected National Parks in West Bengal. The team has named the plant *Drypetes kalamii*, after former President Abdul Kalam.



The new species is a small shrub found to be shorter version of its close relative *Drypetes ellisii*. It is unisexual in nature. The plant produces clusters of greenish and pale-yellow flowers with orange-red and red fruits. In India, about 20 species of *Drypetes* are found.

## 1. Axis Bank launched the fourth edition of 'Evolve'

Axis Bank has launched the fourth edition of 'Evolve' in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. It is an annual multi-city knowledge series for Bank's small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) customers. The current edition of 'evolve' is titled as "Transform your Family Business into your dream company".

This edition will span across 30 cities including Nagpur, Surat, Rajkot, Pune, Vishakhapatnam, Trichy, Kanpur, Ludhiana and Jamshedpur. The series aims to equip the participating SMEs with new-age strategies, live case studies etc.



## 2. 6th Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement released by RBI

On the basis of an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation, Monetary Policy Committee maintained the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) unchanged at 6.0%. Consequently, the reverse repo rate under the LAF remains at 5.75%, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate at 6.25%.



The MPC noted that the economy is on a recovery path, including early signs of a revival of investment activity. Global demand is improving, which should help strengthen domestic investment activity.

## 3. RBI to link base rate with MCLR from 1 April

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will link the base rate for loans with the marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) from 1 April.

RBI had introduced MCLR system with effect from April 1, 2016 to facilitate greater passing on of the benefit of reduction in policy rates to lending rates. MCLR is calculated on the basis of incremental cost of funds while base rate is calculated by taking into account average cost of funds.



#### 4. RBI to set up Ombudsman for Non-Banking Finance Companies

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has announced to set up an ombudsman for Non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) with an aim to strengthen the customer grievance redressal mechanism.

The Ombudsman Scheme is expected to be operationalized by the end of February 2018. Initially it would be started with deposit-taking NBFCs and later on cover NBFCs with asset size of Rs 100 crore or more. At present, there are around 20 banking ombudsmen with offices



in major state capitals in the country.

#### 5. IndusInd Bank unveils new Sonic Identity

IndusInd Bank launched its new Sonic Identity which is essentially a musical logo to build the Bank's brand imagery with the strategic use of music and sound for brand experiences and audience connection.

The musical logo is also referred to as the MOGO™ (short for musical LOGO). The sonic identity is derived from the Bank's persona and core values of innovation, courage and dynamism.



#### 6. Government proposed to allow premature closure of PPF account

Government has proposed to allow premature closure of Public Provident Fund (PPF) accounts and permit opening of small savings accounts in the name of minor. It will make amendments in Small Savings Act in this regard.

The government has also proposed merger of Government Savings Certificates Act, 1959 and Public Provident Fund Act, 1968 with the Government Savings Banks Act, 1873. The government has not make any change in interest rate or tax policy on small savings scheme through this amendment.



## 7. RBI issued revised guidelines for expeditious resolution of bad loans

Reserve Bank of India has issued a revised framework for expeditious resolution of bad loans, harmonising the existing guidelines with the norms specified in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). The new guidelines have specified framework for early identification and reporting of stressed assets.

RBI also announced to do away with the Joint Lenders' Forum (JLF) as an institutional mechanism for resolution of stressed accounts. The revised framework will govern all accounts, including those where any of the schemes have been invoked but not yet implemented.



## 8. SBI wrote off bad loans worth ₹20,339 crore in 2016-17

State Bank of India wrote off bad loans worth ₹20,339 crore in 2016-17. The total amount of bad loans written off by all the public sector banks was ₹81,683 crore for 2016-17 with SBI leading the pack.

The PSBs wrote off ₹34,409 crore worth of bad loans in 2013-14, ₹49,018 crore in 2014-15 and ₹57,585 crore in 2015-16. For the quarter ending Sep-17 in the current Financial Year, PSBs have written off loans worth ₹53,625 crore. Also, September quarter, 9 PSBs (out of 21) had gross non-performing asset ratio of above 15% while 14 have GNPA Ratio of over 12%.



## 9. Bank of Baroda to shut down its operations in South Africa by March-end

Bank of Baroda has decided to exit its South Africa operations by March-end amid a probe into alleged compliance lapses by the bank there.

The branch will stop taking new/incremental deposits and disbursing loans with effect from March 1, 2018. The branch will cease to operate and conduct the business of a bank with effect from March 31, 2018. The bank had initiated operations in South Africa about 21 years ago. BoB has 107 overseas branches.



## 10. RBI relaxed Priority Sector Lending Rule for Banks

The Reserve Bank of India has relaxed the priority sector lending rule for banks. Henceforth, all loans to micro small and medium enterprises (MSME) will qualify as priority sector lending. Till date, loans up to Rs 10 crore per MSME borrower was considered for priority sector calculation.

The sub-target for bank lending to the micro enterprises has been 7.50 percent of adjusted net bank credit or credit equivalent amount of off-balance sheet exposure, whichever is higher.



## 11. Yes Bank announced listing of its debut USD 600 mn MTN Bond on India INX

Yes Bank has listed its debut USD 600 million bond issue under its maiden USD 1 billion MTN (medium term note) programme on Global Securities Market ("GSM") of India INX.

India INX is the country's first international exchange, located at International Financial Services Centre, GIFT City in Gujarat. The bank will use the proceeds to fund the bank's IFSC Banking Unit (IBU) in Gift City.



## 12. NPCI accords consent to roll out WhatsApp BHIM UPI Beta launch

The National Payments Corporation of India, NPCI, has accorded its consent to roll out WhatsApp BHIM UPI beta launch with limited user base of one million and low per transaction limit.

Four banks will join the multi-bank BHIM UPI model. Bharat Interface for Money BHIM- Unified Payments Interface (BHIM UPI) was set up in 2009 as the central infrastructure for various retail payment systems in the country and envisaged by the Reserve Bank of India as a payment utility.



### 13. NABARD signs pact to solarize its premises

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) today entered into a memorandum with Solar Energy Corporation of INDIA (SECI) to install rooftop solar systems on its premises across the country.

The initiative is expected to generate about 4 MW solar power for the institution's own consumption. Surplus power, if produced, will be supplied to discoms. The move is in line with NABARD and the Union government's ongoing effort to promote clean energy.



### 14. NABARD launched Rs 1,918 cr area development plan for Punjab

The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) announced area development plans worth Rs 1,918 crore for Punjab to supplement farmers' income.

Under this plan, the activities like dairy, vegetable cultivation, bee keeping, mushroom growing will be promoted in order to provide income to farmers at sustainable basis. The investment credit growth in Punjab went down from 37 percent in 2013-14 to 18% in 2016-17 while the overall investment credit growth in India has gone up from 25% to 35%.

राष्ट्रीय कृषि और  
ग्रामीण विकास बैंक

### 15. Flipkart-owned PhonePe collaborated with Indian Oil to deploy PoS devices

Flipkart-owned PhonePe has collaborated with Indian Oil Corporation to deploy its own point-of-sales (PoS) payment terminals across all IOCL retail outlets. IOCL customers can pay using UPI, credit and debit cards, PhonePe wallet, or other external wallets.

PhonePe is currently live across more than 60K online and offline merchants including MakeMyTrip, PVR, Cleartrip etc. Flipkart acquired PhonePe in April 2016. Flipkart is planning to invest USD 500 million to expand PhonePe's operations.



## 16. PNB Housing Finance Ltd tied up with IFC for affordable housing

PNB Housing Finance Ltd has tied up with International Finance Corporation (IFC) to raise \$800 million for green and affordable housing in India. IFC is a part of the World Bank Group.

According to the terms of the agreement, IFC and PNB Housing both will put up \$400 million each. IFC will provide \$150 million from its own money while the rest will be raised through masala bonds issued by PNB Housing. Masala bonds are rupee-denominated bonds issued in offshore capital markets.



## 17. First sale of Electoral Bonds to commence from 1st March

The first sale of Electoral Bonds will commence from the 1st of March for a period of ten days. The Government has authorized four branches of the State Bank of India to issue and encash Electoral Bonds initially.

Electoral Bond will be valid for 15 days from the date of issue and no payment shall be made to any payee Political Party if the Bond is deposited after the expiry of the validity period. The Bond deposited by any eligible political party to its account shall be credited on the same day.



## 18. EPFO fixed interest rate at 8.55 % for 2017-18

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, EPFO has declared 8.55% interest rate for 2017-18 for its about 5 crore members. This was decided during the meeting of Central Board of Trustees of EPFO in New Delhi. For 2016-17 the rate was 8.65% and in 2015-16 the rate was 8.8%.

EPFO has liquidated portion of its investments in the exchange traded funds (ETFs) to bridge the gap to provide 8.55% interest this fiscal.



### 19. Fitch put PNB ratings under review for downgrade

Fitch Ratings has placed Punjab National Bank's (PNB) Viability Rating on Rating Watch Negative (RWN). Currently, the viability rating stands at "BB". The possible downgrade of rating is due to the detection of a large fraud in one of the bank's branches amounting to Rs 11,500 crore.



Moody's too has placed the bank under review for downgrade. The agency has a Baa3/P-3 rating while it has a Baa3 rating on its foreign currency issuer rating. The bank overall has a Baa2 rating with a stable outlook now from Moody's.

### 20. RBI sets up panel to monitor bad loans and frauds in banks

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has set up an expert committee to look into the issues related to classification of banks' NPAs, rising incidents of frauds and effectiveness of audits. The panel will be headed by former RBI board member Y H Malegam.



The other members of the committee are Bharat Doshi, S. Raman and Nandkumar Saravade. A.K. Misra, Executive Director, RBI, will be the Member-Secretary of the committee.

### 21. Capital First given permission to merge with IDFC Bank

National Housing Bank approved merger of Capital First and IDFC Bank. The merger is result of IDFC Bank's stated strategy of "retailing" its business to complete their transformation from a dedicated infrastructure financier to a well-diversified universal bank, and in line with Capital First's stated intention and strategy to convert to a universal bank.



Capital First brings with it a retail lending franchise with a loan book of Rs 22,974 crores, customer base of 3 million customers; and a distribution network in 228 locations. Post-merger, the combined entity of IDFC Bank and Capital First will have 194 branches.

## 22. RBI introduced Ombudsman scheme for NBFCs

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) launched the Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFC) for redressal of complaints against NBFCs registered with RBI under Section 45-IA of the RBI Act, 1934.

The Scheme will provide a cost-free and expeditious complaint redressal mechanism relating to deficiency in the services by NBFCs covered under the Scheme. The offices of the NBFC Ombudsmen will function at four metro centres viz. Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi and will handle complaints of customers in the respective zones.



## 23. RBI instructs banks to link SWIFT with CBS by 30th April

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has instructed all banks to integrate SWIFT (Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication) with core banking solutions (CBS) within 30 April, 2018.

The SWIFT system promoted in 1973 by banks globally is used to transmit messages relating to cross border financial transactions. Globally over 11,000 financial institutions in more than 200 countries use the services of SWIFT which is viewed as secure.

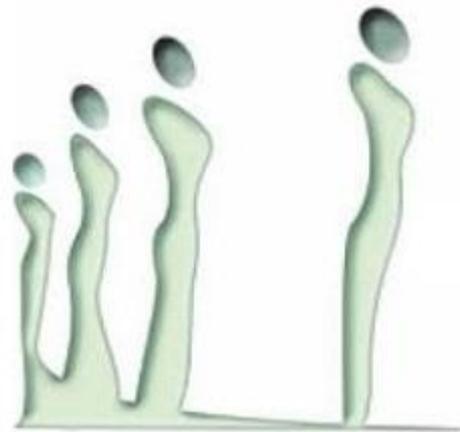




#### 4. International Day of Women and Girls in Science 2018

The International Day of Women and Girls in Science is observed annually on 11th February to ensure full and equal access to and participation in science for women and girls. The resolution was adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 22, 2015.

The theme for this year's celebrations will be on "Gender Equality and Parity in Science for Peace and Development" with the focus being to encourage girls and young women to not only choose science but also enjoy science.



#### 5. World Day of Social Justice

The United Nations' (UN) World Day of Social Justice is observed every year on February 20. The day recognizes the need to promote efforts to tackle issues such as poverty, exclusion and unemployment. It also encourages people to look at how social justice affects poverty eradication.

The theme for 2018 is "Workers on the Move: the Quest for Social Justice". The day supports efforts of the international community in poverty eradication, the promotion of full employment and decent work, gender equity and access to social well-being and justice for all.



#### 6. International Mother Language Day

UNESCO celebrates International Mother Language Day (IMLD) annually on February 21. The theme for 2018 is "Linguistic diversity and multilingualism count for sustainable development".

The day promotes linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism. On this day in 1952 students demonstrated for recognition of their language, Bangla, as one of the two national languages of the then Pakistan, were shot and killed by police in Dhaka.



## 1. Sri Lanka celebrated its 70th Independence Day

Sri Lanka celebrated its 70th Independence Day with theme "One Nation". In 1948, Sri Lanka achieved freedom from British rule. Britain's Queen, Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, and the Countess of Wessex were invited as guests to the celebration. Celebrations took place in the presence of President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe.



President Maithripala Sirisena hoisted the National flag. Parades, cultural programmes, shows by students and civil organizations took place.

## 2. Mahmud Hossain selected as new Chief Justice of Bangladesh

Former judge of the Appellate Division of the Supreme Court, Justice Syed Mahmud Hossain was selected as new Chief Justice of Bangladesh. He has served as an advocate of the District Court and the High Court Division of Bangladesh Supreme Court in 1981 and 1983 respectively. Justice Syed will be known as the 22nd chief justice of Bangladesh.



The other three Appellate Division judges comprise of Justice Muhammad Imman Ali, Justice Hasan Foez Siddique and Justice Mirza Hussain Haider.

## 3. KP Sharma Oli becomes Nepal's new Prime Minister

The Communist Party of Nepal (UML) Chairman KP Sharma Oli has become new Prime Minister of Nepal. President Bidya Devi Bhandari administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr. Oli. This is the second time Mr. Oli has become the prime minister. He had served as prime minister from October 2015 to August 2016.



Nepali Congress President Sher Bahadur Deuba resigned from the post of prime minister to pave the way for formation of a new government as per the people's mandate in recent elections.

#### 4. Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades got re-elected

Nicos Anastasiades won Presidential elections for consecutive 2nd term in Cyprus. He defeated leftist challenger Stavros Malas. Nicos won elections by 55.99% votes against 44% votes of Malas. In the 1st round of voting, Anastasiades won 35.5% of votes against 30.2% of Malas. Nicos Anastasiades won elections on basis of economic co-operation instead of reunification talks.



Nicos Anastasiades won elections by taking credit of recovery of Cyprus from the crisis in 2013.

#### 5. Google launched '#SecurityCheckKiya' campaign

In order to promote security awareness among general public and introduce Safer Internet Day targets, Google launched #SecurityCheckKiya campaign on Safer Internet Day, observed on February 6, by displaying 'Security Check' on its homepage.



#SecurityCheckKiya campaign is aimed at protecting beginners from account hijacking, safeguard Android devices from viral apps and secure all their personal data on losing devices. Under this campaign, an app was launched "Find My Device" for those whose device is lost.

#### 6. Sweden and WFP signed agreement of \$370m aid to UN World Food Programme

The Swedish Government and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) signed a Strategic Partnership Agreement, with Sweden making a historic commitment of approximately US\$370 million in flexible funds to WFP over the next four years (2018 to 2021). The contribution is the largest ever made by a donor within a WFP Strategic Partnership Agreement.



For nearly a decade, Sweden has been the largest donor of flexible funds to WFP.

## 7. US House passed stopgap-spending bill to avert shutdown

In the United States, House of Representatives has approved another stopgap bill to keep the federal government from shutting down. The Republican-controlled House sent to the Senate a temporary spending bill - the fifth of the federal fiscal year that began in October to extend most federal agency funding until March 23.



The bill does not contain changes to U.S. immigration law. January's shutdown came about after Democrats insisted that any spending bill must also include protections for young immigrants known as "Dreamers," who were brought to the country illegally as children.

## 8. Maldives government announced state of emergency

Since, Maldives president Abdulla Yameen faced arrest due to political crisis that followed a surprise Supreme Court ruling and armed troops stormed the country's apex court, country declared a state of emergency for 15 days. Under emergency, certain rights will be restricted, general movements, services and businesses will not be affected.



Former Maldives President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom also got arrested, after the state of emergency was declared. The Maldives government has come under criticism globally for its refusal to obey the court order.

## 9. Sushma Swaraj witnessed Al-Janadriyah fest

Indian external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj attended 32nd Al-Janadriyah festival in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia and discussed impetus of growth of relations between both the countries. India was invited as Guest of Honour' at the festival. Al-Janadriyah festival is national heritage and cultural festival' of Saudi Arabia.



India Pavilion was showcased at the festival based on theme "Saudi ka Dost Bharat". The Pavilion displayed India's vibrant culture through colourful dance, music, traditional strengths like Yoga, Ayurveda, textiles and tourism.

### 10. Dubai International Airport held No 1 position as the world's busiest airport

With 88.2 million passengers in 2017, Dubai International Airport has retained its No 1 ranking as the world's busiest airport for international travel. London Heathrow was second in the list.



DIA first reached the top of the rankings in 2014 when it pipped off London Heathrow and has maintained the title ever since. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in Georgia remains the world's busiest airport overall. Hong Kong International Airport, Amsterdam Airport Schiphol and Paris-Charles de Gaulle Airport are the others in the top-five.

### 11. Bermuda became the first nation to repeal same-sex marriage law

Bermuda became the first country in the world to abolish same-sex marriage rights for its citizens. Bermudans were first granted the right to same-sex marriages after a Supreme Court ruling in May 2017.



The bill was approved by Bermuda's governor John Rankin. The bill will not roll back same-sex marriages that have already taken place. Bermuda is a British Overseas Territory in the North Atlantic Ocean. It has its own constitution and its own government. However, the United Kingdom retains responsibility for defence and foreign relations.

### 12. PM Modi addressed World Government Summit in Dubai

Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered the keynote address at the inaugural day of the World Government Summit in Dubai. India was given the status of Guest of Honour at the Summit. The World Government Summit is an annual event held in Dubai, UAE.



On the final day, India's Umang won the winner of the Best m-Government Service Award for the Accessible Government Category. India's Aadhaar was awarded as the Best Government Emerging Technologies Award. The winner of the Global Universities Challenge was the London Business School.

### 13. India retained top spot as source market for Dubai Tourism in 2017

According to the latest data published by Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism), 2.1 million Indian tourists visited Dubai in 2017 with a 15% growth as compared to last year. India, thus, retained the top spot as the source market.



India also became the first country to cross the 2 million mark in a single year. Shah Rukh Khan promotes Dubai Tourism's 'BeMyGuest' campaign. A total of 15.79 million tourists visited Dubai last year.

### 14. PM Modi laid foundation stone for first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone-laying ceremony for the first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi. This is the first stone temple to be built in Abu Dhabi. It will come up on 55,000 square metres of land.



The temple will be completed by 2020. The UAE government had allocated land for the temple during PM Modi's first visit to the gulf country in 2015.

### 15. World's 1st Autonomous Pods launched in Dubai

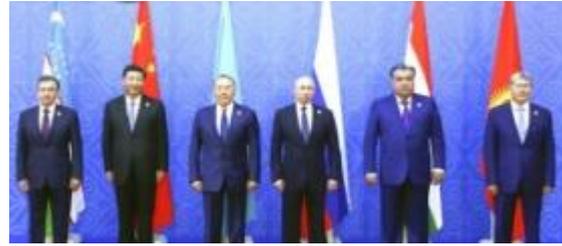
Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) has launched the first tests of the world's first autonomous pods at the World Government Summit. The autonomous pods are designed in cooperation with Next Future Transportation to travel short and medium distances in dedicated lanes.



Each pod can accommodate ten riders. Its average speed is 20k/h. It is fitted with a battery that supports 3 hours of operation, and can be fully charged in 6 hours.

### 16. China to host SCO summit in Qingdao in June

China will host the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Summit in June 2018 in Qingdao City. The 2017 SCO summit was held in Astana, Kazakhstan.



The summit has China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan as full members. India and Pakistan joined SCO as full members on 9 June 2017 in the last summit. The SCO focuses on security-related issues of the region especially on counter terrorism cooperation.

### 17. Venezuela, Libya lose UN Vote for third time in 3 Years

Venezuela and Libya have been suspended from voting in the United Nations General Assembly for the third time in three years because of millions of dollars in unpaid dues to the United Nations.



Venezuela must pay a minimum of \$25,200,296 to restore its voting rights and Libya must pay at least \$6,594,842. The other countries that also lost their voting rights are Central African Republic (CAR), Dominican Republic, Grenada, Surinam and Yemen.

Republic, Dominica, Marshall Islands,

### 18. Cyril Ramaphosa appointed as the New President of South Africa

Cyril Ramaphosa was sworn in as the new President of South Africa. He replaced Jacob Zuma who resigned. Ramaphosa was chosen as leader of the African National Congress in December.



Ramaphosa is one of South Africa's richest men, with an estimated net worth of \$450 million. He rose to prominence as a young man fighting the white-minority apartheid regime in the 1970s and 1980s.

### 19. Indonesia signed deal to buy 11 Sukhoi Su-35 jets from Russia

Indonesia has signed a deal to buy 11 Sukhoi Su-35 jets from Russia. The deal is worth a total 1.14 billion dollars.

Two units of Sukhoi jets will be delivered in August 2018. Another six jets would be delivered in 18 months after the contract comes into effect and the final three a further five months later. The Su-35 is a 4++ generation aircraft employing technologies of the fifth generation. They make it superior to all other 4th generation fighters now under development worldwide.



### 20. Saudi Arabia allows women to start business without male permission

Saudi Arabia has allowed its women citizen to open their own businesses without the consent of a husband or male relative. Women can also benefit from governmental e-services without having to prove consent from a guardian.

Under Saudi Arabia's guardianship system, women are required to present proof of permission from a male guardian to do any government paperwork, travel or enrol in classes. Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has been leading the drive to expand the role of women in the workforce in recent months.



### 21. Pakistan to deploy troops in Saudi Arabia

Pakistan will deploy troops in Saudi Arabia under an existing security pact on training and advise mission. Already around 1,000 Pakistani troops are deployed in Saudi Arabia.

The Pakistan Parliament had voted in 2015 not to send soldiers to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in order to avoid Pakistan's involvement in the Yemen conflict. Saudi Arabia has launched operations to support forces loyal to Yemen's UN-recognised President Abd-Rabbu Mansour Hadi against a Houthi rebellion.



## 22. Pakistan is home to the highest newborn mortality rates in the world

According to a report released by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Pakistan is home to the highest newborn mortality rates in the world. Pakistan topped the poll, with 45 newborn babies dying out of every 1,000 births in 2016. Newborn mortality rate in the Central African Republic was 42 newborn deaths, followed by Afghanistan with 40 and Somalia with 38.



Japan's newborn mortality rate was among the lowest in the world, with 0.9 deaths for every 1,000 live births. India's neonatal mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births) is 25.4.

## 23. UN names India as Global Host for the World Environment Day 2018

The United Nations has nominated India to host the global World Environment Day celebrations on 5 June 2018. The theme of the World Environment 2018 is "Beat Plastic Pollution".



Every year the world uses 500 billion plastic bags. Each year, at least 8 million tonnes of plastic end up in the oceans. Plastic makes up 10% of all of the waste we generate. We buy 1 million plastic bottles every minute.

## 24. Singapore to impose carbon tax from 2019

Singapore will impose a carbon tax from 2019 in order help curb greenhouse gas emissions and make companies more competitive. The tax would be levied on all facilities producing 25,000 tonnes or more of greenhouse gas emissions a year.



The tax, to be applied to all sectors, will be Sg\$5.0 (\$3.8) per tonne of greenhouse gas emissions from 2019 to 2023, after which the levy would be reviewed and may be raised to between Sg\$10 and Sg\$15 per tonne by 2030.

## 25. Cobra Gold Military Exercise held in Thailand

The 37th Cobra Gold Exercise was held in Thailand. A total of 11,075 Thai, U.S., Malaysian, Singaporean, Indonesian, Japanese and South Korean soldiers participated in the exercise.

The annual exercise includes the Command Post Exercise, the Field Training Exercise and the Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Relief Exercise. Cobra Gold is the largest Asia-Pacific military exercise and is among the largest multinational military exercise in which the United States participates.



## 26. Google launched Google Pay

Google has launched Google Pay after combining its two payment services, Google Wallet and Android Pay. The platform includes features like the ability to pay at checkout counters with a smartphone or pay for public transportation.

Google Pay has two areas: Home section and Cards section. Home section shows recent transactions and makes suggestions on local stores while Cards section is for storing digital versions of credit, debit, and reward cards.



## 27. India International Textiles Expo held in Colombo

Powerloom Development & Export Promotion Council (PDEXCIL) in union with Union Ministry of Textiles & Ministry of Commerce & Industry organized India International Textiles Expo (IITExpo) of India in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Various varieties of fabrics, home textiles, traditional items etc. suitable for apparel, industrial, technical application and general consumers was showcased at the event by 45 Indian exhibitors.

Sri Lanka has been buying textile material from India and transforming it into apparel and garments for rest of the world and has attended trainings under Indian Technical & Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme.



## 28. India contributes \$1 million for cyclone-hit Tonga

India has contributed \$1 million for relief efforts in the Pacific Ocean kingdom of Tonga. Tonga was hit badly by cyclone Gita that affected about 70% of Tonga's population. The nation's parliament was also destroyed by the storm.

Of the total \$1 million, \$500,000 would be given as immediate relief to Tonga and another \$500,000 would be allocated to it from the India-UN Development Partnership Fund (I-UNDPF). Tonga's Prime Minister is Akilisi Pohiva.



# Miscellaneous

- Anu Kumar of Uttarakhand grabbed the first gold medal of the Khelo India School Games as he won the 1,500 m final.
- Rating agency CRISIL has revised its outlook on 18 public sector banks (PSBs) from "negative" to "stable" after the government announced bank-wise capital infusion and reform plans.
- The first chat-based job search mobile app of India, 'Empzilla', was launched.
- The South Central Railway (SCR) has become the first railway zone in the country to complete 100 per cent LED lighting at all the stations under its jurisdiction.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on a four-day visit to Palestine, United Arab Emirates and Oman.
- Environment Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan launched the Clean Air for Delhi campaign jointly with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal from February 10-23.
- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh launched the Centre for learning Sanskrit language in Gujarat University in Ahmedabad.
- Services and Indian Railways registered hard-fought victories to bag the Men's and Women's titles in the third Federation Cup Kabaddi tournament in Mumbai.
- Sharmila Nicollet has become the first Indian golfer to qualify for the China Ladies PGA Tour.
- India's first online radio station, Radio Umang, was launched. Listeners can tune in to it through web streaming or download the app.
- India-Russia Agriculture Business Summit 2018 was held in New Delhi.
- Tamil Nadu won their maiden title in the 23rd edition of the Senior Women's National Football Championship after they defeated Manipur 2-1 in the final.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) organised programme "Watan Ko Jano" to give exposure to the youth and children of Jammu and Kashmir about the cultural and socio-economic development taking place in other parts of the country.
- Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau attended the Canada - India Business Forum at Taj Mahal Palace Hotel.
- India to invest \$250 million in Canada while Canadian companies to invest \$750 million in India.
- Fairfax India Holdings Corp. of Canada acquired a 51% stake in the Catholic Syrian Bank in Kerala with \$200 million investment.

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was on a two-day visit to Saudi Arabia where he co-chaired the 12th India-Saudi Arabia Joint Commission Meeting.
- Amazon became the first foreign company to start with its food retail venture in India.
- Milkbasket, India's first and largest micro-delivery platform has been recognised as 'Startup of the Year' 2017 at the 7th Small Business Awards.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the Palace Queen Humsafar Express between Mysuru and Udaipur in Mysuru Railway Station.
- Union Minister of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, Shri R.K. Singh inaugurated the 'International R&D Conclave'- two-day conference on Emerging Opportunities and Challenges of R&D in Indian Power Sector, organised by Central Electricity Authority (CEA).
- IOC denied Russia the opportunity to march under their own flag in the closing ceremony after the IOC ruled that doping violations in PyeongChang had marred their report card.

# National

## 1. Government launched GeM 3.0

Government e Marketplace (GeM), has been envisaged by Government of India as the National Procurement Portal of India. The GeM 2.0 was launched as a pilot in August 2016.

Some of the notable enhancements in the 3.0 version:

- i. Market Based generic requirements across all government agencies
- ii. Standardisation of specifications of both products and services enabling empirical price comparability
- iii. Completely transparent transactions across all ranges
- iv. Generic standards established through universal service levels and cost comparison enabled
- v. Open and dynamic market place with rating based on performance of user on website



## 2. The Government of India and World Bank sign \$100 Million Project to Boost Rural Economy of Tamil Nadu

The Government of India and the World Bank signed a \$100 million Loan Agreement to promote rural enterprises, facilitate their access to finance, and create employment opportunities for youth, particularly women. The Project will be operational in 120 blocks across 3,994 villages in 26 Districts of Tamil Nadu with 411,620 direct beneficiaries.

The \$100 million loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), has a 5-year grace period, and a maturity of 19 years.



### 3. India and ADB sign \$250 Million Loan to improve Rural Connectivity

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$250 million loan to finance the construction of 6,254 kilometres all-weather rural roads in the States of Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal under the Prime Minister's Rural Roads Program (PMGSY).



The First Tranche Loan is part of the \$500 million Second Rural Connectivity Investment Program for India approved by the ADB Board in December 2017.

### 4. Salient features of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Budget 2018-19

- i. The budgetary allocation of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Ministry has been increased from Rs. 51,576 crore in 2017-18 to Rs. 58,080 crore for 2018-19
- ii. Agriculture credit has been increased to Rs 11 lakh crore
- iii. National Bamboo Mission with a fund of Rs. 1290 crore
- iv. Minimum Support Price (MSP) for various agricultural crops will be 1.5 times more than the input cost
- v. Micro irrigation fund Rs. 5,000 crore
- vi. Dairy Processing and Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF) - Rs. 10,881 crore
- vii. Agri-Market Infrastructure Fund – Rs. 2,000 crore
- viii. Loans to Women Self Help Groups increased to Rs.75,000 crore from Rs 42,500 crore



### 5. Defence Budget 2018-19

Union Budget for the financial year 2018-19 has earmarked Rs 2,95,511.41 crore for Defence which accounts for 12.10% of the total Central Government expenditure for the year 2018-19 and a growth of 7.81 % over Budget Estimates (Rs. 2,74,114.12 crore) and 5.91% over Revised Estimates (Rs.



2,79,003.85 crore), respectively for the financial year 2017-18.

Rs 99,947 crore has been set aside for capital outlay to purchase of new weapons, aircraft, warships and other military hardware.

## 6. Government introduced Bill to amend the PMLA 2002

The Government has introduced Bill to amend the Prevention of Money-laundering Act, 2002 through Finance Act, 2018. The key amendments are:

- i. The present amendment shall allow to proceed against property equivalent to proceeds to crime held outside the country also
- ii. Amendment proposed in Section 45(1) would make the applicability of bail conditions uniform to all the offences under PMLA
- iii. Section 447 of Companies Act is being included as scheduled offence under PMLA
- iv. Proposed amendment gives 90 days more for investigation to ED, before prosecution is filed



## 7. Highlights of Budget 2018-19

- i. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley envisaged a total outlay of Rs. 24,42,213 crore for union budget 2018-19
- ii. "Operation Greens" launched to address price fluctuations in potato, tomato and onion
- iii. Outlay on health, education and social protection will be 1.38 lakh crore
- iv. World's largest Health Protection Scheme covering over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families launched with a family limit upto 5 lakh rupees for secondary and tertiary treatment
- v. Fiscal Deficit pegged at 3.5 %, projected at 3.3 % for 2018-19
- vi. Rs. 5.97 lakh crore allocation for infrastructure
- vii. Disinvestment crossed target of Rs 72,500 crore to reach Rs 1,00,000 crore
- viii. Tax on Long Term Capital Gains exceeding Rs. 1 lakh at the rate of 10%



- ix. For senior citizens, exemption of interest income on bank deposits raised to Rs 50,000
- x. Standard deduction of Rs 40,000 allowed for transport, medical reimbursement for salaried tax payers
- xi. Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana to continue up to march 2020 with increased limit of Rs 15 lakhs
- xii. Education cess increased to 4% from 3%

### **8. Tax Incentive for Promoting Post-Harvest Activities of Agriculture**

Finance Minister Shri Arun Jaitley proposed to allow 100% deduction to companies registered as Farmer Producer Companies and having annual turnover up to Rs.100 crores in respect of their profit derived from such activities for a period of five years from financial year 2018-19 while presenting the General Budget 2018-19 in Parliament.



At present, 100% deduction is allowed in respect of profit of co-operative societies which provide assistance to its members engaged in primary agricultural activities.

### **9. Rs.14.34 Lakh Crore to be spent in 2018-19 for creation of livelihood and infrastructure in rural areas**

The total amount to be spent by various Ministries for creation of livelihood and infrastructure in rural areas during 2018-19 will be Rs.14.34 lakh crore, including extra-budgetary and non-budgetary resources of Rs.11.98 lakh crore.



The Government substantially increased the allocation of National Rural Livelihood Mission to Rs. 5750 crore in 2018-19. Rs 2600 crore was allocated to strengthen ground water irrigation scheme under Prime Minister Krishi Sinchai Yojna - Har Khet ko Pani.

## 10. Union Government launched Gobar-Dhan Scheme

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced the launch of Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBAR-DHAN) to make the villages open defecation free and improving the lives of villagers. It will manage and convert cattle dung and solid waste in farms to compost, bio-gas and bio-CNG.

The Finance Minister also announced that 187 projects have been sanctioned under Namami Gange Programme for infrastructure development, reverse surface cleaning, rural sanitation and other interventions at a cost of Rs.16, 713 crore.



## 11. Two major initiatives in health sector announced as part of Ayushman Bharat programme

The Government announced two major initiatives in health sector, as part of Ayushman Bharat programme:

- i. **Health and Wellness Centre:** The Budget has allocated Rs.1200 crore for this flagship programme. Under this 1.5 lakh centres will provide comprehensive health care, including for non-communicable diseases and maternal and child health services.
- ii. **National Health Protection Scheme:** It will cover over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families providing coverage up to 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.



## 12. Government of India and World Bank sign \$375 Million Loan to help India develop its First Modern Waterway

The Government of India and the World Bank signed a \$375 million loan agreement to support India develop its first modern inland water transport fairway on the Ganga river between Varanasi and the seaport of Haldia.

The total cost of the Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) is US\$ 800 million. GoI will fund US\$ 380 million through budgetary allocation. Another US\$ 45 million will come from private sector participation under the PPP mode. The JMVP is expected to be completed by March, 2023.



### 13. Railways Ministry to augment Ayush services in Railway hospitals

Railways Ministry signed MoU with Ministry of Ayush to augment Ayush services in Railway hospitals. The traditional knowledge of AYUSH systems can be harnessed to help a vast majority of railway staff who are required to put in stressful field duties on site.

Ayush Systems of Medicine offer safe, effective and complete holistic treatment in many diseases. The proposed collaboration will play a pivotal role in offering healthcare needs to the people serving the railway sector. Presently Railways is running 126 Homeopathic Clinics and 40 Ayurvedic Clinics.



### 14. Government launched Start-up-India ranking framework

The government launched the Start-up-India ranking framework to help the Startup India initiative to drive economic growth of the country. The key objective of the Startup States and Union territories ranking framework was to encourage States and Union Territories to take pro-active steps towards strengthening the Startup ecosystems at the local level. It will measure the impact of each step initiated at the local level for building a strong Startup ecosystem.



The ranking framework will also enable continuous learning through the dissemination of good practices.

### 15. Government took steps to attract fresh investments in the Urea Sector

Government announced New Investment Policy – 2012 (NIP-2012) and its amendment on to facilitate fresh investment in urea sector and make India self-sufficient in the urea sector.

Under the provisions of NIP-2012 and its amendment, Matix Fertilisers & Chemicals Limited (Matix) has set up a Coal Bed Methane (CBM) based Greenfield Ammonia-Urea complex at West Bengal with the installed capacity of 1.3 MMT per annum. Chambal Fertilizers & Chemicals Limited (CFCL) has proposed to set up a brownfield project with capacity of 1.34 MMT at Gadepan, Rajasthan, which is likely to start commercial production in January, 2019.



## 16. National Standards Bodies signed MoU with BIS

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) signed MoUs with National Standards Bodies (NSBs) of 23 countries. The objective of the MoUs is to facilitate closer cooperation between the bodies with the common aim of strengthening core activities of standardization and conformity assessment, which helps the national economy by providing safe, reliable and quality goods, minimizing health hazards to consumers, protecting the environment, promoting exports and imports, etc.

Some of such countries with BIS signed MoU are Saudi Arabia, USA, Afghanistan, Egypt, Germany, Japan, Kenya and Nigeria.



## 17. IWAI signed project with World Bank for US \$ 375 million

Inland Waterways Authority of India signed a project of US \$ 375 million loan agreement with the World Bank for Jal Marg Vikas Project on Ganga. It involves implementation of the US \$ 800 million JMVP for capacity augmentation of navigation on National Waterway-1(River Ganga) from Varanasi to Haldia. The signing of the agreement follows the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.



The JMVP will result in an environment-friendly, fuel-efficient and cost-effective alternative mode of transportation, especially for bulk goods. The JMVP is expected to be completed by March, 2023.

## 18. Government sets up mechanism in CSIR to interact with Small-Scale Industry

Union Minister for Science & Technology Dr Harsh Vardhan has set up a mechanism in CSIR for regular interface with small-scale industry for transfer of technologies from CSIR laboratories. A nodal officer in CSIR will coordinate with the small-scale industry and CSIR labs for appropriate technology required by them.

CSIR covers a wide spectrum of science and technology – from radio and space physics, oceanography, earth sciences, geophysics, chemicals, drugs, genomics, biotechnology and nanotechnology to mining, materials, aeronautics, instrumentation, environmental engineering and information technology.



### **19. Cabinet approved signing of India-Australia MoUs for Secondment Programme**

The Union Cabinet approved for signing of MoU for Secondment Programme. Under the Programme, one officer from the Australian Treasury shall be seconded to the Department of Economic Affairs and one officer from the IES shall be seconded to the Australian Treasury, Government of Australia, for a period of three months.



The proposed Programme will help to deepen the understanding of current economic policy issues in both countries and also explore further opportunities for future collaboration and engagement. The Programme would also provide the seconded officers with valuable and unique development opportunities.

### **20. Cabinet approved signing of MoU between India and China for the avoidance of DTAA**

The Union Cabinet gave its approval for signing and ratification of protocol amending the Agreement between India and China for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on income.



The Protocol will incorporate changes required to implement treaty related minimum standards under the Action reports of Base Erosion & Profit shifting (BEPS) Project, in which India had participated on an equal footing. Besides minimum standards, the Protocol will also bring in changes as per BEPS Action reports as agreed upon by two sides.

## 21. Cabinet approved signing of a MoU between India and USA on law enforcement training

The Union Cabinet approved MoC between Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers (FLETC), USA and Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPR&D), India on Law Enforcement Training. This paved the way for enhanced cooperation between the two countries in security related matters under the aegis of the India-US Homeland Security Dialogue.



The MoC will help in improving the standards of training, training materials, quality of trainers etc. which will go a long way in improving the functioning of police forces in the country and realizing the concept of SMART Police.

## 22. Cabinet approved DSF Policy Bid Round-11 for ONGC

The Union Cabinet approved for extending the Discovered Small Field Policy to identified 60 discovered small fields / un-monetized discoveries for offer under the Discovered Small Field Policy Bid Round-II. Out of these, 22 fields belong to of Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) Limited, 5 belong to Oil India Limited (OIL) and 12 are relinquished fields / discoveries from the New Exploration and Licensing Policy (NELP) Blocks.



These fields will be developed and monetized faster thereby augmenting production of oil and gas leading to enhance energy security of the country.

## 23. Cabinet approved ratification of the Minamata convention on mercury

The Union Cabinet approved the proposal for ratification of Minamata Convention on Mercury and depositing the instrument of ratification enabling India to become a Party of the Convention.



The approval entails Ratification of the Minamata Convention on Mercury along with flexibility for continued use of mercury-based products and processes involving mercury compound up to 2025. The Minamata Convention on Mercury will be implemented in the context of sustainable development with the objective to protect human health and environment from the anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.

## 24. Cabinet approved placing the new Instrument adopted by ILO

The Union Cabinet approved for placing the new Instrument adopted by International Labour Organization (ILO) Recommendation concerning "The Employment and Decent Work for Peace and Resilience (No.-205)" before the Parliament. The Recommendation provides guidance to member States on the measures to be taken to generate employment and decent work for the purposes of prevention, recovery, peace and resilience with respect to crisis situations arising from conflicts and disasters.



The Recommendation affirms the need to develop and strengthen measures of social protection, as a means of preventing crises, enabling recovery and building resilience.

## 25. Cabinet approved Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2017

The Union Cabinet gave approval to the modifications carried out in the replacement Bill, which replaced the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill 2017, and which has been passed by the Parliament as the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Act, 2018.



The amendment will bring clarity and ensure that the prohibition of certain persons in the resolution process of an insolvent corporate person does not include unintended persons and the opportunity given to a person whose account is classified as non-performing asset is more equitable.

## 26. Cabinet apprised MoU between India and Tunisia for cooperation on youth matters

The Union Cabinet apprised MoU between India and Tunisia to promote cooperation in the field of youth matters.

The objective of the MoU is to create international perspective among the Indian Youth, to promote exchange of ideas, values and culture and to involve them in promoting peace and understanding. The areas of cooperation under the MoU shall include exchange of invitations to international conferences and seminars, printed materials, films etc. and participation in youth festivals.



## 27. Cabinet approved enhancement of target under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana

The Cabinet Committee approved to enhance of the target of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) from five crore to eight crore with an additional allocation of Rs. 4,800 crore. The decision comes in the wake of huge response to Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) from the women particularly in rural areas and to cover such households not having LPG connection.

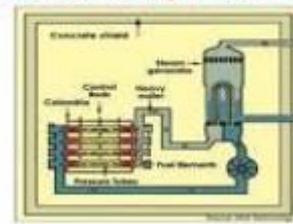


While expanding the target, the Government has also addressed the practical difficulty faced in PMUY implementation, namely, genuinely poor households left out of Socio Economic Caste Survey (SECC) list. Under the PMUY, the original target was to release 3 crore connections by the end of FY 2017-18.

## 28. Government accorded construction of new Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors

The Government accorded administrative approval and financial sanction for setting up ten indigenous 700 MW Pressurized Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) in Fleet Mode, "at an estimated cost of Rs 1,05,000 crore". These ten Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) are being built based on indigenous technology and supply of equipment and services by Indian industry.

### Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor



The total capacity to be added by these ten reactors would be 7000 MW. For timely implementation of these projects, the Government has initiated several measures including expediting pre-project activities, obtaining statutory clearances, procurement of long manufacturing cycle equipment, human resource planning etc.

## 29. Government approved scheme "North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme

Government approved a new scheme "North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS)" at a total cost of Rs.5300.00 crore. This fund of Rs.5300.00 crore will be utilized to meet the committed liability of approximately Rs.3700.00 crore for completing the ongoing projects under Non-Lapsable Central Pool Resources (NLCPR) scheme and to take up projects of around Rs.1600.00 crore under the 100% new centrally funded scheme of NESIDS.



All non-exempt Union Ministries are required to mandatorily earmark 10% of their Gross Budgetary Allocation (GBA) annually for the North Eastern Region.

### 30. ISRO sets up 473 Village Resource Centres for rural development through satellite technology

To demonstrate the potential of satellite technology for development of rural areas, ISRO established Village Resource Centres (VRCs) on a pilot scale, in association with selected NGOs, Trusts and State Government Departments.

VRCs have provided various space technology enabled services such as tele-healthcare, tele-education, natural resources information, advisories related to agriculture, career guidance to rural students, skill development and vocational training etc. About Rs 18 crores was spent for establishing 473 VRCs.



### 31. Cabinet approved signing of a MoU with United Kingdom for skill development

The Union Cabinet approved for signing of MoU with United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on Cooperation in the Field of Skill Development, Vocational Education and Training.

The MoU would pave the way for closer bilateral cooperation between the two countries in the field of vocational education and training and skill development. The MoU will create the framework for innovative partnership and scale up skill training efforts in India and enhance their quality.



### 32. India to host first International Solar Alliance Summit

India will host the first International Solar Alliance (ISA) summit on 11th March, 2018. French President Emmanuel Macron and United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres are expected to attend the summit along with leaders from over 50 member countries. The summit will be held in Delhi.



The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an alliance of more than 121 countries with the primary objective being to work for efficient exploitation of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels. PM Narendra Modi at the India Africa Summit launched the initiative.

### 33. Commerce Minister kicked off consultations on the New Industrial Policy

Commerce and Industries Ministry kicked off a series of nation-wide consultations with the industry on the proposed new Industrial Policy. The New industrial policy envisions to create a competitive Indian industry that is equipped with skill scale and technology.



Ministry highlighted some of the key ideas such as a single ID and digital platform for all G2B services across the business lifecycle, paradigm shift toward self-certification and third-party certification, plug and play infrastructure for SMEs, privatizing maintenance of industrial estates and creating a national R&D vision.

### 34. Google and NCERT united to train students on digital safety

In order to teach students to be responsible as digital citizens, NCERT has decided to develop integrated course in union with Google. It is done with an aim to create safety awareness among citizens and students. As part of its pilot, Google engaged 600 mothers in cities like Delhi and Hyderabad to teach internet safety. The training provided by Google will be free of cost.



The curriculum based on themes being smart, being safe, being a digital citizen and being future ready has been planned to be implemented in 1.4 million schools in India.

### 35. Government launched ASH TRACK Mobile App for better management of fly ash produced by thermal power plants

Union Minister of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, Shri R.K Singh, launched a Web based monitoring System and a Fly Ash mobile application named ASH TRACK.



The ASH TRACK App would be managing 200 million tonnes of fly ash by tracking coal based power plants situated within 100 km and 300 km from given location and availability of fly ash, along with prospective users within the same radius. The App gives plant-wise, utility-wise and State-wise ash utilization status in the country.

### 36. NHAI to Launch Pilot Project for Implementation of “Pay as You Use” Tolling on Delhi-Mumbai Highway

The National Highways Authority of India is executing a pilot project to study the implement ability of “Pay as you use” tolling in India.



The pilot project involves implementing a satellite based electronic toll collection system running on GPS/GSM technology for around 500 commercial vehicles on the Delhi Mumbai national highway. The project will run for one year. The proposed tolling system would be able to deduct money from a vehicle account, credit the money to the concessionaire within one day and open the toll gate.

### 37. List of MoUs/Agreements signed during visit of Prime Minister to Palestine

S. No.	Name of MoUs/Agreements	
1	Setting up of India-Palestine Super-specialty hospital at Beit Sahour in Bethelhem Governorate at a cost of US\$ 30 million	
2	Construction of India Palestine Centre for Empowering women, "Turathi" at a cost of US\$ 5 million	
3	Setting up of new National Printing Press at Ramallah at a cost of US\$ 5 million	
4	Construction of school in Muthalth Al Shuhada Village at a cost of US\$ 1 million	
5	Construction of school in Tamoon village in Tubas Governorate in Palestine at a cost of US\$ 1.1 million	
6	Assistance of US\$ US\$ 0.25 million for construction of additional floor to Jawahar Lal Nehru for Boys at Abu Dees	

### 38. Union Government launched National Deworming initiative

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, J P Nadda, launched the National Deworming Day at Gurugram. It aims to create mass awareness about the most effective and low-cost Soil Transmitted Helminth (STH) treatment-administering Albendazole tablets.

The National Deworming Day is a single fixed-day approach to treating intestinal worm infections in all children aged 1- 19 years and is held on 10 February and 10 August each year.



### 39. Government to set up National Women Entrepreneurship Council

The Ministry of Women and Child Development is planning to set up National Women Entrepreneurship Council (NWECC). NWECC will promote entrepreneurship. The ministry is implementing few other such schemes to ensure economic development of women in the country:

- Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP)
- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)
- National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW)
- Scheme for Adolescent Girls-Sabla
- Working Women Hostels for ensuring safe accommodation for women working away from their place of residence;
- Maternity Benefit Programme



### 40. India to host 8th edition of Theatre Olympics from Feb 17

India will host the 8th edition of Theatre Olympics. The event will continue till 8th April 2018. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated it on 17th February at Lal Quila in New Delhi. The theme of the festival is "Flag of Friendship".

India is hosting the event for the first time and more than 25 thousand foreign artists will participate. 51 day long nationwide theatre extravaganza will be held in 17 cities including Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Patna, Kolkata, Mumbai, Guwahati and Jammu.



#### 41. 80,000 students to be trained under Green Skill Development programme in 2019-2020

80 thousand students will be trained under Green Skill Development programme in 2019-2020. In three years, 5.6 lakh students will be trained under Green Skill Development programme with a budget of Rs 2765 crore rupees.



The Union Government has increased the Green India mission budget by 48% and 1000 crore sapling plantation will be done between 2021 to 2030. The allocations include Rs 20 crore for Green India Fund, Rs 350 crore for project tiger and Rs 170 crore for development of wildlife habitat.

#### 42. List of Agreements/MoUs signed with Oman

S. No	Name of MoUs/Agreements	
1	Agreement on Legal and Judicial Cooperation in Civil and Commercial matter	
2	Agreement on mutual visa exemption for holders of diplomatic, Special, service and official passports	
3	MoU on Cooperation in the field of health	
4	MoU on Cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.	
5	MoU on Cooperation between Foreign Service Institute, Ministry of External Affairs, India and Oman Diplomatic Institute.	
6	MoU on Academic and Scholarly cooperation sectors between National Defence College Sultanate of Oman and the Institute for Defence Studies and the Analyses.	
7	MoU in the field of Tourism cooperation between India and Oman.	
8	Annexure to the MoU on Military Cooperation.	

### 43. Revolving Funds given to 1,79,061 SHGs upto Dec 2017 under DAY-NULM

A total of 2,45,348 beneficiaries have been assisted under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) for setting up individual/ group micro enterprises by the government till December 2017.

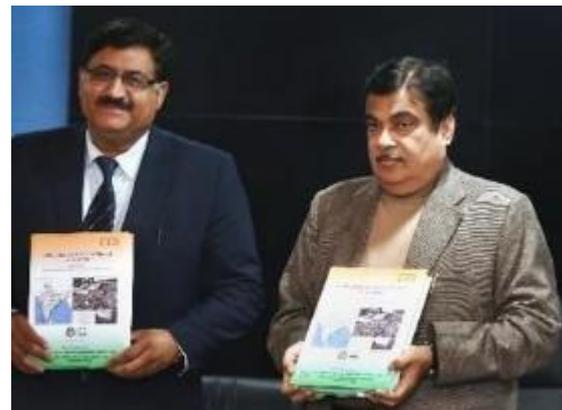
The total utilisation of funds by the States since 2014-15 is Rs.2149.37 crores. More than 3,48,200 SHGs have been dispersed loans under SHG-Bank linkage programme. A total of Rs 13,259.33 crores is the amount of credit disbursed till December 2017. Beginning 2014-15, a total of 2,54,631 SHGs have been formed and 1,79,061 SHGs have been given revolving funds.



### 44. India's first ever Highway Capacity Manual released

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari released India's first ever Highway Capacity Manual in New Delhi. The manual, known as Indo-HCM, has been developed by CSIR – CRRI.

The manual is based on an extensive, countrywide study of the traffic characteristics on different categories of roads like single lane, two-lane, multi-lane urban roads, inter-urban highways and expressways and the associated intersections on these roads. The manual lays down guidelines for when and how to expand or manage different types of roads and their intersections.



### 45. India-UAE ink five agreements

India and UAE signed 5 MoU during PM Narendra Modi's visit to UAE.

- i. MOU between Indian Consortium (OVL, BPRL & IOCL) and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) for the acquisition of a 10% participating interest in the Abu Dhabi's offshore Lower Zakum Concession
- ii. MoU aiming to institutionalize employment of Indian workers in UAE to safeguard their interests
- iii. MoU for technical cooperation in railways



- iv. MoU between Bombay Stock Exchange and Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange
- v. MoU between Government of Jammu and Kashmir and DP World to establish multi-modal logistics park and hub in Jammu comprising warehouses and specialised storage solutions.

#### **46. NVVN bagged international bid for supply of 300 MW power to Bangladesh**

NTPC Vidyut Vyapar Nigam Limited (NVVN), wholly owned subsidiary of NTPC Limited has won a tender to supply 300 megawatts (MW) of electricity to Bangladesh for 15 years.

The tender was floated by Bangladesh Power Development Board (BPDB). The supply of electricity is likely to commence from June 2018 after commissioning of 500 MW HVDC inter-connection project between India and Bangladesh. India, currently, exports approximately 600MW electricity to Bangladesh.



#### **47. India signed loan agreement with NDB for \$100mn for Rajasthan Water Project**

India has signed the second loan agreement with New Development Bank, NDB, for 100 million dollars for Rajasthan Water Sector Restructuring Project for Desert Areas.

This is the first tranche loan approved by the NDB under the Multi Tranche Financing Facility of 345 Million dollars for this project. The project implementation period is six years. The objective of this project is to rehabilitate the 678 kilometre long Indira Gandhi Canal system.



#### **48. National Conference named Agriculture 2022 - Doubling Farmers' Income**

The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare organized a two day National Conference named Agriculture 2022 - Doubling Farmers' Income in New Delhi. The main aim of the conference was to build a consensus around appropriate recommendations that will help in shaping the vision of the Government on Doubling Farmers' Income by 2022.



The CSO has pegged farm and allied sector growth to slow to 2.1% in the current fiscal from 4.9% in the preceding year.

#### **49. MoU Signed between Botanical Survey of India and Natural History Museum, UK**

Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and Natural History Museum (NHM), UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in the field of genetic/taxonomic studies, research and training, conservation in India, including species and habitat conservation assessments, etc.

The MoU will pave the way for BSI staff to work in Natural History Museum, London and vice-versa. NHM will help BSI in capacity building in areas of systematic botany and long-term conservation of plant genetic resources in India.



#### **50. Government extended anti-narcotics scheme for 3 more years**

The Union Government has extended the 'Assistance to States and UTs for Narcotics Control' scheme for a further period of 3 years--from 2017-18 to 2019-20--with an estimated budget of Rs 21 crore.

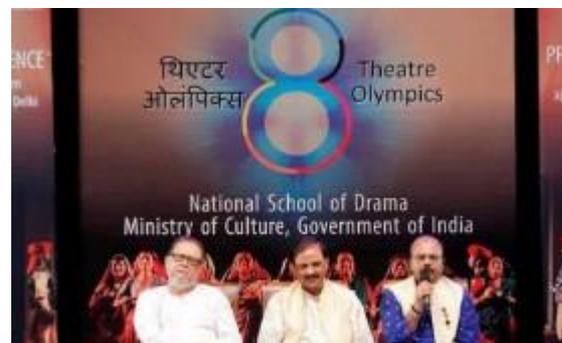
The purpose of the scheme is to assist state governments and Union Territories which are contributing in controlling the inter-state and cross border drug trafficking. The scheme was first launched on October 24, 2004 for a period of five and later extended twice in subsequent years.



#### **51. India to host 8th Edition of Theatre Olympics**

The 8th edition of the Theatre Olympics, the greatest carnival of Theatre in the World, will take place in India for the first time ever from February 17 – April 08, 2018 simultaneously in various cities across the country.

The Theatre Olympics is being organised by National School of Drama, under the aegis of Ministry of Culture. The tagline is 'Crossing Millennia'. The first country to host the Theatre Olympics was Greece in 1995.



## 52. Union Government to set up 562 more Ekalavya schools

The Union Government will set up 562 more Ekalavya Model Residential Schools in tribal areas of the country. 271 such schools have already been sanctioned out of which, 190 are currently operational.



The government has set a target that by the year 2022, every block with at least 20 thousand tribal persons, will have an Ekalavya School. These schools will provide boarding and lodging facilities to tribal students and will be brought at par with the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya through high-quality education.

## 53. India, Iran ink nine agreements in different areas

India and Iran signed nine pacts in different areas:

- i. Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on Income.
- ii. MoU on Exemption from Visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic Passports.
- iii. Exchange of Instrument of Ratification of Extradition Treaty.
- iv. Lease Contract for Shahid Beheshti Port- Phase 1 of Chabahar during Interim Period between Port and Maritime Organization (PMO), Iran and India Ports Global Limited (IPGL).
- v. MoU on Cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine.
- vi. MoU on the establishment of an Expert Group on Trade Remedy Measures to promote cooperation in areas of mutual interest.
- vii. MoU on Cooperation in the field of Agriculture and Allied Sectors.
- viii. MoU on Cooperation in the field of Health and Medicine.
- ix. MoU on Postal Cooperation.



#### 54. Air Odisha launched its maiden flight under UDAN scheme

Air Odisha launched its maiden flight under the Centre's UDAN scheme, linking Mundra with Ahmedabad. Air Odisha is starting services from Ahmedabad to Jamnagar, Mundra and Diu in the first phase of its operation under the UDAN scheme.



Total 400 Airports will be connected under this scheme out of which ten airports are from Gujarat. UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) is a regional airport development and "Regional Connectivity Scheme" (RCS) of Government of India, with the objective of "Let the common citizen of the country fly".

#### 55. India and Iran signed an Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation (DTAA)

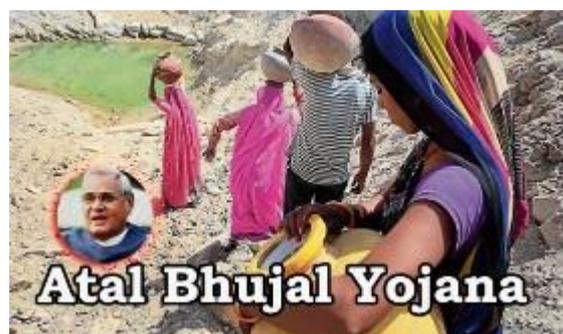
India and Iran signed an Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation (DTAA) and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on income. The Agreement will prevent double taxation. The Agreement will provide for exchange of information between the two Contracting Parties as per latest International Standards. It will improve transparency in tax matters and will help curb tax evasion and tax avoidance.



The Agreement also meets treaty related minimum standards under G-20 OECD Base Erosion & Profit Shifting (BEPS) Project.

#### 56. Government formulated Atal Bhujal Yojana

The Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has finalised a Rs 6,000-crore scheme to tackle the issue of fast depleting groundwater level. The government will fund 50% of the scheme through the budgetary allocation while World Bank will fund the rest.



The scheme is proposed to be launched in Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Haryana, Maharashtra, Gujarat across 78 districts, 193 blocks and about 8300 gram panchayats.

### 57. Government gave nod to six railway projects

The government has approved six railways projects at a cost of Rs 11,661 crore for new lines as well as doubling and electrification of tracks with special thrust on Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh.



- i. 130 kilometres long Jeypore-Malkangiri New Line project at a cost of 2676.11 crore rupees
- ii. Doubling of Muzaffarpur-Sagauli and Sagauli-Valmiki Nagar lines with electrification projects at completion costs of Rs 1,347.61 crore and Rs 1,381.49 crore, respectively
- iii. Jhansi-Manikpur and Bhimsen-Khairar lines doubling with electrification projects at a completion cost of Rs 4,955.72 crore
- iv. Bhatni-Aurnihar line doubling with electrification project at a cost of Rs 1,300.9 crore

### 58. Union Cabinet approved the creation of National Urban Housing Fund of Rs 60000 crore

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for creation of National Urban Housing Fund of Rs 60,000 crore. The fund will be situated in Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.



Under the PMAY(U), the housing and urban affairs ministry has targeted construction of about 1.2 crore houses for the urban poor. The ministry has so far sanctioned 39.4 lakh houses under the scheme.

### 59. Cabinet approved the banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018

The Union Cabinet has approved to introduce the banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018 in Parliament. The bill is aimed at tackling the menace of illicit deposit taking activities in the country.



The Bill contains a substantive banning clause which bans Deposit Takers from promoting, operating, issuing advertisements or accepting deposits in any Unregulated Deposit Scheme. The Bill creates three different types of offences, namely, running of

Unregulated Deposit Schemes, fraudulent default in Regulated Deposit Schemes, and wrongful inducement in relation to Unregulated Deposit Schemes.

## 60. Cabinet approved to introduce the Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2018 in Parliament

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to introduce the Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2018 in Parliament to enable greater financial access of people to other financial products.



The Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2018, seeks to facilitate orderly growth of the sector and remove bottlenecks. It proposes to increase the ceiling of a foreman's commission from 5% to 7%. It also proposes to allow at least two subscribers to join through video conferencing, duly recorded by a foreman, as physical presence of subscribers.

## 61. Cabinet approved constitution of Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for adjudication of dispute on Mahanadi River Waters. The Tribunal shall consist of a Chairman and two other Members. It is required to submit its report and decision within a period of 3 years which can be extended to a further period not exceeding 2 years due to unavoidable reasons.



The Tribunal shall determine water sharing among basin states on the basis of overall availability of water in the Mahanadi basin, the contribution of each state, present utilisation of water resources in each state and potential for future development.

## 62. Cabinet approved India-Morocco Cooperation Agreement in Railway Sector

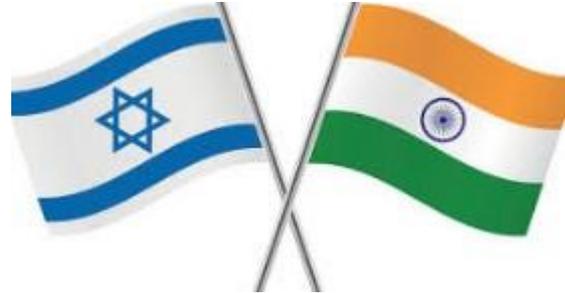
The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval to the Cooperation Agreement between India and the Moroccan National Railways Office (ONCF) to develop long-term cooperation and partnership in different areas of railway sector. The Cooperation Agreement was signed on 14th December, 2017. The Cooperation Agreement will enable technical cooperation in the following areas:-



- a. Training and staff development;
- b. Expert missions, exchange of experience and personnel; and
- c. Mutual technical assistance, including exchanging of experts

### 63. Cabinet approved Agreement between India and Israel on Film Co-production

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval to an Agreement on Film Co-production between India and Israel signed during the visit of Prime Minister of Israel Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu to India.



The signing of the Film co-production agreement will lead to mutual exchange of art and culture, create goodwill and better understanding among the people of both the countries as well as various aspects of film making. The Agreement will also help in generation of employment among artistic, technical as well as non-technical personnel.

### 64. India Posts starts online consumer feedback survey

India Posts started limited period online survey to gather consumer feedback on its services. This Customer Feedback Survey will be for three months from 16.02.2018 to 15.05.2018 and available to public through India Post Website. The Department of Posts will improve services based on the feedback received from consumers.



Since inception in 1854, India Post has evolved by providing varied services to Indian Citizenry in terms of Mail Services (both domestic and international), Money remittances (both domestic and international), Small Savings, Philately, Securing lives, Retail Services and Bill Payments etc.

### 65. Centre launched Ganga Gram and New Swajal Project

Union Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Sushri Uma Bharti, launched the Bagori Ganga Gram project, New Swajal Project at Bagori and Gangotri Iconic Place at Dunda village in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand.



The Minister inaugurated solid and liquid waste management scheme of Rs 11.88 lakh at Bagori. She also inaugurated new Swajal Project at Bagori with a budget of more than 32 lakh rupees. The Swajal scheme is successfully running in Sadag village since 1996.

## 66. LS Speaker Sumitra Mahajan inaugurated 6th India Region CPA conference

Lok Sabha Speaker, Sumitra Mahajan, inaugurated the 6th India region Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference at Patna in Bihar. The conference held discussions mainly on two topics -- 'Parliament's role in the development agenda' and 'Legislature and Judiciary - Two important Pillars of Democracy'.



The CPA is composed of over 180 branches formed in legislatures of commonwealth countries enjoying parliamentary democracy. All the CPA branches are geographically grouped into nine commonwealth regions.

## 67. Government extended transmission charge waiver to solar, wind power till March 2022

The Union government has extended the window to avail transmission charge waivers for wind and solar projects till 31 March 2022. Transmission charges add about Rs 0.20–0.50 per unit to every unit of thermal power.



Earlier, the waiver was available to solar and wind power projects commissioned till 31 December 2019, and 31 March 2019, respectively. The waiver was available for a period of 25 years from the date commissioning of the project.

## 68. Gov signed a MoU with Canada's International Development Research Centre

The Union Government signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), to usher the "programme based research support" in addressing current and future global and local developmental challenges.



Since 1972, IDRC has funded 551 research activities worth CA\$159 million in India through institutions, researchers and NGOs. During the last five years (2012-17), 96 research projects worth CA\$ 51 million were funded by the IDRC in India.

### 69. India notified revised Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Kenya

India has notified the revised Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Kenya in the Official Gazette on 19th February, 2018. The DTAA between India and Kenya was signed and notified in 1985. Subsequently, the DTAA was renegotiated and a revised DTAA was signed between both countries on 11th July, 2016.



The revised DTAA will improve transparency in tax matters, help curb tax evasion and tax avoidance, remove double taxation and will stimulate the flow of investment, technology and services between India and Kenya.

### 70. Projects worth nearly Rs. 4,000 crore approved in 9th executive committee meeting of NMCG

In the 9th Executive Committee meeting of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), projects worth nearly Rs 4,000 crore were approved including a 20 MLD Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) for tannery cluster at Jajmau in Kanpur. The project has an estimated cost of Rs. 629 crore and the central share is Rs. 472 crore.



This 3-phased project includes pre-treatment unit in 380 individual tannery units, a 20 CETP with physical, biological and tertiary treatment, installation of Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD)-based pilot plant of 200 KLD capacity among other components.

### 71. UK and India upgrade joint research on clean water and clean energy

India and the UK launched research projects on 'Water Quality Research' and 'Energy Demand Reduction in Built Environment'. The 'Water Quality Research' programme has eight projects and 'Energy Demand Reduction in Built Environment' programme has four projects, with a total joint investment of up to £15 million.



This India-UK water quality programme aims to equip local communities, policymakers, regulators and businesses with the information and solutions they need to secure the provision of clean water, rejuvenate rivers and restore ecosystems.

## 72. NITI Aayog Budget Allocation Increased by More than 20%

The Union Budget 2018 has allocated 20% more budget to NITI Aayog as compared to last year. Allocations for the Ministry of Planning, which is embodied by the NITI Aayog, have increased by more than 20% over last year i.e. to Rs 339.65 crore in 2018-19 from Rs 279.79 crore in 2017-18.

The budget also envisaged a defined role for NITI Aayog in critical areas of artificial intelligence and agriculture policy.



## 73. Union Government informs BS-VI grade fuel to be available from April 1

The Union Government has informed the Supreme Court that the supply of Bharat Stage VI (BS-VI) auto fuels (petrol and diesel) to retail outlets in Delhi will begin on 1 April 2018. BS-VI emissions norms would come into force across the country from 1 April 2020.

The jump from BS-IV to BS-VI will primarily mean lower sulphur content. Presently, the sulphur content in BS-IV petrol and diesel is 50 parts per million (ppm). BS VI-grade fuels have a sulphur content of 10ppm.



## 74. PM addressed Economic Times Global Business Summit

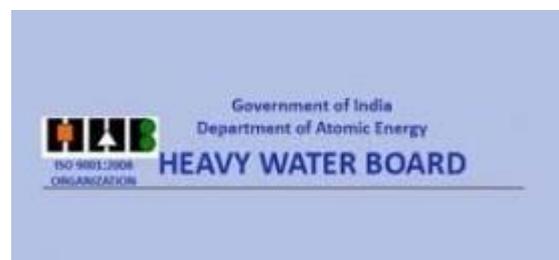
Indian Prime Minister addressed the Economic Times Global Business Summit in New Delhi based on the theme: New Economy – New Rules. Digital India Mission was discussed at the Summit, that brought major change in the economy with 100 crore bank accounts, 100 crore Aadhaar cards and 100 crore mobile phones to create a unique ecosystem. Various initiatives were also discussed such as Mission Indradhanush, Jan Aushadhi Stores, and the Ayushman Bharat scheme.



The Summit's theme was based on the fact that illegal accumulation of people's money is unacceptable, and this is the basic mantra of "New Economy – New Rules."

## 75. Heavy Water Board signed an agreement with M/s Clearsynth, Mumbai

Heavy Water Board, a constituent industrial unit of DAE, signed a collaborative agreement



with M/s Clearsynth, Mumbai for sale of 20 tonnes of Heavy Water in a year for development of deuterium labelled compounds, NMR Solvents, d-labelled Active Pharma Ingredients (APIs). This marks the beginning of an important era in the annals of Indian Nuclear industry.

It is worth noting that during the previous years Indian industries have imported de-neutered compounds and Heavy Water to the tune of 9 Million USD. This Agreement will initiate import substitution for the de-neutered compounds and Heavy Water.

## 76. ITBP received best marching contingent trophy for record 6th time

The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has been adjudged as the best marching contingent among paramilitary and other auxiliary forces marched at Republic Day Parade 2018 at Rajpath. Smt Nirmala Sitharaman, Defence Minister presented the prestigious trophy to Shri R K Pachnanda, Director General ITBP and Assistant Commandant Shri Akshay Deshmukh, the parade commander of the ITBP contingent. ITBP has won the best contingent trophy in the category for the record 6th time.



The Contingent represented all formations of the Force comprising members from almost all Units of the Force.

## 77. India Germany signed MOU for Sustainable Urban Development program

An Indo-German MOU was signed for an "Implementation Agreement in Sustainable Urban Development and Smart Cities in India". The objective of the programme is to develop and apply concepts for sustainable urban development about the provision of urban basic services and housing in selected cities and Smart Cities in India.



The German contribution to the project is up to 8 million EUR. The project will continue for a duration of three years. Mo HUA and GIZ will jointly work on implementing Government of India's missions, the optimization of the national orientation framework.

## 78. India, Canada inked six pacts

India and Canada inked 6 agreements. Agreements signed are:

- i. MoU on Cooperation in Sport
- ii. MoU for Cooperation in Higher Education



- iii. MoU for Cooperation on Intellectual Property Rights
- iv. Terms of Reference for the India-Canada Ministerial Energy Dialogue
- v. MoU for cooperation in the Fields of Science, Technology and Innovation
- vi. Joint Declaration of Intent on Cooperation in the Field of Information Communications Technology and Electronics

### 79. NHRC retains its 'A' status of accreditation with GANHRI in Geneva

The National Human Rights Commission retained its 'A' status of accreditation with the Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) for the fourth consecutive term of five years, during the annual meet of GANHRI in Geneva.

Only such NHRIs are offered "A" status who are found fully compliant with the UN mandated Paris Principles. The accreditation confers international recognition and protection of the NHRI. It also grants participation in the work and decision-making of the GANHRI.



### 80. India and Uzbekistan's Andijan region sign MoU

The Andijan Region of Uzbekistan and India have inked an agreement for cooperation in the pharmaceutical industry.

As a part of the MoU, both sides will develop cooperation in the implementation of a program for the production of pharmaceutical, bio-pharmaceutical products and medical equipment in the Andijan region of Uzbekistan. The two nations also agreed to work together on the issue of attracting direct investments of Indian companies and Uzbek investors.



### 81. ASEAN-India Research Training Fellowship (AIRTF) launched by FICCI and DS&T

Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) has entered into a partnership with the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India



to implement and execute the ASEAN India Research Training Fellowship (AIRTF).

The AIRTF scheme was introduced to promote scientific cooperation between India and ASEAN member countries. The scheme aims at capacity building of 50 young researchers annually from ASEAN member countries in science and technology domain and provides complete financial support for a period of six months that includes to and fro travel, sustenance allowance and research contingency.

# Persons in News

## 1. Rohan More youngest to conquer Ocean Seven

Indian swimmer Rohan More created history after became the youngest individual in the world to complete the Ocean Seven challenge. He also became the first Asian and the first Indian to swim across the Ocean Seven. He is the ninth individual in the world to complete this task.



Ocean Seven is a swimming marathon consisting of seven channel swims. In 2017, Rohan More was awarded the prestigious Tenzing Norgay National Adventure Award 2016-2017 (in the Water Adventure Category) by the Honourable President of India, Ram Nath Kovind.

## 2. Roger Federer became oldest No. 1 in tennis history

20-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer has become the oldest world number one in Tennis history. The 36-year old Swiss replaced Rafael Nadal at the top of the standings. Federer surpassed Andre Agassi, who held the top spot aged 33, in 2003.



Federer first became world number one in February 2004 but has not topped the rankings since October 2012. He slipped to 17th in January 2017. Since then, the Swiss star has won eight titles, including Wimbledon last year and two Australian Opens.

## 3. Sanjiv Bajaj named EY entrepreneur of the year

MD of Bajaj Finserv, Sanjiv Bajaj, has been named as the EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2017. Mr Bajaj will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award (WEOY) in Monte Carlo from June 13-17, 2018.



E. Sreedharan, who lead the metro projects in Delhi, Kolkata, Kochi, and Lucknow, was honoured with the lifetime achievement award. The consulting firm also named nine other category winners for the Entrepreneur of the Year Program. The nine-member jury was led by Dilip Shanghvi, Managing Director, Sun Pharmaceuticals Industries.

#### 4. Flying Officer Avani Chaturvedi became first Indian woman to fly a fighter jet

Flying Officer Avani Chaturvedi became the first Indian woman fighter pilot to fly a fighter aircraft when she flew a MiG-21 Bison in her first solo flight in Jamnagar, Gujarat.

The MiG-21 Bison has the highest landing and take-off speed in the world - 340 km/ph. Chaturvedi completed her training at Hyderabad Air Force Academy. Avani was commissioned into the fighter stream after basic training in June 2016 along with Bhawana Kanth and Mohana Singh.



# Places in News

## 1. New Delhi hosted first ever International Kala Mela

New Delhi hosted first ever International Kala Mela. The festival represents the hopes and aspirations of its people and it chronicles the saga of their lives. It springs from the depths of their hearts and touches the inner core of humanity and is truly the barometer of the quality of life. It involved folk dance presentation by Karunadasa Olaboduwa Dance Troupe, Srilanka and 'Sargam' Kathak Recital by Pandit Harish Gangani's Team, India.



Lalit Kala Akademi fosters cultural contacts within the country and also with other countries, through art exhibition and such Art Festivals.

## 2. 5th South Asia Region Public Procurement Conference Held in New Delhi

The 5th South Asia Region Public Procurement Conference was held in New Delhi, February 5-7, 2018. The objective of the Conference was to enable the Heads of Public Procurement and other key stakeholders in the eight South Asian countries to meet and learn from one another and from experts in the field of public procurement. The theme of the conference is "Public Procurement and Service Delivery".



The conference was organized by South Asia Region Public Procurement Network (SARPPN), which is sponsored and facilitated by the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Islamic Development Bank.

## 3. International Conference on Unani Medicine held in New Delhi

A two-day International Conference on Unani Medicine was organized by the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM) in New Delhi. A MoU was signed between CCRUM and Hamdard University, Bangladesh to establish an "academic chair" in Unani System of medicine in Bangladesh.

The conference was inaugurated on 11th February which is celebrated as Unani Day on the occasion of birth anniversary of Hakim Ajmal Khan.



#### 4. 21st National Conference on e-Governance held in Hyderabad

The 21st National Conference on e-Governance was organized in Hyderabad on February 26-27, 2018. The theme of the Conference this year was, 'Technology for accelerating Development'.

The National e-Governance Awards 2018 in 8 various categories were awarded. The National e-Governance Awards recognise and promote excellence in implementation of e-Governance initiatives taken by various government departments and also initiatives of public sector units and Non- Government Institutions.



#### 5. 'Indian Power Stations 2018' - International Conference on Operations and Maintenance

The 'Indian Power Stations 2018' - three-day International Conference on Operations and Maintenance was held in New Delhi. The theme of the conference was "Technological Challenges: Risks and Challenges in Power Generation".

The conference was hosted by NTPC Ltd to commemorate synchronisation of its first thermal plant at Singrauli Super Thermal Power Station 36 years ago. More than 800 delegates participated in the conference.



#### 6. 12th International Conference on CSR held in Bengaluru

The 12th International Conference on corporate social responsibility (CSR) was held in Bengaluru. It was organised by the Institute Of Directors. The theme of the conference was "Responsible CSR: a New Agenda Beyond Governance".

The Prestigious Golden Peacock Award 2017 were presented. The leadership award for philanthropy and social change was presented to Vineet Nayar, Former Chief Executive Officer, HCL Technologies. Distinguished Awards (2018) of IOD were presented to Justice Jayant M. Patel, former Acting Chief Justice, High Court of Gujarat.



## 7. World's Tallest Hotel 'Gevora' opens in Dubai

The world's tallest hotel has officially opened its doors in Dubai. The Gevora Hotel tops out at an incredible 356 meters high (1,168 feet). The JW Marriott Marquis in Dubai was formerly the world's tallest hotel.

The Gevora opened to its first guests on 12th February. The hotel has 528 rooms and has 75 floors. It is 56 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower. Dubai is also home to the world's tallest building, the Burj Khalifa at 828 metres high.



## 8. India's biggest Annual Conference on Pharma held at Bengaluru

The third edition of the India Pharma 2018 and India Medical Device 2018, International conference and exhibition was held in Bengaluru. The three-day event was organized by Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, in collaboration with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

The theme of the conference was 'Affordable, Quality Healthcare'. Over 300 companies and 50 start-ups showcased their products.



## 9. India's first Radio Festival held In Delhi

India's first radio festival was held in New Delhi on 15th February. It was organised by the International of Women in Radio and Television, in collaboration with UNESCO. The festival traced the journey of creativity, music and social changes on the radio.

The festival was organized to mark the World Radio Day 2018 and it was based on the 2018's theme of World Radio Day - sports and radio.



## 10. World Sustainable Development Summit 2018

The World Sustainable Development Summit 2018 was held in New Delhi. The three-day summit was organised by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated it.



The theme of the Summit this year was 'Partnerships for a Resilient Planet'. The Summit addressed a wide variety of issues, including combating land degradation, effective waste management mechanisms, combat air pollution effectively, facilitate transition to clean energy etc.

### 11. World Congress on Information Technology held in Hyderabad

The three-day World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) was held in Hyderabad. The 22nd edition of the WCIT was hosted by Nasscom. The Government of Telangana was the state partner.

The theme of the conference was "Amplify Digital: Disrupt the Core." At least 20 CEOs from Fortune 500 companies and 100 other top executives besides over 5,000 delegates attended the conference. Nasscom India Leadership Forum (ILF) was also hosted by Nasscom concurrently in Hyderabad.



### 12. India's First AI Research Institute Launched In Mumbai

India's first artificial research institute was inaugurated in Mumbai by PM Narendra Modi. The Wadhvani Institute for Artificial Intelligence will focus on research in artificial intelligence. The main aim of the centre is to integrate artificial intelligence in the field of social development.

The institute is promoted by Sunil and Romesh Wadhvani with an investment of Rs 200cr. The Wadhvani Institute for Artificial Intelligence is based in Mumbai and will be collaborating with the University of Mumbai.



### 13. The 2 day 'RAS BANARAS SANSKRITI MAHOTSAV' held in Varanasi

'Ras Banaras – Swachhagrah – Bapu ko Kaaryaanjali', a diversified cultural festival organized by the Ministry of Culture at Maan Mandir and Assi Ghat of Varanasi held in Varanasi. The festival witnessed folk dance and songs, food & shopping delights and Swachhta drive through exhibitions, songs, puppetry, nukkad nataks and folk dances.



The 2-day event witnessed art forms from classical, folk music, dance and visual arts. The Mahotsav displayed a curtain raiser exhibition on Varanasi curated by the National Archives at Man Mandir Ghat. The 2-day event focused on music and dance performances on the theme of 'Swachhagraha'.

# Regional

## 1. IREDA and RUMSL inked agreement for Large-Scale Solar Parks in Madhya Pradesh

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) and Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL) signed an agreement for financing the shared infrastructure of two large Solar Parks in Madhya Pradesh.



IREDA has sanctioned its first loan of Rs. 210.62 Cr. to RUMSL to finance the two solar parks at a fixed interest rate of 8.5% p.a. for entire loan tenure, moratorium from principal repayments upto 5 years and loan repayment period of upto 20 years.

## 2. MoU signed for Twin tower trade centre in Guwahati

The Assam government signed an MoU with National Building Construction Corporation (India) Ltd for setting up a Twin Tower Trade Centre at Guwahati. The estimated cost of the project is Rs 1.950 crore in self-financing mode.



Guwahati is one of the 99 smart cities and is being established as a regional hub for North East India. The Government of India has planned an investment to the tune of approx. Rs 45,000 crore for the development of India's North-Eastern regions bordering China, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

## 3. Maharashtra government gave nod to new wildlife sanctuary

The Maharashtra government has approved Ghodazari in Chandrapur district as a new wildlife sanctuary in the state. The sanctuary will include 159 sq km of Brahmapuri forest. The forest includes 10 to 15 tigers and 23 leopards.



Maharashtra State Board for Wildlife took the decision to build the sanctuary in the North East of Tadoba. The board also approved various proposals for development works within national parks and wildlife sanctuaries.

#### 4. Government launched KUSUM Scheme to provide additional income to farmers

The Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahaabhiyan (KUSUM) scheme was launched by Union Minister of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, Shri Raj Kumar Singh. The Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahaabhiyan (KUSUM) scheme would provide additional income to farmers, by giving them option to sell additional power to the grid, through solar power projects set up on their barren lands.



The scheme will give a boost to the farmer-oriented scheme involving decentralized solar power production up-to 28250 MW over a period of five years.

#### 5. Government gave nod to a new project to control pollution of River Sal at Goa

The Centre sanctioned a new project to control pollution in River Sal at Navelim town in Goa. The project would cost of Rs. 61.74 cr. Both the Centre and State will share the cost on 60:40 basis. Under the project, around 32 kms of sewers will be laid and sewage treatment plant of 3 million litres per day (MLD) constructed. The project is scheduled for completion by January 2021.



The project will help in reduction of pollution load in the river and improvement in its water quality, besides improving the environment and sanitation in the town.

#### 6. Ola signed MoU with Assam Transportation for River Taxi Service

Government of Assam and Ola signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to pilot an app-based river taxi service in Guwahati. Bringing water taxis on the online platform, a localised and key mode of commute in the capital city will further strengthen the transportation ecosystem.



The river taxis will be a machine-operated boat, which is faster and safer than the conventional ones. Ola will pilot high-speed taxis on the Lachit Ghat, Machkhowa to North Guwahati route, bringing the commute time down 2-5 minutes from 45 minutes by road.

## 7. Andhra Pradesh observed first-ever pelican festival at Atapaka bird sanctuary

Andhra Pradesh observed first-ever pelican festival at Atapaka bird sanctuary on the borders of the Krishna and the West Godavari districts. Folk artists and local fishermen displayed rally with pomp and gaiety and the 'dappu' and metallic beats from Kaikaluru. The helium-filled balloons were also released on the occasion.



Many villagers witnessed the festival and enjoyed sand art, games and sports events, food at the food court organised as part of the festival.

## 8. Arunachal Pradesh CM laid Foundation Stone for Rhododendron Park

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu laid the foundation stone for Rhododendron Park in Tawang.



The park would be built in a total area of 1.15 hectares and would be partly funded under Border Area Development Programme (BADP). The park will have more than 30 species of rhododendrons. Tawang is home to more than 50 different varieties of the species.

## 9. Bihar government banned sale of loose cigarettes

The Bihar government has banned the sale of loose cigarettes in the state. Bihar is the 12th state in the country to enforce such a ban. As per the Tobacco Control Act, anyone selling loose cigarettes would be liable for fine.



According to a survey, 80% people use loose cigarettes, 54% adults in Bihar use tobacco products and 9% of them are smokers. Around 12 lakh tobacco-related deaths occur in the country every year.

## 10. UP Government launched DASTAK campaign to eradicate Japanese Encephalitis

The Uttar Pradesh Government in association with the UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund) has launched a door-to-door campaign "DASTAK" against Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES).



The war cry of DASTAK is "Darwaja khatkhatao, AES aur JE ko bhagao." The vaccination work will be completed by March-April 2018. 38 districts of Uttar Pradesh are affected with AES and JE. Children of 600 schools in the affected areas will also be part of this campaign.

## 11. Assam government introduced 'The Assam Yoga Council Bill, 2018' in State Assembly

The Assam government introduced a Bill in the state Assembly to set up a yoga council for regulating the teaching and practice of yoga.



The council is proposed to be set up in order to assure quality of service and avoid misinterpretation and misuse of the system. Besides, it will ensure that yoga institutions offer safe, reliable and quality medical healthcare. The council will be empowered to grant affiliation and accreditation to institutions teaching yoga as well as withdraw the same.

## 12. Maharashtra signed deal with Virgin Group for World's First Hyperloop

Maharashtra has inked an "intent agreement" with the Virgin Hyperloop One to build a hyperloop between Pune and Mumbai, beginning with an operational demonstration track. Virgin Hyperloop One is a part of Virgin group chaired by Richard Branson.

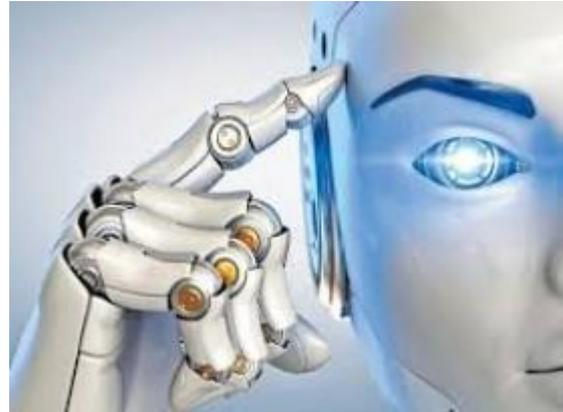


Hyperloop has the capability of going up to 1,000 km an hour. The journey to Pune would take about 14-25 minutes at 350 kmph. Currently, it takes about 3.5 hours.

### 13. Kerala to use robots to clean up manholes

The Kerala state government, in a first of its kind move, is planning to deploy robots to clean sewer holes. The government had held a successful trial run of the robot. The project is supported by Kerala Water Authority (KWA).

The robots are developed by a startup company, Genrobotics. The robot is equipped with Wi-Fi, Blue Tooth and control panels has four limbs and a bucket system attached to a spider web looking extension to scoop out the waste from sewers. The robotic system is aimed at the complete elimination of manual scavenging.



### 14. Two-day UP investors' summit held in Lucknow

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the two-day 'UP Investors Summit' in Lucknow. The focus sectors of the summit were civil aviation, dairy, electronics manufacturing, tourism, renewable energy, film, handloom and textile, agro and food processing, IT and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).



Uttar Pradesh has signed 1,045 pacts worth Rs4.28 trillion. Netherlands, Japan, Czech Republic, Finland, Slovenia, Mauritius and Thailand were the seven partner countries of the summit.

### 15. Assam worst in MMR, spent just 13.58% of NHM fund in 2017-18

Assam ranks at the bottom of the list with regard to maternal mortality rate(MMR). The MMR of Assam is 300 against the national average of 167. Centre had allocated Rs 1,056.25 crore for Assam under National Health Mission (NHM) for 2017-18. However, the spending was just 13.58%.

MMR is the annual number of female deaths per 1,00,000 live births from any cause related to or aggravated by pregnancy or its management. The infant mortality rate(IMR) in Assam is 44 against the national figure of 37.



## 16. Highlights of UP Budget 2018

The UP state government presented a budget of over Rs 4.28 lakh crore which is 11.4% higher than last fiscal. Some of the highlights-

- i. 20 new agriculture centres to be opened
- ii. 5500 centres to be opened to procure wheat from farmers
- iii. Rs 50 crore allocated to handicraft and handloom sector
- iv. Rs 150 crore allocated to provide subsidized electricity to weavers
- v. Rs 8815 crore located to women and child welfare programs
- vi. Chief Minister Self Employment Scheme has been allocated Rs 100 crore
- vii. Start-up fund of Rs 250 crore has been created



## 17. Maharashtra Government to launch Asmita Yojana to provide cheap sanitary pads

The Maharashtra state government is all set to launch its "Asmita Yojana" on the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8. As a part of the scheme, girls in Zilla Parishad schools will get a sanitary napkin packet at Rs 5 while rural women can avail it at a subsidised rate of Rs 24 and Rs 29.



The beneficiary girls will be given "Asmita Cards". The state government has appointed "Umed'- the Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission, as a nodal agency for effective implementation of the scheme.

## 18. Delhi Government to launch 'Mission Buniyaad'

The Delhi government announced the launch of "Mission Buniyaad" for improving learning skills of children studying in state and municipal-run schools.

Under the programme which will run from April to June for Class 3 to 5 in Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) schools and for Class 6 to 8 in government's schools, children will undergo a reading level assessment based on which they will be enrolled in specialised "Mission Buniyaad" classes.



### **19. New Health Policy in Kerala made vaccination certificate mandatory for school admission**

The Kerala state cabinet has approved a new draft health policy which has made vaccination certificate mandatory for admission to class-I from the next academic session with an aim to ensure that all children below the age of five are immunised.

The government has also decided to set up special clinics for transgenders in taluk and district-level hospitals. The new health policy also proposed a comprehensive trauma care facility at every 10 kilometre.



### **20. Jaipur's Gandhinagar railway station becomes 1st fully women operated station of India**

The Gandhi Nagar railway station in Jaipur became India's first major railway station to be fully-managed by women. There are 40 women staff at the station. Also, women personnel of the railway protection force have been deployed at the station.

More than 50 trains pass through the station out of which 25 halt at the station. The station has footfall of more than 7,000 passengers every day.



### **21. Mizoram to get first regional agricultural centre with Israeli collaboration**

Mizoram will get a first of its kind regional agricultural centre in the North Eastern Region. The Centre for Agriculture was set up with Israeli collaboration with a cost of Rs 8-10 crore.

The centre is exclusively for processing of citrus fruits. The project has been set up with the tripartite collaboration of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India, Government of Israel and State Government of Mizoram. It will cater to the whole northeast.



## 22. Telangana inked agreement with Taiwan for better technology partnership

The Telangana Government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Taoyuan City of Taiwan for better technology partnership in the state. The MoU was signed at the closing ceremony of the World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT) 2018.

The two sides have agreed to partner for mutual economic development. Government of Telangana and Taoyuan City will engage in economic exchange of technology companies that have operations in either Telangana or Taoyuan City.



## 23. Second defence industrial corridor to come up in UP

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced that the government would establish a defence industrial production corridor in Uttar Pradesh at an estimated cost of Rs 20,000 crore. The corridor will link Agra, Aligarh, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi and Chitrakoot. It will help create employment for 2.5 lakh people.



The first of the two corridors will be constructed between Chennai and Bengaluru, linking Kattupalli port, Chennai, Tiruchi, Coimbatore and Hosur.

## 24. Asian Development Bank and the Government of India signed \$ 84 million loan for Bihar

The Government of India and The Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed \$84 million loan for improvement and expansion of water supply in Bhagalpur and Gaya towns in Bihar.

The tranche 2 loan is part of the \$200 million multi-tranche financing facility (MFF) for the Bihar Urban Development Investment Program that was approved by ADB in 2012 to provide sustainable urban infrastructure and services in four towns in Bihar. The loan finances will support civil works subprojects and would benefit 1.1 million people and train 400 urban local body (ULB) staff in the management and operation and maintenance.



## 25. Uttar Pradesh government inked pact with Amazon India

Khadi and Village Industries Board of Uttar Pradesh signed agreement with Amazon India to promote online sale of Khadi products via Amazon e-commerce website. This MoU will compel Amazon India to guide, train and enable rural khadi artisans to directly sell their products to Amazon.in customers. MoU will generate employment among Khadi artisans and make them comfortable with Digital initiatives in Khadi industry.



The sale of product portfolio online will include Khadi shirts, kurtas, dhotis, towels and gourmet food, as per the emerging demand in urban areas.

## 26. Andaman & Nicobar Command to Host Milan 2018

The Andaman & Nicobar Command will host a multinational mega event MILAN 2018. It is being held at Port Blair from 06 March to 13 March 2018. With the underlying theme of 'Friendship Across the Seas', MILAN 2018 will witness a diverse mix of professional exercises and seminars, social events and sporting fixtures.

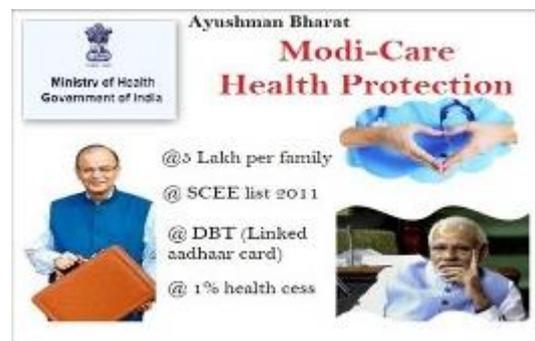


The theme of this year's MILAN International Maritime Seminar is 'In Pursuit of Maritime Good Order - Need for Comprehensive Information Sharing Apparatus'. MILAN 2018 aims to showcase the rich heritage and pristine natural beauty of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to the foreign visitors.

## 27. West Bengal became first state to opt out of "ModiCare"

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has announced the decision to opt out of Centre's 'Modicare' scheme and the state thus became the first state to withdraw from the ambitious programme.

Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had announced the National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) on February 1. Bengal has a similar program called 'Swasthya Sathi' where already 45 lakh families covering 2.5 crore population are already enrolled.



# Reports

## 1. India cheapest country to live in after South Africa

According to a recent survey of 112 countries conducted by GoBankingRates, India is ranked second cheapest country to live or retire. South Africa has topped the survey as the cheapest country.

The survey was conducted on the basis of four key affordability metrics: Local purchasing power index, rent index, Groceries index, and Consumer price index. Among the most expensive countries in the survey are Bermuda (ranked 112), Bahamas (111), Hong Kong (110), Switzerland (109) and Ghana (108).



## 2. India 6th wealthiest country

According to a report by New World Wealth, India has been ranked sixth in the list of wealthiest countries with total wealth of \$8,230 billion.

The list was topped by United States with a total wealth of \$64,584 billion, followed by China (\$24,803 billion) and Japan (\$19,522 billion). India's wealth rose 25% in 2017, making it the best performing wealth market globally. India has 20,730 multimillionaires, the seventh largest in the world.



## 3. India slipped to 42nd place on EIU Democracy Index

According to a report compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), India has slipped to 42nd place on an annual Global Democracy Index. The fall in th rankings primarily due to "rise of conservative religious ideologies".

The list was topped by Norway followed by Iceland and Sweden. New Zealand, Denmark, Ireland, Canada, Australia, Finland and Switzerland formed the rest in the top ten. USA was ranked 21st. North Korea is ranked the lowest at 167th.



#### 4. Forbes India 30 Under 30 list unveiled

Forbes has released its “30 Under 30” list for 2018. The list includes entrepreneurs, innovators and game-changers under the age of 30. The List features young achievers like pistol shooter Heena Sidhu, right-arm fast-medium bowler Jasprit Bumrah, singer and song-writer Jubin Nautiyal, Indian hockey goalkeeper Savita Punia, actress Bhumi Pednekar among others.



The other notables in the list were Rohan M Ganapathy and Yashas Karanam, Ankit Agarwal and Karan Rastogi, Chirag Chhajer, Kshitij Marwah, Gautam Bhatia etc

#### 5. Mumbai airport surveyed as world’s busiest single-runway airport

The GVK group-run Mumbai airport created historical record and became the world’s busiest airport amongst the single-runway facilities by handling 837 flights a day or one in 65 seconds on an average in fiscal 2017 leaving behind London’s Gatwick airport that had 757 flights a day. CAPA report concluded that Mumbai airport is miraculously managing 980 arrivals and take-offs in 24 hours.



According to Sydney-based CAPA in its 2017 annual report, Mumbai airport will reach saturation point in 2018 as it is already handling 94% of its maximum passenger handling capacity.

#### 6. Forbes released first-ever Crypto Rich list

Forbes has released its first ever list of richest people in cryptocurrency. Ripple co-founder Chris Larsen has topped the list with an estimated crypto net worth of USD 7.5-8 billion.

Joseph Lubin with crypto net worth (USD 1-5 billion), Changpeng Zhao (USD 1.1-2 billion), Cameron & Tyler Winklevoss (USD 900 million-1.1 billion) and Matthew Mellon (USD 900 million-1.1 billion) are the others in the top five.



### 7. India ranked at 44th position in Global Intellectual Property Index

According to the International IP Index published by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC), India has been ranked at 44th position out of 50 economies. The index analyses the intellectual property (IP) climate in 50 world economies.

Last year, India ranked 43rd out of 45 countries in the Index. The list was topped by USA followed by United Kingdom and Sweden.



### 8. India ranks 81st in global corruption perception index

According to a report released by the Transparency International (TI), India has been ranked at the 81st position in the annual corruption index among a group of 180 countries. The Corruption Perception Index 2017 also named India as one of the “worst offenders” in terms of graft and press freedom in the Asia Pacific region.

In the 2016 India was in the 79th place. India’s score remained intact at 40 points out of 100 in both 2016 and 2017. New Zealand and Singapore scored the highest scores with 89 and 84, respectively. Somalia has been reported as the most corrupt nation in the index.



### 9. Mumbai 12th wealthiest city globally

According to a report by New World Wealth, India's financial capital Mumbai is the 12th wealthiest city globally with a total wealth of \$950 billion. The list is topped by New York with a total wealth of \$3 trillion.

The other cities in the top ten are London (\$2.7 trillion), Tokyo (\$2.5 trillion), San Francisco Bay area (\$2.3 trillion), Beijing (\$2.2 trillion), Shanghai (\$2 trillion), Los Angeles (\$1.4 trillion), Hong Kong (\$1.3 trillion), Sydney (\$1 trillion), Singapore (\$1 trillion) and Chicago (\$988 billion).



## 10. NITI Aayog released “Healthy States, Progressive India” Report

NITI Aayog released a comprehensive Health Index report titled, “Healthy States, Progressive India”. The report ranks states and Union territories innovatively on their year-on-year incremental change in health outcomes, as well as, their overall performance with respect to each other.

Among the Larger States, Kerala, Punjab, and Tamil Nadu ranked on top in terms of overall performance, while Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, and Uttar Pradesh are the top three ranking States in terms of annual incremental performance. Among Smaller States, Mizoram ranked first followed by Manipur on overall performance and Goa was the top ranked States in terms of annual incremental performance. Among UTs, Lakshadweep showed both the best overall performance as well as the highest annual incremental performance.



# Resignations & Retirements

## 1. Jacob Zuma resigned as South Africa's president

South Africa's embattled President Jacob Zuma has resigned after the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party threatened to eject him from office via a parliamentary vote of no confidence.

Zuma was the country's President for the last 9 years. Mr Zuma's resignation followed weeks of intense public pressure to step down amid long-standing corruption allegations. He led the country for more than a third of its time after apartheid. The country's Parliament elected Mr Ramaphosa as the new President.



## 2. Ethiopian PM Hailemariam Desalegn resigned

Ethiopian Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegn has submitted a letter of resignation. He resigned amid protracted anti-government protests. Hundreds of people have died in three years of anti-government protests. He also stepped down as chairman of the ruling coalition.

Ethiopian Foreign Minister Workneh Gebeyehu is considered to be a leading candidate to take over as new Prime Minister. Hailemariam has led Ethiopia since 2012, after the death of former leader Meles Zenawi.



## 3. Australia's most-capped female player Alex Blackwell announced retirement

Australia's most-capped female player and vice-captain Alex Blackwell announced her retirement from international and state cricket. She made her debut in an ODI against England in 2003. She represented Australia for a total of 251 matches across all three formats.

Alex led Australia to victory at the ICC Twenty20 World Cup in the West Indies in 2010. She was also a member of Australia's World T20 winning sides in 2012 and 2014. She has two World Cup trophies from 2005 and 2013.



## 1. World's smallest rocket launched by Japan

Japan's aerospace exploration agency launched world's smallest rocket that can carry a satellite into orbit. Japan's newly launched modest SS-520 sounding rocket with a third stage inside its nose cone carried a microsatellite 13.6-inch TRICOM-1R cubesat into orbit. The rocket lifted off from the Uchinoura Space Center.



TRICOM-1R is a three-unit CubeSat weighing about 3 kilograms. Prior to Japan, New Zealand company Rocket Lab had launched its first tiny rocket called Electron.

## 2. US based SpaceX launched its most powerful rocket

US based SpaceX launched world's most powerful rocket named as SpaceX's Falcon Heavy on an orbit near Mars. It carried CEO Elon Musk's cherry red Tesla roadster. Rocket fired its 27 engines and rumbled into the blue sky over the same NASA launch pad that served as a base for the US missions to Moon four decades ago.



According to astronauts, Falcon Heavy is the most powerful operational rocket in the world by a factor of two. Falcon Heavy is made to carry nearly 141,000 pounds (64 metric tonnes) into orbit.

## 3. Maiden Flight of Hawk-i with Indigenous RTOS Developed by HAL

The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has developed the first flight of Hawk-i with indigenous Real Time Operating System (RTOS). It is the first indigenous RTOS that has been developed in the country from scratch and to be certified by CEMILAC.

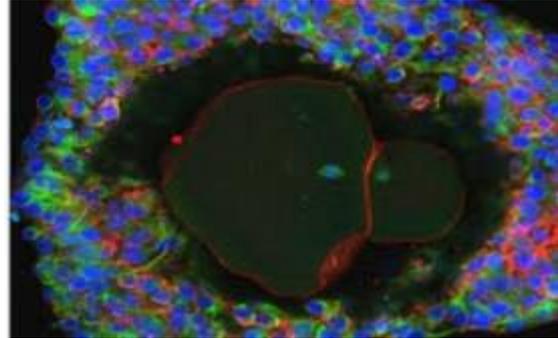


The RTOS is the system software which provides a standard run-time environment for real-time applications execution in a safe and reliable manner. Key features include address, space and time partitioning, priority preemptive process scheduling and health monitoring.

#### 4. Scientists grow human eggs to full maturity in a lab

Scientists at the University of Edinburgh have been able to fully grow human eggs from its earliest stage to full maturity for the first time in a laboratory. It could help widen the scope of available fertility treatments. The study has been published in the journal Molecular Human Reproduction.

In previous studies, scientists had developed mouse eggs in a laboratory to the stage where they produced live offspring.



#### 5. Scientists discover nearly 100 New Exo-planets

NASA's K2 mission has revealed 95 new planets beyond our solar system. This brings the total number of new exo-planets found with the K2 mission up to almost 300. The research has been published in the Astronomical Journal. The first planet orbiting a star similar to our own Sun was detected only in 1995.

An exo-planet or extra-solar planet is a planet outside our solar system that orbits a star. The Kepler spacecraft was launched in 2009 to hunt for exo-planets in a single patch of sky.



#### 6. ISRO planning to launch Chandrayaan-2 mission in April 2018

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is planning to launch Chandrayaan-2 Mission around April 2018. Chandrayaan-2 is the country's second mission to the moon.

Chandrayaan-2 for the first time will carry an orbiter, a lander and a rover to the moon. The total cost of the Chandrayaan 2 mission will be about Rs 800 crore. ISRO has successfully accomplished 48 missions, including 21 Launch Vehicle missions, 24 Satellite missions and 3 Technology Demonstrators.



## 7. Indian scientists develop next generation technology loop to generate clean energy

Indian scientists have developed a super critical carbon di oxide Brayton test loop facility that would help generate clean energy from future power plants including solar thermal. This next generation technology loop was developed indigenously by Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

This is India's first test-bed for waterless super critical carbon dioxide Brayton cycle test loop for power generation. This early stage research could potentially be useful for meeting the energy needs of the country.



## 1. India won U-19 World Cup trophy for record 4th time

India has won the ICC Under-19 World Cup for the record fourth time. They defeated Australia by eight wickets in the final. India remained unbeaten throughout the contest. India's Manjot Kalra was adjudged Man of the Match for his century and Shubman Gill Man of the Series. Prithvi Shaw led the Indian side.

With a fourth crown, India surpassed Australia in the race of most U-19 World Cup titles. India had previously won the world cup in 2012, 2008 and 2000.



## 2. MCG to host T20 World Cup finals in 2020

Melbourne Cricket Ground will host the final of both the men's and women's World Twenty20 in 2020. The eight host cities are Melbourne, Adelaide, Brisbane, Canberra, Geelong, Hobart, Perth and Sydney.

The women's tournament will run from February 21 to March 8, 2020 and the men's tournament from October 18 to November 15, 2020. The women's final will take place on International Women's Day 2020, Sunday March 8, with the aim of creating a world-record attendance for a women's sporting match.



## 3. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Khelo India School Games

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the first Khelo India School Games at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi on January 31, 2018.

The Khelo India programme has been introduced in an attempt to revive the sports culture in India at the grass-root level. Talented players identified in priority sports disciplines at various levels by a High-Powered Committee will be provided annual financial assistance of Rs. 5 lakh per annum for 8 years.



#### 4. Sharath Kamal won Table Tennis Nationals Championship

A. Sharath Kamal won his eighth national crown in the 79th 11Even Sports Table Tennis Senior National Championships after he defeated Anthony Amalraj in the final. With eight titles, Sharath equalled the feat of Kamlesh Mehta for most number of championship titles.



In the women's final, Sutirtha Mukherjee defeated Manika Batra to win the women's singles crown for the first time. While Sharath won Rs 2 lakh as prize money, Sutirtha was awarded Rs 1.5 lakh as prize money.

#### 5. Gopi Thonakal retained his title at New Delhi Marathon

Reigning Asian Champion Gopi Thonakal retained his title at the IDBI Federal Life Insurance New Delhi Marathon in New Delhi. In the women's event also, Monika Athare retained her title.



Gopi clocked 2 hour, 15 minute and 16 seconds to clinch the gold. Nitendra Singh Rawat was second, while Bahadur Singh Dhoni was third. Monika Athare clocked 2 hours, 43 minutes and 46 seconds, ahead of last edition silver medallist Jyoti Gawte and Monica Raut who finished third.

#### 6. Shubhankar Sharma named as best Indian golfer in the world

Shubhankar Sharma was ranked number 72 in world rankings by Official World Golf Ranking (OWGR). He, thus, became the top-ranked Indian golfer in the world rankings. There were 5 other Indian golfers included in the list - Anirban Lahiri, Gaganjeet Bhullar, Shiv Kapur and Ajeetesh Sandhu. Shubhankar won Maybank Championship in Malaysia recently.



Shubhankar Sharma has been winner of All India Amateur Golf Championship in 2013, the Open championships and his first European Tour win at the Joburg Open.

## 7. Jhulan Goswami created world record by taking 200 ODI Wickets

Indian women cricketer Jhulan Goswami created world record and became the first woman in the world to take 200 wickets in ODI cricket. She achieved the target during the second ODI held between India and South Africa in Kimberley. It should be noted that the first male cricketer to pick 200 ODI wickets, was also an Indian — legendary Kapil Dev.



Jhulan Goswami broke the record held by Australian Cathryn Fitzpatrick, which was created many years ago. Jhulan Goswami received ICC Women Cricketer of the Year in 2007.

## 8. Indra Nooyi appointed ICC's first independent female director

PepsiCo Chairman and CEO Indra Nooyi has been appointed to the International Cricket Council (ICC) Board as the governing body's first independent female director.

Nooyi will join the Board in June this year to align with the term of the ICC Independent Chairman. The introduction of an Independent Director, who must be female, was approved by the ICC Full Council in June last year as part of wide ranging constitutional change aimed at improving the governance of the sport.



## 9. Guinness World Record attempted for playing Ice Hockey at highest altitude

To set a record in the Guinness book for ice hockey on the world's highest altitude, an international level tournament was organised at Chibra Kargyam in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir at an altitude of 4371 meters above the sea level.



Five international teams from USA, Germany, Canada, Slovakia and Russia and a local team participated in the tournament. It was jointly organised by the Hockey Foundation, USA, Ladakh Winter Sports Club and Lalok Winter Sports Association. The event at this altitude was certified by the Geological Department government of India.

## 10. Khelo India School Games concluded

The inaugural edition of the Khelo India School Games (KISG) concluded. Haryana emerged as the overall champions, finishing with 102 medals, which included 38 gold, 26 silver and 38 bronze medals.

Maharashtra won 36 gold medals (total 102 medals) and Delhi won 25 gold medals (total 94 medals) to finish second and third respectively in the medal tally. The government has launched Khelo India Programme with around Rs. 1756 crore budget from 2017-2020. 1000 athletes will be selected and provided Rs. 5 lakh as scholarship for the next 8 years.



## 11. Winter Olympics 2018 kicked off in Pyeongchang

The 2018 Winter Olympics, officially known as the XXIII Olympic Winter Games kicked off in Pyeongchang County, South Korea. It was held from 9 to 25 February 2018. Previously, Seoul had hosted the Summer Olympics in 1988.

The Games featured 102 events in fifteen sports, with the addition of big air snowboarding, mass start speed skating, mixed doubles curling, and mixed team alpine skiing to the Winter Olympic programme.



## 12. Shikhar Dhawan becomes first Indian to score century in 100th ODI

Shikhar Dhawan became the first Indian to score a century in his 100th ODI after he scored his 13th century in the fourth ODI against South Africa in Johannesburg. He is the ninth batsman to achieve this feat.

Dhawan made his ODI debut in 2010 against Australia. Former captain Sourav Ganguly came close to scoring a century in his 100th ODI before falling for 97 in the 1999 World Cup game against South Africa.



### 13. Kishan Gangolli won National 'A' Chess Championship

Karnataka's Kishan Gangolli won the National A Chess Championship. It was organised by the All India Chess Federation for the Blind (AICFB). Gangolli became the champion for the fifth consecutive time.

The top five players were Kishan Gangolli (Kar, 10.5 pts), Ashvin K. Makwana (Guj, 9.5), Soundarya Kumar Pradhan (Odi, 9), Aryan B. Joshi (Mah, 8.5), Patra Subhendu Kumar (Odi, 7.5). They will form the Indian team for the forthcoming 'World Team Championship' for the blind to be held in Bulgaria in July 2018.



### 14. Germany retained top spot in FIFA rankings

World Champions Germany remained at the top of the FIFA rankings published in Lausanne, Switzerland. Olympic Champions Brazil is second in the football rankings with European title-holders Portugal third.

The others in the top ten are Argentina, Belgium, Spain, Poland, Switzerland, France and Chile respectively. India has been ranked 102 in the list. Mexico at 17th place is the top ranked team in north and central America. Tunisia lead the Africans in 23rd while 33rd-ranked Iran are leading in Asia.



### 15. Roger Federer won Rotterdam Open for 97th career title

World No 1 Roger Federer has won the Rotterdam Open for his 97th career title. In the Open era, only American Jimmy Connors has won more titles with 109. The record 20-time Grand Slam winner won the Australian Open in January 2018.

Federer defeated Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov 6-2, 6-2 in the final. This was his third title in Rotterdam following successes in 2005 and 2012. The Rotterdam Open is held annually at the Ahoy Rotterdam in Rotterdam, Netherlands.



### 16. Aruna Budda Reddy became 1st Indian to win individual medal at Gymnastics World Cup

Aruna Budda Reddy has created history by becoming the first Indian to win an individual medal at the Gymnastics World Cup. She clinched a Bronze in the Women's Vault event in Melbourne.

Aruna scored 13.649 average points to finish third. Tjasa Kyssef of Slovenia won Gold, while Emily Whitehead of Australia won the Silver. The other Indian gymnast in the competition, Pranati Nayak finished on the sixth spot.



### 17. Parupalli Kashyap wins Men's Singles title at the Austrian Open badminton

Reigning Commonwealth Games champion Parupalli Kashyap has won Men's Singles title at the Austrian Open International Challenge badminton tournament. Kashyap defeated Malaysia's June Wei Cheam in straight games to clinch his first international title in over three years.

Kashyap is a former National champion. His last title came at the Syed Modi International Badminton Championships in 2015. He had reached the final of US Open Grand Prix Gold in 2017.



### 18. Closing Ceremony ends Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang

The 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea concluded with a brilliant closing ceremony. Norway topped the medal tally with 14 Gold, 14 Silver and Eleven Bronze medals. Germany was second with 14 Gold, 10 Silver and 7 Bronze.

Canada followed next in the third place with a tally of 11 Gold, 8 Silver and 10 Bronze. The United States were in fourth spot with a haul of 9 Gold, 8 Silver and 6 Bronze.



### 19. India Open 2018 winners announced

The winners of India's badminton event of year 2018, 'India Open' were announced. India Open is a badminton event organized annually in New Delhi.

	<b>Winner</b>	<b>Runner up</b>
Men's Singles	Shi Yuqi (China)	Chou Tien Chen (Taiwan)
Women's Singles	Beiwen Zhang (America)	P V Sindhu (India)
Men's Doubles	Marcus Fernaldi and Kevin Sanjaya	Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup
Women's Doubles	Greysia Polii and Apriyani Rahayu	Jongkolphan and Rawinda Prajongjai
Mixed Doubles	Mathias Christiansen and Christinna Pedersen	Praveen Jordan and Melati Daeva Oktavianti

