IMPORTANT **MAY 2018**



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Awards & Honours

Virat Kohli wins Cricketer of Year Award

- India's skipper Virat Kohli won the International Cricketer of the Year Award at the CEAT Cricket Ratings awards.
- Opener Shikhar Dhawan was presented the International Batsman of the Year Award, while New Zealand's Trent Boult won International Bowler of the Year Award.
- Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan was presented with the T20 Bowler of the Year Award.

Sulabh Founder Awarded Nikkei Asia Prize

- The founder of Sulabh International, Dr Bindeshwar Pathak, has been honoured with the Nikkei Asia Prize in Japan for his contribution to Asia's development.
- Pathak is among the three who have been conferred with the award.
- Nikkei Inc., one of the largest Media Corporations in Japan, has been presenting the Awards since 1996.

1st Indian Bags 'Linnean Medal'

- Linnean Medal is awarded to a biologist every year by the Linnean Society of London
- Indian botanist Kamaljit Bawa received the Linnean Medal in Botany for his pioneering research on evolution of tropical plants, tropical deforestation & non-timber forest products.
- Bawa is the 1st Indian to win the award ever since it was constituted in 1888.

Bhosle Conferred with Banga Bibhushan

- Asha Bhosle received the highest civilian award of West Bengal, the Banga Bibhushan, by the Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.
- She has done playback singing for over a thousand Bollywood movies & has sung in over 20 Indian & foreign languages.
- Bengal government in 2011 instituted Banga Bibhushan award to recognize the services of eminent personalities from their respective fields.

Mangeshkar Conferred with Swara Mauli Award

- Lata Mangeshkar has been honoured with the Swara Mauli title by Spiritual Guru Vidya Narsimha Bharati Swami.
- It is for the second time that Lata Mangeshkar has been honoured with the Swara Mauli title.
- The veteran singer has several awards to her credit in her over seven-decade-long career, including 3 National Awards.

No Nobel Prize in Literature this Year

• The Swedish Academy has postponed the 2018 Nobel Prize in Literature following sex-abuse allegations and other issues within its ranks that have tarnished the body's reputation.

- The 2018 winner will be presented alongside the 2019 winner next year.
- It is the first time since wartime 1943 that the prestigious award will not be given.

65th National Film Awards 2018

- The 65th National Film Awards 2018 ceremony began at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.
- Actor Sridevi posthumously won the Best Actress Award for her role in Hindi film Mom while Bengali actor Riddhi Sen got the Best Actor award for Nagar Kirtan.
- The Best Feature Film award went to Assamese film Village Rockstars.
- Actor Vinod Khanna was awarded the Dadasaheb Phalke Award.

Pawel Pawlikowski & 'Shoplifters' Won Palme d'Or

- Poland's Pawel Pawlikowski won the best director award at the 2018 Cannes film festival for his love story 'Cold War'.
- The Japanese family drama Shoplifters also received the coveted award for best film, the 'Palme d'Or', at the 2018 Cannes Film Festival.
- Cold War is the 1st Polish film to compete for the Palme d'Or award since Roman Polański's 'The Pianist' scooped up the major award in 2002.
- Set against the background of the Cold War in the 1950's in Poland, the film depicts an impossible love story in impossible times.
- The Palme d'Or is the highest prize awarded at the Cannes Film Festival.

Jagriti Yatra Wins Charity Award in UK

- Jagriti Yatra is an Indian charity that organises various train journeys helping understand & build small Indian towns & villages.
- It has won an award in London. It organises 15-day train journeys, covering 800 km for 400 changemakers across India every year.
- It was among a series of worldwide charities and individuals recognised for their impact on their communities at the Asian Voice Charity Awards.

Andhra IT Min is 'Digital Leader' of the Year

- Andhra Pradesh Minister for IT, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development, Nara Lokesh received the Digital Leader of the Year award during Businessworld Digital India Summit 2018.
- The award was announced for Best Utilisation of Technology in Governance.
- Lokesh won the award for using cutting edge technology & yielding good results in Panchayat Raj, Rural Development & Rural Water Supply departments.

NPCIL Won Russian Award for 'Atom on Wheels'

- NPCIL won the award for its 'Atom on Wheels' campaign started in 2016 to spread awareness in rural areas about the benefits of nuclear energy.
- The Campaign mounted on wheels covered 6 lakh rural population in 6 states with material on Nuclear Technology.

Mark Tully Chosen for RedInk Award 2018

- Veteran British Journalist and former BBC India correspondent Sir William Mark Tully was chosen for 2018 RedInk award for Lifetime Achievement in Journalism.
- Tully worked with the BBC for 30 years before resigning in July 1994. He held the position of Chief of Bureau, BBC, Delhi, for 20 years.
- The RedInk Awards for excellence in Journalism are instituted by the Mumbai Press Club.

KISS Humanitarian Award 2018

- KISS Humanitarian Award is an international award given to someone who has made an exceptional contribution to the society in various fields relating to social issues.
- Nobel Peace award winner & the founder of Grameen Bank Prof. Muhammad Yunus has been conferred with the prestigious KISS Humanitarian Award 2018.
- Prof Yunus is the 2nd Nobel laureate to be conferred the award.

Nisha Bhalla Conferred with 'WEF 2018' Award

- Holistic coach and consultant, Nisha Bhalla was felicitated at the recently concluded Annual WEF 2018 Awards.
- She was presented the 'Excellent Woman of Excellence' Award for her spiritual service.
- Women Economic Forum is the largest global gathering of women entrepreneurs and leaders worldwide that recognises the most successful women across all fields.

Days & Events

International UN Peacekeepers Day - May 29th

- International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers is observed every year on May 29th to pay tribute to all men & women who have served & continue to serve in UN peacekeeping operations.
- Theme of International Day of UN Peacekeepers 2018 was UN Peacekeepers: 70 Years of Service & Sacrifice.
- So far India has taken part in 43 Peacekeeping Missions with a total contribution exceeding 1,80,000 troops.

RSM 2018 Celebrated in Uttarakhand

- Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav 2018 will be organised by Ministry of Culture in Tehri, Uttarakhand under the Ek Bharat Shreshta Bharat.
- It is the 19th edition & was organised from 25th to 27th May 2018, with its important thrust being, presenting uniqueness & rich diversity of Indian culture.
- Tehri Lake Festival was also a part of RSM 2018, where Uttarakhand Tourism organizes water sports for people.

India to Host World Environment Day - June 5th

- India will be the host country for this year's World Environment Day celebrations.
- World Environment Day is celebrated annually on June 5th.
- This year's theme is 'Beat Plastic Pollution: If you can't reuse it, refuse it'.
- World Environment Day was established by the UN General Assembly in 1972.

International Biological Diversity Day - May 22nd

- International Day for Biological Diversity was celebrated on May 22nd to increase awareness of biodiversity issues.
- This date commemorates the date of Adoption of the Agreed Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity at Nairobi on 22nd May 1992.
- Theme chosen for International Day for Biological Diversity 2018 was 'Celebrating 25 Years of Action for Biodiversity'.

Anti-Terrorism Day - May 21st

- Anti Terrorism Day is observed every year throughout the country on May 21st.
- The Day is observed to generate awareness in the country among all sections of people, about the dangers of terrorism and violence and its effect on the people, society and the country as a whole.
- Anti-terrorism pledge is taken in all Government Offices, Public Sector Undertakings and other Public Institutions.

International Museum Day - May 18th

- International Museum Day is held every year on or around 18th May, coordinated by the International Council of Museums.
- It aims to raise awareness of the fact that Museums are important means of cultural exchange, enrichment of cultures & development of mutual understanding, cooperation and peace among people.
- Theme chosen for 2018 was 'Hyperconnected Museums: New approaches, New Publics'.

World Hypertension Day Observed - May 17th

• World Hypertension Day was observed on May 17th, 2018, to increase high blood pressure awareness.

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- The World Hypertension Day was first inaugurated in the year 2005 and has become an annual event ever since.
- The theme for this year is 'Know Your Numbers'.



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International Day of Living Together in Peace - May 16th

- The UN General-Assembly declared 16th May as the International Day of Living Together in Peace.
- The Day aims to uphold the desire to live and act together, united in differences and diversity, in order to build a sustainable world of peace, solidarity and harmony.
- The Day invites countries to further promote reconciliation to help to ensure peace and sustainable development.

International Day of Families - May 15th

- International Day of Families is observed on 15th of May every year to promote awareness of issues relating to families.
- This year the theme of the International Day of Families was 'Families & Inclusive societies'.
- The year 1994 was proclaimed as the International Year of Families by the UN.
- The Symbol of International Day of Families consists of a solid green circle with an image in red.

World Migratory Bird Day

- The World Migratory Bird Day is a 2-day programme observed on the second weekend of the month of May to highlight the urgency to protect migratory birds and their habitats.
- The theme of the World Migratory Bird Day 2018 was 'Unifying our Voices for Bird Conservation'.
- India sees over 200 species of birds migrate to the country during winters from the Asian and European regions.

Customs & Postal Department Holds Joint Conference

- Indian Customs & Department of India Posts held a first ever Joint Conference in New Delhi to deliberate on streamlining imports & exports by post.
- Imports & Exports by post are the 6th highest cited citizen grievances under Centralized Public Grievance Redress & Monitoring System.
- Customs & DGFT have worked together since a year to liberalise, reform & align laws relating to imports by post.

International Nurses Day celebrated - May 12th

- International Nurses Day is celebrated every year on May 12th to create awareness about the roles and responsibilities of nurses.
- International Nurses day also marks the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing.
- This year the theme of the day was 'Nurses: A voice to lead Health is a Human Right'.

19th National Technology Day - May 11th

- The country observed 19th National Technology Day on 11th May to commemorate successful carrying out of the nuclear test at Pokhran in Rajasthan.
- On the same day, India performed successful test firing of the Trishul Missile and test flying the first indigenous aircraft 'Hansa-3'.
- The country started observing the day as National Technology Day every year since the year 1999.

Asia Media Summit Hosted by India

- The 15th Asia Media Summit (AMS) 2018 was hosted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India from 10th - 12th May 2018 in New Delhi.
- The AMS 2018, an annual summit of the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) Kuala Lumpur, is a prestigious summit in the Asia Pacific Region.
- The theme of the summit was 'Telling Our Stories Asia and More'.

Children's Theatre Festival in Kolkata

• Children from 8 countries, belonging to various theatre groups, took part in the International Children's Theatre Festival held in Kolkata.

- The 8 countries are France, Slovenia, Swaziland, Mexico, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh.
- The festival, organised by the 'Kolkata Eso Natak Shikhi', is based on the theme: 'Safe Drive Save Life, Save Kids' Life'.

World Laughter Day Observed - May 6th

- Celebrated since 1998, World Laughter Day is an annual event celebrated to raise awareness about laughter and its many healing benefits.
- World Laughter Day takes place on the first Sunday of May of every year.
- The first celebration was on May 10, 1998, in Mumbai, India, and was arranged by Dr. Madan Kataria, founder of the worldwide Laughter Yoga movement.

Festival of Bharat Hosted in Delhi

- Delhi hosted the Festival of Bharat between May 9th and May 14th as a tribute to the majesty and depth of Indian civilization.
- The event was held at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) in New Delhi.
- Scholars, Grammy Award winning artistes, rising new stars and prominent public attended this festival..

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to become Biennial

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will now be celebrated every alternate year & a series of sessions will be held before the event to increase the interests of Indians living within & outside the country.
- Theme-based sessions will be conducted, in which Ministry of External Affairs will invite 12 people including both nationals & NRIs.
- 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will be held in Varanasi on Jan 2019.

Sushma to chair session on 'Act East' Policy

- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will be chairing an interactive session on Act East Policy in New Delhi.
- Chief Ministers of 8 North Eastern states Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Sikkim, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Tripura have been invited to attend this meeting.
- They will be accompanied by senior officials from the States who deal with policy issues related to the subject.

World Press Freedom Day observed - May 3rd

- World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1993.
- Since then, 3rd May, the anniversary of the 'Declaration of Windhoek' is celebrated worldwide as World Press Freedom Day.
- It is an opportunity to celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom.

• The theme for 2018 was "Keeping Power in Check: Media, Justice and The Rule of Law".

'Vibrant North East 2018' - May 3rd

- The 'Vibrant North East 2018', an event in which people would be made aware of central government schemes and programmes, was held in Guwahati from May 3rd.
- The main purpose of the event was to disseminate information about the schemes, grants and projects of the Central government.
- This was the fourth edition of the 'Vibrant North East' expo in Guwahati.

World Asthma Day observed - May 1st

- Asthma is a chronic lung disease that is caused by inflammation of the airways.
- World Asthma Day is celebrated worldwide on the first Tuesday of May every year.
- It is organised by the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA), it is a global health event aimed at improving asthma awareness and care worldwide.
- The theme of this year's event was 'Never too early, never too late'.

International Labour Day observed - May 1st

- International Labour Day, also known as International Worker's Day or May Day is observed on 1st May.
- It is observed every year to promote and encourage the international labour associations.
- The day marks the victory of workers' movement for eight hours of work.
- It also aims to pay tribute to workers sacrifices in achieving economic and social rights all over the world.

International Affairs

Nepal to Announce 1st Federal Budget

- Nepal's Finance Minister will present the first federal budget of Nepal after completing the three-tier elections held simultaneously in the year of 2017.
- The Government of Nepal is expected to unveil the budget of about 16 trillion for the upcoming fiscal year.
- The Constitution of Nepal mandates the government to unveil the budget in a joint meeting of federal parliaments.

EU to Observe Zimbabwe Polls for 1st Time

- The European Union will deploy observers to Zimbabwe's general election expected in July, for the first time in 16 years the bloc will monitor polls in the southern African country.
- The EU and Zimbabwe's government signed a memorandum outlining guidelines for election monitors.

• Zimbabwe formally invited the EU in March to send an election observation mission.

China invites Iran to Attend SCO Summit

- China has invited the Iranian President to participate in the upcoming Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit being organised in June 2018.
- The summit will be the first after the inclusion of India and Pakistan as members of the organisation in 2017.
- Iran, Mongolia, Afghanistan, and Belarus have been granted 'Observer' status.

Pakistan to allow Hindu widows to Remarry

- A landmark Bill allowing Hindu widows to remarry has been passed by the assembly of Pakistan's Sindh Province.
- The bill allows Hindu widows to remarry out of their own free will but only after a period of six months have lapsed after their husband's death.
- The bill also grants Hindu women the right to file a petition for dissolution of a marriage if they want to terminate their marriage.

Colombia Formally Joins NATO

- Colombia has decided to formally join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).
- With this, Colombia becomes the 1st Latin American nation to join NATO as a global partner.
- Colombia will join as a global partner, which means it will not necessarily have to take part in military action & will be fully accredited in Brussels.
- Other global partners include Mongolia, Iraq, Japan & Pakistan.

Ireland Overturns Abortion Ban

- Ireland has voted overwhelmingly in a referendum to overturn the abortion ban.
- Result was a landslide 66.4% 'yes' vote against 33.6% who voted 'no'.
- Currently, abortion is only allowed when a woman's life is at risk, but not in cases of rape, incest or fatal foetal abnormality.
- One of the key cases influencing the debate on abortion in Ireland was that of Indian dentist Savita Halappanavar.

Hamburg to Host 2018 Global Wind Summit

- The first edition of the Global Wind Summit will be held in Hamburg, Germany from September 25-28, 2018.
- The event will provide a platform for experts from across the globe to discuss innovative and green technologies for harnessing wind energy making.
- India is the 4th largest country after China, US, and Germany in terms of wind energy installation capacity at around 33 GW.

- North Korea has carried out demolition of its Punggye-ri nuclear test site in a series of huge explosions.
- Destruction of the nuclear testing tunnels at Punggye-ri is a tangible step toward denuclearization goal that Kim Jong-un agreed to at the 27 April Panmunjom Summit.
- North Korea permitted a group of journalists from Britain, China, Russia, South Korea and US to watch the destruction.

Nepal: First Country to Eliminate Trachoma

- Trachoma is a kind of chlamydial infection that happens due to unclean water supply & lack of hygiene and spreads through contact with nose, throat or eye of infected person.
- Nepal became the 1st country in South-East Asia to eliminate Trachoma.
- Nepal government took important measures like providing incentives to districts & local communities to build latrines in order to improve sanitation

Guatemala & Paraguay Opened its Embassy in Jerusalem

- Guatemala has opened its embassy in Jerusalem, following in the footsteps of the United States, which recently inaugurated its embassy in the city.
- Paraguayan President Horacio Cartes also has inaugurated his country Israel embassy in Jerusalem.
- Guatemala is the 2nd country and Paraguay is the 3rd country to to move its embassy to Jerusalem.

China, U.S. Vow against Trade War

- China and US have issued a joint statement on economic and trade consultations, vowing not to launch a trade war against each other.
- The two sides agreed to take effective measures to substantially decrease U.S. trade deficit in goods with China.
- Trump administration wants to lower America's goods trade deficit with China by at least \$200 billion by the end of the year 2020.

World's 1st Floating Nuclear Power Station

- Russia has unveiled the world's first floating nuclear power station to meet its growing electricity needs.
- The ship holds two 35 megawatt nuclear reactors that can produce enough electricity to power a town of 200,000 residents.
- It will be primarily used to power oil rigs as Russia pushes further north into the Arctic to drill for oil and gas and needs electricity in far-flung locations.

UN to send War Crimes Investigators to Gaza

• UN Human Rights Council has voted to send a team of International War Crimes Investigators to probe the deadly shootings of Gaza protesters by Israeli forces.

North Korea Dismantled its Nuclear Test Site

- The resolution was backed by 29 members while 2 members US and Australia voted against and 14 abstained.
- Israel has defended the killing of protesters, saying it was acting in self-defence to protect its borders and communities.

Cyclone 'Sagar' Formed over Gulf of Aden

- A cyclonic storm named Sagar has formed in the Gulf of Aden.
- Cyclone Sagar is the first cyclonic storm of the season in Indian waters.
- Gulf of Aden is in the Arabian Sea and is surrounded by Yemen, Djibouti and Somalia.
- Fishermen have been advised to not venture into Gulf of Aden and adjoining areas of Arabian Sea.

First Essential Diagnostics List

- World Health Organisation has published its 1st 'Essential Diagnostics List', a compilation of tests needed to diagnose the most common conditions as well as a number of global priority diseases.
- The step was taken to address the problem of people's inability to access diagnostic services.
- The list focuses on vitro tests like tests of blood & urine.

Green Economy to Create 3Mn Jobs in India

- India could witness the creation of more than 3 million jobs if it adopts sustainable practices for a green economy, the International Labour Organization said in the 'World Employment and Social Outlook'.
- All sectors, except the mining industry, will experience an increase in employment.
- The transition to a green economy in India will inevitably cause job losses in certain sectors.

WHO Launched 'REPLACE'

- WHO has launched a comprehensive plan called "REPLACE" to eliminate industrially-produced artificial trans fats from global food supply by 2023.
- REPLACE stands for Review dietary sources, Promote the use of healthier fats, Legislate, Assess changes, Create awareness and Enforce.
- The REPLACE plan is the first time WHO is calling for the elimination of something other than a noncommunicable disease.

China Aims to Deliver Amphibious Aircraft

- Amphibious Aircrafts are those which can take off on both, land and water.
- China's amphibious aircraft, Code-named Kunlong, stated to be the largest in the world is expected to be delivered to customers by 2022.

• It will mainly be used for maritime rescue, fighting forest fires and marine monitoring, according to its state-owned manufacturer.

World Bank Provides 1Mn Grant for Bangladesh

- The World Bank (WB) is going to provide Bangladesh with a grant to meet the basic needs of around one million Rohingyas who fled from Myanmar.
- A WB team will be visiting Bangladesh to discuss the issue with the government.
- As per the WB's conditions, the entire fund that the WB has finally agreed to provide Bangladesh with will have to be spent for the Rohingyas only.

Trump Axes NASA Funding

- The Trump administration has eliminated funding for NASA's research program that tracks greenhouse gases around the world.
- The Carbon Monitoring System (CMS), a \$10m (£7m)-a-year project tracks the world's flow of carbon dioxide from space.
- The US's environmental policy has shifted under Trump administration, which wants to bolster the US's fossil fuel industry.

Cholera Vaccination Campaign in Yemen

- According to WHO, there have been more than 1 million cases of cholera in Yemen & 2,275 recorded deaths since Nov 2016.
- The 1st vaccine campaign against Cholera in Yemen has started, a year & a half after an epidemic was triggered by war & a health and sanitation crisis.
- The oral vaccination campaign started in four districts in Aden aims to target around 350,000 people.

Iraq Holds 1st Election Since IS Defeat

- Iraq has begun voting for its 1st parliamentary election since declaring victory over the Islamic State group.
- Haider al-Abadi who has been the PM of Iraq since 2014 is angling for a new term, claiming credit for defeating the Jihadists.
- Iraq has been struggling to find a formula for stability since a US-led invasion toppled dictator Saddam Hussein in 2003.

Israel Launched Airstrikes Against Iran

- Israel and Iran were engaged in their most direct confrontation to date after Iranian forces stationed in Syria fired nearly 20 missiles targeting Israeloccupied territory and Israel Defence Forces responded with airstrikes.
- This marks Israel's most significant military action in Syria since the civil war started in 2011.
- The two countries have been engaged in a proxy war for years.



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China Launched New Satellite

- China successfully launched a Hyperspectral Imaging Satellite for comprehensive observation of the atmosphere, including air pollution.
- The 'Gaofen-5' satellite was launched with the help of a 'Long March 4C' rocket from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in Northern Shanxi Province.
- It will help reduce China's dependence on foreign hyperspectral satellite data.

Beijing to Hold World Robot Conference

- The 2018 World Robot Conference will be held in Beijing from August 15th to 19th.
- This event will see over 12,000 competing teams and 50,000 participants from more than 10 countries and regions.
- The conference will greatly stimulate passion and innovation in the robot industry as well as help with research and development.

Russia confirms Dmitry Medvedev as its PM

• Russian State Duma (the lower house of parliament) has given its mandate to Dmitry Medvedev for a new term as the Prime Minister.

- Medvedev's candidature for the Prime Minister's seat was proposed by President Vladimir Putin after the inauguration of his fourth term as Russia's President.
- Under Russia's Constitution, the government is obliged to resign when a new presidential term begins.

Korean Unification Flag Signed at ITFF

- The Korean Unification flag was signed by members of the joint Korean women's table tennis team at the World Team Table Tennis Championship.
- The flag features a blue Korean Peninsula against a white background.
- The flag is being used in such tournaments where a unified Korean team is fielded off to participate.

Lebanon holds Maiden Parliamentary Elections

- Polling has begun across Lebanon, where voters are going to elect their parliament for first time in 9 years.
- Last elections in the country were held in 2009, for what was supposed to be a 4 year term. But parliament extended its term twice due to instability in neighbouring Syria.
- Lebanon has one of the world's highest debt-to-GDP ratios & IMF has warned its fiscal trajectory is unsustainable.

Israel Withdraws Race for Seat on UNSC

- United Nations Security Council (UNSC) is made up of 5 permanent members - Britain, China, France, Russia & US while 10 other seats are filled by elected members that serve 2 year stints.
- Israel has withdrawn from a race against Germany & Belgium for 2 seats on United Nations Security Council in 2019-20.
- Israel was competing with Germany & Belgium for one of the two seats allocated to Western European & Others Group.

Busiest Air Route : Singapore - Kuala Lumpur

- The trip between Singapore and the Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur is the world's busiest international air route according to the study by air travel intelligence firm OAG.
- Asia dominated the list of the world's 20 busiest international air routes.
- The world's second busiest air route is between Hong Kong and the Taiwanese capital Taipei & followed by the Jakarta to Singapore air route.

Informal Meeting of SAARC FMs held in Manila

- The twelfth informal meeting of SAARC Finance Ministers was held in Manila, on the sidelines of the 51st Annual Meeting of Asian Development Bank (ADB).
- The meeting was chaired by the Finance Minister of Nepal Yuba Raj Khatiwada.

• The Finance Ministers/Heads of Delegation briefed the meeting about the current status of economic progress achieved by their countries.

Pakistan Reopens Major Trade Route with Afghan

- Pakistan has reopened a major trade route with Afghanistan, the Ghulam Khan, pass after four years.
- Authorities had closed Ghulam Khan border crossing in 2014, after the launch of military operation in North Waziristan.
- Pakistan's army claims that 95% of the area is now militant-free and all the militants' hideouts have been destroyed.

Dominican Republic Cuts Ties with Taiwan

- The Dominican Republic severed ties with Taiwan after nearly 80 years.
- The Dominican Republic established diplomatic relations with China.
- Taiwan now has formal relations with only 19 countries, many of them poor nations in Central America and the Pacific.
- Panama cut its diplomatic ties in favor of Beijing in June last year.

Blue Origin Launches its 1st Space Mission

- Blue Origin, the US aerospace company owned by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, has launched its suborbital 'New Shepard' rocket and space capsule.
- The mission marked the company's first test flight of the year and second flight of the New Shepard 2.0 spacecraft.
- New Shepard is a reusable vertical takeoff, vertical landing space vehicle, consisting of a pressurized capsule atop a booster.

National Affairs

DAC Approves Procurement of Equipments

- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, approved the procurement of equipment valued at over Rs 6,900 crore.
- This includes Thermal Imaging Night Sights for the Rocket Launcher for accurate targeting of enemy bunkers.
- The DAC, under the Defence Minister was constituted for overall guidance of the defence procurement planning process.

IMD To Team Up with BSNL For Weather Warnings

- India Meteorological Department (IMD) is teaming up with state-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) to send extreme weather warnings to people.
- The alerts will be about impending extreme weather conditions such as storms and heatwaves.
- The exercise is being carried out in an experimental stage, and if successful the plan is to rope in other weather agencies.

Coal India's 1st Thermal Power Plant

- Coal India Ltd (CIL) will develop its first-ever thermal power plant in the country in Odisha.
- The project will be implemented through CIL's subsidiary, Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL).
- The power plant, which will have a capacity of 1,600 MW, will come up at Sundergarh district.
- NTPC Ltd will be a joint venture partner and will likely have a 49 per cent stake.

Dehradun to host Main Event on Yoga Day

- Dehradun will be the venue for this year's national programme on International Yoga Day on June 21st 2018.
- The main International Yoga Day event was held at Lucknow in 2017.
- International Yoga Day is celebrated annually on 21st June since 2015.
- An international day for yoga was declared by the United Nations General Assembly.

App to help voters to share malpractice proof

- Election Commission will launch multi-lingual mobile application called "Model Code of Conduct Violation Reporting App" ahead of the 2019 elections.
- It aims to share evidence of malpractice by political parties, their candidates & activists directly with the electoral body.
- It was made available for the 1st time in Bengaluru in the run-up to the recently concluded Karnataka Assembly polls.

EC Plans to Try out Confidential Voting System

- The Election Commission will soon examine the New Zealand model, which allows eligible people to vote even if their names are not on the printed roll for valid reasons.
- The concept of a 'unpublished' (confidential) roll will also be discussed.
- 'Unpublished' roll is for those who fear making their details available on the printed roll for security reasons.

UP-Mumbai Freight Corridor Open from August

- The first phase of India's longest freight corridor connecting Uttar Pradesh and Mumbai is set to be inaugurated on August 15, 2018.
- This was disclosed by the chairman of the Railway Board Ashwani Lohani, who inspected the 190kmlong Ateli-Phulera section of the dedicated railway freight corridor between Dadri in UP and Mumbai.
- It is part of the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor.

PM Modi Launches Solar Powered Expressway

- PM Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first highway to be lit by solar power in Bagpat, Uttar Pradesh.
- Eastern Peripheral Expressway is 135 km long, stretching from Kundli on NH 1 to Palwal on NH 2.

- The highway has provisions of rainwater harvesting on every 500 metres on both sides and would showcase 36 national monuments and 40 fountains.
- It has been built in a record time of 17 months.

Patratu Super Thermal Power Project

- Prime Minister Modi laid the foundation stone for the 1st phase of 2400MW Patratu super thermal power project in Jharkhand.
- The project is a 74: 26 joint venture between Government of Jharkhand and Patratu Vidyut Utpadan Nigam, a subsidiary company of NTPC.
- It will allocate 85% of the power to Jharkhand that will benefit the state in the long run & will help in economic growth of the region.

Government Reconstituted the FSDC

- Government has reconstituted the Financial Stability and Development Council to include secretaries from the revenue department as well as Ministry of IT.
- FSDC was set up in 2010 by the then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee.
- The council comprises RBI Governor, SEBI Chairman, Finance Secretary, and secretaries in the departments of Economic Affairs, Financial Services and Corporate Affairs.

UAV Surveillance & Panic Buttons in Mumbai

- To enhance women's safety, Mumbai police are planning to use Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) for surveillance and install `panic buttons' across the city.
- The measures are part of a Rs 252-crore Safe City Project, which will be implemented fully in 3 years.
- The use of UAVs for women's safety will be the first in the country.

Smart Cities India 2018

- The 4th Smart Cities India 2018 Expo has kicked off in New Delhi.
- The event, consisting 5 expos is being held with a vision to help develop attractive and safe cities that evoke pride, passion and a sense of belonging among citizens.
- The 5 expos are, Building India Expo, Solar India Expo, Transport India Expo, Smart Cities India Expo and Water India Expo.

1st Commercial Flight lands in Arunachal Pradesh

- A 42-seater ATR Aircraft of Alliance air landed in Arunachal Pradesh carrying CM Pema Khandu and 24 other passengers.
- This is the state's 1st commercial flight, that would develop new prospects of economic development in this region.
- The flights will be operated thrice a week.

1st Advisory Centre for Energy Regulation

- Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur has set up first of its kind Centre for Energy Regulation in the country to strengthen policy and regulatory limitations in energy and power sector.
- The centre would develop a regulatory database to enable stakeholders in taking more informed decisions.
- The centre has been set up with the assistance of the UK government.

NMCG Asks DDA to Expedite "Asita"

- · Asita generally means River Yamuna.
- National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) inspected the Yamuna River Front Development (RFD) project is being implemented by Delhi Development Authority.
- Yamuna RFD project aims to restore, revive and rejuvenate the river's floodplains and make them accessible to the people of Delhi.
- A special focus of the project is on reviving the river's biodiversity.

CSC to Reach 2.50 Lakh Gram Panchayats

- The network of Common Service Centres (CSCs) are set to be expanded to 2.50 lakh Gram Panchayats by the end of 2018.
- Common Service Centres (CSCs) provide electronic services in banking, insurance, passport seva, telemedicine and pensions to villages in India.
- The CSC model has adopted six villages in the country in the pilot phase.

Convention on Rejuvenation of Krishna River

- Experts in water conservation from across the country will deliberate on ways to rejuvenate the Krishna river at the maiden National Convention of the Indian Water Council (IWC) May 22nd.
- The Indian Water Council was formed in April 2018 in Rajasthan.
- The 'National Convention on Rejuvenation of the Krishna River', is the IWC's first event.

Railways to Use AI to Control Air Circulation

- For the first time, the Railways will use artificial intelligence to control air circulation, to issue emergency alerts and also for supervision and maintenance work in a 10.28-km-long tunnel in Imphal.
- It will alert the passenger in case of fire and help us in quick evacuation in case of an issue.
- This system will also be used in the Hyderabad, Mumbai and Ahmedabad metros.

EESL Distributes 30 Cr LED Bulbs

• State-run Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) has distributed over 30 crore light emitting diode (LED) bulbs across the country under the 'Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All' (UJALA) scheme.

- The UJALA scheme was launched in January 2015 and is currently the largest LED distribution programme in the world.
- It is a non-subsidized LED lamp distribution project undertaken by EESL.

India 6th Wealthiest Country

- India is the 6th wealthiest country in the world with a total wealth of US \$8,230 billion.
- The US is the wealthiest country in the world with a total wealth of US \$62,584 billion, according to the AfrAsia Bank Global Wealth Migration Review.
- Total wealth refers to the private wealth held by all the individuals living in each country. It includes all their assets less any liabilities.

Train Connecting NE to the West Coast Begun

- The Northeast Frontier Railway has started operating one lease Parcel Cargo Express Train (PCET) on fortnightly basis, connecting Northeastern part of the country to the West Coast.
- The route of this Parcel Cargo Express Train is New Guwahati in Assam to Kalyan in Maharashtra.
- The PCET has been started in line with the Government's priority to provide connectivity to the Northeast region.

World Bank Extends \$300 Mn Credit

- The World Bank Board of Executive Directors approved a \$220 million loan and an \$80 million (Rs 544 crore) guarantee for the India Energy Efficiency Scale-Up Program.
- The Program will be implemented by the Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL).
- This will help scale up the deployment of energy saving measures in residential and public sectors, strengthen EESL's institutional capacity.

Kishanganga Hydropower Project Inaugurated

- PM Modi has dedicated 330 MW Kishanganga hydropower project in Jammu and Kashmir to the nation.
- Kishanganga hydropower project will provide 13% free power to J&K including 1% for local area development fund amounting to around Rs 133 crore per year.
- The project was delayed for several years as Pakistan dragged India to International Court of Arbitration, which ruled in India's favour in 2013.

AYUSH to be Adopted as a Word

- Commission for Scientific & Technical Terminology has decided to adopt the acronym "AYUSH" as a word, both in English & Hindi languages, for scientific and technical purposes.
- AYUSH became popular as the acronym for 5 traditional systems of medicine - Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy.

 CSTT adopted the acronym as a word based on a proposal of the Ministry of AYUSH

India saw 211 Tuberculosis Cases per 1 Lakh

- According to the 'World Health Statistics 2018' released by World Health Organisation (WHO), India saw an estimated 211 cases of tuberculosis (TB) per 1,00,000 people in 2016.
- Nepal and Bhutan recorded fewer number of TB cases per 1,00,000 population than India.
- India has pledged to eradicate tuberculosis by 2025, five years ahead of the global target set by WHO.

Freshwater Decline in India

- India is among the hotspots where overuse of water resources has caused a decline in the availability of freshwater, according to study using an array of NASA satellite observations of Earth.
- The study found that Earth's wetland areas are getting wetted and dry areas are getting drier.
- In Northern India, groundwater extraction for irrigation of crops has caused a decline in available water.

SC Approves Draft Cauvery Management Scheme

- The Supreme Court approved the Centre's draft Cauvery Management Scheme for smooth distribution of water among four southern riparian states.
- The scheme would deal with the issue of water share of the four states in different circumstances like normal and deficient water years in the Cauvery river basin.
- The top court had modified the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) award of 2007.

International Rail Coach Expo in Chennai

- For the first time, an International Rail Coach Expo (IRCE) was held in Chennai.
- The expo which was held from 17th to 19th May focused on Rail Coaches and train sets.
- It will be a unique platform to bring different suppliers under one roof and create synergy for "Make in India".

Development of 'Freight Village' in Haryana

- Cabinet approved the development of trunk infrastructure components for the integrated multimodal logistics hub known as 'Freight Village'.
- They will be built at Nangal Chaudhary in Haryana under the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor Project.
- Freight villages are logistics centers, where the cargoes from different transport modes can be reloaded, compiled and prepared for transportation.

Uttarakhand Cabinet Holds Meeting in a Boat

• The Uttarakhand Cabinet organised a meeting in a boat named Marina on the Tehri Reservoir.

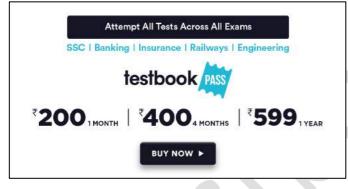
- Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat was present for the cabinet meeting.
- Notably, a cabinet meeting was held outside the capital of the state for the first time ever.
- Famous Tehri Dam is located on the river Bhagirathi.

PM to Lay Foundation for Zojila Tunnel

- PM Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the Zojila tunnel on 19th May in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The tunnel is being built to check the growing influence of Pakistan and China in the Ladakh region.
- The contract for the project has been awarded to IL & FS (Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services).
- Zojila Pass is known as the gateway to Ladakh region and connects Kargil and Leh with Srinagar.

Mangaluru is the Best in Waste Management

- The Union Government has selected Mangaluru as "India's best city in solid waste management".
- It was selected under the categories of cities having population between 3 lakh and 10 lakh under Swachhata Survekshan 2018.
- The survey by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs assessed 4,203 urban local bodies under the support of the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban).



Aadhaar Not Mandatory for Getting Pension

- The government clarified that Aadhaar has not been made mandatory for getting pension for government employees.
- It also said that Aadhaar is an additional facility to enable the use of technology for submission of life certificate without visiting banks.
- There are about 48.41 lakh Central Government employees and 61.17 lakh pensioners.

Railways to Install 'Panic Button' for Women

- To strengthen women passengers' security in trains, North Eastern Railway plans to deploy women police personnel on trains during night hours as well as install 'panic buttons' in coaches.
- One of the measures proposed to ensure women's safety is having a different colour on the women coaches.

1st All-Woman POPSK Starts Operations

- A Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) run by an all-woman team started operations on 14th May in Phagwara, Punjab.
- It was the 192nd POPSK in the country, but the first one to be operated by an all-woman team.
- The Seva Kendra was inaugurated by Union Minister Vijay Sampla in the local head Post Office.

E-Gates to Give Immigration Clearance

- From January 2019, low-risk foreign travelers will not have to wait in long queues at airport immigration counters.
- The Indian government plans to install special automated kiosks e-Gates for speedy document and identity verification.
- At the e-Gates, foreigners can present their machinereadable passports, place their fingerprints on the scanner and complete a customs declaration.

Domestic Violence Act Includes Divorced Women

- The Domestic Violence Act, meant to punish men who abuse women in a relationship, extends to all man-woman relationships & also protects divorced women from their former husband, the Supreme Court has upheld.
- The court held that domestic violence can continue even after divorce.
- It amounts to domestic violence if the former husband tried to dispossess the woman from a jointly-owned property.

TNAU Seed Centre Bags Award

- The seed centre at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU) has bagged an award for excellence in research on seed technology.
- The best performance centre award was presented at the annual group meeting of the all-India coordinated research project on national seed projects.
- All agricultural universities under the Indian Council of Agricultural Research participated in the meet.

Railways to Compensate for Onboard Death

- The Supreme Court held that the Indian Railways must pay compensation in case of death or injury while boarding or deboarding trains.
- It added that in case of an accident or untoward incident, the Railways must pay compensation whether or not there has been a wrongful act, neglect or fault on the part of the administration.
- The railways cannot plead negligence on the part of the victims.

Supreme Court Reserves Verdict On The Aadhar

• The Supreme Court reserved its verdict on petitions challenging the Constitutional validity of the 2016 Aadhaar Act, which lasted for 38 working days spread over 4 months.

- This was the 2nd longest oral hearing in the history of the Supreme Court.
- The 1st being the landmark Kesavananda Bharati case in which the apex court in 1973 outlined the basic structure of the Constitution.

Pawan Kalyan Unfurls 'largest' Indian flag

- The largest Indian flag was unfurled at NTR Stadium in Hyderabad to pay tribute to martyrs of India's First War of Independence of 1857.
- The flag, measuring 183 feet in length and 122 feet in breadth, was unfurled by Tollywood actor and Jana Sena party president Pawan Kalyan.
- The flag is prepared by an organisation called 'Vibrants of Kalam'.

Arunachal's Biggest Solar Plant Inaugurated

- Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu inaugurated the state's biggest solar power plant at Energy Awareness Park.
- The plant, with a capacity of 1 megawatt, was commissioned on April 1st at an estimated investment of Rs 8.50 crore.
- With the commissioning of the solar plant, import of energy from other states will reduce considerably.

World's 2nd Oldest Rock is From Odisha

- A rock sample was recovered nearly 8 years ago from Champua in Odisha's Kendujhar district.
- Scientists have found in the rock a grain of magmatic zircon (a mineral that contains traces of radioactive isotopes).
- It is an estimated to be around 4,240 million years old — a discovery of great promise to study the earth's early years.

NITI Aayog to Rank States on SDG Parameters

- NITI Aayog will soon come out with the Sustainable Development Goals Index to rank states based on their performance in this field.
- SDGs comprise 17 goals, which include ending poverty and hunger, quality education, gender equality, clean water, sanitation & energy.
- Prime Minister's Office in 2017 appointed NITI Aayog as the supervising agency for SDGs to improve India's global performance.

Stanford University to Partner with UP

- Uttar Pradesh Health Minister Sidharth Singh has said that the Stanford University in the United States will partner with UP to combat diseases like Japanese encephalitis and acute encephalitis syndrome.
- Companies like Boeing, Lockheed Martin also want to set up their plants in India, Singh added.
- Singh led a delegation to the US to get investments from the country.
- YES Bank to Launch Water-Security Programme

- YES Bank is all set to roll out a capacity building project with farmers in Haryana and Rajasthan under its 'Livelihood and Water Security' CSR initiative.
- The overall focus of the programme would be on sustainable agricultural practices and Digital Literacy.
- The programme would be rolled out initially across 15 districts (eight districts in Haryana and seven in Rajasthan).

India's Longest Rail Bridge to be On Brahmaputra

- Bogibeel bridge, India's longest rail-cum-road bridge on the Brahmaputra connecting Dibrugarh to Dehamji is expected to be open for public by October 2018.
- The bridge will boost defence logistics along the China border and reduce travel time for rail passengers and road users.
- The bridge will make Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh easily accessible from Dibrugarh.

Modern Animal-free Testing for Drugs Approved

- In a step that would spare animals from suffering due to drug experiments, the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) has approved modern, animal-free tests for drug manufacturers.
- The IPC has replaced the pyrogen test carried out on rabbits and the abnormal toxicity test carried out on guinea pigs and mice.
- The guidelines in the edition will come into effect on July 1st.

First Integrated Smart Cities Control Centre

- Madhya Pradesh has launched country's first Integrated Control & Command Centre for all the 7 smart cities of the state in Bhopal.
- The centre would enable authorities to monitor the status of various smart civic amenities in real-time through the sensors connected to it.
- Smart City Mission, is an urban renewal program by the govt that aims to develop 100 smart cities across the country.

India Ranks 4th on Asia-Pacific Power Index

- India has been ranked 4th out of 25 nations in the Asia-Pacific region on the Lowy Institute Asia Power Index that measures power across 25 countries.
- India has been pegged as a "Giant of the Future" while Japan has been pegged as a "Smart Power".

Apex Conference for The CEOs of Smart Cities

- Minister of State for Housing & Urban Affairs, Hardeep Puri, inaugurated the 'First Apex Conference for the CEOs of Smart Cities' in Bhopal on 8th May.
- The two-day conference is being organised for providing a platform for cross-learning and knowledge sharing among the Smart City CEOs.

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· The Union Ministry of Urban Development is responsible for implementing the smart city mission.

NITI Aayog and Google Sign Sol for AI

- · A Statement of Intent (Sol) was signed between Google and NITI Aayog.
- · The move is aimed at fostering growth for India's nascent AI (Artificial Intelligence) and machine learning ecosystem.
- The NITI Aayog has been entrusted to set up a national programme to conduct research and development in frontier technologies such as AI.
- Under this program, Google will train, mentor and incubate Indian AI startups.

Indian Naval Commanders Conference

- Indian Navy commanders will discuss the country's maritime security and review the naval force's mission-based deployments in the Indian Ocean Region.
- ٠ The commanders would discuss the optimal utilisation of the Navy's share of the defence budget.
- · The conference would be addressed by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- The conference starts on May 8th and will conclude on May 11th.

GST Network to be a Government Body

- The GST Council approved a proposal to make the GST Network (GSTN) a government body.
- The government will acquire the 51% stake held by private entities and subsequently, the Central Government will own 50% in GSTN and states will collectively hold the remaining 50%.
- Currently, a 49% stake in GSTN is held by the Government.

4th Regional Conference of AIIB

- The 4th Regional Conference of AIIB on Futuristic, Resilient and Digital Infrastructure was organised in Bengaluru on May 3rd.
- It was organised by the Ministry of Finance, Confederation of Indian Industry, and Research and Information System for Developing Countries.
- The 2-day Conference is a lead-up to the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank.

Centre Allows Private Poppy Cultivation

- The Centre has taken the 1st step towards privatisation of poppy cultivation and extraction of opium.
- Opium is the source of alkaloids such as morphine, codeine and baine, used in anti-addiction therapies and medicines that treat extreme pain, such as in cancer patients.
- Opium production in India is highly controlled & farmers sell their produce to the government.

- The Pakyong airport in Sikkim is set to become the 100th operational airport in the country when it will be commissioned in June 2018.
- Sikkim was the only state without an airport in the country.
- SpiceJet has been granted permission to fly to Pakyong in Sikkim from Kolkata under the Civil Aviation Ministry's Regional Connectivity Scheme.

e-Office System Launched by Hyderabad Police

- The Hyderabad city police launched the 'e-Office' System in the city Police Commissionerate office as a citizen-friendly initiative.
- e-Office is a 'product suit' developed by NIC and it aims at handling files in a more efficient and transparent manner to improve the responsiveness to citizens.
- The system helps in faster clearance of files and it envisions a paperless office.

SC Eases Procedure for Case Record Transfer

- Trial courts need to give only photocopies of case records to higher Courts. The transfer, to and fro, of original records impedes speedy trial, the Supreme Court ordered.
- At present, the original records are transferred from the trial court to the High Court.
- The order said that in specific cases, the appellate/revisional court may call for the original records for perusal.

Dalmia Group adopts Gandikota Fort in Andhra

- Dalmia Bharat Limited has also 'adopted' Gandikota Fort in Andhra Pradesh under "Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan".
- "Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan" is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Tourism, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), states and union territories.
- Under the contract, the company will focus on providing basic amenities at the fort.

NITI Aayog's agenda for 'New India 2022'

- NITI Aayog will soon come out with a development agenda for 'New India 2022', which will spell out strategy for expediting economic growth.
- It will start working on a 15-year vision document after finalising the development agenda document for 'New India 2022'.
- It had planned to come out with three documents: 3 year action agenda, 7 year medium-term strategy and 15 year vision document.

Pilot Scheme for 2,500MW Power Procurement

Government has launched a Pilot Scheme for procurement of aggregate power of 2500 MW on competitive basis from commissioned power plants without "power purchase agreements" (PPA).

Pakyong to Become 100th Functional Airport

- The main purpose of the scheme is to revive commissioned power plants which are unable to sell electricity in the absence of valid PPA.
- The bids under the scheme were invited in the first week of May 2018.

2nd Rapidly Growing Country for Air Traffic

- India has been projected to be the 2nd fastest growing country in the world for air passenger traffic.
- The Airports Council International (ACI), a global trade body representing airports, in its traffic forecasts, said, 'by the year 2022 passenger traffic in emerging economies like India will surpass advanced economies'.
- ACI has put Vietnam at the top position with an 8.5 percent growth rate.

India & World

India and ADB Signed Loan Agreement

- India has signed an \$80 million loan agreement with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to help modernize technical and vocational education and training institutions and improve skills ecosystem in Himachal Pradesh.
- This project will also establish six City Livelihood and seven Rural Livelihood Centres, which in turn will increase employment for women in HP.
- Another objective of this project is to support the Skill Initiatives of Government of Himachal Pradesh.

SACF Receives Frederick Pincott Award

- South Asian Cinema Foundation (SACF), has received the Frederick Pincott Award for 2017 from the Indian High Commissioner for promoting Hindi Cinema in Britain.
- This institution has been active in boosting the original research and books on Indian films.
- SACF have also made documentaries like "Beyond Partition", "Niranjan Pal" and "Indo-British Cinematic Encounters".

OPIC Loan to Expand Access to Clean Drinking Water in India

- The US government's Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) has committed a ₹80 crore loan to Water Health India Pvt Ltd to finance installation of 900 decentralised plants in India.
- This project will expand access to affordable clean drinking water to millions of people in India.
- These plants will be mainly installed at public locations like railway stations, shopping malls etc.

Ministry of External Affairs Sign the Host Country Agreement

• Ministry of External Affairs of India and the International Solar Alliance (ISA) signed the Host Country Agreement.

- This Agreement gives ISA the power to contract, to acquire and dispose of movable and immovable properties, to institute and defend legal proceedings.
- Thus, ISA became the first international intergovernmental treaty-based organization to be headquartered in India.

J.S. Rajput Nominated as India's Representative

- The Government of India nominated Professor J.S. Rajput, former Director of NCERT, as India's representative to the Executive Board (EXB) of UNESCO.
- Professor J.S. Rajput is an eminent educationist with rich experience in various fields including UNESCO.
- The EXB is one of the constitutional organs of UNESCO and is elected by the General Conference.

GSL Delivers 2nd 'AOPV' to Sri Lankan Navy

- Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) has delivered second Sri Lanka Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel (SL AOPV) of Sri Lankan Navy ceremoniously at Vaddem, Vasco da Gama.
- This vessel will be the largest and most advanced ship in the Sri Lankan Navy fleet.
- This is the fourth Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) delivered to Sri Lanka in the current financial year.

Air India Makes History by Flying to Israel

- Air India flight Al 139 from New Delhi to Tel Aviv became the first commercial aircraft to fly to Israel over Saudi Arabia.
- It is for the first time that Saudi Arabia has allowed an Israel-bound flight to enter its airspace, thus ending a 70 years old ban.
- Many Arab & Islamic nations do not recognise Israel & therefore disallow airlines from using their airspace for flight services to that country.



\$100 Million for Palestinian Refugees

- A group of 20 nations including India have pledged a total of around \$100 million to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees across the Middle East.
- The donor nations included Qatar, Norway, Turkey, Canada, India and Switzerland.
- Where India has pledged \$5 million while Switzerland has pledged \$4.2 million.

7th India-Egypt Joint Commission Meeting

- The 7th India-Egypt Joint Commission Meeting was held in New Delhi on 23rd March 2018.
- The meeting was led by Indian External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj and Egyptian Foreign Minister, Sameh Shoukry.
- Both the sides reviewed the progress in the areas of political, trade & investment, S&T, cybersecurity, capacity building, space and culture.

Gotsurve as Next Ambassador to Korea

- Shri Atul M. Gotsurve (IFS: 2004), currently Director in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.
- He is expected to take up his assignment shortly.

India, Hong Kong Signs Tax Avoidance Pact

- India and Hong Kong entered into a Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement, aiming to facilitate investment flow between both countries and prevent tax evasion.
- This agreement will prevent double taxation and provide for the exchange of information between the two contracting parties.
- This in turn will improve transparency in tax matters and help to curb tax evasion and tax avoidance.

Naval Ships Exercise to Boost UAE-India Ties

- Naval ships of the UAE and India will hold a first-ever joint exercise 'Gulf Star 1' giving a further boost to bilateral ties.
- INS Gomati (Guided Missile Frigate) and INS Kolkata (Guided Missile Destroyer) are participating in the exercise.
- This joint exercise is a part of the comprehensive strategic partnership and aims to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation.

India and EU Sign an Agreement

- India and the European Union have signed an agreement that will enable them to share earth observation data from each other's satellites.
- The European Commission will provide India with free, full and open access to the data from the Copernicus Sentinel family of satellites and ISRO will share data from its Earth observation satellites.
- This pact was inked in Bengaluru.

India Hands Over 18th Diesel Loco to Myanmar

- India handed over the 18th Diesel-Electric Locomotive to Myanmar, thereby completing the 1st project under the current Indian line of credit (LoC) to the eastern neighbour.
- These locos are fitted with the Microprocessor Control Based System and have been customised for the Myanmar Railways.

- The first two-day India-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction was inaugurated on 19th March 2018.
- This workshop is being jointly organised by the Ministry of Home Affairs, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Government of Japan.
- The aim of this workshop is to develop a Specific Bilateral Action Plan on areas of cooperation in Disaster Risk Reduction.

UK-India Cooperation Energised at "Elecrama"

- The United Kingdom became the Indian electrical industry's international partner for the Elecrama 2018, which was held from 10th to 14th March 2018 at the World Utility Summit.
- Elecrama is the flagship showcase of the Indian Electrical Industry ecosystem and the largest congregation of power sector ecosystem in Geography.
- The event enabled to share lessons on building a cleaner, smarter and more efficient power sector.

German President Steinmeier Visited India

- German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier visited India from 22nd to 25th March 2018 with an aim to strengthen bilateral ties.
- It was his first visit to India as the President of Germany.
- Germany is India's largest trading partner in Europe and the sixth largest trading partner in the world.
- Germany is also the 7th largest foreign direct investor in India indicates the commercial significance of this meet.

India and Madagascar Ink Deal

- India and Madagascar have signed an agreement under which both the countries will explore various ways of cooperation in the field of defence.
- An amended Air Service Agreement was also signed to support efforts towards improving connectivity between the two countries.
- The Madagascar President decorated President Ramnath Kovind with second highest civilian honour, Grand Cross.

India Ranks 78th on Energy Transition Index

- India has been ranked 78th among the 114 countries on the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Energy Transition Index.
- The Index listed the countries based on their ability to balance energy security, environmental sustainability and affordability.
- The overall list was topped by Sweden, followed by Norway and Switzerland at the 2nd and 3rd position respectively.

MoU Between India and Sri Lanka

 The Union Cabinet has approved MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) inked between India and Sri Lanka for promoting cooperation in field of IT.

- This MoU aims to promote cooperation in the areas such as e-governance, m-governance, electronicspublic services delivery, cyber security, software technology parks, startups etc.
- It will be implemented by constituting a Working Group comprising representatives from both the sides.

Delhi, Bangalore Among the Cheapest Cities in the World

- New Delhi, Bangalore and Chennai are among the cheapest cities in the world, according to an Economist Intelligence Unit's "The Worldwide Cost of Living" survey.
- Syria's capital, Damascus is the cheapest city while Singapore is most expensive city in the world.
- The Worldwide Cost of Living is a biannual survey that compares 400 individual prices across 160 products and services.

WHO's Southeast Asia Region Pledge to End TB

- Countries of WHO's South East Asia Region pledged to end Tuberculosis by 2030 and India assured its support to them for meeting their goals in eliminating this disease.
- The participating countries signed the 'Delhi End TB Summit Statement of Action', which will ensure that their TB plans are fully funded.
- India will support all member countries in meeting their goals of becoming TB-free.

Agreement for Avoidance of Double Taxation

- The Union Cabinet has approved an Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on income between India and Iran.
- This Agreement will stimulate flow of investment, technology and personnel from India to Iran & vice versa.
- It will also improve transparency in tax matters and will help to curb tax evasion and tax avoidance.

World Hindi Secretariat Building in Mauritius

- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the World Hindi Secretariat Building in Mauritius on his visit to the country.
- He also launched the World Hindi Secretariat Logo, an Early Digital Learning Programme as well unveiled foundation stones of a social housing project and a large ENT hospital being built with Indian assistance.
- He became the first Indian President to visit Madagascar.

Newton-Bhabha Fund for Arsenic Research

• An India-UK Joint Team has won the Newton-Bhabha Fund for a project on Groundwater Arsenic Research in Ganga River Basin.

- The Department of Science and Technology has undertaken the project with the Natural Environment Research Council, UK, to find solutions to the water challenges faced in the arsenic-affected Ganga River.
- This project will be conducted from three sites Bijnor and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Nadia in West Bengal.

India Tops the List of Arm Buyers

- Arms import by India increased by 24% between 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 period as per data on international arms transfers released by International Peace Research Institute.
- India is followed by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, China, Australia, Algeria, Iraq, Pakistan and Indonesia as the World's Top Importers.
- The largest arms suppliers to India are Russia (62%), US (15%) and Israel (11%).

No Limit on Membership in ISA

- Membership of International Solar Alliance (ISA) will be open for all countries, with no restrictions on duration of sunlight or geographical location.
- When the ISA was announced in 2015, 121 nations situated between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn receiving at least 300 days of sunlight were eligible for membership.
- Sixty countries had signed up to join the ISA.

UP's Largest Solar Power Plant Inaugurated

- PM Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron have inaugurated Uttar Pradesh's biggest solar power plant in Dadar Kalan village of Chhanvey block in Mirzapur
- Some 1,18,600 solar panels have been set up in over 380 acres.
- The solar plant will generate 15.6 crore units of electricity annually, which is about 1.30 crore units per month.

EIB & IREDA Signed a Loan Agreement

- European Investment Bank (EIB) and Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency signed an agreement for the second line of credit of Euro 150 million on the non-sovereign basis.
- The line of credit will be used for financing Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency projects in India.
- More than 1.1 million households are expected to be benefitted from clean energy produced with these funds.

India Won "Best Exhibitor Award"

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

 India's Incredible India (Ministry of Tourism) presented a short film named "Yogi of the Racetrack " in the meet.



Indo-French Knowledge Summit Ends

- The first ever Indo-French Knowledge Summit was held successfully with a landmark agreement on mutual recognition of educational qualifications between India and France.
- The government will soon launch the "Study India programme" to increase the inflow of foreign students to India.
- The two-day summit was organized by the French Embassy in India and the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

India, France Inked 14 pacts

- India and France inked key pacts in the strategic areas of security, nuclear energy after extensive talks between PM Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron.
- Agreements in the field of education, environment, urban development and railways were also signed.
- The two countries also decided to step up cooperation in space technology and use it in the maritime domain.

1000 GW of Solar Energy by 2030

- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is working for the deployment of over 1,000 GW of solar energy and aims to mobilise more than USD 1,000 billion into solar energy project by 2030.
- The International Energy Agency (IEA) also signed a joint partnership declaration with the ISA.
- The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) will sign a joint partnership declaration on 11th March 2018.

Crime-free Zone Along Indo-B'desh Border

- The Border Security Force (BSF) and the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) declared an 8.3 km stretch along the border a 'crime free zone.'
- The stretch falls between the border outpost of Gunarmath and Kalyani of the BSF and Putkhali and Daulatpur of the BGB.
- Both the forces will work together to ensure that no crime or anti-social activity occurs along this stretch.

Indian Military ranked 4th strongest in World

- Out of 133 countries, India is ranked fourth on a global index for its military strength.
- Only the United States, Russia and China are ranked above India on the list, according to the latest report of the Global Firepower index 2017.
- India maintained its position above France in the top five military powers in the world.

India's Child Marriage Numbers Drop Sharply

- The proportion of girls getting married in India has nearly halved in a decade, the UN children's agency UNICEF said.
- UNICEF said 25 million child marriages were prevented worldwide in the last decade, with the largest reduction seen in South Asia.
- Currently, 27% of girls, or nearly 1.5 million girls, get married before they turn 18 in India. This is a sharp decline from 47% a decade ago.

India, Israel Inked MoU On Water Conservation

- The government of India has signed an MoU with Israel to enhance cooperation on 'National Campaign for Water Conservation in India'.
- It was announced by the Minister of State for Drinking Water and Sanitation S S Ahluwalia.
- As per this MoU, both sides would work to enhance cooperation at the national, regional and international level to design.

India 12th Largest Holder of US Securities

- India's exposure to US government securities rose sharply to a high of \$144.7 billion at the end of 2017.
- In 2017, China was the largest holder of US government securities withholdings to the tune of \$1.18 trillion, followed by Japan at \$1.06 trillion.
- Among the BRIC countries, India had the third largest exposure while that of Russia was lower at \$102.2 billion.

Free Indo-Pacific Region for India & Vietnam

- India and Vietnam decided to deepen defence and security cooperation and resolved jointly for a free and open Indo-Pacific region.
- This comes in the wake of increasing assertiveness by China in the region, from South China Sea to the South Asian region.
- Vietnam is one of the key neighbours of China and has resisted Chinese claims in South China Sea.

India, Vietnam Ink 3 pacts

- India and Vietnam inked three pacts.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang also vowed to expand bilateral cooperation in several key sectors, including defence, oil and gas, and agriculture.

• The three pacts signed after the talks between the two leaders would provide for cooperation in areas of nuclear energy, trade and agriculture.

India to Help Build Plant in Bangladesh

- India, Bangladesh and Russia have signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the construction of the Rooppur nuclear power plant in Bangladesh.
- The MoU was signed in Moscow by the Department of Atomic Energy of India, the Ministry of Science and Technology of Bangladesh and Rosatom.
- Russia is building the nuclear power plant in Bangladesh on a turnkey basis.

India-Jordan Sign Twelve Agreements

- India and Jordan have renewed their support to the Palestinian cause.
- The two sides signed twelve agreements, including one on defence cooperation, following a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and King of Jordan Abdullah II bin Al Hussein.
- MoU for long term supply of Rock Phosphate and Fertilizer/NPK, Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement was signed.

India, Jordan Firm Up Security Cooperation

- India and Jordan signed an agreement in defence cooperation paving the way for a joint strategy to counter common threats.
- The defence agreement, the first such understanding between the two sides, is the biggest takeaway of the visit by the Jordanian King Abdullah II.
- India and Jordan held the first bilateral security dialogue in July 2016.

Indian Economy at 7.6% in 2018: Moody's

- Indian economy is starting to recover from the negative impact of demonetisation and disruption caused by the roll out of GST, Moody's Investors Service said.
- The international rating agency, however, kept the growth forecast for India in the calendar year 2018 unchanged at 7.6% and at 7.5% for 2019.
- According to the Economic Survey, the economy is likely to grow at 7-7.5% in 2018-19.

Personalities in News

Pankaj Saran Appointed Dy NSA

- India's envoy to Russia Pankaj Saran has been appointed as the Deputy National Security Advisor.
- He served twice in the Prime Minister's Office First as Deputy Secretary during 1995 and 1999, and then as the Joint Secretary between 2007 and 2012.
- He had held various positions in India & abroad including country's High Commissioner to Bangladesh.

• Ajit Doval is the National Security Adviser

R K Agrawal Appointed NCDRC President

- Justice R K Agrawal has been appointed as the next President of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission.
- Justice Agrawal will take over from Justice DK Jain who retires on May 31st.
- National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission is a quasi-judicial commission that aims to resolve complaints where the value of goods or services & compensation, if any, claimed exceeds Rs.1 crore.

Google Celebrates the pH Scale Founder

- Google honoured Danish biochemist, Soren Peder Lauritz Sorensen, for his revolutionary work in the concept of the pH scale.
- The pH scale is a concept that is used to measure acidity and alkalinity of substances.
- The significance of pH is that it measures the concentration of the hydrogen ion and ranks them on a scale of numbers between 0 and 14.

Defence Secretary to be DRDO Chief

- The government has asked Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra to hold additional charge of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- This comes after Eminent scientist S Christopher completed his term as the Chief of DRDO.
- Christopher was appointed as the Director General of the DRDO for a two-year term in May 2015 and was given a one-year extension in May 2017.

Queen Maxima of Netherlands Came to India

- Queen Maxima of the Kingdom of the Netherlands who is also the United Nations Secretary General's Special Advocate for Inclusive Finance for Development arrived in New Delhi on a 4-day visit to India.
- Netherlands is the 5th largest investor in India.
- During Netherlands Prime Minister Mark Rutte's visit to India, the former became an official partner of the International Solar Alliance.

Akshay Launches Ad Campaign for Swachh Bharat

- Akshay Kumar launched an advertisement campaign for the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen).
- The campaign was launched at a Collectors Convention for Toilet Technology.
- The campaign focuses on promoting the twin pit toilet technology in rural India.
- The advertisement campaign launched is an effort, supported by the World Bank.

RBI Appoints Sudha as its 1st CFO

• National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) executive Sudha Balakrishnan has been appointed as the first chief financial officer (CFO) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

- Balakrishnan, a chartered accountant, was until recently a vice-president at the NSDL, India's first and largest depository.
- She will be the 12th executive director at RBI, and will serve a 3-year term.

Woman Scales Mt Everest at 53

- Sangeeta Bahl, at the age of 53 has become the oldest Indian woman to scale the Mount Everest.
- She scaled the peak on May 19th, 2018, with the help of 2 Sherpas and was felicitated at the Indian embassy in Kathmandu.
- She carried a banner to the peak advocating early detection of breast cancer in women & funding for the same.
- She has already conquered 6 out of the 7 highest peaks of the world.

India's Highest Decorated General Passed Away

- India's most decorated General, Lt Gen Zorawar Chand Bakshi, also known as Zoru Bakshi passed away.
- Decorated with Maha Vir Chakra, Vir Chakra, Param Vishisht Seva Medal and Vishisht Seva Medal, Bakshi was instrumental in the historic capture of strategic Haji Pir pass from Pakistan army.
- He also took part in the World War II in the Burma in which he earned a Mention-in-Despatches.

Astronaut and Moonwalker Alan Bean dead

- Former US astronaut Alan Bean, who was the 4th man to walk on the Moon, has died in Texas, U.S.
- Bean went into space twice, the first time in November 1969 as the lunar module pilot on the Apollo 12 moon-landing mission.
- Bean spent a total of 69 days in space, including 31 hours on the moon.
- In 1973 he was commander of the second crewed flight to Skylab America's first space station.

President Appoints Odisha, Mizoram Governors

- President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed new Governors of two states Odisha and Mizoram.
- President Kovind appointed Professor Ganeshi Lal as the Governor of Odisha while Kummanam Rajasekharan has been appointed as the Governor of Mizoram.
- Rajasekharan will replace incumbent Lt Gen Nirbhay Sharma.

Sushil Chandra Gets Another 1-year Extension

- Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) chairman Sushil Chandra has got a 1-year extension up to May 31, 2019.
- He took over as chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) in 2016.
- This is the 2nd extension that he has got.

• CBDT has 6 members, apart from the chairman, and is responsible for framing policy related to direct taxes and the Income Tax Department.

Govt Appoints Non-Executive Chairpersons

- Finance ministry has appointed non-executive chairpersons at Punjab & Sindh Bank, Dena Bank & Central Bank of India, as part of its agenda to reform public sector banks.
- Charan Singh, Anjali Bansal & Tapan Ray were appointed as non executive chairperson of Punjab & Sind Bank, Dena Bank & Central Bank of India, respectively.
- These banks have been plagued by mounting bad loans & massive losses.

New Vice Chief of Army Staff

- Lt. Gen. Devraj Anbu has been appointed as the new Vice Chief of Army Staff (VCOAS).
- He is presently GOC-in-C (General Officer Commanding-in-Chief) Northern Command.
- He will replace Lt. Gen. Sarath Chand who retires on May 31st.
- Lt. Gen. Anbu is expected to be replaced by Lt. Gen. Ranbir Singh who was the Director General Military Operations (DGMO) at the time of surgical strikes.



Niti Aayog Ropes in Sushant Singh Rajput

- Actor Sushant Singh Rajput will promote 2 major initiatives of NITI Aayog - BHIM app & the Women Entrepreneurship Platform.
- BHIM is a payment app that lets users make simple and quick transactions using Unified Payments Interface.

• Women Entrepreneurship Platform is a unified access portal which brings together women from different parts of India to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations.

Anubrata Biswas Appointed as MD & CEO

- Airtel Payments Bank has announced the appointment of Anubrata Biswas as its Managing Director & CEO.
- Anubrata will be responsible for driving Airtel Payments Bank's mission of taking convenient and innovative digital banking services to the doorstep of every Indian.
- Airtel Payments Bank was the first payments bank to start operations in India.

H D Kumaraswamy sworn in as Karnataka CM

- JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy has been sworn in as Karnataka's 24th chief minister.
- This will be Kumaraswamy's second term as the chief minister of Karnataka since 2007, when he last held the post for 20 months.
- G Parameshwara, the state Congress chief and the party's Dalit face, was sworn in as the deputy chief minister.

Olga Wins Man Booker International Prize

- "Flights", a philosophical rumination on modern-day travel by the Polish author Olga Tokarczuk, won the Man Booker International Prize for works of translated fiction.
- The Man Booker International Prize is awarded by the same organization that gives the Man Booker Prize for fiction.
- It is for a single work of fiction that has been translated into English and published in the United Kingdom.

Pravin Agrawal Appointed BHEL Director

- Power equipment maker Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited has appointed Pravin L Agrawal as the parttime official director on its board.
- An Indian Forest Service officer, Agrawal is presently joint secretary in the Department of Heavy Industry (DHI), Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises.
- Established in 1964, BHEL is India's largest power generation equipment manufacturer.

NYSE to Have its 1st Female Leader

- The New York Stock Exchange has appointed Chief Operating Officer Stacey Cunningham as its 1st female president.
- Cunningham will replace Tom Farley as the head of NYSE.
- Cunningham became NYSE's chief operating officer in June 2015.
- NYSE's move means 2 of the top three US stock exchange operators are led by women.

testbook.com

Malaysia Gets its 1st Sikh Minister

- Gobind Singh Deo, an Indian-origin Sikh politician in Malaysia, has become a cabinet minister.
- He is the 1st member of the minority community in Malaysia's history to be appointed as a minister.
- He has been given the communications and multimedia portfolio.
- He is among the 2 politicians of Indian descent that have been included in the Pakatan Harapan coalition's Cabinet.

Discussion on Governance - Data Privacy

- Justice B N Srikrishna, who heads the committee on framing new data protection norms for India, will chair a panel discussion on governance to be held in New Delhi.
- The event is hosted by India International Centre (IIC) in collaboration with NITI Aayog and Centre for Policy Research (CPR).
- The discussion on 'Future of Governance' will focus on various aspects related to data privacy.

1st Person to be Put on No-Fly List

- Birju Salla, who created a hijack scare onboard a Jet Airways flight in 2017, has become the 1st person to be put on the "National No Fly List".
- He has been banned from flying under highest level of onboard unruly behaviour that entails grounding from 2 years to lifetime.
- A person put on the no-fly list can't fly by any flight of that airline, international or domestic, for grounded period.

Pawan Singh Named RTS Jury Chief

- India's former shooter & national coach Pawan Singh has been appointed as the Chairman of Result Timing Score Jury by the International Shooting Sports Federation for the ISSF World Cup in Munich.
- With this appointment, Singh became the 1st Indian to chair the RTS Jury at a senior World Cup.
- He would be responsible to resolve any score related issue and provide an accurate result on time.

Venezuela's Maduro Won Presidential Vote

- Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro won a new 6year term in what is being seen as a controversial vote.
- Country's main opposition coalition, Democratic Unity Roundtable, had boycotted the election.
- The two most popular opposition leaders, Henrique Capriles and Leopoldo Lopez, were barred from running in the vote.
- Several democratic countries have rejected to recognize the vote.

Anil Kumar Jha Appointed CMD of Coal India Ltd

- Anil Kumar Jha has been appointed as the Chairman-Cum-Managing director (CMD) of Coal India Limited.
- Anil Kumar is at present the CMD of Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd.
- Anil Kumar will replace acting chairman Suresh Kumar, an IAS officer, who has been holding the post of additional secretary at the ministry of coal.
- CIL is a state-owned coal mining company headquartered in Kolkata.

J&K Chief Secretary Got Extension

- Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary B B Vyas has been given 1 year extension in service, beyond May 31st, 2018.
- The move came days after the Centre amended a rule to provide a longer tenure to the Chief Secretary.
- With regard to others states, a Chief Secretary may get an extension in service, beyond the superannuating age, for a period not exceeding 6 months.

Rajinder Singh Named Hockey India President

- Rajinder Singh has been named the president of Hockey India, following Mariamma Koshy's resignation from the post.
- He is currently the Senior Vice President of Hockey India.
- Koshy was appointed as the President of Hockey India in November 2016 following Narinder Batras decision to step down after being elected as the President of International Hockey Federation.

Ramalingam Appointed as Chief Justice

- Justice Ramalingam Sudhakar was sworn-in as the Chief Justice of the High Court of Manipur.
- The acting Governor of Manipur Jagdish Mukhi administered the oath of office to Justice Ramalingam Sudhakar.
- Justice Ramalingam Sudhakar was appointed as Chief Justice of Manipur High Court by the President of India.

Lalit Kala Akademi Gets New Chairman

- Artist and sculptor Uttam Pacharne has been appointed as the chairman of the Lalit Kala Akademi.
- Currently, he is a member of the advisory committee, Kala Academy, Goa.
- He is the recipient of National Lalit Kala Award and Maharashtra Gaurav Puraska from Government of Maharashtra.
- The Lalit Kala Akademi or National Academy of Art is India's national academy of fine arts.

Youngest Woman to Scale Mt. Everest

• Shivangi Pathak from Haryana has become youngest women of the country to scale Mt Everest.

- 16-year-old Shivangi climbed the Mt Everest to spread the message that women could overcome any obstacle to achieve their goals.
- In 2014, 13-year-old Malavath Poorna from India had climbed Mt Everest from Tibet side and became the youngest girl in the world to the summit at Everest.

CIA's First Female Director

- US Senate has approved Veteran spy Gina Haspel as CIA's first female director.
- She replaces former CIA chief Mike Pompeo who was recently made Secretary of State.
- Central Intelligence Agency is a civilian foreign intelligence service of US federal government that analyses national security information from around the world.

Gujarat Governor Given Additional Charge of MP

- Gujarat Governor Om Prakash Kohli was given the additional charge of Madhya Pradesh while the state's Governor Anandiben Patel is on leave.
- Patel was appointed Madhya Pradesh Governor in January after she resigned as Gujarat's Chief Minister in 2016 citing her 75-year age.
- She had replaced Kohli who had been handling the additional charge of Madhya Pradesh from August 2016.

Ambika Sharma to Head USIBC India Office

- The US-India Business Council (USIBC), a premier business advocacy organisation, named Ambika Sharma as its India head.
- Ms. Sharma was Director General for International at the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).
- Formed in 1975, USIBC is the premier business advocacy organization, comprised of top-tier US and Indian companies advancing US-India commercial ties.

Mukul Rohatgi Appointed as Eminent Jurist

- Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi has been appointed as an eminent jurist in the selection committee for appointment of the Lokpal.
- The post of eminent jurist in the Lokpal selection panel was lying vacant since the death of senior advocate P P Rao.
- Rohatgi was appointed as Attorney General of India after the Narendra Modi government assumed power in May 2014.

Shashank Manohar to Serve as ICC Chairman

- Former BCCI president Shashank Manohar will serve a 2nd term as the independent chairman of the International Cricket Council.
- Manohar, who became the first independent ICC chairman in 2016, will continue for a second 2-year term following his unopposed election.

• During the last two years, Manohar has led to significant reform in the sport.

Read to Succeed Colao as Vodafone Group CEO

- Vodafone Group has announced that Nick Read will be the next CEO of the company, succeeding Vittorio Colao.
- Colao steps down after just over 10 yrs in the job, during which he transformed Vodafone from a pure mobile player into a converged operator owning multiple cable & fibre networks.
- Vodafone owns & operates networks in 26 countries & has partner networks in over 50 additional countries.

Physicist EC George Sudarshan Passed Away

- Famous theoretical physicist EC George Sudarshan passed away in Texas, USA.
- He worked in the subjects of quantum Zeno effect, optical coherence, open quantum system, non-variance groups among others.
- In 2007, the Kerala-born scientist was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, the country's 2nd-highest civilian award.

Lt Gen Sukhdeep Takes Over as DGAR

- Lieutenant General Sukhdeep Sangwan has taken over the charge as the Director General of Assam Rifles.
- Lt Gen Sanwagn has taken over as the 20th Director General of the Force which is popularly called as Sentinels of the North East.
- Lt Gen Sangwan has also participated in Operation Blue Star, Operation Vijay and Operation Parakram.

Action for Removal of Allahabad Bank CEO

- Govt has initiated action for removal of Allahabad Bank CEO Usha Ananthasubramanian & 2 executive directors of Punjab National Bank following CBI's first charge sheet in the \$2 billion fraud at PNB.
- The Allahabad Bank board has also been asked to divest Ananthasubramanian of all powers and initiate further action.
- Ananthasubramanian was the MD & CEO of Punjab National Bank from 2015 to 2017.

Film-Theatre actor Kalasala Babu Passes Away

- Noted Malayalam film-theatre actor Kalasala Babu, known for a number of villainous and character roles, passed in Kochi.
- A multi-faceted actor, Babu had tried his hand in all three major formats of acting- theatre, movies and television serials, in his career spanning over three decades.
- Babu had started a troupe, 'Kalasala,' and came to be known in the industry as Kalasala Babu.

Poet Balkavi Bairagi Died

- Noted Hindi film lyricist, Nandram Das Bairagi, popularly known as Balkavi Bairagi is dead.
- Bairagi was a Lok Sabha member between 1984 and 1989 and also a former Rajya Sabha MP.
- He wrote several Hindi poems, among which, Jhar gaye paat, bisar gayi tehni is considered a gem by many Hindi poets.
- He was given the name Balkavi as he wrote some classic poems in his childhood.

Nirmal Singh Elected JK Assembly Speaker

- BJP legislator & former Deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh has been elected as the Speaker of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.
- Singh, who is an MLA from Billawar constituency in Jammu region, was elected as the Speaker by a voice vote in a one-day special session of the J&K Assembly.
- Singh defeated Congress MLA from Bandipora, Usman Majeed.

Green Ambassador of Sikkim

- The Sikkim Government has nominated Bollywood singer Mohit Chauhan as the Green Ambassador of the state.
- Chauhan has been nominated as the Green Ambassador for promoting Sikkim as a Green Destination, nationally and internationally, on a voluntary basis.
- Sikkim is known for its rich biodiversity and abundant natural resources due to environment-friendly policies.

Mahathir Mohamad Sworn in as Malaysia's PM

- Mahathir Mohamad has been sworn in as the Prime Minister of Malaysia again after a shock election victory.
- Mahathir's coalition defeated the governing Barisan Nasional coalition, led by PM Najib Razak, which has been in power for more than 60 years.
- The victory capped a dramatic comeback for Mahathir, who ruled the country for 22 years.
- 92 year old, Mahathir becomes the oldest PM in the world.

President Kovind Visits Siachen Base Camp

- President Ram Nath Kovind has become the 2nd president to visit the Siachen base camp of the Indian Army in Ladakh.
- Siachen is considered to be the highest battlefield in the world.
- In 2004 APJ Abdul Kalam became the first Indian President to visit the Siachen glacier.
- The entire Siachen Glacier, with all major passes, is under the administration of India since 1984.

Pawan Agarwal Gets Extension as CEO of FSSAI

- Pawan Kumar Agarwal has been given three months extension as the Chief Executive Officer of the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).
- Pawan Kumar Agarwal is a 1985-batch IAS officer of West Bengal cadre and has served as Joint Secretary of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- He was appointed as the CEO of the FSSAI in December 2015.

Modi Among the Top 10 Most Powerful People

- PM Modi has been ranked 9th among the top 10 most powerful people in the world by Forbes.
- The list is topped for the first time ever by the Chinese President Xi Jinping, who dethroned Russian President Vladimir Putin as the most influential person on the planet.
- Forbes said that Modi has emerged as a key figure in the international effort to tackle climate change.

Eminent Odia Lyricist Passes Away

- Eminent Odia lyricist Gurukrushna Goswami passed away in Odisha.
- Goswami was associated with the Odia music industry for over six decades. He was a scriptwriter, a lyricist and a music director.
- Goswami had received the Best Lyricist award in 1996, Bhakta Kabi Salabeg award and Odisha Sangeet Natak Akademi (OSNA) Award in the year 2000.

Renowned Marathi Singer Arun Date Dies

- Veteran Marathi singer Arun Date, known for his popular song Shukratara has passed away.
- Date, famous for non-film 'bhavgeet' (lyrical poetry) songs, had crooned numbers like Shukratara & Ya Janmavar, which became very popular among people.
- He contributed to the Marathi music industry for more than 50 years.
- Date was the 1st recipient of the state government's 'Gajananrav Vatave Puraskar'.

Mary Named Ambassador for TCS World Marathon

- Former tennis star Mary Pierce has been named the International Event Ambassador for TCS World 10K 2018 Marathon.
- The marathon, scheduled to be held in Bengaluru for May 27th.
- Mary Pierce reached her career high ranking of World No. 3 in 1995, post her first Grand Slam Singles title - that of the Australian Open in January 1995.

Economist & WB Finance Min Ashok Mitra Died

• Noted scholar and former Finance Minister in the Left Front government in West Bengal Ashok Mitra passed away on 1st May.

- Mr. Mitra was also an eminent economist and penned several newspaper columns on social and economic issues.
- He was the Chief Economic Adviser to the Central Government from 1970 to 1972.
- In the mid-1990s he became a member of Rajya Sabha.

WhatsApp Boss and Co-founder Jan Koum to Quit

- The chief executive and co-founder of WhatsApp, the Facebook-owned messaging app, is leaving the company over disagreements about privacy and encryption.
- Jan Koum will also step down from Facebook's board of directors.
- WhatsApp, with 1.5 billion monthly users, is the largest messaging service in the world.

Uday Kotak Redesignated as MD & CEO

- The board of directors of Kotak Mahindra Bank has redesignated Uday Kotak as Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer with effect from 1st May, 2018.
- Mr. Kotak was earlier executive Vice Chairman and Managing Director.
- Mr. Kotak was the only official among private banks to have a Vice Chairman designation.

Environment

Mekunu Cyclone Turns Severe

- India Meteorological Department has warned that Mekunu Cyclone might trigger heavy showers along the Maharashtra coast.
- Mekunu Cyclone had caused severe flooding and damage in Yemeni island of Socotra and now is moving towards the western coast.

IMD to Add 30 Doppler Radars in Country

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) will add 30 Doppler radars in the next 2-3 years across the country.
- Doppler radars provide precise information about thunderstorms, dust storms, hail storms, rainfall and wind patterns.
- With a radius of 250 km, they help in issuing nowcasts 2-3 hours prior to severe weather events.
- The first Doppler radar was installed in Chennai in 2002.

India Fast Losing Mangrove Cover

- According to the report, India has ranked ninth in the area of mangrove forests it lost between 2000 and 2015, but the rate of loss is only half the global average.
- The report has been published by the Woods Hole Research Center, a think tank based in Massachusetts, USA.

• While Malaysia, Myanmar, Brazil, and Thailand were other countries to lose maximum cover during the period of study.



SAWEN's 1st Meeting in India

• The South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN), an inter-governmental wildlife law

enforcement agency, held its first-ever meeting in India.

- SAWEN was launched in Bhutan in 2011.
- In 2016 the Union Cabinet gave permission to adopt the statute of SAWEN.
- Its member countries are India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan, Pakistan & Maldives.

UN Chief Announced Climate Summit for 2019

- UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres has announced that a Climate Summit to review the Paris Agreement commitments will take place on September 2019 in New York.
- In March 2018, Guterres appointed former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg as his Special Envoy for Climate Action who was tasked to support UN in its climate strategy.
- In 2017, US withdrew itself from the Paris Agreement.

New Sheep Insemination Technique Developed

- Scientists at the Central Sheep and Wool Research Institute (CSWRI), have come up with a new Laparoscopy-assisted Insemination Technique for sheep.
- The minor invasive laparoscopic technique involves passing a rigid fiber-optic laparoscope into the abdomen through a small incision.
- Scientists said the new technique would help achieve up to 60% survival in the birth of lambs.

1st Record of Invasive Aphid in Kashmir

- The brown peach aphid an insect that attacks temperate fruit trees - has been found in Kashmir Valley for the first time.
- Aphids feed on the saps of plants, attacking plant tissues that transport food to all different plant parts.
- The brown peach aphid is a notorious pest of peach and almond trees in the Mediterranean regions.

India to Soon Begin Forecasting of Tsunami

- India would now be able to foretell the distance a destructive sea wave would travel after it breaches the coast, a prediction that can greatly reduce loss of life and property.
- The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services has developed a model to predict how far sea water would travel.
- This would be a Level-3 alert under India's Tsunami Early Warning System.

Govt Launches NWIC to Maintain Water Data

- Govt has set up a central body National Water Informatics Centre to maintain a comprehensive water resources data.
- NWIC will be a single window source of updated data on water resources in India.
- NWIC will collaborate with national & international research institutes to provide technical support to

central & state organisations dealing with water emergency response of hydrological extremes

1st Dolphin Census Kicked off in Punjab

- The Punjab government along with WWF-India are conducting the first organised census of Indus dolphins one of the world's rarest mammals.
- Found only in India and Pakistan, the Indus dolphins are confined to only a 185 km stretch between Talwara and Harike Barrage in India's Beas river in Punjab.
- Indus river dolphin is the national mammal of Pakistan.

New Snake found in Western Ghats

- The snake, currently observed only in the forests of the Anaikatty Hills in Tamil Nadu's Coimbatore district, has been named Uropeltis Bhupathyi.
- The reptile belongs to a family of snakes found only in peninsular India and Sri Lanka.
- They are non-venomous, burrowing and mostly earthworm-eating.

World's Rarest Ape on the Edge of Extinction

- Tapanuli Orangutan the Rarest Ape species on the planet - could lose its battle for survival, unless decisive steps are taken to rescue it.
- Fewer than 800 members of the species survive, and they are under assault from mega-projects, deforestation, road building, and poaching.
- The ape survives only in areas with virtually no roads.

Gujarat Launches policy to Reuse Waste Water

- The Gujarat government unveiled its 'Reuse of Treated Waste Water Policy' which aims to reduce the state's dependence on fresh water sources like the Narmada river.
- The policy will promote the use of treated waste water and will see the setting up of sewage treatment plants.
- The treated water would be used in industrial units, thermal power plants, gardening and in the construction sector.

14 Cities In India are World's Most Polluted

- Delhi and Varanasi are among the 14 Indian cities that figured in a list of 20 Most Polluted Cities in the world in terms of PM 2.5 levels in 2016, according to the data released by the WHO.
- Other Indian cities were Kanpur, Faridabad, Gaya, Patna, Agra, Muzaffarpur, Srinagar, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Patiala and Jodhpur.
- PM 2.5 includes pollutants like Sulfate, Nitrate and black carbon.

CPCB has Banned Party Poppers

 The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has banned party poppers - a popular decorative used at parties and celebrations.

- Party poppers contains low-intensity chemical explosives and plastic streamers that are linked to a variety of health issues and pollution.
- The reason behind the ban is primarily due to the impact of the chemicals like Red-Phosphorus have on the eyes.

Government Policies & Schemes

Odisha Police, UNICEF Join Hands

- Odisha government launched 'Paree Pain Katha Tiye' (A word for the little angel), an awareness campaign against child sexual abuse.
- UNICEF and the State police have joined hands for the campaign to create the awareness on the importance of preventing child sexual abuse.
- In each district, the campaign will be led by the Superintendent of Police and District Collector.

Haryana Constitutes Animal Welfare Board

- Haryana Government has constituted the State Animal Welfare Board for Animal Welfare.
- The Board has been constituted under the chairmanship of additional chief secretary, Animal Husbandry and Dairying.
- The Director General, Animal Husbandry and Dairying would be the member secretary of the Animal Welfare Board.

Tripura Govt to Phase out Plastic Carry Bags

- The Tripura government has set August 15th as the deadline to phase out plastic carry bags.
- The government, as part of the 'Himalayan Cleanup' programme, urged people to replace their plastic bags with biodegradable ones.
- The Himalayan Cleanup campaign has been launched by a Delhi-based organization in 12 mountain states in the country to end plastic pollution in the hilly areas.

HP Govt to Promote Organic Farming

- The Himachal Pradesh government has decided to promote organic farming in a big way and plans to adopt an integrated approach for promoting organic and zero budget natural farming system.
- The government has introduced 'Prakritik Kheti Khushhaal Kisaan Yojana' (PKKKY).
- PKKKY will enhance agricultural income by adopting low-cost climate-resilient Zero Budget Natural Farming System.

MHA Creates New Division for Women Safety

- Ministry of Home Affairs has created a new division to deal with all issues of women safety in coordination with relevant ministries, departments and state governments.
- Punya Srivastava has been appointed as the Joint Secretary to head this division.

• The division will deal with all schemes under NIRBHAYA fund and Crimes against women, SCs & STs, children & elderly persons among others.

Insurance Cover for all Telangana Farmers

- Telangana government has announced that it would provide life insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh each to all farmers in the state.
- The Telangana government has tied up with LIC for implementation of the scheme.
- Irrespective of the reasons due to which a farmer dies, the insured amount of Rs 5 lakh shall be paid to the nominee proposed by the insured farmer within 10 days of the claim.

'Nidaan' Software for Disease Monitoring

- A new software, 'Nidaan', has been launched in Rajasthan for presumptive diagnosis and monitoring of seasonal and non-communicable diseases.
- "Nidaan" will facilitate online entries of as many as 46 diseases and healthcare services available for their treatment in different institutions.
- It is expected to help in formulation of specific action plans for control of diseases.

Samagra Shiksha Scheme for School Education

- HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar has launched Samagra Shiksha scheme for school education from preschool to senior secondary levels.
- The scheme focuses on improving quality of education, enhancing learning outcomes & using technology to empower children & teachers.
- The scheme will enhance the use of digital technology in education through smart classroom & digital boards.

'My MP Rojgar Portal' Launched

- Madhya Pradesh CM, Shivraj Singh Chauhan launched the "My MP Rojgar Portal" in Bhopal under 'Pahal', which is a Mukhyamantri Career Counselling programme.
- This portal will provide jobs to youth as per their skills, interests and educational qualifications.
- The portal has been developed under Youth Empowerment Mission by the Madhya Pradesh Skill Development and Employment Generation Board.

Universal Service Obligation Fund Approved

- The Union cabinet has approved the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) supported scheme to provide mobile services in Left Wing Extremismaffected areas.
- Up to 4,072 towers will be set up in 96 districts of 10 states affected with the Left Wing Extremism.
- The tower locations have been proposed for the states of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Telangana.

Amendments to Bankruptcy Code Cleared

- Cabinet has cleared amendments to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, incorporating changes suggested by a government appointed panel.
- The panel had suggested that home buyers should be treated as financial creditors, which will allow them to equitably participate in an insolvency resolution process.
- The panel has also suggested relaxations for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises under the IBC.

Chatra Parivahan Suraksha Yojana

- Haryana government is going to launch Chatra Parivahan Suraksha Yojana for the safety of girls.
- Under this scheme, all the girl students will get free travel facility from their home to their educational institutions.
- The primary objective of this scheme is to ensure that the girls feel secure at public places, workplaces and while traveling.

Free Treatment for Victims of Road Accident

- Gujarat government has decided to take the financial responsibility of the accident cases within its state limits.
- The government will provide up to Rs. 50,000 in medical treatment for the first 48 hours for each individual who meets with a road accident in the state.
- The free treatment will entail the initial first aid, Xray, treatment in ICU along with all the other emergency facilities.

India Post Customises Affordable Life Policies

- India Post plays an important role in financial services, reaching out in the rural areas with its large and efficient network.
- Postal Life Insurance extended insurance cover to the rural population under the banner 'Rural Postal Life Insurance' (RPLI) in 1995.
- This scheme is primarily meant for people residing in rural areas, especially women and small and marginal farmers.

Centre Launches Clean-up Drive for Beaches

- The Union Environment Ministry has launched a drive aimed at cleaning 24 beaches and water bodies as well as 24 polluted river stretches in the run-up to the World Environment Day on June 5th.
- The theme of the World Environment Day, to be hosted by India this year, is 'Beat plastic pollution'.
- The Ministry has formed 19 teams to implement the campaign.

Govt. Creates DG for Trade Remedies

• Ministry of Commerce has issued a notification for a unified Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR).

- DGTR will be the apex national authority for all trade remedial measures including anti-dumping, countervailing duties and safeguard measures.
- It will also provide trade defence support to domestic industry and to exporters in trade remedy investigations instituted by other countries.

Govt Allows eSIMs, Hikes Connections Limit

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has allowed the use of e-SIMs while issuing guidelines for the same.
- The eSIMs will be installed in the device and details of service providers can be updated in it when buying a new connection.
- The DoT has enhanced the number of connections per user to 18.

Cabinet Okays Defence Spectrum Budget Hike

- The Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure approved increasing the budget for laying of 'alternative communication network' for defence services.
- The alternative communications network is being set up in lieu of airwaves vacated by the Defence Ministry for civilian use.
- The project is being implemented by state-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL).

Coal Linkage Rationalisation for IPPs

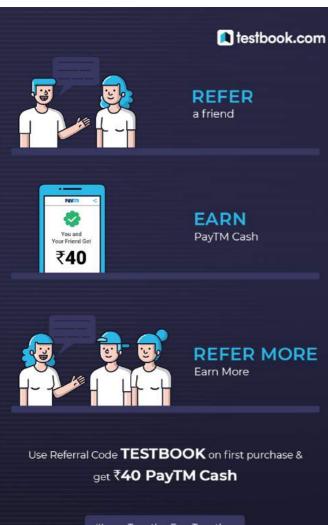
- The government has issued the guidelines to allow power producers to swap coal supply assurances against lowering tariffs.
- The one-time process will be available only to Independent Power Producers (IPPs) having coal linkages through the allotment route.
- Coal India, South Eastern Coalfields, and the Central Electricity Authority will jointly undertake this exercise.

New Method to Solve PSU Disputes

- Cabinet has approved a mechanism within the government for speedy resolution of commercial disputes of central public sector enterprises without cases going to courts.
- A new two-tier mechanism will be put in place of the existing Permanent Machinery of Arbitration mechanism to resolve such commercial disputes.
- Cabinet decision is based on the recommendations of the Committee of Secretaries.

Cabinet Okays Micro Irrigation Fund

- Union Cabinet has approved corpus of Rs 5,000 crore for setting up of a dedicated "Micro Irrigation Fund" with NABARD under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana.
- The fund seeks to provide states financial assistance on concessional rate of interest to promote micro-irrigation.
- The lending rate under MIF has been proposed at 3% lower than the cost of raising the fund by NABARD.



#LearnTogetherEarnTogether

Prabhu Launched Intellectual Property Mascot

- Minister of Commerce & Industry Suresh Prabhu launched the Intellectual Property mascot – IP Nani at the conference on National Intellectual Property Rights Policy.
- The mascot will spread awareness about the importance of Intellectual Property Rights among people, especially children.
- The character is also in line with World Intellectual Property Organization's campaign for the World IP Day.

Cabinet Approves National Biofuel Policy

- Cabinet has approved National Policy on Biofuels which allows doping of ethanol produced from damaged foodgrains, rotten potatoes, corn & sugar beet with petrol.
- The Policy categorizes biofuels as 1st Generation, which produces bio-ethanol from molasses & biodiesel from non-edible oilseeds.
- 2nd Generation ethanol can be produced from municipal solid waste & 3rd Generation fuels like bio-CNG

Government Approved to set up AIIMS at Deoghar

- The Centre has approved setting up of an All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Deoghar in Jharkhand.
- The institute will have residential complexes and allied facilities and services on the lines of AIIMS, New Delhi.
- The AIIMS at Deoghar will have 20 speciality/super speciality departments, including 15 operation theatres.

Meeting of Stakeholders on 'Samarth'

- A meeting of stakeholders on Samarth Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector under the Skill India Mission was held on 14th May.
- The broad objective of the new scheme is to skill the youth for gainful and sustainable employment in the textile sector covering the entire value chain of textiles, excluding spinning and weaving.
- The scheme targets to train 10 lakh persons.

Government Unveiled Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has issued National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy.
- The objective of the policy is to provide a framework for the promotion of large grid-connected wind-solar PV hybrid system for efficient utilization of transmission infrastructure and land.
- It also aims at reducing the variability in renewable power generation and achieving better grid stability.
- 4 States Ink MoUs With Centre on Health
- The states of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana and Uttarakhand agreed to implement the ambitious national health protection mission (NHPM).
- NHPM aims to provide an annual coverage of Rs 5 lakh per family.
- The scheme will target poor, deprived rural families and identified occupational categories of urban workers' families.
- It will be cashless and paperless access to services.

Environment Ministry Launched GSDP

- The Union Environment Ministry launched its fullfledged Green Skill Development Programme (GSDP) that aims to train over 5.5 lakh workers in environment and forest sectors in the country through 30 courses by 2021.
- Environment minister Harsh Vardhan also unveiled a related mobile app (GSDP-ENVIS).
- The GSDP was launched last year as a pilot project in 10 districts of the country.

Govt to Link 200 More Mandis to eNAM

• The government will link additional 200 wholesale mandis to the online trading platform eNAM this fiscal and also encourage inter-mandi transactions.

- Online trading on the eNAM platform can be done through the website, trading platform or the Mobile App.
- At present, 585 regulated mandis in 14 States are linked with the electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM) launched in April 2016.

DNA Data Banks to Be Set Up

- DNA databanks will be set up at the national and state level to store profiles, according to a draft bill on DNA technology being finalised by the Law Ministry.
- The draft bill also states that all DNA data including DNA profiles, DNA samples, and records, will only be used for identification of the person.
- The Department of Biotechnology was consulted by the law panel to draft the bill.

Compensation Scheme for Sexual Assault

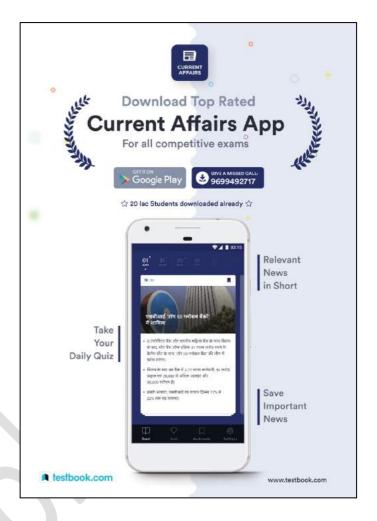
- Supreme Court has approved 'Compensation Scheme for Women Victims/Survivors of Sexual Assault/Other Crimes-2018' a scheme for mandatory grant of compensation to victims of sexual assault & acid attack.
- The scheme has been prepared by National Legal Services Authority in consultation with Centre.
- A victim of gangrape would now get a minimum compensation of Rs 5 lakh up to a max of Rs 10 lakh.

Centre to Double Credit Guarantee to MSMEs

- The Union Government announced that it would double the credit guarantee for 2018-19 under the Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE).
- This will tackle the trade finance woes of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
- The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises & Small Industries Development Bank of India has established CGTMSE.

I&B Ministry to Set Up Web portal

- The information and broadcasting ministry will set up a dedicated web portal to disseminate information on filming facilities available in the country.
- The portal will also provide an overview of such locations. Applications for shooting permission will be accepted through the site.
- The portal will allow online payments and issuing permissions.



Govt Set to Expand Buddhist Tourism Circuit

- The government will now expand the 'Buddhist Circuit' to 21 other states.
- The Ministry of Tourism has identified stupas and viharas in these states, around which small intrastate Buddhist zones will be developed.
- Earlier envisaged by the government as mainly comprising seven major Buddhist pilgrimage sites, in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar only.

Govt Departments Earmark Rs 16,500 Cr for SBM

- A sum of Rs 16,500 cr has been earmarked by 71 ministries & departments of the govt for implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) in 2018-19.
- The amount is over & above the budget of Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation for SBM (Gramin) & Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs for SBM (Urban).
- SBM aims to clean up the streets, roads & infrastructure of India's cities & rural areas.

Top 30 Innovations Showcased at Marathon

- To identify India's best student innovators, Atal Tinkering Labs of the Atal Innovation Mission of NITI Aayog organized an Atal Tinkering Marathon.
- It was a 6-month long challenge across 6 different areas, namely, clean energy, water resources, waste

management, healthcare, smart mobility and agritech.

• The goal of the student innovator programme is to test the innovations in the community.

India's Clean Energy Capacity Touches 70 GW

- Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has stated that India's installed clean energy capacity has already touched 70 GW as per data compiled on March 31st, 2018.
- 100 billion units of electricity was generated through renewables during last fiscal, which also is the highest ever so far.
- R K Singh has reaffirmed government's commitment to meet target of having 175 GW by 2022.

Kerala Government to Provide Free Internet

- The Kerala Government will set up a Joint Venture company to launch its new optic fibre network.
- The Kerala Fibre Optic Network Limited will implement the Kerala Fibre Optic Network (K-FON) project.
- The K-FON initiative is being implemented to provide speedy internet connectivity to government offices and educational institutions and to the public at an affordable rate.

Easier Credit Norms for Small Farmers

- The government has streamlined lending norms in schemes such as the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) to boost institutional credit flow to small and marginal farmers.
- Under revised guidelines, standard security requirements, such as hypothecation of crops, now do not apply to loans of up to Rs1 lakh.
- Under KCC, small farmers can avail of a "flexible limit" of between Rs10,000 and Rs. 50,000.

Delhi Government Amended Minimum Wages Act

- President Ram Nath Kovind has given his assent to the Delhi government's Bill to amend the Minimum Wages Act.
- Under the amended act, employers violating labour rules in the city will now face fine ranging from Rs. 20,000-50,000 and jail term between 1 to 3 years.
- For an unskilled worker, the minimum wages is Rs 13,350 per month while for semi-skilled, it is Rs 14,698.

MeitY Launched Internship Scheme

- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has launched 'Digital India Internship Scheme' portal in which a token of Rs. 10,000 will also be offered to interns as remuneration per month.
- The internship scheme will enable the young students to learn closely about working of the transformative initiative of Digital India.
- The 2-month internship will start from June 2018.

Telangana Govt to Launch Rythu Bandhu Scheme

- Telangana Government launched the "Rythu Bandhu Scheme" (Farmers' investment support scheme) at Karimnagar district on 10th May 2018.
- Under the scheme, the farmers will get Rs. 4,000 each an acre in the Kharif and Rabi seasons to take care of the credit needs ahead of the farm seasons.
- The government has excluded about 11 lakh tenant farmers from the scheme.

Draft of Telecom Interconnection Released

- The Indian telecom regulator released the draft amendment of telecommunication interconnection.
- TRAI has set time-frame for provisioning of ports for initial interconnection and augmentation to be increased to a maximum 42 working days.
- The draft said a service provider may request the other service provider for additional ports at a Point of Interconnection (POI).

Green Licence Plates for e-Vehicles

- To promote electric vehicles in India, the government has approved green licence plates bearing numbers in white fonts for private e-vehicles & yellow for taxis.
- The purpose behind distinctive number plates is their easy identification for preferential treatment in parking beside other proposed benefits like concessional toll.
- India at present has 1 to 1.5 lakh electric vehicles.

Panel for Time-Bound Release of MPLADS Funds

- The parliamentary panel on Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) funds has recommended that amounts donated by lawmakers for rehabilitation work after natural disasters should be disbursed within two weeks.
- The panel was headed by Deputy Speaker of Lok Sabha M. Thambidurai.
- A Member of Parliament gets Rs. 5 crore a year to spend on local area development.

New Norms for Labeling Food Planned

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has released new draft regulations on food packaging.
- All packaged food with at least 5% content from genetically engineered sources need to be labeled so.
- Foods that exceed norms of sugar and fat will need to carry 'red' and 'green' labels specifying the extent to which they do so.

Government to Expand Van Dhan Vikas Kendras

• Tribal Affairs Ministry will expand Van Dhan Vikas Kendras in Tribal Districts across the country.

- The aim of the establishment of these Kendras is to provide skill upgradation and capacity building training to increase the incomes of tribals.
- Van Dhan Vikas Kendra was launched at Bijapur, Chattisgarh on 14th April 2018 for training, providing equipment and tools for primary level processing

CBDT Notifies DTAA Between India & Kuwait

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has notified a protocol to amend the existing double taxation avoidance pact (DTAA) between India and Kuwait.
- It had entered into force on March 26th, updating the provisions in the DTAA.
- The protocol, which was signed on January 15th, 2017, was notified on May 4th this year.
- India and Kuwait had signed a double taxation avoidance pact on June 15th, 2006.

Sensitization Meeting of Stakeholders Held

- The 'first sensitization meeting of stakeholders to make Delhi a model Accessible city' was held in the national capital on May 7th 2018.
- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities took this initiative to coordinate the meeting of all key stakeholders, sensitize them about the legal mandates.
- Delhi being the capital city of the country is proposed to be selected for this drive.

Loan Agreement with WB for POSHAN Abhiyaan

- India has signed a loan deal worth \$200 million with World Bank for National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN Abhiyaan).
- The loan would help Government in achieving its goal of reducing stunting in children 0-6 years of age from 38.4% to 25% by 2022.
- POSHAN scheme launched by PM Modi on March 8, 2018, aims to ensure holistic development & adequate nutrition for pregnant women, mothers & children.

100 One Stop Centres for Distressed Women

- Centre has approved setting up of 100 additional One-Stop centres in 9 states to help violence affected women.
- States in which these centres will be set up are Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, MP, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu & UP.
- These centres aim to facilitate integrated services for violence affected women like police assistance, social counseling, medical & legal aid.

HRD Announces 75 NRC for Teachers

 Human Resource Development Ministry has launched a major and unique initiative of online professional development of 1.5 million higher education faculty using the Massive Open Online Courses platform SWAYAM.

- In the 1st phase, 75 discipline-specific National Resource Centres have been identified.
- NRC are tasked to prepare online training material with a focus on new and emerging trends.

Chhattisgarh to Recruit Transgender in Police

- To promote gender equality, Chhattisgarh govt has decided to recruit transgender in the police force.
- Chhattisgarh is the 1st state to recruit transgenders for police while Tamil Nadu is the 1st state to hire India's first transgender police officer.
- In 2014, Supreme Court declared transgender people as the 3rd gender & ruled that they have equal privilege over the fundamental rights.

Google to Set up 25,000 Wi-Fi Hotspots in AP

- Google India has partnered with Andhra Pradesh State FiberNet Limited to set up Wi-Fi stations in all the Gram Panchayats of the state.
- It will install 25,000 Wi-Fi hotspots by December 2018.
- In 2016, Google had installed public Wi-Fi networks at 100 railway stations and is now working to expand the project to as many as 400 stations by 2018 end.

Maha Launched Mobile Weather Information App

- Maharashtra Chief Minister launched 'MahaVedh', a mobile application which provides weather-related information to farmers.
- The application will provide real-time information on temperature, humidity and a forecast for 15 days.
- The application will also provide forecasts of lightning.

Online System for Grant of Security Clearance

- An online system for grant of security clearance to international conferences, seminars and workshops organised in India was launched by the Home Ministry.
- The online portal "https://conference.mha.gov.in" was launched by Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba.
- Obtaining clearances for organising a conference, issue of conference visa to foreign delegates was an offline procedure till now.

Government Aid to Reduce Sugarcane Dues

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval to provide financial assistance of Rs. 5.50 per quintal of cane crushed in sugar season 2017-18 to sugar mills.
- This will help sugar mills to clear cane dues of farmers.
- The assistance shall be paid directly to the farmers on behalf of the mills.

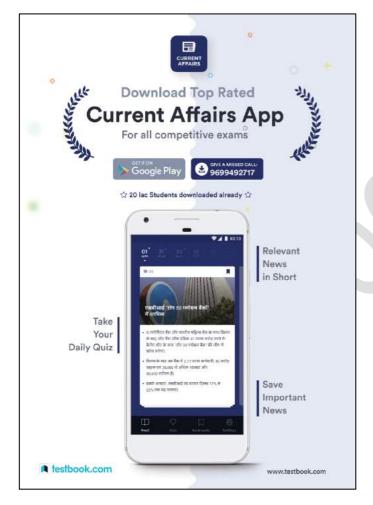
'Go to Village' Mission Launched in Manipur

• Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh launched 'Go to Village' mission throughout the state of Manipur.

- The mission was launched on May 2nd in 60 villages of all the 60 Assembly constituencies.
- The mission is aimed at identifying the eligible and deserving beneficiaries in every corner of the state and delivering government services at their doorstep.

Govt Doubles PMVVY Pension Investment Limit

- The government has doubled the investment limit to Rs 15 lakh under the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandan Yojana (PMVVY) pension scheme and extended the subscription period by two years till March 31st, 2020.
- PMVVY is for senior citizens and was available from 4th May 2017 to 3rd May 2018.
- The scheme provides an assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8% per annum for 10 years.



Cabinet Renames Minority Development Programme

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has renamed the Multi-sectoral Development Programme as Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram.
- The restructured programme aims to provide better socioeconomic infrastructure facilities to minority communities, particularly in the field of education, health & skill development.
- The scheme would extend to 308 districts compared to 196 districts at present.

Maharashtra to Issue Land Document Online

- Maharashtra has become the 1st state in India to provide digitally-signed land record receipts (also known as 7/12 receipts).
- The 7/12 receipt is extensively used by farmers for loan agreements, crop survey and for availing of government facilities.
- Earlier the hand-written 7/12 receipts were prepared by talathis, who solely had the power to make changes in the documents.

Krishonnati Yojana to be Continued

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved continuation of Umbrella Scheme Green Revolution - Krishonnati Yojana in the Agriculture Sector beyond 12th Five Year Plan to 2019-20.
- Umbrella scheme comprises of 11 Schemes.
- The schemes aim to develop the agriculture & allied sector in a holistic & scientific manner to increase the income of farmers by enhancing production & productivity.

Scheme to Strengthen Healthcare Infra Extended

- Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana beyond the 12th Five Year Plan to 2019-20 with a financial outlay of Rs 14,832 cr.
- PMSSY aims at correcting the imbalances in the availability of affordable tertiary health care facilities in different parts of the country.
- Under this scheme, new AIIMS are established & govt medical colleges are upgraded.

DoT Releases Draft National Telecom Policy

- The draft of National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2018 aka National Digital Communications Policy 2018 has been uploaded for public consultations on the Department of Telecom's (DoT).
- One of the key strategies in the draft talks of recognising spectrum as a key natural resource for public benefit
- The draft proposes one Gbps connectivity to all Gram Panchayats by 2020 and 10 Gbps by 2022.

Commission Clears Connectivity in Flights

- The Telecom Commission on May 1st approved the TRAI's recommendations for offering voice and data services in flights within Indian airspace.
- The operation of Mobile Communication on Aircraft should be permitted with a minimum height restriction of 3,000 meters in Indian airspace.
- In January, TRAI had recommended mobile communication on domestic and international flights in India.

Telecom Sector to Get Ombudsman

• In a move aimed at empowering mobile consumers, the Telecom Commission cleared a proposal for

creation of an Ombudsman under the sector regulator to resolve subscriber complaints.

- As per the decision of Telecom Commission, the Ombudsman will be created by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).
- The TRAI will be free to set up as many Ombudsman as per requirement.

Government to Host Farmers Welfare Workshops

- In an outreach to farmers, the Government is organising 'Kisan Kalyan Karyashala' at the block level across the country on 2nd May 2018.
- The workshops will be part of the ongoing 'Gram Swaraj Abhiyan'.
- 'Gram Swaraj Abhiyan' is a rural-centric campaign that had started on April 14th, the birth anniversary of Dalit icon B R Ambedkar, and will end on May 5th.

Swachh Bharat Summer Internship Commenced

- The Swachh Bharat Summer Internship commenced from 1st May 2018.
- The programme aims to engage millions of youngsters across the country, to encourage them to contribute to the Swachh Bharat Mission.
- Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in association with Ministry of Human Resource Development and Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has launched a novel and first of its kind initiative.

Gobardhan Yojana Launched from Haryana

- Union Minister for Drinking Water and Sanitation launched the Gobardhan scheme from Haryana's Karnal district on 30th April.
- The scheme would focus on managing and converting cattle dung and solid waste in farms to compost, biogas and bio-CNG.
- The Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan (GOBAR-DHAN) scheme was first announced by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in budget.

Art & Culture

World's Largest Bird Sculpture 'Jatayu'

- Kerala tourism will soon inaugurate the world's largest bird sculpture, Jatayu Earth's Centre in Kollam, Kerala.
- The replica of bird 'Jatayu', a character in the Ramayana is 65 feet tall & is positioned right at the top of a rock situated 1,000 feet above sea level.
- The rock, 'Jatayupara', where the structure is based, is the place where Jatayu fell after its wings were slain by Ravana.

Digitisation of Dying Languages

• Centre and State Governments are working along with start-ups to provide regional language-related products and services.

- Languages like OI Chiki script of Santali which is also one of the 22 official languages of India and Gondi language are gaining popularity due to this measure.
- The not-for-profit organisation 'Indic Project' has developed open source tools for language digitisation.

India to Organise Cultural Festival in Egypt

- India is organising a 5 day cultural festival in Egypt to commemorate the 157th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore.
- Festival is being organised by Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture, the cultural wing of Indian Embassy in Cairo.
- An exhibition of paintings of Tagore titled 'Rabindranath Tagore: Rhythm in Colours' will be held at Museum of Ahmed Shawky at Giza.

Science & Technology

NIC Launched 4th Data Centre in Bhubaneswar

- Bhubaneswar has become the 4th National data centre of National Informatics Centre (NIC) after Delhi, Hyderabad and Pune.
- The new cloud-enabled National Data Centre aims to offer round-the-clock operations with secure hosting for various e-governance applications of Central and State Governments.
- Almost all Indian-government websites are developed and managed by NIC.

Mountain Ranges Discovered Beneath Antarctica

- Mountain ranges and valleys have been discovered by scientists deep beneath the Western Antarctic ice region.
- This discovery will contribute to the rising global sea levels.
- Three valleys were discovered by the researchers linking the two major parts of Antarctica, out of which, one is 217 miles long.

1st Drone-Carried Meteorological Data Monitor

- China has successfully tested its first drone-carried meteorological data monitor to undertake atmospheric observations.
- Dropsonde also known as meteorological data monitor will gather data such as temperature, humidity, and wind direction and transmit them to ground receiving devices in real time.
- Dropsondes can be widely used in meteorological emergency, disaster & ecological monitoring.

Twin Spacecraft to Track Earth's Water Cycle

• A joint U.S./German space mission to track the global water cycle was successfully lifted off on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket

- Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment Follow-On, GRACE-FO, is a joint mission by NASA & German Research Centre for Geosciences.
- GRACE-FO will monitor the movement of mass around the earth by measuring where & how the moving mass changes Earth's gravitational pull.

NASA's Hunting Probe completed Lunar Flyby

- NASA's latest planet-hunting satellite has successfully completed a lunar flyby, passing about 8,000 kilometers from the Moon.
- It beamed back a test image revealing more than 200 thousand stars.
- The flyby provided a gravity assist that helped the Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) sail toward its final working orbit.
- TESS is NASA's search for planets outside our solar system.

China's First Privately Developed Rocket

- China launched its First Privately developed rocket from a launchpad in Northwestern China on 17th May 2018.
- The launch of the 'Chongqing Liangjiang Star' rocket marks the first launch of a non-state Chinese rocket.
- The rocket was launched by OneSpace Technology and it uses energy-saving technology, such as wireless communications.

Frog Species Found in Karnataka

- The latest addition to India's Frog Fauna is the narrow-mouthed frog named Microhyla kodial found in Mangalore.
- The species has been named after the city of Mangaluru which is called 'Kodial' in the Konkani Language.
- The Greyish-Brown Frog is just 2 cm long.

Fastest Growing Black Hole Discovered

- Scientists discovered the fastest-growing black hole known in the universe.
- The energy emitted from this newly discovered supermassive black hole, also known as a 'Quasar', was mostly ultraviolet light but also radiated x-rays.
- The discovery of the new supermassive black hole was confirmed using the spectrograph on the ANU 2.3 metre telescope to split colours into spectral lines.

ISRO Making Green Propellant

- Scientists at the Indian Space Research Organisation have reported progress in the development of an environment-friendly propellant to power satellites and spacecraft.
- The effort is to replace the conventional hydrazine rocket fuel, a highly toxic and carcinogenic chemical, with a greener propellant.
- ISRO has started working on propellant blend based on hydroxylammonium nitrate.

India's 1st Lithium-Ion Charger

- President Ram Nath Kovind unveiled India's first, indigenous Lithium-ion Battery charger, developed by Ampere Vehicles in New Delhi.
- The Lithium-Ion Charger Project is supported by Technology Development Board of the Ministry of Science and Technology as part of the Make-in-India initiative.
- The unveiling event took place on the occasion of National Technology Day.

SpaceX Launched Most Powerful Falcon 9

- SpaceX blasted off its newest & most powerful Falcon 9 rocket, known as the Block 5, carrying the first high-orbit communications satellite for Bangladesh.
- The satellite will provide broadband connectivity to rural areas throughout Bangladesh.
- Block 5 Falcon 9 is eventually meant to carry astronauts to the International Space Station, with the first launch tentatively planned for December 2018.

GravityRat has Been Further Updated

- The RAT was first detected by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team, CERT-In, on various computers in 2017.
- The 'RAT' in its name stands for Remote Access Trojan, which is a program capable of being controlled remotely.
- GravityRAT has recently been updated further & equipped with Anti-Malware evasion capabilities.
- It is designed to infiltrate computers and steal the data of users.

Govt to Set Up Marine Observation System

- India will establish a Marine Observation System Along the Indian Coast (Mosaic).
- At least 6 observatories 3 along the East Coast and and an equal number along the West Coast will be established.
- The project, to be launched later this year is intended to carry out monitoring, especially the marine coastal pollution.

ISRO Develops Desi Atomic Clock

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has developed an atomic clock that will be used in Navigation Satellites to measure precise location data.
- The space agency currently imports atomic clocks from European aerospace manufacturer Astrium for its navigation satellites.
- The atomic clock is currently undergoing a series of qualification tests.

Mars Probe Taking Mini Satellites

- A pair of briefcase-sized spacecraft known as CubeSats are making their way into deep space for the first time, sharing a ride with NASA's InSight Mars lander.
- Mars Cube One (MarCO) is a pair spacecraft that launched along with NASA's InSight Mars lander on May 5th.
- CubeSats are generally under 15 kilogrammes, and can weigh as little as about 2.5 kilogrammes.

China Launches 'APSTAR-6C' Communication Sat

- China has launched a new communication satellite 'APSTAR-6C' at the South-Western Xichang Satellite Launch Center.
- The satellite will provide TV transmission, communication, Internet and multimedia services to customers across the Asia-Pacific region.
- Both the satellite and the rocket were developed by the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation.

A New Nuclear Reactor for Space

- NASA has developed a new kind of reactor to be used for space exploration missions.
- NASA's Kilopower project works to build the kind of technology that could be used for an affordable fission nuclear power system so astronauts can have longer trips to planets.
- Kilopower is a small, lightweight fission power system that can deliver 10 kilowatts of electrical power.

NASA to Track Earth's Ice & Water

- NASA is gearing up for the upcoming launch of its Gravity Recovery & Climate Experiment Follow-On (GRACE-FO) mission.
- The mission will map changes in water and ice around the world by detecting variations in Earth's gravity & it involves 2 identical spacecraft that will orbit the Earth.
- The mission is a joint project between NASA and the GFZ German Research Center for Geosciences, Germany.

NASA Mission to Study Heart of Mars

- NASA is set to launch Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy & Heat Transport (InSight) on May 5th 2018.
- InSight will be the 1st mission to peer deep beneath the Martian surface, studying the planet's interior by measuring its heat output and listening for marsquakes.
- It will use the seismic waves generated by mars quakes to develop a map of the planet's deep interior.

• Gen Bipin Rawat, Chief of Army Staff has released the book 'Across the Bench - Insight into the Indian Military Judicial System'.

- The book is written by Lt Gen Gyan Bhushan, former Army Commander and Member 'A', Armed Forces Tribunal, Lucknow Bench.
- The book deals with military judicial system vis-a-vis command & management issues within the military establishments.

Committees & Recommendations

Deliberations on Punchhi Commission Report

- Standing committee of the Inter-State Council has completed deliberations on Punchhi Commission's recommendations.
- Punchhi Commission deals with the responsibility and jurisdiction of the Centre during major outbreaks of communal and caste violence.
- Government had constituted this Commission on Centre-State Relations under the Chairmanship of former CJI Madan Mohan Punchhi on April 27th, 2007.

Panel for Health Sector

- The 15th Finance Commission has constituted a high level group to explore and give recommendations for a balanced expansion of the Health Sector.
- The group will be headed by AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria.
- It will suggest ways to optimize the use of existing financial resources & to incentivise state governments' efforts towards fulfillment of well-defined health parameters in the country.

Committee for Securing Airport Cargo Terminals

- Govt. has constituted a special committee to suggest ways for better-securing airport cargo terminals in the country against terror threats.
- It will chalk out an anti-sabotage & counter-terror plan that can be deployed at the un-guarded air cargo terminals.
- Committee will have representatives from Home Ministry, CISF, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, IB & few other cargo handling agencies.

Panel to Look into Black Money Recovery

- A Parliamentary Panel headed by Murali Manohar Joshi will study the recovery of black money & performance of public sector banks.
- 30-member Estimates Committee has decided to study a host of subjects related to various ministries in the year 2018-19.
- The panel will also look into the import of uranium for nuclear plants, mining activities & environment among other matters.

Committee Constituted to Advise 15th FC

Books & Authors

Book Released by Chief of Army Staff

- 15th Finance Commission has constituted an advisory council to advise & assist them on any issue or subject related to Terms of Reference of the Commission.
- The council is going to assist in the preparation of any paper or research study and will be led by Arvind Virmani, President of the Forum for Strategic Initiatives.
- The Chairman of 15th Finance Commission is N. K. Singh.

Committee to Review Conduct of Business in RS

- The Chairman of Rajya Sabha Venkaiah Naidu has constituted a 2-member committee to review rules of procedure & conduct of business in the House.
- The committee will be headed by former Secretary General of the Rajya Sabha, Dr V. K. Agnihotri.
- The formation of this committee comes with an aim to improve the day-to-day functioning of the two houses of the Parliament.

Business & Economy

Patanjali Ties Up with BSNL

- Baba Ramdev's Patanjali has tied up with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd. (BSNL) to launch Swadeshi Samriddhi SIM cards.
- Patanjali is also offering health, accidental and life insurance cover of Rs 2.5 lakh and Rs 5 lakh on availing the sim.
- The Swadeshi Samriddhi SIM cards will be initially available only to employees of Patanjali and will eventually be rolled out across the country.

India Signed Loan Agreement with World Bank

- India has signed a loan agreement with the World Bank for USD 21.7 Million for strengthening the Public Financial Management in Rajasthan Project.
- The Project aims to contribute to improved budget execution, enhanced accountability and greater efficiency in Revenue Administration in Rajasthan.
- It also involves strengthening of Expenditure & Revenue Systems and Project Management among others.

Approval for Petrol, Diesel Futures

- The Oil Ministry has given its in-principle approval for futures trading in petrol as well as diesel.
- The Indian Commodity Exchange (ICEX) had approached SEBI seeking its nod to launch petrol and diesel futures contracts.
- The contracts are expected to help hedge against volatility in oil prices.

SEBI to Implement System-Driven Disclosures

• Markets regulator SEBI will soon put in place systemdriven disclosures for non-promoters, directors and certain class of employees of listed companies.

- The System-driven disclosures in securities market was introduced in December 2015 and is being implemented in a phased manner.
- It has already been put in place with respect to disclosures of promoter/promoter group.

Tata Trusts Signs MoU with Govt.

- Tata Trusts has joined hands with the government to help it in development initiatives in 8 worst Naxal-affected districts in Chhattisgarh.
- These districts are covered under 'transformation of aspirational' districts programme of the NITI Aayog.
- Tata Trusts will help the government in conducting surveys & providing ground level & technical support in raising the living standards of citizens.

EPFO Cuts Administrative Charges to 0.5%

- Employees' Provident Fund Organisation's trustees had decided to cut the administrative charges to 0.50% from 0.65% of total wage paid by employers in its meeting this year.
- EPFO decided to cut the administrative charges in view of its expanding business and high recovery of such fees.
- According to EPFO estimates, the employers would save in total around ₹900 crore annually after this move.

India Launches its Second IT Corridor in China

- India has launched its 2nd IT corridor in China to cash in on the booming Chinese software market.
- NASSCOM has now set up one more digital collaborative opportunities plaza, also known as the SIDCOP platform, in China's Guiyang.
- In December 2018, the NASSCOM established its first SIDCOP platform in the Chinese port city of Dalian, which is India's first IT hub in China.

Intra-State e-way Bill Comes into Force

- Maharashtra, Manipur & 5 union territories have rolled out intra-state e-way bill system for movement of goods worth over Rs 50,000 within the state.
- With this, the number of States, where the system is being implemented will go up to 27.
- E-Way Bill is an electronically generated document which is required to be generated for the movement of goods of more Rs. 50,000 from one place to another

EPF Interest Rate hits 5-year low at 8.55%

- The government has notified 8.55% interest rate on EPF for 2017-18, lowest in 5 years since the 2012-13 fiscal.
- Employees' Provident Fund is a mandatory contribution from the salary of an individual that every company which has more than 20 employees has to deduct.

• EPF accounts are overseen by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, which is under the Ministry of Labour & Employment.

Yes Bank Empanelled as 'Settlement Bank'

- Yes Bank has received approval from National Stock Exchange to be empanelled as Settlement Bank for National Securities Clearing Corporation (NSCC), a wholly owned subsidiary of NSE.
- NSCC is responsible for clearing and settlement of all trades executed on NSE.
- The Bank is already an empanelled Clearing Bank for BSE, NCDEX & MCX.

First Company to Achieve Rs 7 lakh Crore m-cap

- Tata Consultancy Services' market valuation briefly crossed the Rs 7-lakh crore mark on May 25, 2018, making it the first company to achieve this milestone.
- TCS is the country's most valued firm, followed by Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and Hindustan Unilever Limited.
- TCS recently became the first Indian company to close the trading session with over USD 100 billion market valuation.

Direct Funding Facility to VLEs in CSCs

- Small Industries Development Bank of India has signed an MoU with Common Service Centres Special Purpose Vehicle for providing financial support to CSCs.
- SIDBI will extend financial support to Village Level Entrepreneurs of CSCs, with minimum 1 year of operation, under the Direct Financing Window of SIDBI.
- The MoU aims to bring more citizens under the ambit of financial inclusion.

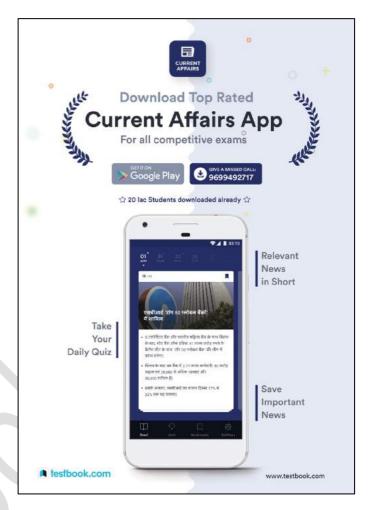
MobiKwik Launches UPI on Platform

- MobiKwik has announced the launch of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) on its platform via its own Virtual payment address (VPA) handle @ikwik.
- Users can simply scan and generate UPI QR functionality to send and receive money using VPA and phone number from the contact list.
- MobiKwik is the first in the industry to offer UPI access to a huge base of three million merchants on its app.

New Data Protection Rules Come into Effect

- European Union's new data protection laws have come into effect.
- The General Data Protection Regulation gives EU citizens more rights over how their information is used.
- It establishes consumers' 'right to know' who is processing their information & what it will be used for.

• It also establishes the key principle that individuals must explicitly grant permission for their data to be used.



Guwahati-Barauni to Get Gas Pipeline by 2021

- Urja Ganga Natural Gas Pipeline has been extended till Guwahati by the Gas Authority of India Limited (GAIL), the city will get gas pipeline by 2021.
- The 721-km pipeline project will connect Dhamra, Barauni, Paradip and Haldia and will extend to Guwahati.
- This is a 3000 crore project and would also be be extended to other Northeast locations, operational from 2023.

IRCTC Partners with Ixigo

- In order to exclusively power hotel bookings, IRCTC has partnered with the Ixigo, a travel marketplace.
- Under this partnership, wide range of accommodations from Ixigo would be available on the mobile and web platforms of IRCTC.
- Ixigo is a Gurugram based travel search engine and also a mobile travel application available for all OS.

Customs Duty on Wheat Raised by 30%

• Customs duty on wheat has been raised by the government from 20% to 30% in order to protect domestic growers and curb cheaper imports.

- It has been done to restrict overseas purchase so that the farmers get their MSP (Minimum Support Price) and also to avoid pressure coming under domestic prices of wheat.
- Walnut shell has also seen an increase in the import duty from 30% to 100%.

HDFC Bank to Offer Digital Loans

- HDFC Bank has launched its Digital Loans against Mutual Funds in partnership with transfer agent CAM.
- Customers will be able to leverage their mutual fund portfolio to avail funds for any emergencies without liquidating their investments.
- The ticket size of the loans will range from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1 crore at an interest rate of 10.5 -11%.

Bank Credit Grows 12.64%, Deposits at 7.61%

- According to an RBI data, Banks' credit grew by 12.64% year-on-year to ₹85,51,099 crore in the fortnight ended May 11, 2018.
- Banks' deposits grew by 7.61% to ₹1,13,92,165 crore in the fortnight ended May 11, 2018, compared with ₹1,05,86,083 crore in the fortnight ended May 12, 2017.
- Bank credit is the aggregate amount of credit available to a person or business from a banking institution.

MCX Launches India's First Silver Options

- India's Multi Commodity Exchange has launched the country's first silver options contracts.
- Five contracts expiring in June, August, November, February and April with a lot size of 30 kg were launched.
- India is the world's biggest consumer of silver, which is mainly used for jewellery making in the county.
- The exchange had recently launched crude oil and copper options.

India Ranks 44th in Terms of Competitiveness

- India has moved one notch higher, to the 44th place in terms of competitiveness, in the annual rankings compiled by International Institute for Management Development.
- US is the most competitive economy globally followed by Hong Kong and Singapore in the second and third place.
- India is ranked the 12th most competitive economy out of the 14 Asian countries on the list.

Niti Aayog and ABB India Join Hands

- ABB India & Niti Aayog have inked a pact to help India reap benefits of new technologies including robotics & artificial intelligence.
- The 2 institutions signed a Statement of Intent to work together in preparing key sectors of the economy for digitalisation, artificial intelligence, robotics & industrial automation.

• The initiative also covers the fast-growing segment of electric mobility.

Repo in Corporate Debt Securities

- Bombay Stock Exchange has received approval from RBI and Sebi to launch repo in corporate debt securities.
- Corporate bond repo is where a firm or a bank pledges corporate bonds with another company or lender to garner funds.
- The corporate repo debt will be launched in 2 models - Basket repo with settlement guarantee and Special repo without settlement guarantee.

Paytm's Initiative to Educate Women

- Paytm has announced a programme called Paytm AshaKiran, which aims at educating rural women about financial services.
- It will help in creating new job opportunities in small towns & cities of India.
- In the first phase, the bank has partnered with United Nations Development Program under its Disha project to mobilize self-help groups and organize workshops.

New Scheme Introduced by IRCTC

- Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation has introduced VIKALP scheme for passengers in wait-listing to provide berth in another train.
- Under the scheme, passengers from all classes & trains can select 5 trains, however, the scheme does not guarantee a confirmed berth.
- Passengers should be prepared as they can be shifted to another train leaving even 12 hours prior to the booked one.

Finance Ministry Ties with 40 Entities

- In order to extend loans under the Mudra scheme, Finance Ministry has tied up with 40 entities including Amul & Flipkart.
- These companies will identify people who need loans under Mudra Yojana, underwrite them and we will extend loans under the scheme.
- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana was launched in 2015, for providing loans of up to Rs 10 lakh to noncorporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.

India Drags United States to WTO

- India has dragged US to World Trade Organisation's dispute settlement mechanism over the imposition of import duties on steel & aluminum.
- Donald Trump had recently signed two proclamations that levied a 25% on steel and a 10% tariff on aluminum imported from all countries except Canada & Mexico.
- India's exports of steel and aluminum products to U.S. is about \$1.5 billion every year.

NDB Plans to Launch Americas Regional Office

- New Development Bank (NDB), formerly referred to as BRICS Development Bank, is planning to launch its Americas Regional Office in Brazil.
- It will increase operational capabilities of NDB and facilitate identification & preparation of bankable projects in Brazil.
- NDB is mandated to mobilise resources for infrastructure and sustainable development projects in BRICS & other emerging economies.

BNPM to Increase Bank Note Paper Production

- The government's Bank Note Paper Mill India (BNPM) has received green signal to increase the production of bank note paper at its Mysuru unit in Karnataka.
- The production of bank note paper has been increased from 12,000 tonnes per annum to 16,000 tonnes per annum.
- The raw material used for manufacturing of currency paper is 100% cotton sourced from neighbouring countries.

MCX Launched India's First Copper Options

- India's Multi Commodity Exchange has launched country's first copper options contracts.
- It will provide physical market participants an additional instrument to hedge their risk.
- Option contracts were launched with a lot size of 1 tonne in 3 contracts expiring in June, August and November 2018.
- Copper ranks as the 3rd most-consumed industrial metal in the world, after iron & aluminum.

India to Achieve 9% Growth Rate by 2022

- NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar has said that Indian economy will achieve 9% growth rate on sustained basis by 2022.
- Reforms like GST, Demonetisation and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code will help in achieving this ambitious target of 9%.
- He said that the Indian economy grew by 6.6% in 2017-18 and expected to grow at 7.5% this fiscal.

100% Business Ownership to Foreign Investors

- United Arab Emirates Cabinet has approved a plan to allow foreign investors to own 100% of UAE-based businesses by end of 2018.
- At present, foreigners generally cannot own more than 49 percent of any UAE firm unless it is incorporated in a special 'free zone'.
- The decision is part of a wider change to the system that would grant residency visas of up to 10 years to investors and specialists.

BoB Launched MSME Factory in Gurgaon

• Bank of Baroda has launched its first integrated SME Loan Factory in Gurgaon to cater the needs of MSME segment in NCR.

- It will function as a One Stop Shop for MSME customers and will provide end to end solutions viz. Acquisition, Processing, Disbursement & Relationship Management.
- BoB has also decided to centralize Government Sponsored Schemes loan processing at the district level.

GDP Growth in Q4 of FY18 Seen at 7.4%: Icra

- Rating agency Icra expects GDP growth in January-March 2017-18 at 7.4% on account of good rabi crop harvest & improved corporate earnings.
- As per Icra, the growth of the Indian gross value added (GVA) at basic prices in year-on-year terms is likely to record a considerable recovery to 7.3% in Q4 FY2018
- The Rating Agency further said it expects a mild pickup in growth in the services sector.

NABARD Sanctions Solar Street Lighting System

- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development has sanctioned LED Solar Street Lighting system for Arunachal Pradesh under its Rural Infrastructure Development Fund with a grant of Rs 87.83 lakh.
- It would be implemented in 4 districts of the state Tirap, Longding, Namsai & Tawang.
- The scheme was launched by Chief Minister Pema Khandu in presence of NABARD Chairman Harsh Kumar Bhanwala.

Revenue from e-tourist Visa Hits Rs 14 Billion

- The government has earned Rs 14 billion as revenue from the highly successful e-Visa scheme, since its launch in 2014.
- The e-Visa scheme has been implemented by the foreigners' division of the Home Ministry.
- The scheme also covers business and medical categories.
- The facility is available for nationals of 163 countries for entry into India through 25 international airports & 5 seaports.

Aadhaar, PAN mandatory for Broker Licence

- The revenue department has made Aadhaar and PAN mandatory for persons seeking a customs broker licence.
- Customs broker is a person licensed to act as an agent on behalf of importer/exporter for a transaction of business relating to entry or departure of conveyances or goods at any customs station.
- The licence is issued by the Directorate General of Performance Management.

Venture Capital Symposium 2018 Began

• NITI Aayog, in association with Vision India Foundation, is organising Venture Capital Symposium 2018 to deepen the economic relationships between France and India.

- Venture Capital Symposium 2018 is an event where French investors interacted with 100 early to midstage Indian start-ups.
- The Symposiums aims to support the Start-up India programme that was launched by PM Modi in 2015.

MPC to Meet for 3 days from June 4

- The Reserve Bank of India has advanced the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting by a day to June 4th and also increased the duration to 3 days.
- It is for the first time that the MPC will meet for 3 days.
- The 6 member MPC, headed by the RBI Governor, sets the benchmark interest rate.
- MPC was set up by amending the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, through the Finance Act 2016.

RBI Slaps Fine on South Indian Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has slapped a penalty of ₹ 50 million on South Indian Bank Limited for noncompliance with the directions issued by it.
- The non-compliance pertains to Income Recognition and Asset Classification (IRAC) norms, Know Your Customer norms and treasury function.
- Further, the bank is also pulled up for deficiencies in its compliance function and compliance culture.

Indian Economy to Grow 7.6% in 2018-19

- According to the UN World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP), India's economy is projected to grow 7.6% in the fiscal year 2018-19, remaining one of the fastest growing economies in the world.
- This is a substantial recovery from the 6.7% growth India registered in the year 2017.
- The report also said that the recovery in private investment remains a crucial challenge in India.

RBI Issues Guidelines on NSFR

- The RBI issued detailed Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR) guidelines to ensure that banks maintain a stable funding profile in relation to the composition of their assets and off-balance sheet activities.
- The guidelines on NSFR are in line with global norms prescribed by the Basel Committee.
- The NSFR would be applicable for Indian banks at the solo as well as consolidated level.

RBI Eases Setting up of IFSC Banking Units

- RBI modified the norms for setting up IFSC Banking Units.
- In April 2015, the Reserve Bank had formulated a scheme for setting up of International Financial Services Centres (IFSC) Banking Units (IBUs) by banks in IFSCs.
- To enable IBUs to start their operations, the parent bank will be required to provide a minimum capital of USD 20 million.

RBI Imposed Penalty on Cooperative Bank

- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a penalty of ₹50,000 on Universal Co-operative Urban Bank, Mancherial, Telangana.
- The penalty has been imposed on the Bank as it had violated RBI's directive and guidelines on loans and advances to directors and their relatives.
- Urjit Patel is the Governor of Reserve Bank of India which is headquartered at Mumbai.

Record Production of Foodgrain in 2017-2018

- Aided by a normal monsoon last year, India's production of foodgrains touched a record 279.5 million tonnes in 2017-18.
- This was estimated in the 3rd advance estimate of crop production released by the Agriculture Ministry on 16th May.
- The higher year-on-year food production is due to a larger harvest of rice and a record crop of pulses.

Blockchain-Based Trade Finance Network

- Infosys has formed a blockchain-based trade finance network with 7 private-sector banks, to increase security and efficiency in the Banking Sector.
- Blockchain allows all stages of transactions to be securely shared between network members, as opposed to each bank working independently.
- Lenders currently testing its trade finance network are ICICI, Axis and Yes Bank among others.

BSE is First to get US SEC Recognition

- The BSE has received the recognition certificate of 'Designated Offshore Securities Market' (DOSM) from the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).
- This will help in the sale of securities to US investors through the BSE platform without registration of such securities with the US SEC.
- The BSE becomes the 1st bourse in India to receive the DOSM recognition

Exports Rose to \$25.9 billion in April 2018

- India's exports rose by 5.17% year-on-year to USD 25.9 billion in April 2018 on back of good show by sectors like engineering, pharmaceutical & chemicals.
- Non-petroleum and non-gems and jewellery exports in April 2018 were valued at USD 19.8 billion as against USD 17.7 billion in April 2017, showing an increase of 11.73%.
- India recorded a trade surplus in services sector at USD 6.5 billion.

BSNL Partners SAP to Boost GST Compliance

- BSNL has signed a MoU with SAP to jointly offer innovative GST solutions to enterprises across India.
- The MoU aims to ensure that every business in the nation successfully adopts GST through BSNL's
- The government has set up an IFSC in Gujarat.

country-wide reach & SAP's expertise in providing robust technology offerings.

• The collaboration leverages the capabilities of BSNL as GST Suvidha Provider & SAP as Application Service Provider.

IIM-A Launched Bharat Inclusive Initiative

- Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad's centre for innovation, incubation, and entrepreneurship has launched a \$25 mn Bharat Inclusion Initiative.
- It aims to mentor & invest in start-ups in early stage & seed segment over the next 3 to 4 yrs.
- The initiative received an initial pledge of \$12.5 mn from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation & Omidyar Network.

India to Clock GDP growth of 7.7%

- India's GDP is expected to grow by 7.7% in January-March, up from 7.2% in the preceding quarter, says a Nomura report.
- According to the report, despite the moderation in March, industrial production growth averaged 6.2% in the January-March period.
- The report further noted that India is expected to witness cyclical recovery led by both investment and consumption.

E-Way Bill System in Assam & Rajasthan

- The E-way bill system for intra-State transport of goods in Assam and Rajasthan will roll out on May 16th and May 20th respectively.
- This would take the total number of States under the system to 21.
- E-Way Bill system for Inter-State movement of goods has been rolled out from 01st April 2018.
- E-Way Bill is electronically generated for the consignment/movement of goods from one place to another.

Listed Companies to Disclose Payment Delays

- SEBI proposed that listed companies have to disclose any delay or expected delay in payment related to their debt securities within 24 hours.
- The proposal came against the backdrop of various instances regarding non-compliance with listing norms by issuers of non-convertible debt securities.
- The regulator has sought public comments till June 11th on the proposals.

Lending, Deposit Curbs on Allahabad Bank

- RBI has imposed restrictions on Allahabad Bank, including on expansion of risky assets, creation of non-banking assets and accessing/renewing wholesale/costly deposits.
- RBI has also asked the bank to reduce exposure to unrated and high-risk advances.
- The RBI directive comes in the wake of the Bank's common equity tier-1 breaching the minimum regulatory requirement of 7.37% in March 2018.

India-Dedicated Investment Fund

- China's largest bank, Industrial & Commercial Bank of China has launched country's 1st India-dedicated publicly offered Investment Fund.
- The fund will invest in exchange-traded funds listed on more than 20 exchanges in Europe & US that are based on Indian market.
- The Bank said that the Indian market offers the best opportunity for Chinese investors due to the prospects of double-digit growth.

Fino Payments Bank to Offer Net Banking

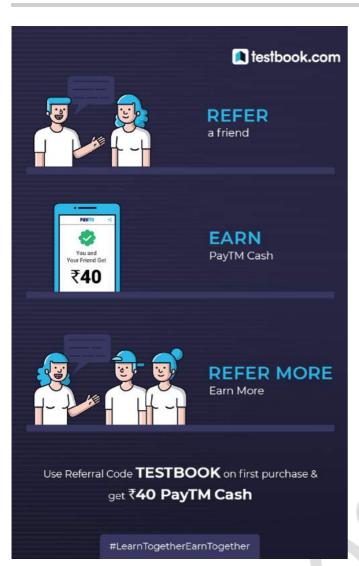
- Fino Payments Bank launched a suite of digital products that can be accessed online and through mobile phones.
- Fino had launched its mobile Banking App BPay in 2017.
- The latest initiatives include Unified Payments Interface (UPI), BHIM app- using which customers can access UPI and make P2P payments.

Paytm Introduced Automatic Recurring Payments

- Paytm has introduced automatic recurring payments, a new feature that lets users configure the payments app to pay for periodic recurring expenses automatically.
- Similar to standing instructions for Bank Accounts, the 'My Payments' feature can be used for high-value payments for a variety of cases.
- Company expects the feature to significantly boost bank-to-bank transactions on the Paytm App.

Barclays Seeks Patents Around E-Currency Tech

- Barclays has filed two patent applications relating to the transfer of digital currency and data storage with the Indian Patent Office.
- The Bank has filed a patent application titled 'secure digital data operations' & it is a method and system for transferring digital currency from a payer to the recipient.
- The other patent filed is 'data validation and storage' and is about cryptography.



Industrial Output Growth at 4.4%

- Industrial output grew by 4.4% in March, the slowest in 5 months, due to a fall in capital goods production and deceleration in mining activity.
- Industrial growth measured by the Index of Industrial Production in 2017-18 too decelerated to 4.3% from 4.6% in the previous fiscal.
- The IIP grew by 4.4% in March 2017, the same as in March 2018 according to Central Statistics Office.

UNDP to Set Up Skill Development Centre

- United Nations Development Programme will soon set up a skill development centre at 'Bharosa' in Hyderabad.
- 'Bharosa' an initiative of Hyderabad City Police, is a state-of-the-art centre to support women and children who are victims of violence.
- The centre will empower vulnerable & marginalised women by imparting Skills Training.

Revision of WPI Base Year to 2017-18

• The commerce and industry ministry has started the exercise to revise base year to 2017-18 for computation of wholesale inflation with a view to present a more realistic picture of the price situation.

- In May 2017, the government revised the base year for WPI-based inflation to 2011-12.
- The New Index, with 2017-18, is expected to have new items.

Largest Remittance-Receiving Country in World

- According to the report 'RemitSCOPE Remittance markets & opportunities - Asia & the Pacific', India was the largest remittance-receiving country in the world in 2017.
- India with \$69 bn, China with \$64 bn & Philippines with \$33 bn were the 3 largest remittance-receiving countries in the world in 2017.
- According to the report, cash-to-cash transactions was the most common form of transfer.

ADNOC Supplies First Oil Cargo Vessel to India

- Abu Dhabi National Oil Company has sent the 1st cargo vessel with 2 million barrels of crude oil for India's strategic Petroleum Reserve.
- ADNOC is going to use part of the crude oil to supply its customers, while the rest will remain as strategic storage for Government of India to be released in event of an emergency.
- This is the 1st such investment by any foreign company in an Indian SPR facility.

Kerala & NTPC Sign MoU for Solar Power

- The Kerala State Electricity Board has signed a memorandum of understanding with the National Thermal Power Corporation for increasing solar power generation in the state.
- The MoU also includes an agreement to set up a 15 MW Solar Power Unit at the NTPC Complex in Kayamkulam.
- The possibility of setting up solar plants at reservoirs, open space & top of buildings will also be explored.

Tea Industry Records Highest Ever Production

- Achieving a historic feat, the Indian Tea Industry has recorded the highest ever production of 1,325.05 million kg as well as the export of 256.57 million kg during 2017-18.
- Total Tea production in 2017-18 went up by 74.56 million kg or 5.96%, as compared to the corresponding figure in 2016-17.
- Growth in exports was majorly driven by 5 countries -Egypt, Iran, Pakistan, China & Russia.

SEBI Asks Listed Firms to Split CMD Post

- SEBI has asked listed companies to split the post of Chairman and Managing Director by April 2020.
- SEBI has also made it compulsory for them to have six independent directors on board, including a women director.
- The changes, which were first recommended by Kotak Bank chief Uday Kotak-led committee on corporate governance in 2017, have now been accepted and notified by SEBI.

RBI Puts Dena Bank Under Corrective Action

- RBI has initiated prompt corrective action against Dena Bank in view of high non-performing assets, restricting the bank from giving new loans & new hiring.
- Prompt Corrective Action comes after Dena Bank posted a loss for the third year in a row with net NPA's close to 12%.
- Though several banks are under the PCA framework currently, Dena Bank is the first lender to have fresh lending curbed.

India's Growth to Accelerate

- Credit rating agency Fitch has said that India's economic growth will accelerate to 7.3% in the current financial year & 7.5% in the next fiscal.
- Fitch said the growth rate will accelerate as money supply has recovered to its pre-demonetisation level & disruptions related to rollout of GST have diminished.
- Fitch has kept India's sovereign rating 'BBB-' unchanged for the 12th year in a row.

New Monetary Limits for Public Sector Banks

- Monetary threshold for public sector banks to report frauds to departments of CBI for a probe has been revised.
- Frauds of min. Rs 3 cr & to Rs 25 cr have to be reported to either CBIs Anti-Corruption Branch or to Economic Offences Wing.
- According to RBI, cases of frauds involving more than Rs 25 cr & up to Rs 50 cr should be given to CBIs Banking Security & Fraud Cell.

Walmart to Buy Control of Flipkart

- Walmart had agreed to pay \$16 billion for about 77% stake in Flipkart.
- It will be the biggest ever acquisition in India by a foreign firm surpassing the about \$13 billion
 Vodafone spent in 2007 for buying Hutchison's Indian business.
- The Walmart entered India in a joint venture with the Bharti Group in 2007 & started cash-and-carry stores named 'Best Price Modern Wholesale' in 2009.

India to be the Fastest Growing Economy

- International Monetary Fund has reaffirmed that India will be the fastest-growing major economy in 2018, with a growth rate of 7.4% that would further rise to 7.8% in 2019.
- IMF's Asia & Pacific Regional Economic Outlook said that India was recovering from the effects of demonetisation and GST.
- After India, Bangladesh is projected to be the fastestgrowing economy in South Asia.

MCX to Launch Crude Oil Options

- India's Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) will launch the country's first crude oil options contract on 15th May.
- India is the world's 3rd biggest consumer of crude oil. Crude oil futures contracts were most traded on the exchange platform in 2017/18 fiscal year ended on March 31st.
- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has approved the options contract.

MSEs Biz Sentiment Improves

- Business sentiment among Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) improved in the January-March, according to the CriSidEx index.
- The Index developed by Crisil and SIDBI is based on a diffusion index of 8 parameters-5 manufacturing and 3 services.
- It measures MSEs business sentiment on a scale of 0 to 200.
- CriSidEx is India's first sentiment index for MSEs which was launched in February.

Govt to Come Out with Producers' Price Index

- The government will come out with a Producers' Price Index next month for 10 services, including telecom & railways on an experimental basis.
- The move will help track inflation in these services, which will also include ports, insurance, banking, transportation & air travel.
- 2 major indices are used currently for tracking price movement - Wholesale Price Index & Consumer Price Index.

India Slips to 6th spot in Biz Optimism Index

- As per Grant Thornton's quarterly global business survey, India slipped to the 6th position globally in the business optimism index for the first quarter of 2018.
- While the business optimism is at an 'all-time high' globally, business sentiment in India has been the weakest since 2014.
- The top 5 nations on the index are Austria, Finland, Indonesia, Netherlands and the US.

BSE to Launch Commodity Derivatives Trading

- Bombay Stock Exchange has decided to launch trading in the commodity derivatives segment from October 1st.
- BSE will begin commodity derivatives with nonagriculture commodities like metals, energy and base metals.
- A derivative is a contract between two parties which derives its value/price from an underlying asset.
- The most common types of derivatives are futures, options, forwards and swaps.

NSE Introduces 'Managed Co-Location Services'

- In order to facilitate small and medium-sized trading members, NSE introduced a facility of 'managed colocation service'.
- In this facility, space will be provided to vendors along with provision for receiving market data.
- This facility enables the co-located entities to access the trade/order related data before other non-co-located entities.

HPCL Begins Home-Delivery of Diesel

- After Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), state-owned Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) has launched home-delivery of diesel in Mumbai.
- 'HP Fuel Connect' will deliver diesel to select customers having fixed equipment, heavy machinery in their premises.
- IOC had launched home-delivery of diesel in Pune in the month of March.

India Seeks \$4 bn Assistance from ADB

- India has requested Asian Development Bank to expand its sovereign and non-sovereign operations in the country by providing financial assistance worth \$4 billion a year.
- India also requested ADB President Takehiko Nakao to support its endeavour towards an inclusive & sustainable growth accompanied by rapid economic transformation.
- ADB aims to promote social and economic development in Asia.

ADB Projects India's Growth at 7.3% in 2018

- Asian Development Bank President Takehiko Nakao has noted that India's growth in 2018 would pick up to 7.3%.
- The Bank has also projected that India will remain the fastest growing Asian Nation with 7.6% growth in 2019-20.
- The size of India's economy is about USD 2.5 trillion currently, making it the 6th largest in the world.

India's Most Trusted FMCG Brand

- As per TRA's Brand Trust Report 2018, Patanjali has left behind brands like HUL & ITC to emerge as the most trusted brand in the FMCG sector.
- Patanjali was established in 2006 by Ramdev along with Balkrishna, with the aim of establishing a science of Ayurveda in coordination with latest technology & ancient wisdom
- Besides FMCG, Patanjali is present in other sectors like education & healthcare as well.

GST Council Simplifies Return Filing Process

- The GST Council in its 27th meeting decided on a new, simplified method of filing GST returns, based on the recommendations of the Group of Ministers on IT simplification.
- All taxpayers excluding a few exceptions like composition dealer shall file one monthly return.

• Goods & Services Tax Council is a constitutional body & is chaired by the Union Finance Minister

California's is World's 5th Biggest Economy

- California's economy has surpassed that of the United Kingdom to become the world's 5th largest economy.
- California's GDP of \$2.7 trillion has overtaken the UK's \$2.6 trillion.
- California's economic output is now surpassed only by the total GDP of the United States, China, Japan and Germany.
- All Economic Sectors except agriculture contributed to California's higher GDP.

RBI Asks Banks to Share Data with DRI

- The Reserve Bank of India has asked banks authorised to deal in foreign exchange to share data with the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI).
- Under the new rules, in the case of inward remittances, the agency can seek information relating to a remittee's details like name, address etc.
- In the case of outward remittances, the agency can seek information relating to a remitter's detail.

SEBI Proposes Changes to Public Issue Norms

- SEBI has proposed some changes in public issue norms, including shorter time period for price band announcement & lesser disclosures about group companies at time of IPO.
- The time period for announcing price band for Initial public offerings (IPO) will be reduced to 2 working days from current 5 days.
- These proposals are based on suggestions made by SEBI's Primary Market Advisory Committee.

RBI Announced Rs.10,000 Crore Bond Purchases

- The Reserve Bank of India has announced that it would buy Rs. 10,000 crore of government bonds via Open Market Operation (OMO).
- The move could bring some relief to the bond market which is reeling under the pressure of rising yields despite a slew of regulatory measures.
- Since the start of 2018, the yield on the 10-year benchmark bond has gained 40 basis points to 7.73%.

NITI Aayog Ropes in IBM to Use AI

- NITI Aayog has partnered with IBM to develop a crop yield prediction model using artificial intelligence to provide real-time advisory to farmers.
- The partnership aims to make use of technology to improve crop productivity, soil yield and farmers income.
- 1st phase of the project will focus on developing a model for 10 backward districts branded as "aspirational districts" by NITI Aayog.

PGCIL Inks Pact With Power Ministry

- State-run Power Grid Corporation of India (PGCIL) has inked a pact with the Ministry of Power to incur capital expenditure of Rs.25,000 crore for the current fiscal.
- The MoU includes various targets to be achieved by Powergrid during 2018-19.
- Other targets in the MoU inter-alia include parameters related to human resources, project management, research & development.

Exchanges Allowed to Extend Trading Time

- Markets regulator SEBI allowed stock exchanges to extend trading in equity derivatives by over 8.5 hours to bring the timings in line with commodity markets.
- It has allowed exchanges to set trading hours in equity derivatives between 9:00 am and 11:55 pm, effective October 1, 2018.
- As of now, trading is allowed from 9:15 am till 3:30 pm.

EPFO Introduces View Pension Passbook Service

- EPFO introduced 'View Pension Passbook' Service for the pensioners through 'UMANG app'.
- On clicking 'View Passbook' option, it requires PPO Number and Date of Birth information to be entered by the pensioner.
- Other e-services of EPFO already available through UMANG app includes EPF Passbook, Raise claim, Track Claim, eKYC services etc.

RBI Asks FPI Data from Listed Companies

- The Reserve Bank asked all listed companies to provide information on Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPI) investments to depositories before May 15.
- Currently, the RBI receives data on the investment made by FPIs and Non-Resident Indians on Stock Exchanges from banks.
- Depositories have to provide the necessary infrastructure and systems for operationalising the monitoring mechanism.

CBDT signs 200th UAPA in April

- The CBDT has signed its 200th unilateral advance pricing agreement (UAPA), which is aimed at promoting government's resolve of the non-adversarial tax regime.
- The Central Board of Direct Taxes had entered into one UAPA during April, thus taking the total count to 200.
- The UAPA entered into during April 2018 pertains to the provision of sourcing support services.

Kotak Launches Free Intraday Trading Facility

- Kotak Securities has unveiled 'Free Intraday Trading' facility, allowing investors to trade intraday without paying brokerage charges.
- Investors can do intraday trades across cash, future and options segments at an annual subscription of Rs. 999.

• Intra-day trading refers to trades in which investors buy and sell the shares within the same trading session.

Core Sector Growth Slows to 4.1% in March

- The growth of 8 core sectors slowed to a threemonth low of 4.1% in March due to weak performance in six sectors including coal, crude oil and natural gas.
- The other sectors which showed slower growth rates were refinery products, steel and electricity.
- The Index of Eight Core Industries consists- coal, steel, cement, crude oil, natural gas, fertilizers, electricity & refinery products.

GST Receipts Cross Rs. 1 lakh cr. in April

- Revenue from the Goods and Services Tax (GST) for April 2018 crossed the Rs. 1 lakh crore threshold, coming in at Rs. 1,03,458 crore.
- It Indicates that the indirect tax regime was stabilising and that economic revival was picking up pace.
- The GST was rolled out across the country on July 1st, 2017.

CBIC to Handle Applications for Inland Depots

- Applications for setting up of Inland Container Depots, Container Freight Stations, and Air Freight Stations will now be handled by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs.
- The move will promote ease of doing business at trade front.
- Earlier, the commerce ministry used to handle these applications.
- The development would help India improve its ranking in trading across borders.

Government Extends MEIS Export Benefits

- Over 35 handicraft products such as candles, paper and clay articles would be entitled for export benefits.
- These export benefits are provided under Merchandise Export from India Scheme (MEIS).
- Under this scheme, the government provides duty credit scrip to exporters.
- The rates vary from product to product and the export destination, as envisaged in the foreign trade policy.

RBI Allowed FPIs to Invest in Treasury Bills

- Easing foreign investment rules, the RBI on 1st May permitted Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPIs) to invest in treasury bills issued by the Central Government.
- The RBI also asked the FPIs to bring down their total exposure in debt instruments (G-secs or corporate bonds).

• Treasury Bills are short term (up to one year) borrowing instruments of the Government & they are auctioned by RBI.

SEBI Tightens KYC Norms for FPIs

- SEBI came out with a detailed framework for Risk Based Know Your Client (KYC) documentation of Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs).
- The market regulator made it clear that Non-Resident Indians (NRIs), Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) and resident Indians cannot be beneficial owners of FPIs.
- NRIs and OCIs can only obtain an FPI licence when they limit their roles to investment advisors.



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Sports

Chennai Super Kings Lift their 3rd IPL Title

- Chennai Super Kings lifted their 3rd Indian Premier League title after defeating Sunrisers Hyderabad by 8 wickets in Mumbai.
- Shane Watson's century helped Chennai to defeat Hyderabad.
- Shane Watson was declared as Man of the Match.

De Villiers Retires from International Cricket

 Former South Africa Test captain AB de Villiers has announced his retirement from international cricket.

- De Villiers made his international debut in Test series against England in 2004.
- He scored 8,765 Test runs and has a batting average of over 50 in both Test & ODI cricket.
- AB de Villiers holds the records for scoring the fastest 50, 100 and 150 in ODIs.

Pant Named Emerging Player of IPL 11

- Delhi Daredevils wicket-keeper batsman Rishabh Pant named Emerging Player of IPL 11.
- Sunil Narine also picked up two awards -- Super Striker and Valuable Player.
- Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Kane Williamson (735 runs) got the Orange Cap while Kings XI pacer Andrew Tye (24 wickets) got the Purple Cap.

Japan's Women Clinch Uber Cup

- Japan's women clinched the Uber Cup, the Women's World Badminton Championship, defeating Thailand 3-0 in Bangkok.
- It ends an Uber Cup drought for Japan that stretches back to 1981.
- The Uber Cup is second in prestige only to the Olympics as a national team event.
- As of the 2018, China is the most successful team, having won fourteen times. Japan is second, having won it six times.

Real Madrid Won the 2017-18 Champions League

- Real Madrid have claimed yet another Champions League title by beating Liverpool FC 3-1 in the final.
- It is the third consecutive year that Real Madrid have won the tournament and the fourth such in five years, taking their total tally to a record 13 titles.
- Madrid's Gareth Bale became the 1st player ever to come on as a substitute and score twice in a European Cup/Champions League final.

1st National Sports University in Manipur

- The Union Cabinet has approved an ordinance to set up the country's 1st national sports university in Manipur.
- The varsity will be spread over 325 acres in Imphal West district with a cost of Rs 524 crore.

South Korea Won Asian Champions Trophy 2018

- Defending champions Indian Women's Hockey Team lost to hosts South Korea 0-1 in the final match of the Women's Asian Champions Trophy 2018.
- The win for South Korea saw them lift the title for the 3rd time after having won in the 2010 and 2011 editions of the tournaments.
- India's Vandana Katariya was declared the player of the tournament.

Simona Halep Retained Top Spot in WTA Rankings

• The proposal to set up the national sports university in Manipur was initially announced by PM Modi, while Rs 100 crore funds for it were allocated in the 2014-15 budget.

World's Most Popular Athlete - Cristiano Ronaldo

- Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo was named the most popular athlete in the world as he topped the ESPN World Fame 100 list for a third straight year.
- Three-time NBA champion Lebron James retained his 2nd spot on the list, while Messi came 3rd.
- 11 Indian athletes including Virat Kohli, Saina Nehwal and Sania Mirza have made it to the list of ESPN World Fame 100 of 2018.

1st International Football Tournament in Iraq

- Iraq will host a West Asia Football Federation championship in Basra in November 2018, the first international tournament to be staged in the country since the 1990s.
- Iraq has not played competitive internationals on home turf since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.
- In March 2018, FIFA decided to lift a 30-year-old ban from Iraq on hosting the international football.

Messi Won European Golden Shoe

- Barcelona striker Lionel Messi has won his 5th European Golden Shoe after his team defeated Real Sociedad in their final La Liga match of the season.
- Messi won the award with 34 goals, for a total of 68 points during the 2017-18 season.
- Messi is the only player to have won the European Golden Shoe 5 times.
- 4-time winner Cristiano Ronaldo finished 9th after scoring 26 goals for Real Madrid.

Nadal Won 8th Rome Masters 2018

- Rafael Nadal won Rome Masters for the 8th time after defeating defending champion Alexander Zverev 6-1, 1-6, 6-3 in the finals.
- The win is Nadal's 78th ATP Tour title and takes him clear of John McEnroe into 4th place in the list of most men's titles won in the Open era.
- Romanian Tennis star Simona Halep has retained her numero-uno spot in the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) Rankings.
- Halep maintains a lead of 425 points over secondplaced Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark.
- After the 2017 Wimbledon Championships, Simona Halep became the active player with the most consecutive weeks within the Top 10.
- Halep started her 2018 season by winning the Shenzhen Open.

Para-National Games Under Khelo India Scheme

- The inaugural National Para Games, on the lines of National Games for able-bodied athletes, will be held under the Khelo India Scheme in June-July in Bengaluru.
- The Paralympic Committee of India will be responsible for the technical conduct of the Games.
- All the funding will be done by the Sports Ministry under the Khelo India Scheme.

Heena Sidhu Clinched Gold

- Indian Shooter Heena Sidhu clinched the gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol at the International Shooting Competitions 2018 in Hannover, Germany.
- Heena was in a rollicking form in the final where she was tied with France's Mathilde Lamolle on 239.8 points. She won the tie to win the gold ahead of Mathilde.
- The finish marks a strong build-up to next week's ISSF World Cup in Munich.

Lewis Hamilton Wins Spanish Grand Prix

- Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton has extended his lead at the summit of the Formula One championship after a crushing win at the Spanish Grand Prix.
- Finland's Valtteri Bottas was 2nd while the Dutch Max Verstappen stood 3rd.
- It was the first one-two of the season for Mercedes, which had been slower than Ferrari in the past few races.

Kvitova Won 3rd Madrid Open Title

- Petra Kvitova outlasted her Dutch opponent Kiki Bertens 7-6 (8-6) 4-6 6-3 in the finals to clinch the third Madrid Open title.
- Kvitova, the victor in Spain in 2011 and 2015, becomes the 1st woman to win the tournament 3 times.
- Kvitova has now claimed four titles in 2018 after triumphs in St Petersburg, Doha and Prague.

Indian Judokas Win 3 Medals

- Indian judokas won 3 medals on the opening day of Asian Cadet Judo Championships in Lebanon.
- Rohini S Mohite from Maharashtra won a gold medal in the 40kg category while Tababi Devi Thanjam of Manipur emerged as a champion in the 44kg category.
- India has sent a 40-member team for the 12th Asian Cadet Judo Championships.

Nadal Breaks 34-year Old Record

- Spanish world number one Rafael Nadal broke a 34year-old record by winning his 50th straight set on clay, the most consecutive sets won by a player on a surface.
- Nadal eased past Argentine Diego Schwartzman 6-3 6-4 in the round of 16 of Madrid Open to storm into the quarter-final round and broke John McEnroe's long-standing record in Open Era.

6 CWG Stars Join TOPS

- Six Commonwealth Games medallists from the track and field, shooting and weightlifting disciplines were inducted into the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)
- The objective of TOPS, launched by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, is to identify & support the potential medal prospects for 2020 Olympic Games.
- The selected athletes are provided financial assistance for their training.

Aditi Finishes T-6th at the Texas Classic

- Indian golfer Aditi Ashok has notched up her second successive top-10 finish by finishing Tied-sixth at the Volunteers of America LPGA Texas Classic.
- This was Aditi's second top-10 in a row after her Tied-seventh at LPGA Mediheal last week.
- Aditi is the youngest and first Indian to win the Lalla Aicha Tour School.

Narang-Ghatkar Win Silver Medal in Shooting

- Gagan Narang combined with Pooja Ghatkar to win the mixed team silver medal in the Grand Prix of Liberation international shooting competition in Pilsen, Czech Republic.
- Earlier in the tournament, Mihika Poore bagged the women's air rifle gold.
- Nivetha Paramanantham clinched the gold medal in the women's air pistol after topping the qualification.

Ramit Tandon Wins Abu Dhabi Open Squash Title

- India's Ramit Tandon has won the Abu Dhabi Open squash title.
- Ramit toppled number one seed Omar Abdel Meguid of Egypt.
- This is Ramit's third title on Professional Squash Association (PSA) tour. In world rankings, the Indian holds the 65th position, while the Egyptian is placed higher at the 41st spot.

India Won 20 Gold at Junior Athletics Meet

- India finished on top in the 7-nation competition with 20 gold, 22 silver and eight bronze medals at the 3rd South Asian Junior Athletics Championships in Colombo.
- Host Sri Lanka bagged rest of the 12 gold medals in the competition along with 10 silver and 19 bronze.
- The juniors will next represent India at the 18th Asian Junior Athletics Championships to be held in Gifu, Japan.

Neeraj Breaks Own National Record

- Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has broke his own national record by clearing a distance of 87.43m to finish 4th at the Diamond League series.
- Chopra, who recently won a gold at Commonwealth Games was up against the likes of Olympic champion Thomas Rohler & World champion Johannes Vetter.

 Chopra had set the earlier record of 86.48m when he won a gold medal in 2016 World Junior Championships.

'Star Khel Mahakumbh' Launched At HP

- BJP MP Anurag Thakur and cricketing great Sachin Tendulkar has launched 'Star Khel Mahakumbh' at Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh.
- The initiative has been designed in a manner as to attract participation of at least one lakh youth from across 5000 villages and 800 panchayats.
- The athletes will compete in volleyball, basketball, cricket, football, kabaddi and athletics.

Saina Returns to Top 10

- Commonwealth Gold Medalist Saina Nehwal climbed up to return into the Top-10 of the Badminton World Federation Women's Singles Rankings.
- Commonwealth mixed team Gold Medalist Kidambi Srikanth climbed from 5th to the 3rd spot, while HS Prannoy jumped to a career-best eighth spot.
- Meanwhile, Rio Olympic silver medalist PV Sindhu retained the third spot.

England Jump Up to No.1 in ODI Rankings

- England has replaced India at the top of International Cricket Council one-day rankings.
- England, who last topped the ODI rankings in Jan 2013, has gained 8 points & moved to 125 points.
- India with 122 points is at the 2nd position followed by South Africa & New Zealand.
- England's rise up the table is because the forgettable 2014-15 season was dropped from the latest calculations.

Harendra Singh to Coach Men's Hockey Team

- Hockey India has appointed Harendra Singh as coach of India's men's team, while Sjoerd Marijne will take over as chief coach of women's side.
- Harendra led the junior men's hockey team to the World Cup title in 2016.
- Before joining the Indian women's team, Marijne had a successful tenure with the Netherlands' women's team.

Salah Named 'Footballer of the Year'

- Liverpool forward Mohamed Salah has been named the Football Writers' Association Footballer of the Year.
- The Egypt star the first African winner of the award - also won the Professional Footballers' Association player of the year award in April.
- Salah has scored 31 goals in 34 league appearances for Liverpool this season.

Rizvi Claims No.1 Spot Pistol Rankings

• Indian shooter Shahzar Rizvi grabbed the number one spot in 10m air pistol rankings by ISSF.

- He won the silver medal in the just-concluded World Cup in Changwon, Korea.
- Rizvi had previously won a gold medal with a world record score at the World Cup in Guadalajara, Mexico in March.
- The other Indians in the top-10 are Jitu Rai and Om Prakash Mitharval who are at 6th & 12th spot.

Defence

Rustom-2 Drone to be Delivered by 2020

- The Rustom-II Unmanned Aerial Vehicle, which is being developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), will be delivered to the armed forces by 2020.
- The drone is being developed for use by all 3 services of Indian Armed Forces, primarily for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance operations.
- It can fly at around 280 km/h and carry a variety of payloads.

Indian Navy Commissioned 4th LCU

- Indian Navy has commissioned IN LCU L54, the 4th ship of Landing Craft Utility MK-IV, into its fleet at Port Blair.
- It has been indigenously designed & built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers.
- It can be deployed for multi-role activities like disaster relief operations and evacuation from distant islands.
- A total of 8 vessels in the class are planned to be built for the Indian Navy

World's Longest Surface-to-Air Missile

- World's longest surface-to-air missile test was conducted by Russia quietly.
- This S-500 surface-to-air missile successfully struck a target that was 299 miles away.
- Russia claims that this missile system is capable of destroying objects flying in space 62 miles above the Earth's surface.
- It is also capable of intercepting aircrafts, drones and hypersonic missile.

India, Nepal to Conduct a Military Exercise

- Armies of both the nations, India and Nepal will conduct a 2-week long military exercise 'Surya Kiran' in Uttarakhand.
- The focus of the exercise will be to enhance cooperation in conducting counter-terrorism operations in mountainous terrain.
- Around 300 soldiers from both the nations will be participating in this exercise.

Navy conducts 'Prasthan' Exercise

 Indian Navy has conducted an exercise called 'Prasthan' in the Western Offshore Development area in Mumbai.

- The exercise is held every 6 months & aims at integrating maritime stakeholders, including, Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force, ONGC, Customs & Port Trust.
- The drill focused on things like fire on an oil platform, Oil spill, search and rescue for crashed helicopters and more.

Artificial Intelligence in Defence Forces

- India has decided to include Artificial Intelligence in its defence forces with an aim to enhance the operational preparedness of the armed forces.
- A task force has been set up under the chairmanship of N. Chandrasekaran to finalise the specifics & framework of the project.
- Major countries like Russia, US & China are taking steps to ensure that their defence systems are fully empowered by AI

India Test-Fired BrahMos Supersonic Cruise

- India has successfully test-fired the Indo-Russian joint venture BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from a test range along the Odisha coast.
- Trial was conducted to validate its "life extension" technologies developed for the 1st time in India by DRDO and team BrahMos.
- The successful test will result in huge savings of replacement cost of missiles held in the inventory of the Armed Forces.

India to Hold Naval Exercise with Vietnam

- 3 Indian warships namely INS Sahyadri, INS Shakti & INS Kamorta entered into Tien Sa Port, Vietnam on May 21st.
- A professional interaction will be held between personnel of the two navies as well as official calls & interaction with dignitaries of the Vietnamese government.
- On completion of the harbour phase, warships from the two navies would conduct their 1st joint naval exercise.

CRPF Raises 'Bastariya Battalion'

- In a bid to enhance combat capabilities in Naxal-hit area of Bastar district in Chhattisgarh, the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), for the first time, has decided to include local representation in a special unit.
- The special unit has been numbered as 241 and named as 'Bastariya Battalion'.
- All the candidates have been selected from four highly Naxal infested district in Chhattisgarh.

Exercise 'Gandiv Vijay' in Rajasthan

• Thousands of soldiers with warfighting equipment of South Western Command's Chetak corps are engaged in intensive training in Mahajan field firing ranges of Rajasthan under exercise 'Gandiv Vijay'.

- The exercise, which began two months ago, will conclude on May 23rd.
- The exercise involves multi-mode mobilisation from dispersed locations.

TN to Build India's Next-Gen Aircraft

- The Aeronautical Development Agency has set the ball rolling for building the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft by extending an invitation to private players in Tamil Nadu (TN).
- It is the 1st time an indigenous military aircraft programme is seeing the involvement of private players.
- It is also the 1st time a defence plane development project is proposed to be executed outside Bengaluru.

BRO Built a Road from India's Border to China

- The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) has created history by establishing a road link to India's border with China beyond Limeking and along the Tama Chung Chung-Taksing Axis recently.
- The road from Limeking now connects TCC to Taksing, covering a distance of approximately 80 km.
- BRO develops and maintains road networks in India's border areas. It comes under the Ministry of Defence.

Army Finalised Ammunition Project

- The Army has finalised a Mega ₹15,000-crore project under which a range of ammunition for its critical weapons and tanks will be produced indigenously.
- The implementation of the project is being monitored by the top brass of the Army and the Defence Ministry.
- The immediate aim of the project is to create an inventory of all major weapons to enable the forces to fight a 30-day war.

Coast Guard Ship Vikram Arrives in Mangalore

- Indian Coast Guard vessel Vikram, the first in the class of seven new-generation offshore patrol vessels under the union government's 'Make in India' initiative, arrived at Mangalore.
- The ship is built with an integrated platform management system to enable special control capabilities.
- The ship is also designed to carry a twin-engine light and heavy helicopters.

Indian Army Tests 'Air Cavalry' Concept

- The Indian Army has tested in the desert terrain of Rajasthan the military concept of 'Air Cavalry'.
- The 'Air Cavalry' concept was used by the US Army to locate and assault enemy ground forces during the Vietnam War.
- Under the 'Air Cavalry' concept, attack helicopters are fully integrated with tanks and mechanised ground forces.

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Joint EEZ Surveillance of Maldives

- Indian Naval ship Sumedha, a Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel has been deployed to undertake joint EEZ surveillance of Maldives.
- The ship would undertake an Operational Turnaround at Male during which it would interact & impart training to Maldives' National Defence Forces personnel.
- Joint EEZ surveillance is an endeavor of Govt of India & Indian Navy to ensure safety & security of the vast EEZ.

Army's Vijay Prahar Exercise in Rajasthan Ends

- Indian Army's 'Vijay Prahar' exercise in which over 25,000 troops of the Jaipur based South Western Command participated culminated in Rajasthan's Suratgarh.
- Fighting equipments including tanks, attack helicopters, drones and fighter aircraft were used in the month-long exercise.
- The concept of 'Air Cavalry' employing attack & weaponized helicopters was also validated during the exercise.

India to Station Fighter Planes in Andaman

- India has decided to station fighter airplanes in Andaman & Nicobar Islands to strengthen India's hold over the crucial Malacca, Sunda, and Lombok Strait.
- This is the first time fighter airplanes will be positioned in Andaman and Nicobar islands since World War II.
- The Malacca, Sunda and Lombok straits are narrow ocean passes that connect the Indian Ocean to the South China Sea.

India-Malaysia Joint Exercise Enters Phase 2

- The second phase of the Indian and Malaysian armies' joint military exercise 'Harimau Shakti' was initiated on May 7th.
- The exercise was conducted in Hulu Langat forest of Malaysia under harsh and humid conditions.
- The sappers team from 3 Engineer regiment of the Indian Army are training with the Malaysian Army combat engineers as a part of their first joint exercise.

BrahMos to Attain 76% Localisation in 6 months

- BrahMos, the world's fastest supersonic cruise missile, will be achieving 75% localisation in the next six months.
- As of today 65% of the value (in BrahMos) is created in India.
- The Quad launcher is designed for supersonic cruise missiles in an inclined configuration on-board our navy ships.
- The launcher provides superior firepower as compared to the twin canister.

Royal Navy Receives its Minesweeping System

- Britain's Royal Navy has taken the delivery of its 1st unmanned autonomous minesweeping system.
- The system will restore the Royal Navy's sweep capability, enabling it to tackle modern digital mines that may not otherwise be discovered in challenging mine hunting conditions.
- It can be operated from a land or ship-based control station & can be deployed from a suitable ship or port.

Dakota Aircraft Joined IAF again

- A restored Dakota aircraft has joined the Indian Air Force more than 4 decades after the fleet was phased out following an illustrious service record.
- Dakota popularly known as Gooney Bird was the 1st major transport aircraft inducted in the Indian Air Force.
- Restored Dakota rechristened as Parashuram will join Vintage Fly of one each of Tiger Moth & Howard raised at Hindan Air Force Station

First meet of Defence Planning Committee

- The new Defence Planning Committee (DPC) met for the 1st time under the chairmanship of National Security Advisor Ajit Doval.
- The DPC will draft National Security Strategy (NSS) and other doctrines as well as ushering reforms in the country's higher defence management and planning.
- The Chief of Integrated Staff in the Ministry of Defence will be the member secretary of DPC.

India, China Militaries to Set up Hotline

- Militaries of India & China have agreed to set up a hotline between their headquarters after the informal summit between PM Modi & President Xi in Wuhan.
- Hotline is regarded as a major confidence-building measure as it would enable the militaries of both countries to intensify communication to avert border tensions.
- India already has a hotline with Pakistan that was 1st used in 1991.

India Among Top 5 Defence Spenders

- According to a Swedish arms watchdog, India & China were among the 5 Biggest Military spenders which together accounted for 60% of the Total Global Defence Expenditure of \$1.739 Trillion in 2017.
- India spent \$63.9 Billion in 2017 to expand, modernise & enhance the operational capability of its armed forces.
- The 5 top military spenders in 2017 were US, China, Saudi Arabia, Russia & India.

Vijay Prahar Exercise Took Place in Rajasthan

• More than 20,000 troops of strike formations of the Indian Army's South Western Command were

engaged in 'Vijay Prahar' exercise near Suratgarh in Rajasthan.

- The aim of the exercise was to fine-tune jointmanship with the Indian Air Force.
- The other aspects which were focused were fighting capabilities through armed helicopters and fighting and operate in the nuclear environment.

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