

WEEKLY

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12TH AUGUST - 18TH AUGUST 2018

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Awards & Honours

Delhi official wins WHO award

- Delhi government's additional director of health S K Arora has been awarded the prestigious WHO World No Tobacco Day 2017 Award for his extraordinary contribution towards tobacco control.
- Tobacco prevalence in Delhi has come down by 6.5% in the past six years.
- The National Health Policy 2017 has set targets of relative reduction in tobacco prevalence by 15% by 2020 and 30% by 2025.

McQueen to receive BAFTA's Britannia Award

- British director Steve McQueen will receive BAFTA's John Schlesinger Britannia Award.
- McQueen, who won an Oscar for 12 Years a Slave, would be this year's recipient of the John Schlesinger Britannia Award for excellence in directing.
- The award's previous recipients include Danny Boyle, Christopher Nolan, and Quentin Tarantino.

3 scientist awarded by Albany Medical Center

- The recipients of the annual Albany Medical Center Prize in Medicine and Biomedical Research were announced on 15th August 2018.
- The recipients are James Allison, Dr Carl June and Dr Steven Rosenberg.
- Three scientists will share a \$500,000 medical prize for their studies of the immune system that have led to innovative treatments for cancer, HIV and other diseases.

Shaurya Chakra for Major Aditya, Aurangzeb

- Rifleman Aurangzeb and Major Aditya Kumar of Indian Army will be conferred the Shaurya Chakra along with 18 others Armed Forces Personnel and members of Paramilitary Forces.
- Sepoy Vrahma Pal Singh was selected for Kirti Chakra posthumously.
- The President has approved 131 Gallantry Awards to armed forces personnel and members of paramilitary forces.

Prez awards medals to Indian Coast Guard

- President of India has awarded one President's Tatrakshak Medal for Distinguished Service, five Tatrakshak Medal for Gallantry and two Tatrakshak Medal for Meritorious Service on the to Indian Coast Guard personnel.
- The President's Tatrakshak Medal for Distinguished Service has been awarded to IG Rakesh Pal.
- These awards are being given to the personnel of Indian Coast Guard since 1990.

Gallantry award for members of INSV Tarini

- President Ram Nath Kovind approved 'Nao Sena' medal for the six women crew members of Indian Naval Sailing Vessel Tarini.
- Lt. Commander Vartika Joshi, who led the expedition, Lt. Commander Prathibha, and Swathi, Aishwarya, Vijaya and Payal have been awarded the Nao Sena Medal.
- Nao Sena Medal is a gallantry award that recognises individual acts of exceptional devotion to duty or courage.

Days & Events

Raj to observe Sept as 'month of nutrition'

- Rajasthan will observe September as the "month of nutrition" to create awareness among people living in the state.
- In the month of nutrition awareness in rural as well as urban areas will be created for nutrition.
- From September, students of Class 1 to 8 of government schools will be given milk daily instead of thrice a week.

Nepal-India Literature Festival 2018 begins

- Nepal-India Literature Festival 2018 has begun in Birgunj, Nepal on August 12, 2018.
- On this occasion eminent writers from both the countries were also felicitated.
- Around 250 participants from India and Nepal are attending the two day festival.
- The event has been organised by Nepal India Co-operation Forum.

International Affairs

United States forms Iran Action Group

- Mike Pompeo, the US secretary of state, has announced the creation of the Iran Action Group (IAG).
- IAG is a dedicated group to coordinate and run the US's policy towards Iran following President Donald Trump's unilateral withdrawal from a multinational nuclear deal with Tehran.
- Brian Hook, the Department of State's director of policy planning, has been appointed as its head.

Ibrahim re-elected as president of Mali

- President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has been re-elected as President of Mali after beating opposition candidate.
- Keita will serve his second five-year term as Malian leader.
- Keita will take office on September 4, 2018.
- Mali is a landlocked nation home to at least 20 ethnic groups where the majority of people live on less than \$2 a day.

U.S. imposes sanctions on Myanmar military

- The United States imposed sanctions on four Myanmar military and police commanders and two army units.
- The sanctions were imposed for their involvement in **human rights abuses against the country's Rohingya Muslims**.
- The sanctions marked the toughest US action so far **in response to Myanmar's crackdown on the Rohingya minority** which started in 2017.

Imran Khan takes oath as Pakistan PM

- Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) chairman Imran Khan on 18th August, 2018 took oath as the 22nd Prime Minister of Pakistan.
- The oath-taking ceremony was administered by Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain.
- In the July 25, 2018 general elections, the PTI had emerged as the single largest party with 116 seats.

Paraguayan President Abdo Benítez sworn in

- Right-wing former Senator Mario Abdo Benítez has been sworn in as the new president of Paraguay after defeating his liberal rival in April elections.
- Mr Abdo Benítez is the son of a close aide to ex-military dictator Alfredo Stroessner.
- He replaces Horacio Cartes.
- Mario Abdo Benítez got involved in politics in 2004.

Qatar to invest \$15 billion in Turkey

- Qatar has promised to make a USD 15 billion direct investment in Turkey.
- The announcement came after Qatar's emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani held talks with Turkish President Erdogan.
- Turkey has been badly hit by a currency crisis amid a widening diplomatic standoff with the United States.

5 Caspian Sea states sign landmark convention

- The leaders of the five countries bordering the Caspian Sea signed a landmark deal on the legal status of the sea.
- The leaders of Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Russia and Turkmenistan signed the agreement on the status of the inland sea.

- The agreement was made to settle a long-lasting dispute on whether the Caspian is a sea or a lake.

RCEP trade ministers to meet in Singapore

- Trade ministers of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) member countries, including India and China, will hold a crucial meeting in Singapore on August 30-31, 2018.
- RCEP mega trade pact aims to cover goods, services, investments, economic and technical cooperation, competition and intellectual property rights.
- RCEP bloc comprises 10 Asean members and their six FTA partners.

Meeting of Senior Officials of BIMSTEC held

- A special meeting of Senior Officials of the Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) was held in Kathmandu on 11th Aug.
- Senior officers from all member states and Secretary General of BIMSTEC attended the meeting.
- The group was formed in 1997.

National Affairs

India petitions FAO for a 'Year for Millets'

- Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers welfare has requested the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) to **declare an "upcoming" year as International Year of Millets**.
- This would help garner wider global attention to millets which are not only nutritious but also resilient to climate change.
- India is celebrating 2018 as the national year of millets.

NPPA fixes ceiling price of 92 drugs

- The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) has fixed the ceiling price for 92 drug formulations, including those used for the treatment of cancer, hepatitis C, migraine and diabetes among others.
- NPPA fixes the ceiling price of essential medicines of Schedule I under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order (DPCO) 2013.
- NPPA monitors the prices of controlled and decontrolled drugs.

BSNL launches VOIP based WINGS service

- Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) has launched BSNL WINGS a VOIP based service.
- In WINGS, there is no SIM or cable wiring as is a VOIP service through an app.
- The WINGS service offers unlimited free audio/video calling for one year.

- The facility can be used anywhere within the country and the app automatically uses the existing address book in the phone.

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UK returns stolen 12th century Buddha statue

- A 12th Century statue of Lord Buddha which was stolen from India some 57 years ago was returned by the United Kingdom on 15th August 2018.
- The gold idol with silver inlay was one of the 14 images stole in 1961 from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) site museum in Nalanda, Bihar.
- The image was discovered by Vijay Kumar, who is associated with India Pride Project.

Akshay Kumar is Road Safety Brand Ambassador

- Akshay Kumar was appointed as brand ambassador for road safety by Union ministry of Road, Transport and Highways to promote road safety through its new campaign.
- As a part of the campaign, Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari launched three short videos, featuring Akshay Kumar to create road safety awareness.

Uttarakhand HC appoints itself as guardian

- The Uttarakhand high court said it would act as the legal guardian of cows in the state.
- The court did this by invoking the 'parens patriae' doctrine and is a doctrine that grants the court inherent power and authority to act as guardian for those who are unable to take care for themselves.
- The court banned slaughter of cows, bulls, bullocks, heifers or calves in the state.

JCOs are gazetted officers, says Defence Min

- Junior Commissioned Officers (JCO) in the Indian military are gazetted officers, the Defence Ministry has clarified in an order issued on August 1, 2018.
- The Ministry has instructed the three services to issue suitable identity cards to the JCOs immediately in the order.
- JCOs and equivalent officer having been accorded gazetted officer status by an Act of Parliament.

SC approves colour coding of vehicles

- The Supreme Court approved a proposal submitted by the Union of India (UOI) to colour-code vehicles according to the fuel they run on, in an effort to help counter air pollution.
- The apex court ruling allows for blue stickers to be used for vehicles running on petrol and CNG, and orange stickers for diesel vehicles.
- However, it clarified that this would only be applicable in Delhi and NCR.

Egon to help BBB in PSB leadership programmes

- The Indian Banks' Association has appointed Egon Zehnder International as a 'Knowledge Partner' to the Banks Board Bureau.
- It will design, implement and institutionalise a flagship leadership development strategy for public sector banks in India.

- In addition, Hay Consultants Private Limited will assist the bureau in assessing leadership competencies of candidates.

Nat Wildlife Genetic Resource Bank inaugurated

- The 'National Wildlife Genetic Resource Bank' was inaugurated by Union Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan in Hyderabad
- This facility would facilitate the exchange of genetic material between Indian zoos for maintaining genetic diversity.
- Wildlife Genetic Resource Banking is the systematic collection and preservation of tissues, sperm, eggs and embryos, genetic material.

CJI changes subject-wise roster in SC

- The Chief Justice of India has changed the subject-wise roster for judges in the Supreme Court to categorise cases for Justice R. Banumathi, who now heads a Bench.
- The Bench headed by Justice Banumathi would hear cases on family law issues, labour, civil cases, public premises eviction, land law, etc.
- The subject-wise roster was first implemented from February 5, 2018.

Rajnath Singh to visit flood affected area

- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh to visit flood affected area in Kerala today.
- 14 teams of NDRF consisting of 404 rescuers and 31 boats are already deployed in various parts of flood hit districts
- Besides the NDRF, adequate columns of Army, Navy and Coast Guard, Helicopters of Indian Air Force, Navy & Coast Guard are also deployed.

India & World

11th World Hindi Conference begins

- The 11th World Hindi Conference, an event aimed at expanding the reach of the Hindi language at a global level, was inaugurated in Mauritius on 18th August, 2018.
- The theme of the conference for the year 2018 is "Hindi World and Indian Culture".
- World Hindi Conference was started in 1975 to make the Hindi language a medium of service and knowledge.

UK returns stolen 12th century Buddha statue

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- The image was discovered by Vijay Kumar, who is associated with India Pride Project.

India grants Rs 470m for Postal Highway

- The Government of India has released 470 million Nepali rupees grant for Postal Highway that runs across Terai region in Nepal.
- The amount has been released to maintain fund liquidity for the ongoing construction of 14 road packages under Postal Highway Project.
- Postal Highway also called 'Hulaki Rajmarg' runs across the Terai region of Nepal, from Bhadrapur to Dodhara.

Australia lifts ban on adoptions from India

- Australia has lifted a ban on the adoption of children from India.
- The ban was imposed eight years ago after a major trafficking scandal was exposed.
- The easing of restrictions follows protracted talks between the governments of India and Australia for the past two years.

India rejects U.K. proposal on DNA tests

- India rejected a proposal by the U.K. to use DNA sampling to establish the nationality of illegal migrants living there citing "privacy issues".
- As per the proposal, security agencies in India were to verify the antecedents of illegal migrants without documents in the U.K. within 72 days and those with documents within 15 days.
- India refused to sign the final pact in April 2018.

India hands 1st lot of houses in Sri Lanka

- India handed over the first lot of houses built for Indian-origin people in Sri Lanka's tea plantation areas on 12th August, 2018.
- India had committed 60,000 houses under the 'innovative Indian housing project'.
- It is the largest Indian assistance project in any country with a grant of over USD 350 million.

Personalities in News

Infosys CFO MD Ranganath resigns

- IT major Infosys said its Chief Financial Officer M D Ranganath has resigned from the company.
- Ranganath will continue in his current position till November 16, 2018.
- Ranganath had taken over the said role after the then CFO Rajiv Bansal had quit in 2015.
- Ranganath has worked at Infosys for 18 years.

Google honours Ebenezer Cobb Morley

- Google celebrated the birth anniversary of Ebenezer Cobb Morley, referred to as the father of modern football, with a doodle on 16th August 2018.

- Ebenezer Cobb Morley was a founding member and the first secretary of the Football Association or FA in 1863.
- FA is the oldest football body of the world and is credited with creating the rules and shaping modern football.

Ang Lee to be honoured by DGA

- Oscar-winning director Ang Lee will be one of the recipients of the annual Directors Guild of America (DGA) honours at its ceremony.
- The DGA Honours recognises individuals and institutions that have made distinguished contributions to American culture through the world of film and television.
- Ang Lee received the Oscar award for 'Life of Pi' in 2013.

N Raghuram elected Chair of INI

- Indian scientist-academician, N Raghuram, has been elected Chair of the International Nitrogen Initiative (INI), a global policy making initiative.
- Raghuram is the first Indian and Asian to be elected to the Chair.
- Raghuram specialises in the biological determinants of nitrogen use efficiency in crops.
- He has been the President of the Indian Nitrogen Group.

Govt dismisses Usha Ananthasubramanian

- The government has dismissed Usha Ananthasubramanian, former managing director of scam-hit Punjab National Bank and Allahabad Bank, from service.
- Usha, who completed her one year as the CEO & MD of Allahabad Bank on May 6 2018.
- She also served as the Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer of Punjab National Bank from August 2015 to May 2017.

Tahilramani sworn-in CJ of Madras HC

- Justice Vijaya Kamlesh Tahilramani was sworn-in as Chief Justice of the Madras High Court by Governor Banwarilal Purohit at a ceremony in Raj Bhavan in Chennai on Sunday.
- The new Chief Justice, along with Justice M. Duraiswamy would hear from August 13.
- She was born in 1958 and started practice in the Bombay High Court as well as City Civil and Sessions courts in Mumbai in 1982.

Environment

Tigress released into Satkosia Tiger Reserve

- A female tiger, brought from Madhya Pradesh's Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve was released in Satkosia Tiger Reserve.

- The name of the tigress is 'Sundari'.
- A male tiger was also brought from Madhya Pradesh's Kanha National Park to Satkosia Tiger Reserve.
- Satkosia Tiger Reserve is a tiger reserve located in the Angul district of Odisha.

Government Policies & Schemes

East-Coast freight corridor to come in 2019

- India's third freight corridor is likely to come up between Kharagpur and Vijaywada sections.
- The project, which is also called the East Coast Corridor, will be 1,114 km in length and is part of the Golden Quadrilateral project of Indian Railways.
- The Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd has sent a proposal to Indian Railways to undertake the 3rd freight corridor project.

India bans pet coke import for use as fuel

- The Government of India banned the import of petcoke for use as fuel but allowed import of the product by some industries, which will use it as feedstock.
- It is allowed only for cement, lime kiln, calcium carbide and gasification industries which uses pet coke as feedstock.

- India imports about half of its annual petcoke consumption mainly from the United States.

Govt launches 'Digital northeast vision'

- The Central Government launched the 'Digital Northeast Vision Document 2022' in Guwahati.
- North East Indian region has become the newest member of the Centre's flagship programme 'Digital India' initiative.
- 'Digital Northeast India Vision 2022' envisages in implementing the initiative throughout the North East through optimum utilization of information, communication, and technology.

Railways launches "Digital Screens"

- The Ministry of Railway has launched digital screens to spread awareness among public about the heritage of Indian Railways.
- The project aims at showcasing the legacy of Indian Railways through one to two minute-long movie clips on digital LED screens.
- In addition, QR code based posters on Railway Heritage are also being displayed at these stations.

Madhya Pradesh Launches "Dial 100" Police App

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on 15th August launched Dial 100 Mobile app.
- The App will help the needy at the time of emergency.
- As soon as police receive a call through Dial 100 application, Madhya Pradesh Police will reach the location as soon as possible.

Government portal starts advocacy drive

- The government has started an advocacy drive based on 'learning material' offered by WhatsApp to create awareness among students, government officials and others around the issue of fake news.
- The campaign, being run by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing on a portal — 'infosecawareness.in'.
- It is targeted at school children and youth as well as government officials.

Telangana launches two Human Welfare Schemes

- Telangana government launched two major schemes - free eye screening for all citizens and life insurance for farmers on 15th August, 2018.
- Under "Kanti Velugu" (Eye Sight), the entire population of 3.7 crore will be provided free eye care.
- "Rytu Bima" (Farmer insurance) is aimed at providing life insurance cover of Rs. 5 lakh to every farmer.

Permanent commission for women in armed force

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that women officers in India's armed forces would now

have the option to take up permanent commission through the Short Service Commission.

- As per the Short Service Commission, a woman officer can serve for 10-14 years.
- The Indian Air Force and the Indian Navy also grant permanent commission to women officers.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan unveiled

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the launch of world's largest government-funded programme - the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan.
- It will be launched on the birth anniversary of Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay on 25th September.
- The government has decided to provide 5 lakh rupees health care insurance coverage for the poor and vulnerable.

Odisha CM launches health scheme

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced the start of Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY), an universal health coverage scheme in the state on 15th August 2018.
- The scheme would benefit 70 lakh families.
- Under the scheme, secondary and tertiary chashless health care assistance will be provided up to Rs 5 lakh per family per annum.

New concession model for Greenfield airports

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation has proposed a new financial model for building Greenfield airports.
- Under new model, the concession fee given by the airport operator to the concessioning authority will **be based on a 'per passenger aeronautical model'**.
- The new model will be followed for building the Jewar airport in Uttar Pradesh.
- The new model will encourage increased private investment.

Scheme for monitoring drugs safety aspects

- The AYUSH Ministry introduced a new central sector scheme for monitoring of the safety aspects of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs and documenting their adverse effects.
- The ministry introduced the scheme for promoting pharmacovigilance of these drugs.
- All India Institute of Ayurveda was designated as the National Pharmacovigilance Centre.

WB govt lifts income ceiling for 'Kanyashree'

- The West Bengal government has widened the reach of its flagship women welfare scheme 'Kanyashree' by lifting the ceiling on annual family income.
- As per the scheme, unmarried girls above 13 years are offered cash incentive for remaining unmarried till 18.
- Kanyashree was launched in 2013 to prevent child marriage in economically weaker sections with an annual household income of ₹1.2 lakh.

NITI Aayog launches "Pitch to MOVE"

- NITI Aayog has launched "Pitch to MOVE" - a mobility pitch competition.
- The aim is to provide budding entrepreneurs of India a unique opportunity to pitch their business ideas to a distinguished jury.
- "Pitch to MOVE" is organised by NITI Aayog in collaboration with Invest India and Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers.

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SC launches 3 application for litigants

- The Supreme Court launched three applications to facilitate e-filing of cases, making digital payments and service of judicial notices through smartphones.
- SC launched E-courts services, E-pay and NSTEP (National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes) applications.
- The Chief Justice of India said that these applications would help the litigants.

Rajnath inaugurates NDMC Smart City projects

- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated various initiatives as part of smart city project of New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) on 13th August, 2018.
- The facilities inaugurated includes smart poles with free wi-fi, 360 degree cameras and environmental sensors, solar tree with the LED lights, mobile

charging points, ideation centre for promoting smart city entrepreneurs.

Hry to launch Ayushman Bharat in 22 districts

- Haryana will launch its pilot health project Ayushman Bharat Haryana from August 15, 2018 in 22 district hospitals, one ESI and one medical college.
- Under this scheme medical facility upto Rs 5 lakh will be provided for free to 15.50 lakh families.
- Initially this facility will be provided in government hospitals, which would later be started in empanelled private hospitals.

First project under Swadesh Darshan Scheme

- The first project under the central government's Swadesh Darshan Scheme, 'North East Circuit: Imphal and Khongjom', will be inaugurated by Manipur Governor Najma Heptulla on 14th August, 2018.
- The project covers 2 sites - Kangla Fort and Khongjom.
- 'Swadesh Darshan' is a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Tourism for the development of thematic circuits in the country.

Centre unlocks 66000 crore green fund

- The Centre has unlocked more than 66,000 crore rupees to increase the country's forest cover.
- The fund is an accumulated amount of money which user agencies have been depositing as compensation for diverting forest land for non-forest purposes.
- As per the rules about 80% of the total money will be used by the states for plantation and other green projects.

Farmer can avail Rs 1.50 lakh loan waiver

- The Maharashtra government has expanded the scope of the loan waiver scheme.
- The government has now extended the benefits to every member of the farmer's family in case of a separate loan account.
- Earlier, the state government had considered the farmer's family as one unit and considered it eligible to claim waiver of Rs 1.50 lakh agricultural debt.

Proposal for setting up of water aerodrome

- Civil Aviation Ministry has approved a proposal for setting up of water aerodromes in the country.
- In the first phase, Chilika Lake in Odisha, Sardar Sarovar Dam and Sabarmati river front Ahmedabad in Gujarat have been identified for construction of water aerodromes.
- Under the proposal, water aerodrome will be set up near locations of tourist and religious importance.

Science & Technology

Microsoft, Apollo Hospitals unveil AI

- Microsoft India and Apollo Hospitals unveiled the **'first-ever' artificial intelligence**-powered cardiovascular disease (CVD) risk score API (application program interface).
- It is designed to predict the risk of CVD in the Indian population.
- This would also enable doctors across the Apollo network of hospitals to drive preventive cardiac care across the country.

Iron and Titanium found on 'Ultrahot Jupiter'

- The astronomers carried out new observations of exoplanet Kelt-9b.
- Kelt-9b is the hottest exoplanet discovered and was discovered in 2017.
- Astronomers discovered that the atmosphere is made up of vaporized iron and titanium.
- The team used the Galileo National Telescope in La Palma, Canary Islands, to observe the planet.

China's rover to explore dark side of moon

- China has unveiled a new lunar rover as it prepares to become the first nation in the world to explore the dark side of the moon.
- China's last lunar rover -- named Yutu, or Jade Rabbit -- ceased operation in August 2016 on the surface of the moon as part of the Chang'e 3 mission.
- China announced its intentions in 2015 to send a rover to the dark side of the moon.

ISRO's first mission to study the Sun

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) plans to study the Sun through its Aditya-L1 satellite which will be inserted in a halo orbit, which is 1.5 million km from the Earth during 2019-2020.
- Aditya-L1 will be launched by PSLV-XL from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
- ISRO had planned to use Aditya-1 to observe only the solar corona, which is the outer layer of the Sun.

NASA's Opportunity Rover remains unreachable

- NASA has reportedly not been able to establish contact with the Opportunity Rover for over two months.
- Opportunity Rover has been exploring Mars for 14 years.
- The last time NASA heard from Opportunity was June 10, 2018.
- The rover had to undergo an emergency shutdown in June, after the Martian dust storm prevented it from powering itself through its solar panels.

CSIR develops new Clot buster

- A new Clot buster, 'PEGylated Streptokinase' has been developed at CSIR-Institute of Microbial Technology, Chandigarh and is all set to revolutionize the treatment of ischemic strokes.
- Ischemic stroke is a condition caused by a dysfunction in the supply of blood to the brain.
- CSIR and Epygen Biotech Pvt. Ltd. have entered into an agreement to develop the PEGylated Streptokinase.

Chandrayaan-2 to be launched in January-March

- India's second moon mission Chandrayaan-2 will now be launched in the January-March window in 2019.
- Chandrayaan-2, which will be launched onboard the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) Mk-3.
- **The lander has been named "Vikram" as a tribute to the pioneer of India's space programme and former ISRO chairman (1963-71), Vikram Sarabhai, Sivan said.**

ISRO plans to launch TV channel

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is planning to launch a TV channel to promote scientific temper among people and conduct training camps for school students.
- ISRO will select students and organise training camps for 25 to 30 days and the students will be allowed to visit laboratory and make their small satellite.
- ISRO was planning to set up an incubation centre for startups.

World's first mission to touch the Sun starts

- **NASA's Parker Solar Probe, mankind's first mission to 'touch' the Sun, has been launched today on a seven-year long journey.**
- Liftoff took place from Space Launch Complex 37 at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in the US early today.
- The Parker Solar Probe will perform the closest-ever **observations of the Sun's outer atmosphere, called the corona.**

Places in News

First penguin to be born in India

- India's first Humboldt penguin was born on 15th August at Mumbai's Veer Jijamata Udyan.
- It is the first penguin to be born in the country.
- Eight Humboldt penguins were brought to Mumbai from South Korea in July 2016.
- The zoo authorities will later conduct a DNA test to find out its gender and will then name it.

Haryana's first civil airport in Hisar

- Haryana's first civil airport was inaugurated at Hisar.

- A MoU was also signed between the state government and SpiceJet Limited for assistance in development of Phase-II and III of the integrated aviation hub.
- With the inauguration of the first phase of the project today, all facilities required for flying an aircraft have been made available at the airport.

Jodhpur, Marwar cleanliest railway stations

- Rajasthan's Jodhpur and Marwar railway stations have emerged the cleanliest among the major stations in the country.
- While Jodhpur secured the first position in A1 category stations for 2018, Marwar took the pole position in A category, according to the study report released by Railway Minister Piyush Goyal.
- The North Western Railway (NWR) topped the list as the cleanest zone.

Committees & Recommendations

New panel formed on mullaperiyar dam

- A special committee headed by National Water Commission was formed to monitor situation in Mullaperiyar dam.
- The Cabinet Secretary constituted a committee chaired by chairman, Central Water Commission and Engineers-in-Chief of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- **The decision comes in the wake of Kerala's** request to Tamil Nadu not to allow the water to reach beyond 142 ft.

IRDA constitutes working group

- Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDA) constituted a working group to the norms for insurance surveyors.
- The 7-member working group has been formed to address areas pertaining to licensing, renewal and others in the context of the existing regulatory framework for Surveyors and Loss Assessors.
- The working group will submit its report within 2 months.

Business & Economy

IRCTC partners with PhonePe

- Mobile payment platform PhonePe has partnered with Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) to facilitate digital payment on the IRCTC Rail Connect Android app.
- The partnership will enable over 100 million PhonePe users to use their bank accounts to pay for their travel booking directly via UPI, credit and debit cards, and PhonePe digital wallets.
- PhonePe is owned by Flipkart.

MSME credit growth slowed during note ban

- According to Reserve Bank of India's report, credit growth in the micro, small and medium enterprise (MSME) sector declined during the demonetisation phase.
- Bank credit to MSMEs increased on average by 8.5% year on year during the June quarter of fiscal year 2018-19.
- MSMEs face constraints in accessing credit through formal channels because about 97% of them operate in the informal sector.

HAL becomes first PSU to transact on TReDS

- Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) has become the first public sector enterprise to make a transaction on the "TReDS platform".
- TReDS is an online electronic institutional mechanism for facilitating the financing of trade receivables of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) through multiple financiers.
- In 2017, the government mandated all major PSUs to join TReDS platform.

India clocked over 10% GDP growth

- Indian economy clocked 10.23% and 10.78% growth in 2007-08 and 2010-11 respectively.
- This is according to the GDP data released by the Ministry of Statistics based on new base series of 2011-12 as the base year.
- **As per new calculation, India's** GDP growth was consistently over 8%, which slowed down during the financial crisis in 2008-09.
- The economic growth fell drastically after 2010-11.

SEBI eases process of issuance of securities

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) allowed investors to place multiple bids in a private placement issue on debt basis and permitted depositories to act as facilitators.
- This will ease the process of issuance of securities on electronic book platform.
- SEBI has also allowed closed bidding on electronic book platform (EBP) along with open bidding.

SEBI cuts listing time for public issue

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) drastically cut the timeline for listing of debt securities to 6 days from 12 days at present.
- This will make the existing process of issuance of such securities simpler and cost-effective.
- The new rule would be applicable for all public issues of debt securities from October 1, 2018.

TCS becomes most valued company

- Tata Consultancy Services on 16th August 2018 pipped Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) to regain the crown of India's most valued company in terms of market capitalisation.
- RIL had on 14th August 2018 dethroned TCS to clinch the title of the most valued Indian company by market valuation.
- The m-cap figure of companies changes daily with stock price movement.

NPCI unveils 'more secure' UPI

- The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) launched the updated unified payments interface (UPI) 2.0 on August 16, 2018.
- The new version of UPI, in addition to current and savings accounts, will let customers link overdraft accounts to UPI.
- Another feature would allow customers to check their invoice sent by merchants prior to making payments.

India's oil import bill to jump by \$26 bn

- India's crude oil import bill is likely to jump by about \$26 billion in 2018-19 as rupee dropping to a record low has made buying of oil from overseas costlier.
- India imports more than 80% of its oil needs, spent \$87.7 billion on importing 220.43 million tonnes (MT) of crude oil in 2017-18.
- For 2018-19, the imports are pegged at almost 227 MT.

India Ratings cuts growth forecast to 7.2%

- India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has revised its FY19 economic growth forecast down to 7.2% from 7.4% earlier.
- It cited the headwinds emanating from elevated **global crude oil prices and the government's decision** to fix the minimum support prices of all kharif crops at 1.5 times the production cost.
- Ind-Ra provides ratings, research and rigorous analytics of market in India.

Bharti Axa ties up with Airtel Payments Bank

- Bharti Axa Life Insurance and Airtel Payments Bank entered into an alliance to offer the 'Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana' (PMJJBY).
- Airtel Payments Bank also becomes the first payments bank in India to offer the PMJJBY.

- Under the tie-up, PMJJBY will be initially available at one lakh Airtel Payments Bank banking points across the country.

BSE to launch liquidity enhancement plan

- BSE will launch a liquidity enhancement scheme on monthly single stock options and index options.
- Under the liquidity enhancement scheme (LES), brokers and other market intermediaries are given incentives for a specified period of time to bring in liquidity.
- LES will generate investor interest in securities which have limited trading activity.

NTPC to set up unit for coal mining

- NTPC will soon set up a subsidiary to handle its coal mining operations.
- NTPC also has a plan to list the coal subsidiary subsequently on stock exchanges.
- It would cover operations of its all coal mines and will be run like a coal company.
- The company has already started extracting coal from the Pakri Barwadih mine.

Trade deficit hits 62-month high in July 2018

- **A sharp rise in the crude oil bill led to India's trade deficit** widening to a 62-month high in July 2018, despite exports growing by 14.32%.
- The trade deficit increased to \$18.02 billion in July 2018, up from \$16.61 billion in June 2018.
- A broad-based hardening of the international crude price has led to the trade deficit rising every month in 2018-19.

REC inks pact with German bank

- Rural Electrification Corporation has inked a loan agreement with German bank KfW for EUR 200 million.
- The fund will be used to finance clean energy projects in India.
- This is REC's fourth line of credit under Indo-German development cooperation which REC will utilise to finance renewable energy projects in India.

WPI inflation slows to 5.09% in July 2018

- Inflation at the wholesale level slowed to 5.09% in July 2018 largely due to a cooling down of food price inflation.
- The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation was **lower than June's 5.77%**.
- The WPI is published by the Office of the Economic Adviser in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The new series of WPI with base 2011-12 is effective from April 2017.

Mazgon Dock Shipbuilders gets SEBI's nod

- Mazgon Dock Shipbuilders has received markets regulator SEBI's go ahead to float an initial public offering.
- The company had filed draft papers with the SEBI in April, 2018 and obtained its "observations" on August 10, 2018.
- SEBI's "observations" are necessary for any company to launch public issues like initial public offer (IPO) and follow-on public offer (FPO) and rights issue.

Inflation slows to 9-month low at 4.17%

- Retail inflation eased to a nine-month low of 4.17% in July 2018 as food inflation cooled to its lowest level since July 2017.
- Inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) slowed from the 4.92% pace set in June 2018.
- Among all the Indian states and Union Territories, West Bengal recorded the highest annual inflation rate of 7.37%.

RBI net sells USD 6.184 bn of US currency

- RBI continued to remain a net seller of the U.S. dollar in June 2018, after it sold \$6.184 billion of the U.S. dollar in the spot market, RBI data showed.
- In June 2018, the RBI bought \$4.020 billion of U.S. dollar, while it sold \$10.204 billion in the spot market.
- In May 2018 and April 2018, RBI had net sold Rs. 5.767 billion and \$2.483 billion of the U.S. currency, respectively.

Axis Bank introduces Iris authentication

- Axis Bank has become the first bank in the country to introduce Iris Scan Authentication feature for Aadhaar-based transactions through its micro ATM tablets.
- This service will boost the bank's financial inclusion.
- Micro ATMs completely eliminate the requirement of debit cards, passwords, PINs, and user IDs, and empower consumers to avail banking services using only their Aadhaar numbers.

NPAs in education sector on the rise

- As per the IBA data, the percentage of NPA to outstanding education loan rose from 7.3 percent in March 2016 to 7.67 percent in the following year and then jumped to 8.97 percent in March 2018.
- The outstanding education loan amount at the end of 2017-18 was Rs 71,724.65 crore of which Rs 6,434.62 crore was NPA.
- PSBs' share in total lending by banks to education sector is about 91.5 percent.

Sports

UAE all set to host Asia Cup 2018

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the Emirates Cricket Board (ECB) signed an agreement for the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to host the prestigious Asia Cup.
- The Asia Cup 2018 will have cricket teams from India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.
- The tournament will be held from September 15 to September 28 in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

India won silver medal at cycling C'ship

- Teen cyclist Esow Alben won the silver medal at the UCI Junior Track Cycling World Championships in Switzerland.
- **This is India's first-ever medal** at any cycling World Championships.
- Alben became the Junior World No. 1 this July 2018 after becoming the first Indian to win a gold medal at the Asian Junior Track Cycling Championships.

Asian Games begin in Jakarta

- The 18th edition of the Asian Games officially kicked off in the Indonesian capital Jakarta on 18th August 2018.
- Asian Games 2018, also known as Jakarta Palembang 2018, starting from August 18 will end on September 2, 2018, in the Indonesian cities of Jakarta and Palembang.
- It is the second time for Jakarta to host the sports games after 1962.

India rise to 96th spot in FIFA Ranking

- India's football team have jumped one spot higher to take the 96th spot in the latest FIFA World Rankings.

- The improvement came in the ranking after FIFA implemented a new ranking system called 'Elo' where points are added and subtracted to the team's existing tally before every match.
- France clinched the number one FIFA ranking followed by Belgium, Brazil, Croatia and Uruguay.

Nihal Sarin becomes India's 53rd Grandmaster

- Nihal Sarin became India's 53rd Grandmaster after attaining his third and final Grand Master-norm in the Abu Dhabi Masters.
- He is only the third grandmaster from Kerala after GN Gopal and SL Narayanan.
- He is the twelfth youngest grandmaster in chess history.
- Earlier in June 2018, Chennai-born R Praggnanandhaa secured the title of the grandmaster and became India's 52nd grandmaster.

Ramesh appointed women's team head coach

- The Board for Control of Cricket in India (BCCI) appointed Ramesh Powar as the Head Coach of Indian Women's Cricket Team.
- Powar's term will include a tour to Sri Lanka, a bilateral series in the West Indies in October 2018 followed by the ICC Women's World T20 in West Indies in November 2018.
- Powar has played 31 ODIs and two Tests from 2004 to 2007 for India.

Anderson 1st to took 100 wickets at Lord's

- England fast bowler James Anderson became the first bowler to take 100 Test wickets at the Lord's Cricket Ground.
- Anderson achieved the feat on day four of the second Test in the ongoing five-match Test series against India.
- It was India's opening batsman Murali Vijay who became his 100th Test wicket.

Rafael Nadal wins fourth Rogers Cup

- Rafael Nadal won his 80th Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) World Tour title on August 12, 2018.
- Nadal beat Stefanos Tsitsipas for his fourth Rogers Cup crown and fifth victory of the year.
- Nadal also won the Rogers Cup in Toronto in 2008 and in Montreal in 2005 and 2013.

Messi is Barcelona's most decorated player

- Lionel Messi won his 33rd title to become the most successful player of Barcelona on August 12, 2018.
- Messi is the Barcelona's new captain.
- Barcelona beat Sevilla in the Spanish Super Cup as Messi overtook Andres Iniesta, who had 32 titles when he left for the Japanese league.

Gerard Pique confirms retirement from team

- Barcelona defender Gerard Pique confirmed on **Saturday that he has retired from Spain's** national team.
- Pique had announced before the World Cup that he did not plan on returning to the national team after the tournament in Russia.
- Pique was an indisputable starter when Spain won the 2010 World Cup and the 2012 European Championship.

Defence

Israeli Navy to procure Barak 8 missile

- The multipurpose Barak 8 missile defence system will be procured by the Israeli Navy to protect its economic zones and strategic facilities from diversified threats.
- The Barak 8 missile defence system is jointly developed by India and Israel.
- Barak-8 is an operational air and missile defense system used by the Israeli Navy as well as by the Indian Navy and air forces.

DAC approves procurement of 6 patrol vessels

- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved procurement of six indigenously designed and manufactured Next Generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (NGOPVs) for the Indian Navy.
- The DAC is headed by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- The vessels will be built in indigenous shipyards and will be fitted with state-of-the-art sensor suite with increased endurance.

Pak Navy's maritime ship to visit Colombo

- Pakistan Navy's maritime security ship 'Kashmir' to visit Sri Lanka's Colombo port on Monday for a four days visit.
- During the stay the officers and men of the ship will take part in various professional activities with Sri Lankan Navy.

US suspends military training with Pakistan

- The Trump administration has suspended more than a decade-long military training programme of Pakistani personnel at the US institutions.
- This come days after Islamabad and Moscow signed an agreement to allow Pakistani troops to receive training at the Russian defence centres.
- Pakistani officers have been receiving military training and education in the US since early 1960.