WEEKLY

5TH AUGUST-11TH AUGUST 2018

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Awards & Honours

Oscars introduces new 'popular film' category

- The Academy which runs the Oscars ceremony has added a new category to honour popular films.
- The Academy also plans to set an earlier air date for the Oscars in 2020 — February 9 — and will be making that broadcast more "globally accessible."
- The award show will also be capped at three hours long.

Days & Events

World Biofuel day observed on August 10

- World Biofuel Day is observed every year on 10th August.
- The aim is to create awareness about the importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels and to highlight the various efforts made by the Government in the biofuel sector.
- The World Biofuel Day is being observed by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas since 2015.

International Affairs

Ivan Duque sworn in as new Colombian prez

- Colombia's conservative Ivan Duque Marquez took oath as the country's 60th president, succeeding Juan Manuel Santos, who had been in power since 2010.
- Duque defeated Petro, in a presidential run-off in June with 54% votes.
- Duque who formerly served as a senator was the presidential candidate for the Democratic Centre Party for the election in 2018.

U.S. sanctions against Iran back in effect

- The first set of U.S. sanctions against Iran that had been eased under the landmark nuclear accord have gone back into effect.
- An executive order by President Donald Trump reimposed the sanctions on financial transactions that involve U.S. dollars.
- U.S sanctions targeting Iran's oil sector and central bank are to be reimposed in early November 2018.

China successfully tests hypersonic aircraft

- China has successfully tested its first cutting-edge hypersonic aircraft, 'Xingkong-2' or Starry Sky-2.
- The aircraft could carry nuclear warheads and penetrate any current generation anti-missile defence systems.
- The hypersonic aircraft was designed by the China Academy of Aerospace Aerodynamics in collaboration with the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation.

Russia appoints Steven Seagal as US envoy

- Russia has appointed martial artist and action film star Steven Seagal as a special envoy to improve ties with the United States.
- His responsibility will be to "facilitate relations between Russia and the United States in the humanitarian field, including cooperation in culture, arts and public and youth exchanges."
- Seagal was also granted Serbian citizenship in 2016.

U.K. to have new organ donation law

- The U.K. government announced new plans to change the law for organ and tissue donation to address the urgent need for organs within the Indian-origin community in the country.
- The proposed new system of consent for organ and tissue donation is expected to come into effect in England in 2020 as part of a drive to help Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people.



National Affairs

Carrying hard copy of DL not compulsory now

- Carrying a physical copy of the driving licence and the vehicle's Registration Certificate (RC) is not compulsory now as the government has validated digital copies.
- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said that states have been issued an advisory to accept the documents in digital format.
- Documents are present on the government's DigiLocker or mParivahan platform.

Santali to get own Wiki edition

- Santali has become the first Indian tribal language to get a Wikipedia edition in its own script after the Santali Wikipedia went live earlier this month.
- Wikipedia contributors from India, Bangladesh and Nepal generated the content for the page, officials said.
- Santhali is written in OI Chiki script and spoken by 6.4 million people, according to the 2001 census.

HP Gov shed British-era 'His Excellency' tag

• In a departure from the British-era practice, Himachal Governor Acharya Devvrat has directed the state government to discontinue prefixing the words "His Excellency" or "Mahamhim" as a greeting while addressing him.

- Further, Devvrat said "honourable" should be prefixed to his name.
- In 2012, then President Pranab Mukherjee had introduced a new protocol for greeting the constitutional head.

NGT denies Sterlite to operate

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) once again denied permission to the Sterlite Industries' Thootukudi plant to operate or carry out maintenance independently.
- The Thootukudi plant had been operational since the last 22 years, having a capacity of producing four lakh tonne copper per annum.
- Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB) issued closure orders on May 23, 2018.

NITI Aayog to host Investor Conference

- NITI Aayog hosted an investors' conference to attract investments for the development of eco-tourism on public private partnership basis in Andaman & Nicobar, and Lakshadweep Islands.
- The conference was inaugurated by NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant.
- NITI Aayog has been mandated to steer the Holistic Development of Islands program, along with the respective UT administration/ State Governments.

Supreme Court finalises new BCCI Constitution

- The Supreme Court relaxed some of the key recommendations made by Justice Lodha panel relating to reform cricket administration in the country.
- Crucial modifications have been brought about in the 'One State-One Vote' policy and interpretation of the cooling-off period for BCCI office bearers.
- The Court also accorded full membership to Railways, Services and Association of Universities.

MoU signed between Tribal Affairs & AYUSH

- Ministries of AYUSH and Tribal Affairs inked a MoU to promote Medicinal and Aromatic Plants and forest produce for livelihood development of tribal people.
- National Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Board will identify potential medicinal plant species of the tribal areas.
- The MoU will support training and awareness program on Good Agricultural Practices & Good Field Collection Practices.

AllA signs MoU with IIT

• All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) signed a MoU with the Indian Institute of Technology to boost research in traditional medicine and streamline hospital care facilities in the country.

- The MoU is aimed at upgrading the national institutes of traditional medicine at par with the IITs and IIMs.
- AllA is a public Ayurveda medicine & research institution located in New Delhi.

Delhi HC decriminalises begging

- The Delhi High Court decriminalised begging in Delhi, saying provisions penalising the act were unconstitutional and deserved to be struck down.
- The consequence of this decision would be that prosecution under the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, against persons alleged to have committed the offence of begging, would be liable to be struck down.

Goa gets its own app-based taxi service

- Goa got its first and exclusive app-based taxi service called 'Goamiles'.
- The app was launched by the Chief Minister of Goa, Manohar Parrikar.
- Goamiles is said to be managed by a local Goan company called Frotamiles which is a subsidiary of the parent company Pitasys Software.
- The app can be downloaded from Google Play Store and Apple Store.

Niti Aayog to organise Partnership Conclave

- NITI Aayog, United Nations in India and the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) are jointly organizing a Government and Business Partnership Conclave on 8th August 2018.
- The conclave will focus on the interrelated sectors of water, energy and green industry.
- The main purpose is to explore the roles and contributions of the business sector in the implementation of SDGs in India.

India's summer crop sowing down

- According to the government data, Indian farmers have planted Kharif crops or summer-sown crops on 85.456 million hectares as of August 3 2018.
- Monsoon rainfall was 10% lower than normal as of August 5, 2018.
- India's monsoon rains are likely to be below average in 2018 after the country experienced tepid rainfall during the first half of the season.

Thermal battery plant unveiled in Andhra

- India became home to the world's first-ever thermal battery plant that was inaugurated in Andhra Pradesh on 6 August 2018.
- The thermal battery facility is owned by Bharat Energy Storage Technology Private Limited.
- Thermal batteries use thermal energy to operate, i.e., the energy created by temperature differences.



3-judge SC Bench to hear Article 35A issue

- Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra orally observed that the Supreme Court will consider whether Article 35A is violative of the basic structure of the Constitution.
- Article 35A gives special status to the State and people of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The basic structure is a collective term coined by a 13-judge Bench in the historic Keshavananda Bharati case.

SC notifies norms for senior advocate status

- The Supreme Court has notified guidelines for according 'senior advocate' designation to lawyers.
- The SC constituted a 5-member permanent committee headed by the Chief Justice of India to shortlist candidates.
- The finalised guidelines are titled "Supreme Court Guidelines to regulate Conferment of Designation of Senior Advocates, 2018."

Minjar fair ends in Himachal's Chamba town

- The eight-day-long Minjar fair concluded in Himachal Pradesh's Chamba town on the banks of the Ravi River with the immersion of 'minjars', which symbolises the blossoming of maize.
- During the fair, people put 'minjars' on their colourful costumes and pray for timely rain and bumper crop.
- HP CM Jai Ram Thakur led the 'shobha yatra' of Lord Raghuvir, the principal deity of Chamba.

Anurag Sachan appointed as MD of DFCCIL

- Anurag Sachan appointed as Managing Director of Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd. (DFCCIL).
- Sachan, a 1981-batch officer of Indian Railway Service of Engineers (IRSE), is at present Chief Administrative Officer of Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project.
- DFCCIL is a special purpose vehicle set up under the administrative control of the Ministry of Railways.

India & World

Army Commander heads for China to visit Delhi

- India and China will be engaged in a series of military related confidence building measures over the next 2 weeks.
- It includes visit by Chinese Defence Minister to Delhi in the backdrop of the Wuhan Summit.
- A four-member Indian Army delegation headed by Eastern Army Commander Lt Gen Abhay Krishna will be going on a "goodwill visit" to China from August 13 to 19.

Cabinet approves pact between ICAI and CPA

- The government approved a pact between the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and Chartered Professional Accountants, Canada.
- The MoU includes collaboration on the definition, learning, and evaluation of the professional qualities and skills and competencies of Chartered Accountants.
- It will provide an opportunity for the ICAI members to expand their professional horizon

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Korea

- The Cabinet gave its ex-post facto approval to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Korea on Trade Remedy Cooperation.
- The MoU was signed in July 2018 during the State visit of President of South Korea to India.
- The MoU will promote cooperation between the two countries in the area of trade remedies viz. antidumping, subsidy and countervailing and safeguard measures.

Cabinet approves MoU b/w India and Indonesia

- The Union Cabinet approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Indonesia on health cooperation.
- The MoU paves way for cooperation in the areas of research and development; active pharmaceutical ingredients and IT-based medical equipment.
- It also covers human resource development; health services; and any other area as may be mutually agreed upon.

3rd India-Nepal Coordination meeting in Delhi

- The 3rd India-Nepal Coordination meeting was held in New Delhi on August 8, 2018.
- A seven-member delegation from Nepal, headed by Inspector General of Nepal Armed Police Force Shailendra Khanal will take part in the three-day meeting.
- Several important matters like security scenario along the border, coordination meetings at field level and training of police personnel will be discussed.

India, Sri Lanka to hold talks

- India, Sri Lanka to hold the 10th round of talks to widen the scope for free trade agreement; negotiations likely to conclude by December.
- The pact is aimed at further boosting the economic ties between the two countries by liberalizing trade norms.
- India and Sri Lanka have a free trade agreement in goods and was implemented in March 2000.

Sushma Swaraj meets Kyrgyzstan counterpart

• External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj held talks with her Kyrgyzstan counterpart, Erlan Abdyldaev.

- The discussion was on deepening cooperation in trade, energy, defense, security and other areas.
- Swaraj is on a three-nation tour to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan as part of India's efforts to boost strategic partnership with the resource-rich nations.

Personalities in News

Lionel Messi named Barcelona's captain

- Lionel Messi will replace Andrés Iniesta as Barcelona's captain for the new season, after the latter ended his 22-year stint at the Spanish club.
- Messi, who already wears the armband for Argentina, has previously led Barça in Iniesta's absence.
- Lionel Messi is an Argentine professional footballer who plays as a forward for Spanish club Barcelona and the Argentine national team.

Marie Curie tops BBC poll

- Polish-born scientist Marie Curie, the first person to win two Nobel Prizes, has topped a BBC History magazine poll, which listed "100 women who changed the world".
- Albanian-Indian Nobel Laureate Mother Teresa was placed 20th on the list while former PM Indira Gandhi was ranked 49th.
- Other notable names included former UK PM Margaret Thatcher and Indian poet Sarojini Naidu.

Indra Nooyi will step down as CEO

- Indra Krishnamurthy Nooyi will step down as the CEO of PepsiCo after 12 years in the position.
- Under her, PepsiCo began focussing on products that include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and gave an emphasis on less sugar and fat.
- Ramon Laguarta will succeed Ms. Nooyi as CEO.
- Ms. Nooyi will step down as CEO on October 3, but will remain Chairman until early 2019.

Environment

Khangchendzonga in list of Biosphere Reserves

- The Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve has become the 11th Biosphere Reserve from India that has been included in the UNESCO designated World Network of Biosphere Reserves.
- Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve in Sikkim is one of the highest ecosystems in the world.
- The core zone Khangchendzonga National Park was designated a World Heritage Site in 2016 under the 'mixed' category.

Government Policies & Schemes

Modi launched the digital platform Parivesh

- Modi launched the digital platform the "Pro Active and Responsive facilitation by interactive and Virtuous Environment Single window Hub" (Parivesh).
- It is an initiative of the Environment Ministry.
- Through this portal, environmental clearances for forest and climate-related issues will be done easily. He also gave clearance to the first project which is being built in Odisha via Parivesh.

Exhibition inaugurated by Ministry of Culture

- An exhibition entitled 'Prathibandhit Sahitya mein Swatantrata Sangram' (Freedom Movement through Proscribed Literature) was inaugurated on 10th August in the premises of National Archives of India, in New Delhi.
- The Exhibition was based on the unique collection of proscribed literature.
- It is being organised by Ministry of Culture.

12 modern biofuel refineries to come up

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that 12 modern biofuel refineries worth ten thousand crore rupees will be established across the country.
- This will provide employment to 1.5 lakh youth.
- He was addressing an event on the occasion of World Biofuel Day 2018 in New Delhi.
- The Prime Minister said the government is targeting ten percent ethanol blending in petrol by 2022 and 20 percent by 2030.

Lok Sabha passes bills to amend GST laws

- The Lok Sabha passed four bills amending laws relating to the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- The Central GST (Amendment) Bill, 2018, Integrated GST (Amendment) Bill, 2018, The Union Territory GST (Amendment) Bill, 2018 and the GST (Compensation to States) Amendment Bill, 2018 got the Lok Sabha's nod.
- The provisions will allow taxpayers to amend their tax returns in order to rectify errors.

Scheme to provide pulses to states for PDS

- The Government decided to sell nearly 3.5 million tonnes of pulses to states at Rs 15 per kg lower price than the wholesale rate for distribution under public distribution system (PDS) and other welfare schemes.
- The decision in this regard was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs.
- The Centre will provide 3.48 million tonnes of pulses to state governments from its stock.

'One District one Product' Summit inagurated

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the 'One District One Product' (ODOP) Summit on August 10, 2018 in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- The scheme aims at promoting one traditional industry in every district such as lock industry in Aligarh, silk-weaving in Varanasi and biscuit-making in Amethi.
- Under ODOP, Rs 250 crore loans will be disbursed to start-ups.

Jal Bachao, Video Banao, Puraskar Pao Contest

- The Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation announced the winners for the first fortnight of the 'Jal Bachao, Video Banao, Puraskar Pao' contest that was launched on 10th July 2018.
- The winners will be given prize amount of Rs 25,000/, Rs 15,000/- and Rs 10,000/- respectively.
- The objective of the contest is to spread awareness about water conservation.

Nod for three changes to triple talaq Bill

- The Cabinet approved three crucial amendments to the triple talaq Bill.
- The cabinet has approved amendments which mandate that the FIR be either filed by the victim of triple talaq or immediate blood relations.
- Giving instant triple talaq will continue to be illegal and void and will attract a jail term of three years for the husband.

Cabinet extends PMGSY

- The government approved the continuation of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) beyond the 12th five year plan period.
- The decision taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs would help in connecting 38,412 habitations.
- PMGSY was launched on December 25, 2000, with the objective to provide All-Weather road connectivity to the rural areas.

Nod for four more NDRF battalions

- The government approved a proposal of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs to raise four more battalions of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF).
- Two of the four battalions will initially be raised in the Indo-Tibetan Border Police and one each in the Border Security Force and Assam Rifles.
- The NDRF was created in 2006 and has currently 12 battalions stationed across the country.

DNA Technology Regulation Bill introduced

• The government introduced DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill 2018 in the Lok Sabha.

 The Bill seeks to provide regulation for the use and application of DNA Technology for establishing the identity of certain categories of persons including the victims, offenders, suspects, under trials, missing persons and others.

Govt will launch SBM ODF+ and ODF++ Protocol

- The Government will launch ODF+ and ODF++ Protocol on August 10, 2018.
- SBM (Swach Bharat Mission) ODF+ protocol focuses on sustaining community public toilet usage by ensuring their functionality, cleanliness, and maintenance.
- SBM ODF++ will focus on achieving sanitation sustainability by addressing complete sanitation value chain and disposal of faecal sludge and septage.

Suresh launches Mobile App Niryat Mitra

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Aviation Suresh Prabhu launched 'Niryat Mitra – mobile App' in New Delhi.
- The app developed by the Federation of Indian Export Organisations is available both on Android and on IOS platforms.
- It provides the wide range of information required to undertake international trade right from the policy provisions for export and import, applicable GST rate.

NRIs cannot file RTI applications: Government

- Non-Resident Indians cannot file Right to Information (RTI) applications to seek governance-related information from the Central government departments.
- Only citizens of India have the right to seek information under the provisions of Right to Information Act, 2005.
- Subject to the provisions of the Act, the citizens of India could file the online application under the RTI Act, 2005.

Govt. asks citizens not to use plastic flags

- The Centre has urged all citizens not to use national flag made up of plastic.
- The States were told to ensure strict compliance of the provisions contained in the 'Flag Code of India, 2002' and 'The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.
- The advisory said on important national, cultural and sports events, flags made of paper only are to be used by the public.

Government raises duty on textile products

• India doubled import duties on 328 textile products to 20%, as the world's largest cotton producer sought to curb soaring imports from China.

- The government in July had doubled import duty on over 50 textile products — including jackets, suits and carpets — to 20%.
- Import duty is a tax collected on imports and some exports by a country's customs authorities.



MHADA to rope private landowners for PMAY

- The Maharashtra government to rope in private landowners to collaborate with Maharashtra Housing and Area Development Authority (MHADA) to implement the Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana (PMAY) in urban areas.
- Private landowners having more than 10 acres of land are eligible to participate in the scheme.
- The MHADA will construct houses for economically weaker sections and lower income groups.

Lok Sabha approves additional expenditure

- The Lok Sabha approved the first batch of supplementary demands for grants envisaging a gross additional outgo of Rs 11,697.92 crore for the current fiscal.
- The additional grant required to meet the required expenditure of the government is called Supplementary Grants.
- These grants are presented and passed by the Parliament before the end of the financial year.

Parliament passes Immovable Property Bill

• Parliament passed a bill to amend the regulations governing the compensation payable for acquisition

of immovable property by the Centre for defence and security purposes.

- The bill seeks to amend a provision to allow the Centre to re-issue the notice of acquisition to ensure that the property owner gets an opportunity to be heard.
- The amendments included changing the year of the Bill.

TRAI launches DND, MyCall on UMANG platform

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) launched the Do not Call (DND) 2.0 and MyCall apps with the Unified Mobile Application for New-Age Governance (UMANG) platform.
- UMANG provides a single platform for all Indian citizens to access, pan-India, e-Gov services.
- MyCall is an intuitive and user-friendly application for crowd-sourced voice call quality monitoring.

Access to Andamans eased

- Foreigners no longer need a Restricted Areas Permit to visit 29 inhabited islands in the Andaman and Nicobar chain.
- The Union Home Ministry decided to lift restrictions as the government intends to boost tourism.
- The 29 inhabited islands have been excluded from the restricted area permit notified under the Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, 1963, till December 31, 2022.

MoA signed for funding Irrigation Projects

- A revised Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) has been signed amongst Government of India, NABARD and National Water Development Agency.
- The MoA was signed to fund the central share of 99 prioritized irrigation projects under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY).
- Under PMKSY, 99 ongoing irrigation projects were identified for completion in mission mode by December 2019.

Govt extends e-visa facility to 165 countries

- Seeking to promote tourism, the government has extended e-visa facility for citizens of 165 countries at 25 airports and five seaports.
- The government has launched the 'Incredible India 2.0' campaign, marking a shift from generic promotions to market-specific promotional plans.
- A 24X7 toll free multi-lingual tourist helpline has also been put in place as part of the efforts.

Scope of HEFA expanded with capital expansion

- The Government has approved the authorised equity capital expansion of Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) to Rs.10,000 crore.
- The Union Cabinet had approved HEFA in September 2016 as a Special Purpose Vehicle with a Canara Bank.

• All Centrally Funded Educational Institutions in Higher Education, School Education and Medical Education sectors are eligible to avail of loans through HEFA.

Rajya Sabha gives nod for NCBC Bill

- The Bill extending constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) was cleared by the Rajya Sabha on 6th August 2018.
- The Lok Sabha had passed the proposed law on August 2, 2018 with more than a two-thirds majority.
- The Constitution (123rd Amendment) Bill, 2017 was introduced in Lok Sabha on April 5, 2017.

Amendment in LS to make adoption easier

- The government introduced an amendment to the Juvenile Justice (JJ) Act, 2015, in the Lok Sabha on 6th August 2018.
- The amendment will empower District Magistrates with the authority to grant adoption orders.
- The Union Cabinet had approved amendments proposed by the Women and Child Development Ministry in July 2018.
- The amendment states the objective is to avoid the pendency of cases.

BIMS & Bhoomi Rashi-PFMS linkage launched

- The Government of India launched the Bidder Information Management System (BIMS) and Bhoomi Rashi and PFMS linkage.
- BIMS is aimed at streamlining the process of prequalification of bidders for EPC Mode of contracts for National Highway works.
- Bhoomi Rashi, the portal developed by MoRTH and NIC, comprises the entire revenue data of the country, right down to 6.4 lakh villages.

Startup India's Academia Alliance Programme

- To fulfil the Government of India's mission to promote the spirit of entrepreneurship in the country, Startup India launched the "Startup Academia Alliance programme".
- The programme is a unique mentorship opportunity between academic scholars and startups working in similar domains.
- The programme aims to reduce the gap between scientific research and its industrial applications.

Defence India Startup Challenge launched

- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched defence India startup challenge in Bengaluru.
- The highlight of the event was the launch of 11 challenges by MoD now thrown open to provide solutions in the startup ecosystem.
- The launch of challenges will provide the fillip to the innovation potential in the country, partnering with the best minds nationally and internationally.

Fugitive Offenders Bill gets president's nod

- President Ram Nath Kovind has given assent to the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018, that will deter offenders to evade legal process in India and flee the country.
- The bill was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 25 July 2018 and by the Lok Sabha on 19 July 2018.
- The Bill allows designated special court to declare a person as fugitive economic offender and and to confiscate his property.

Guj to implement Ayushman Bharat programme

- Gujarat government will implement the Centre's Bharat Ayushman programme which is expected to roll out across the country this August 2018.
- The Ayushman Bharat- National Health Protection Scheme aims to provide medical coverage to over 10 crore poor families.
- The medical coverage is up to 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation.



Govt approves projects under 'IMPRINT-2'

- Government has approved 122 new research projects of 112 crore rupees under its Impacting Research Innovation and Technology 'IMPRINT-2' scheme.
- The initiative aims to advance research in energy, security, and healthcare domains in the higher education institutions.
- IMPRINT is MHRD supported Pan-IIT and IISc joint initiative to address the major science and engineering challenges.

Scheme for girl child launched

- Bihar CM Nitish Kumar launched the 'Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana'.
- The ambitious scheme will provide Rs. 54,100 from the birth of a girl child till she graduates.
- The 'Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana' will be run by three departments — education, health and social welfare.
- Over 3.12 lakh girls will be covered under the scheme in the current financial year.

10,000 jobs to be created under NHPS

- 10,000 new jobs will be created with the implementation of the Centre's ambitious Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM), provides a cover of Rs 5 lakh per family annually to 10 crore poor families.
- Health Ministry has signed a pact with the Skill Development Ministry for the recruitment of 1 lakh 'Ayushman Mitras' and will be deployed at Govt & Private hospital.

Science & Technology

World's 1st Hindi-Speaking Robot 'Rashmi'

- Ranchi-based software developer Ranjit Srivastava is developing the world's first Hindi-speaking humanoid robot, claimed to cost just Rs 50,000 so far.
- Named Rashmi, the AI-powered robot can also speak Bhojpuri, Marathi, and English, and is equipped with facial expressions and recognition systems.
- He was inspired to create Rashmi after seeing Hong Kong-made humanoid 'Sophia' in 2016.

US to create Space Force by 2020

- The US Defence Department will create a Space Force as the sixth branch of the military by 2020, Vice President Mike Pence announced.
- Advancements in space technology made it clear that space is the new battlefield for the 21st Century, Pence said.
- Pence also announced plans to establish the US Space Command and the Space Development Agency.

Most distant radio galaxy discovered

- An international team of astronomers has detected the most distant radio galaxy ever observed.
- The researchers determined that the galaxy is about 12 billion light-years away.
- This radio galaxy has been named 'TGSS J1530+1049', and it was initially discovered using the Giant Meter-wave Radio Telescope (GMRT) in India.

Forty-four new exoplanets discovered

- Scientists have found 44 planets beyond our solar system in one go.
- Astronomers' pooled data from NASA's Kepler and the ESA's Gaia space telescopes.
- The findings will improve existing models of solar systems, and may help researchers investigate exoplanet atmospheres.
- Four of the planets orbit their host stars in less than 24 hours,

SpaceX launches reusable rocket

• SpaceX relaunched its newest version of its Falcon 9 rocket booster to send a communication satellite for Indonesia into the orbit.

- The so-called Block 5 booster, which SpaceX says will be able to fly as many as 10 times with routine maintenance.
- The booster first flew on May 11 2018, when it delivered the first Bangladeshi satellite into space.

New compound may reverse human cell ageing

- Scientists have developed a novel compound which can reverse ageing in human cells, and may lead to "anti-degenerative" drugs.
- Researchers tested compounds designed to target mitochondria, the "power stations" of cells.
- The compounds AP39, AP123 and RT01 help the old or damaged cells to generate the 'energy' needed for survival and to reduce senescence.

Lithium-rich giant star discovered

- Chinese scientists have discovered the most lithiumrich giant star ever known.
- The star has a mass almost 1.5 times our sun.
- The star is in the direction of Ophiuchus, north side of the Galactic disk, with a distance of 4,500 light years to Earth.
- The findings were realised with the help of The Large Sky Area Multi-Object Fiber Spectroscopic Telescope (LAMOST) located in northern China.

P is for Pie: Android's latest version

- Google launched the latest version of it's Android operating system Android Pie.
- Android Pie mostly focuses on behind-the-scenes improvements designed to make Android phones work faster while saving precious battery life.
- An over-the-air update to Android 9 will begin rolling out to Google's Pixel phones.

China launches exascale supercomputer

- China has operationalised a prototype exascale computing machine, the next-generation supercomputer.
- The Sunway exascale computer prototype was put in operation on 5th August 2018 and helps to execute a quintillion calculation per second.
- The exascale computer is expected to be built in the second half of 2020 or the first half of 2021.

GSAT-11 set to be launched on November 30

- Indian Space Research Organisation's heaviest satellite so far — the GSAT-11 — will take off a spaceport in French Guiana on 30 November 2018.
- The communication satellite will help in increasing the internet speed in the country.
- The GSAT-11 carries 40 transponders and is capable of providing high bandwidth connectivity with up to 14 GB per second data transfer speed.

Launch of India's 2nd moon mission postponed

- The launch of India's second mission to the moon, Chandrayaan-2, may be delayed till January 2019.
- The postponement comes in the wake of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) facing quick setbacks.
- Chandrayaan-2 will be ISRO's first time attempt to land a rover, on the Moon.

Places in News

Over 12,800 trees cut in Delhi in 3 years

- Over 12,800 trees have been cut in Delhi in the last three years for various government projects.
- Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh informed the Rajya Sabha.
- However, he added, "It has been decided to plant more than 10 lakh trees in different parts of Delhi."

Free sex change operations: Kerala

- The Kerala government will foot the bill for transgenders willing to undergo sex change operations, CM Pinarayi Vijayan has announced.
- An amount of ₹2 lakh will be reimbursed as hospital expenses, while those who have already undergone such surgeries can also apply for reimbursement.
- Earlier, Tamil Nadu had announced free sex change surgeries in government hospitals for transgenders.

Mughalsarai Junction renamed

- The iconic Mughalsarai Railway Junction in Uttar Pradesh has been renamed as Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Junction Railway station.
- A passenger train with an all-women crew and a goods train was also flagged off.
- Railway officials said it will be the first time in the country that an all-woman crew will run a train.

First intertidal art gallery in Maldives

- World's first intertidal art gallery called Coralarium is located at the Fairmont Maldives Sirru Fen Fushi resort
- It filled with around 30 sculptures acting as a habitat for coral and other marine species
- The frame of the gallery is made of pH-neutral marine steel and designed to reflect the blue hues surrounding it.
- Designed by British sculptor Jason deCaires Taylor.

Committees & Recommendations

NGT forms panel to monitor Ganga cleaning

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) constituted a committee for monitoring the rejuvenation project of Ganga from Haridwar to Unnao in Uttar Pradesh.
- The committee will be headed by a former Allahabad High Court judge.

• NGT has asked Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court to nominate a former judge who will head the committee.

2 task force for making aircraft, UAVs formed

- The Government of India has set up two task force to prepare the roadmap for manufacturing aircraft and unmanned aerial vehicles in India.
- One committee will explore the possibility of manufacturing aircraft in India.
- The other committee will explore the possibility of manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles (Drones) in India.

Committee to review security of VIPs

- The Jammu and Kashmir Government ordered the formation of a three-member committee to review the security of protected persons in the state.
- The committee will be headed by Additional Director General of Police (ADG) Security.
- The decision has been taken days after a man forcibly entered into the residence of the former chief minister and Member of Parliament (MP) Farooq Abdullah.



Business & Economy

Industrial output hits 4-month high of 7%

• Industrial output recorded a four-month high growth rate of 7% in June on account of higher output in

mining, manufacturing and power generation segments.

- The cumulative growth for the period April-June 2018 stands at 5.2% over the corresponding period of the previous year.
- The manufacturing sector, which constitutes 77.63% of the index, grew by 6.9 per cent in June.

Ikea Opened its 1st India Store in Hyderabad

- Ikea, the Swedish retail giant opened its first Indian store in Hyderabad on 9th August 2018.
- Ikea's next store is planned to open in Mumbai in the summer of 2019, followed by another in Bangalore in 2020.
- The Swedish furniture retailer has already invested 4.5 billion euros (\$5.2 billion) into India.

PayPal enters into pact with HDFC Bank

- PayPal, and HDFC Bank have entered into a partnership.
- The partnership will result in a safer, faster and more convenient payment experience for HDFC Bank cardholders and help drive incremental digital spend.
- HDFC cards will be presented as a payment option during enrollment and subsequent payments, with the ability for consumers to easily open PayPal accounts.

HSBC launches online platform 'MyDeal'

- HSBC has launched a new digital platform-MyDeal.
- MyDeal will simplify capital raising process through capital markets by providing real-time access to information such as investors' feedback, profiles, client orders and deal pricing.
- The platform contains all the information relating to a client's capital markets transaction and is updated on the real-time basis

CCI approves Walmart, Flipkart deal

- The Competition Commission (CCI) had approved U.S. retail giant Walmart's proposed acquisition of Flipkart.
- In May 2018, Walmart announced the acquisition of 77% stake in Flipkart, the biggest takeover by the U.S. Company till date.
- The transaction values the 11-year-old Indian ecommerce company at \$20.8 billion.
- Deals beyond a certain threshold are required to get clearance from the CCI.

650 branches of IPPB to be launched on Aug 21

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch 650 branches of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) on the 21st August, 2018.
- The IPPB has been setup under the Department of Post, Ministry of Communication with 100% equity owned by the Indian government.

• The IPPB will leverage the vast network of the Department of Posts with 1.55 lakh access points, three lakh postmen and Grameen Dak Sewaks.

Mobile transactions hit ₹14,632 crore in June

- The value of transactions made through mobile wallets touched a record ₹14,632 crore in June 2018 as per the data released by Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- Debit and credit card transactions too hit a new record of ₹3.62 trillion in June 2018.
- The volume of transactions through mobile banking yet again reached a peak in June 2018, crossing the 300 million mark for the first time.

RBI to pay ₹ 50,000 crore dividend to govt

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will transfer ₹50,000 crore of its surplus money to the government, the highest since 2015-16.
- The Reserve Bank, which follows July-June financial year, has paid about 63% higher dividend than the previous year (2016-17).
- Under the RBI Act, 1934, the Reserve Bank of India is required to pay the government its surplus fund.

SBI launches digital transaction MOPAD

- State Bank of India (SBI) launched one more digital initiative called MOPAD (Multi Option Payment Acceptance Device) on 8th August, 2018.
- It will enable customers to make payments through cards, Bharat QR, UPI and SBI Buddy (e-wallet) on a point of sale (PoS) terminal.
- It will also provide digital convenience to customers and ease of doing business for merchants at the same time.

JP Morgan to set up finclusion lab

- JP Morgan will set up a financial inclusion lab to support fintech startups in association with IIM-Ahmedabad and the Dell and Bill Gates foundations.
- JP Morgan will provide up to \$7 million over the next four years towards this initiative.
- The lab will host accelerator programmes to identify solutions for specific financial challenges.

Nikhil Nanda appointed as chairman and MD

- Farm and construction equipment maker Escorts appointed Nikhil Nanda as the chairman and managing director (MD) of the company.
- The company's board unanimously appointed Nikhil as the chairman and MD to succeed his late father, Rajan Nanda.
- Nikhil has been a key member of the company's board since 1997.

National Stock Exchange unveils new logo

• To mark 25 years of its existence, the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) unveiled a new logo

symbolizing integrity, excellence, trust and commitment.

- The National Stock Exchange of India Limited is the leading stock exchange of India, located in Mumbai.
- The NSE was established in 1992 as the first demutualized electronic exchange in the country.

Anti-dumping duty on 'methylene chloride'

- The Finance Ministry has extended by one year the validity of existing anti-dumping duty on 'methylene chloride' imports from the US and the European Union.
- Methylene Chloride is used in the manufacture of polycarbonate and phenolic resins, rayon yarn, pharmaceuticals, agro and fragrance chemicals.
- It is also used as an extractant for edible fats, cocoa butter and essences.

Bank collected 5000 Crores from Customer

- 21 public sector banks and three major private sector lenders collected Rs 5,000 crore from customers for non-maintenance of minimum balance in their accounts in 2017-18.
- SBI was charging the penalty till 2012, reintroduced it from April 1, 2017. SBI reduced charges from October 1, 2017
- Accounts under BSBD scheme Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna are not required to maintain any minimum balance.

PM Modi to launch IPPB on Aug 21

- PM Modi on August 21 will launch India Post Payments Bank that will have at least one branch in every district and focus on financial services in rural areas.
- Two branches of the bank are already operational in Ranchi and Raipur.
- IPPB will go live with 650 branches, 3,250 access points co-located at post offices and 11,000 postmen both in rural and urban area for doorstep banking services.

India's forex reserves dip by \$951 mn

- Foreign exchange reserves declined by \$951 million to \$404.2 billion in the week to July 27, on account of a fall in the foreign currency assets.
- Reserves rose by a marginal \$67.7 million to \$405.1 billion in the previous week.
- It has crossed the \$400-billion mark for the first time in the week to September 8, 2017.
- The forex kitty is an indicator of the health of the economy.

NABARD Sanctions Rs 772 crore in Haryana

• NABARD has sanctioned Rs 722 crore for eight water projects in the rural areas of Haryana, state Minister for Public Health Engineering Banwari Lal.

- Works on these projects will supply water to 256 villages and 72 hamlets, are in progress
- The state government was getting financial assistance from the National Capital Region Planning Board to modernize the sewerage system in urban areas.



Sports

Lionel Messi named Barcelona's captain

- Lionel Messi will replace Andrés Iniesta as Barcelona's captain for the new season, after the latter ended his 22-year stint at the Spanish club.
- Messi, who already wears the armband for Argentina, has previously led Barça in Iniesta's absence.
- Lionel Messi is an Argentine professional footballer who plays as a forward for Spanish club Barcelona and the Argentine national team.

Kohli became 2018's highest int run-scorer

- During his 23-run knock against England at Lord's, Team India captain Virat Kohli overtook England's Jonny Bairstow to become this year's highest runscorer in international cricket.
- Kohli has scored 1,404 runs in 25 innings this year, 15 more than the English wicketkeeper-batsman.
- Shikhar Dhawan, who has scored 1,055 runs, is the second highest run-scorer among Indians in 2018.

Neeraj Chopra to be India's flag-bearer

- Javelin thrower star Neeraj Chopra will be India's flag bearer in the opening ceremony of the Asian Games 2018.
- Chopra, who won the gold medal in Commonwealth Games 2018 event in Gold Coast, will lead India's contingent in the multi-sport event.
- The 2018 Asian Games will take place from August 18 to September 2 and will be held in Indonesian cities of Jakarta and Palembang.

Tokyo 2020 to use facial recognition

- A facial recognition system using artificial intelligence will be used at the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- The Tokyo Olympics will be the first games to have this kind of security system using facial recognition technology.
- It is aimed at strengthening security and preventing terrorism, as well as shortening waiting times to lower athlete stress.

Indian Men's hockey team rises to 5th rank

- Indian men's hockey team jump one spot to fifth in the latest FIH rankings chart.
- India is the only team which registered an upward movement among the top 10 teams.
- The Indian team, which now has 1484 points in its kitty, is above the likes of 2012 Olympic champions Germany, England and Spain.
- World champion Australia maintained its top spot with 1906 points.

Momota 1st Japanese man to win Gold at BWF

- Kento Momota became the first Japanese man to win the Badminton World Championships.
- Kento Momota of Japan defeated Shi Yuqi of China in the men's final at the Badminton World Championships.
- Momota has won nine of 13 tournaments he has entered since returning from a 15-month gamblingrelated suspension.

Kuznetsova wins Washington WTA title

- Svetlana Kuznetsova defeated Croatia's Donna Vekic and won her 18th career Women's Tennis Association (WTA) title at the Washington Open.
- Svetlana Kuznetsova is ranked 128th in the world.
- Kuznetsova, the winner of the 2004 US Open and 2009 French Open, claimed a second Washington title to go with the one she won in 2014.

Netherlands won women's hockey world cup

- In Women's hockey world cup, the Netherlands have been crowned the world champions for a record eighth time.
- Spain won the third-place match by beating Australia to claim their first ever World Cup medal.
- India finished the tournament at the 8th spot.

Fabio Fognini topples Juan Martin

- Fabio Fognini defeated Juan Martin Del Potro in final of Los Cabos Open.
- Fabio Fognini captured his first career hardcourt title on Saturday, surprising Juan Martin del Potro 6-4, 6-2, in the final of the ATP Los Cabos Open.
- It is the 31-year-old Fognini's eighth ATP Tour victory.
- This is his third title of 2018 to go with wins in Sao Paulo and Bastad.

Kolesnikov win European Title at Glasglow.

- Kliment Kolesnikov of Russia set a world record for the 50 metres backstroke while winning the European Championship title in Glasgow on Saturday.
- The teenager clocked 24.00 seconds to take 0.04 seconds off the record set by Britain's Liam Tancock at the world championships in Rome in 2009.
- He defeated Silver medallist Robert-Andrei Glinta, a former world junior champion, by 0.55 seconds.

Sindhu takes silver in Badminton Champ

- Carolina Marin became the first woman shuttler to win the world championships thrice. She had won the title in 2014 and the 2015 Jakarta edition.
- Sindhu settled for another white metal following a 19-21, 10-21 loss to Marin of Spain in World Badminton Championship.
- Sindhu's second successive silver at the World Championships and had won a silver medal in 2017 and bronze medals in 2013, 2014.

Virat Kohli is the No.1 Test batsman

- India captain Virat Kohli topped the ICC Player Rankings for Test batsmen.
- Kohli thus became the seventh India batsman, and first since Sachin Tendulkar (in June 2011) to be ranked the number one Test batsman in the latest ICC rankings.
- At 934 points, Kohli has become India's highestranked batsman, 14th overall, on the all-time tally of points.

Defence

SCO Peace Mission 2018: Russia

- As part of Shanghai Cooperation Organization initiatives, SCO Peace Mission Exercise is conducted biennially for SCO member states.
- The joint exercise for the year 2018 will be conducted from 22 August to 29 August 2018 at Chebarkul, Chelyabinsk, Russia.
- This will be a historic occasion due to the maiden participation of India post becoming a full member of the SCO in June 2017.

Indo - Thailand Joint Exercise Maitree 2018

- Exercise Maitree is a joint military exercise between Indian Army and Royal Thai Army which started on 6 August and will end on 19 August 2018 in Thailand.
- It is a platoon level exercise which comprises of infantry component.
- The exercise will emphasize to hone the tactical and technical skills in joint counter insurgency and counter terrorist operations in rural and urban scenario.

Army on track for BIMSTEC exercise in Sept

- The Indian army conducted the final co-ordinating conference for the Joint Military Exercise (MILEX-18) in Pune.
- MILEX-18 will be held at the Foreign Training Node at Aundh Military Station in Pune in September 2018.
- The armies of all seven BIMSTEC countries India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Thailand and Myanmar — will be participating in the exercise.

HAL's Light Combat Aircraft under IAF

- The government is poised to hand over control of the Bengaluru division of State-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to the Indian Air Force (IAF).
- This comes as the next phase of the LCA project, development of the MK2 variant, as well as the **country's next fighter aircraft programme, the** Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA), begin to take shape.

Polity

Monsoon session in LS most productive in 18yrs

- The recently concluded monsoon session in Lok Sabha saw 110% productivity, the highest in 18 years, according to think tank PRS Legislative Research.
- The Lok Sabha spent 50% of its time on legislative business and had the highest number of private members' bill introduced since 2000, at 999 bills.
- Meanwhile, the Rajya Sabha saw 68% productivity this monsoon session.

Triple Talaq bill deferred to next session

- The government has decided not to table the Triple Talaq bill in the Rajya Sabha, deferring it to the next Parliament session.
- The Lok Sabha cleared the bill last year but needs to pass it again due to amendments made by the Cabinet.
- The Cabinet approved a provision to grant bail to those found guilty of giving instant Triple Talaq.