

**BANKING &
FINANCIAL AWARENESS**

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1. Awards and Honours

INTERNATIONAL AWARDS

Name of the Award	Winner (Individuals, organisations & states)	Special Highlights
World Food Prize	Lawrence Haddad and David Nabarro	They worked to provide availability of nutritious food for pregnant women and children to reduce malnutrition in developing countries.
Nikkei Asia Prize	Dr Bindeshwar Pathak - Founder of Sulabh International	-
	Chinese environmentalist Ma Jun - Business Innovation Prize for using power of internet to promote cleaner industry	
	Vietnamese doctor Nguyen Thanh Liem - Science and Technology prize in recognition of his work in advancing health care for children	
Asian Voice Charity Award	Jagriti Yatra	An Indian charity that organises train journeys to understand & build India of smaller towns & villages.
Political and Public Life Awards- Lifetime achievement award	Shatrughan Sinha	Contribution to the fields of arts and politics.
Pritzker Architecture Prize- (Nobel equivalent for the field)	Balkrishna Doshi	First Pritzker laureate from India.
UK Golden Flame Award	Simi Garewal	-
Abel Prize	Robert Langlands	Developed a programme connecting representation theory to number theory.
Commonwealth Point of Light	Srishti Bakshi- exceptional service to empowering women in India.	Founder of the Cross-Bow Miles movement.
Linnean Medal in Botany from Linnean Society of London	Kamaljit Bawa- pioneering research on evolution of tropical plants, tropical deforestation & non-timber forest products	First Indian to win the award ever since it was constituted in 1888.

'Business Personality of the year 2018' award in the UK.	Joginder Sanger	Chairman of Mastcraft Group and Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan.
Shorenstein Journalism Award	Siddharth Varadarajan- founding editor of The Wire.	Honours journalists who have "produced outstanding reporting on Asia and contributed significantly to Western understanding of the region".
Shri Jayadev Rashtriya Yuva Pratibha Puraskar 2018	Anindita Anaam-Kathak dancer	-
Tourist Train of the Year by Pacific Area Travel Writers' Association. (PATWA)	'Palace on Wheels' of Rajasthan	-
Guillermo Cano Press Freedom Prize UNESCO	Mahmoud Abu Zeid- Egyptian photo journalist	-
World's best public communication campaign at ATOMEXPO-2018	Nuclear Power Corp of India (NPCIL's) 'Atom on Wheels' campaign	-
KISS Humanitarian Award 2018	Prof. Muhammad Yunus- Nobel Peace award winner & the founder of Grameen Bank	-
The 'Excellent Woman of Excellence'	Nisha Bhalla	For her spiritual service
World Press Cartoon awards- Best caricature category.	Thomas Antony	The awards are given to the best works published in 2017 in newspapers and magazines from around the world.
Man Booker International Prize	"Flights", a philosophical rumination on modern-day travel by the Polish author Olga Tokarczuk	The Man Booker International Prize is awarded by the same organization that gives the Man Booker Prize for fiction. It is for a single work of fiction that has been translated into English and published in the United Kingdom.
'National Geographic Chasing Genius Challenge' in the U.S.	Dr. Asha	She designed Therax, a web/mobile application that helps patients with home exercise programmes in their native language.

PULITZER PRIZE – 2018

Name of the Award	Winner (Individuals, organisations & states)	Special Highlights
Pulitzer Prize for Public Service	The New York Times and The New Yorker. For stories about disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein and other powerful men who have been accused of sexual harassment and abuse.	-
Pulitzer in the Investigative Category	Washington Post for relentless reporting that influenced the outcome of the 2017 Senate race in Alabama.	-
Pulitzer in National Reporting	New York Times and The Washington Post for coverage of Russian interference in the 2016 elections.	-
Pulitzer Prize for Music.	Kendrick Lamar for his 2017 album "DAMN"	First rapper to win the Pulitzer Prize for music.

The Swedish Academy has postponed the 2018 Nobel Prize in Literature following sex-abuse allegations and other issues within its ranks that have tarnished the **body's reputation**. The 2018 winner will be presented alongside the 2019 winner next year. It is the first time since wartime 1943 that the prestigious award will not be given.

Syria has returned to France the prestigious Legion d'honneur presented to President Bashar al-Assad. President Assad was decorated with the highest class of the award, the Grand Croix, in 2001 after he took power following the death of his father. France recently joined the US and Britain in bombing Syrian targets over an alleged chemical weapons attack.

NATIONAL AWARDS

Name of the Award	Winner (Individuals, organisations & states)	Special Highlights
RedInk award for lifetime achievement in journalism-2018	Sir William Mark Tully	Instituted by the Mumbai Press Club.
First Tribal Queen at the Adi Rani Kalinga Tribal Queen competition held at Utkal Mandap.	Pallavi Durua	Organised by SC & ST department, Govt of Odisha and the State Tourism Department.
'Chief Minister of the Year' SKOCH Award	Vasundhara Raje	Implementing the prime minister's Digital India campaign for benefitting the common man.
Order-of-Merit Awards from SKOCH	East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC)	-

Prime Minister's award for outstanding contribution for promotion and development of yoga for the year 2018.	Vishwas Mandalik (Individual) from Nasik and the Yoga Institute (Organisation) in Mumbai	-
Godavari Gaurav award.	Amol Palekar	-
'State of the Year' Award under the 'business leader'	Chhattisgarh	-
Nari Shakti Puraskar-2017	INSV-Tarini team	Tarini is a part of Navika Sagar Parikrama, an all women crew of Indian women navy officer who circumnavigated the globe.
India Biodiversity Award 2018 in the category of 'Conservation of wildlife species'	Singchung Bugun Community Reserve	-
Saraswati Samman- 2017.	Sitanshu Yashaschandra's poetry collection "Vakhar"	Awarded annually by the K K Birla Foundation.
ONV Literary Award	M T Vasudevan Nair	-
ONV award for young promising writer	'Amma urangunnilla', a poetry collection by Anuja Akathoottu.	-
Banga Bibhushan	Asha Bhosle	Highest civilian award of West Bengal
Digital Leader of the Year award- Business world Digital India Summit 2018.	Nara Lokesh- Andhra Pradesh Minister for IT, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development.	-
National Intellectual Property Award- 2018	Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)	-
'Condecoracion'/ Medal of the 'Gran Colar de la Independencia'	Ram Nath Kovind	The highest honour accorded to a non-citizen by the government of Equatorial Guinea.
National 'Water Digest Award'	Chhattisgarh	Award is presented every year by globally renowned magazine 'Water Digest'-which focuses mainly on water resources.
G.K. Reddy Memorial National Award for journalism	Karan Thapar	-

2017 Kochon Prize	Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for building a excellence in TB research and development.	-
Champion Security Award-	HDFC bank	The Award is a mark of excellence reflecting leadership in risk management and payment security performance.
Most Film Friendly State	Madhya Pradesh	-
Madhya Pradesh will be awarded for reducing maternal mortality under Prime Minister's Safe Motherhood Campaign.		
Most Informative Pavilion	Defence Research and Development Organisation- DRDO	At the 105th Indian Science Congress (ISC) in Manipur
Best Design Panel	NHAI pavilion	At the 105th Indian Science Congress (ISC) in Manipur
Most Improved Airport in the Asia Pacific region.	Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad	-
'Santokbaa Humanitarian Award'.	Noble Laureate Kailash Satyarthi and space scientist A S Kiran Kumar, Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)	The award is instituted by Shree Ramkrishna Knowledge Foundaton (SRKKF) and presented by the President of India.
'Most inspiring icon of the year for Social Welfare".'	Yuvraj Singh	The award was given by the Dadasaheb Phalke International Film Festival for his exemplary contribution in the field of social welfare.

Ministry of Women & Child Development received **the 'Best Performing Social Sector Ministry' SKOCH Award**. The ministry achieved results through schemes like Beti Bachao Beti Padhao has achieved huge success and improved sex ratio.

The Government has approved to institute **the "Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Police Investigation"** to promote high professional standards of Investigation of Crime in the State/UT Police and Central Investigating Agencies. A total of 162 medals will be awarded every year. The names of awardees will be

declared on 15th August every year.

Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency (TNeGA) has received an award for promoting ease of doing business. TNeGA developed an investor facilitation portal that provides single window clearance to industrial proposals in the state. The award was given in recognition of simplification of procedure and ease with which clearances from various authorities can be procured by a business.

SPORTS

- BCCI recommended Indian cricketers Smriti Mandhana and Shikhar Dhawan for the Arjuna Award.
- Indian women's cricket team captain Mithali Raj was adjudged 'Sportsperson of the Year' at the Telangana Sports Journalists Association annual awards for 2017.

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CEAT Cricket Rating Awards	
Category	Winner
International Cricketer of the Year Award	Virat Kohli
International Batsman of the Year Award	Shikhar Dhawan
International Bowler of the Year Award	Trent Boult
T20 Bowler of the Year Award	Rashid Khan

PADMA AWARDS

PADMA VIBHUSHAN		
Shri Illaiyaraja	Art-Music	Tamil Nadu
Shri Ghulam Mustafa Khan	Art-Music	Maharashtra
Shri Parameswaran Parameswaran	Literature and Education	Kerala

PADMA BHUSHAN		
Shri Pankaj Advani	Sports-Billiards/ Snooker	Karnataka
Shri Philipose Mar Chrysostom	Others-Spiritualism	Kerala
Shri Mahendra Singh Dhoni	Sports-Cricket	Jharkhand
Shri Alexander Kadakin (Foreigner/Posthumous)	Public Affairs	Russia
Shri Ramachandran Nagaswamy	Others-Archaeology	Tamil Nadu
Shri Ved Prakash Nanda (OCI)	Literature and Education	USA
Shri Laxman Pai	Art-Painting	Goa
Shri Arvind Parikh	Art-Music	Maharashtra
Ms. Sharda Sinha	Art-Music	Bihar
Shri Ramachandran Nagaswamy	Others-Archaeology	Tamil Nadu
Shri Ved Prakash Nanda (OCI)	Literature and Education	USA
Shri Laxman Pai	Art-Painting	Goa
Shri Ramachandran Nagaswamy	Others-Archaeology	Tamil Nadu
Shri Ved Prakash Nanda (OCI)	Literature and Education	USA

Shri Laxman Pai	Art-Painting	Goa
Shri Arvind Parikh	Art-Music	Maharashtra

Ms. Sharda Sinha	Art-Music	Bihar
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PADMA SHRI	
73 Padma Shri Awards were given of which 14 of the awardees are women and the list also includes 16 persons from the category of Foreigners/NRI/PIO/OCI and 3 Posthumous awardees.	

ENTERTAINMENT AWARDS

Award	Winner
French distinction of Knight of the Order of Arts and Letters.	Kalki Koechlin
Lifetime Achievement Award at the Rome Film Festival 2018	Veteran director Martin Scorsese
J.C. Daniel Award- Kerala government's highest honour for lifetime contribution to Malayalam cinema.	Sreekumaran Thampi
IIFA Awards 2018	
Best Actress	Sridevi (posthumously)
Best Actor	Irfan Khan
Best Film	Tumhari Sulu
Best Director	Saket Chaudhary
Outstanding Achievement by an Actor in Indian Cinema	Anupam Kher
National Awards	
Dadasaheb Phalke award	Vinod Khanna
Best Hindi Film	Newton
Best Actor	Riddhi Sen for 'Nagar

	Kirtan'
Best Actress	Sridevi for 'Mom'
Best Director	Jayaraj for 'Bhayanakam'
Best Film	Village Rockstars (Assamese)
Best Action Direction	'Baahubali 2: The Conclusion'
OSCARS/90 th Academy Awards	
Best picture	Shape of Water
Best Actor in a Leading Role	Gary Oldman for 'Darkest Hour'
Best Actress	Frances McDormand for 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri'
Best Actor in a Supporting Role	Sam Rockwell in a Supporting Role for 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri'
Best supporting actress	Allison Janney for 'I, Tonya'.
Best Director	'Guillermo del Toro for 'The Shape of Water'.
Best Foreign Language Film	'A Fantastic Woman'

Dada Saheb Phalke Award for Excellence	
Best Leading Lady (Critics Award)	Aditi Rao Hydari
Best Actor (male)	Shahid Kapoor
Best actor people's choice award	Ranveer Singh
Lifetime achievement award	Simi Garewal
Path breaking producer of the year	Anushka Sharma and Karneesh Sharma

Cannes film festival 2018 Awards	
Best director award	Pawel Pawlikowski for his love story "Cold War".
'Palme d'Or- 2018 (highest prize awarded at the Cannes Film Festival)	Shoplifters- Japanese family drama

2. Business and Economy

RBI MONETARY POLICY - JUNE 2018

Monetary Policy is the **macroeconomic policy** by which the **Reserve Bank** controls the supply of money and credit in the economy on the basis of the different parameters.

Urjit Patel-headed six-member **Monetary Policy Committee (MPC)** of the Reserve Bank of India came out with the Monetary policy.

Rate	Value	Additional Information
Repo Rate	6.25%	The repo rate was raised by 25 basis points for the first time since January 2014, in about four-and-a-half-years. It is the rate at which commercial bank borrows money from RBI against securities for a short period of time.
Reverse Repo Rate	6%	It is the rate at which RBI borrows money from the commercial banks.
Bank rate	6.5%.	It refers to the interest rate charged by the central bank on loans granted to commercial banks.
Marginal Standing Facility (MSF)	6.5%.	Marginal standing facility (MSF) is a window for banks to borrow from the Reserve Bank of India in an emergency when inter-bank liquidity dries up completely.

NEWS RELATED TO RBI (HQ- MUMBAI, GOVERNOR- URJIT PATEL, ALSO KNOWN AS THE FINANCIAL MARKET REGULATOR)

RBI has tightened **Priority Sector Lending (PSL)** norms for foreign banks by directing them to create sub-targets so that they lend a portion of their loans to small & marginal farmers as well as MSMEs. PSL norms mandate foreign banks to lend **40%** of their total loan book

to the **priority sector**.

RBI has decided to **do away with the per borrower loan limits to Micro/ Small and Medium Enterprises** for classification under priority sector lending. So far, loans to Micro/ Small and Medium Enterprises up to ₹5 crore and

₹10 crore, respectively, were classified as PSL.

- RBI has imposed a monetary fine of **₹40 lakh** on **State Bank of India** over counterfeit notes.
- RBI imposed a penalty of **₹3 crore** on **Axis Bank** for non-compliance of **Income Recognition and Asset Classification (IRAC)** norms.
- RBI imposed a penalty of **₹2 crore** on **Indian Overseas Bank** for non-compliance with **Know Your Customer** norms.
- RBI imposed a fine of **₹5 crores** on **Airtel Payments Bank** for flouting **Know Your Customer (KYC)** norms and operating guidelines.
- RBI has imposed a penalty of **Rs 58.9 crore** on **ICICI Bank** for failure to adhere to **held-to-maturity (HTM)** guidelines. This is the **highest penalty imposed** by RBI on a bank for a single incident. Under RBI guidelines banks have to split their holding of government securities into '**held-to-maturity (HTM)** and **available for 'available-for-sale' category.**
- The **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)** signed MoU with the RBI for enhancing cooperation between the two regulators to ensure better implementation of the **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.**
- RBI has **scrapped the issuance of Letters of Undertaking (LOUs) and Letters of Comfort (LOCs)** for **trade credit for imports.** Banks will continue to issue guarantees and letter of credit for trade purposes which are the international norm. A letter of credit is secure because it has the details of the expiry date and the material purchase.
- RBI issued a **Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework** to **maintain the sound financial health of banks.** The framework facilitates banks in breach of risk thresholds for identified areas of monitoring, such as capital, asset quality and profitability, to take corrective
- measures. The RBI, through corrective framework, encourages banks to abstain from riskier activities.
- RBI has changed the **methodology used by debt market players** for their valuation in order to prevent the possibility of manipulation in the prices of securities, especially government securities. **Security/bond valuation** will be based on the weighted average price of the last half-an-hour of trading.
- RBI allowed banks to **spread out the provisioning to cover losses** on their government bond portfolio across four quarters. This dispensation to spread the so-called mark-to-market provisioning is available for the quarters ending December 2017 and March 2018. Banks using such option will have to make the disclosure in their notes to accounts of the quarterly results.
- RBI has decided to set up **Data Sciences Lab** to improve its forecasting, surveillance and early warning detection abilities which will aid policy formulation. The unit will become operational by December 2018.
- RBI switched back to the **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)-based** measure to offer its growth estimates from the **Gross Value Added (GVA) methodology.** The Government had started analysing growth estimates using GVA methodology from January 2015 and had also changed the base year to 2018 from January. The GDP model gives the picture from the **consumers' side or demand perspective.**
- RBI directed all **regulated entities** including banks not to provide services to businesses dealing in **virtual currencies like bitcoins**, so as to protect consumers and check money laundering. RBI asked entities, which are already into such services to stop providing this kind of services within three months. RBI has directed all payment system operators to **store all data within India.**
- RBI has **deferred** the adoption of '**Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS)**' by banks, for a year, **till April 2019**, due to

the unpreparedness of banks to migrate to the new accounting system. Ind AS is a **global accounting practice** that lenders are mandated to adopt that may lead to initial credit losses.

- RBI imposed a Rs 3 crore penalty on **IDBI Bank for not following the central bank's rules on classification of loans**. It did not **adhere to RBI's norms on Income Recognition and Asset Classification**.
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has slapped a penalty of **₹ 50 million** on **South Indian Bank Limited** for non-compliance with the directions issued by it.

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- RBI tightened reporting norms for the **Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)** under which an individual can transfer up to **USD 2,50,000** abroad in a year. These are currently permitted by banks based on the declaration made by the remitter. The scheme was introduced on February 4, 2004, with a limit of USD 25,000.
- RBI has **amended its 'Know Your Customer' guidelines**, making **Aadhaar compulsory by banks & finance companies**. It has also **done away with sections relating to use of other "officially valid documents" by lenders for address and identity proof**. The norms have been revised because the government had amended laws on prevention of money laundering.
- RBI has **removed the restriction that limited foreign investors to only investing in government and corporate bonds with tenures of three years or more**. This decision can bolster the domestic bond market. The move comes after weak investor interest in two recent auctions that led to a spike in sovereign

debt yields

- In a bid to **facilitate cheaper access of overseas funds**, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) further liberalized **External Commercial Borrowings (ECB)** policy by including more sectors in the window. The ECB Liability to Equity Ratio for ECB raised from direct foreign equity holder under the automatic route has been raised to **7:1**. With a view to harmonising the extant provisions of Foreign Currency and Rupee ECBs and Rupee Denominated Bonds, a uniform all-in-cost ceiling of 450 basis points over the benchmark rate was fixed.
- RBI revised **cap on FPI investments** in any Central Government security to **30 percent of the outstanding stock of that security**. FPIs were required to invest in corporate bonds with a residual maturity of 3 years.
- RBI has placed restrictions on business activities of **City Co-operative Bank** till such time as its **financial position improves**. Customers of the bank will not be allowed to withdraw more than Rs 1000 of the total balance held in their accounts.
- RBI permitted **Foreign Portfolio Investments (FPIs)** to invest in treasury bills issued by the Central Government. Treasury Bills are short term (up to one year) borrowing instruments of the Government & they are auctioned by RBI.
- RBI has asked banks authorised to deal in foreign exchange to share data with the **Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI)**.
- According to RBI, cases of frauds involving more than **Rs 25 cr & up to Rs 50 cr** should be given to **CBIs Banking Security & Fraud Cell**. Frauds of min. **Rs 3 cr & to Rs 25 cr** have to be reported to either **CBIs Anti-Corruption Branch or to Economic Offences Wing**.
- RBI has initiated Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) against **Dena Bank** after it posted a loss for the third year in a row with net NPA's close to 12%. Though

several banks are under the PCA framework currently, **Dena Bank is the first lender to have fresh lending curbed.**

- RBI issued detailed **Net Stable Funding Ratio (NSFR) guidelines** to ensure that banks maintain a **stable funding profile** in relation to the composition of their assets and off-balance sheet activities. The NSFR would be applicable for Indian banks at the solo as well as consolidated level.
- The guidelines on NSFR are in line with global norms prescribed by the **Basel Committee.**
- RBI modified the norms for setting up **IFSC Banking Units** to enable IBUs to start their operations. The parent bank will be required to provide a minimum capital of USD 20 million. In April 2015, the Reserve Bank had formulated a scheme for setting up of International Financial Services Centres (IFSC) Banking Units (IBUs) by banks in IFSCs. The government has set up an IFSC in Gujarat.
- According to an RBI data, **Banks' credit** grew by **12.64% year-on-year** to **₹85,51,099 crore** in the fortnight ended May 11, 2018. **Banks' deposits** grew by 7.61% to **₹1,13,92,165 crore** in the fortnight ended May 11, 2018, compared with **₹1,05,86,083 crore** in the fortnight ended May 12, 2017. Bank credit is the aggregate amount of credit available to a person or business from a banking institution.
- RBI has decided to allow **Urban Co-operative Banks (UCB)** to convert into **Small Finance Banks (SFB)**. The move is aimed at bringing these entities into mainstream banking. UCBs currently face regulation by both the RBI and the respective State governments. By turning into SFBs, they will be regulated only by the RBI.
- RBI has **increased the eligibility limit for a loan** to classify as priority sector lending in a bid to boost affordable housing. For metropolitan areas, loan limits have been raised from **Rs. 28 lakh**
- to Rs. 35 lakh.** The move is aimed at giving a fillip to low-cost housing for the economically weaker sections and lower income groups.
- RBI allowed banks to spread their **Mark-To-Market (MTM) losses** for the June quarter as well. RBI also asked banks to build an Investment Fluctuation Reserve (IFR) of 2% of their holdings. In April, RBI had given banks an option to spread provisioning for MTM losses recorded on their investment portfolio
- In a bid to check loan defaults, RBI said that a **Public Credit Registry (PCR)** will be set up containing information on all borrowers to ensure financial stability. This was done following a report by **Yeshwant M Deosthalee** headed High Level Task Force. The PCR will serve as a registry of all credit contracts
- The RBI said that the **Interest subsidy** scheme on **short-term crop loans** of up to **Rs 3 lakh** will be implemented through the DBT mode. As per the scheme, farmers can avail of short-term crop loans of up to three lakh rupees at subsidised interest rate of 7%. The Centre has earmarked 15,000 crore rupees for 2018-19 towards interest subvention for short-term crop loans.
- The Reserve Bank of India observed the **Financial Literacy Week** beginning on June 4. **'Customer Protection'** was the theme.
- The RBI has asked payment services firms to provide an update, on action taken by them to store transaction data in India, **every fortnight.** RBI wants payment system operators to store payment-related data in the country by **October 2018.**
- In a move to enhance credit discipline among larger borrowers, the RBI proposed a **'minimum level of loan component' of 40 percent** for borrowers having an aggregate fund-based working capital limit of Rs. 150 crores and above from the banking system. It will be proposed to be effective from October 1, 2018. The 40 percent loan component will

be revised to 60 percent from April 1, 2019.

- Public sector banks have claimed a ₹1,50,960 crore reduction in their non-performing asset levels over 2017-18, only 27% was actual recoveries, according to data provided by RBI Governor Urjit Patel.
- NPA refers to loans or advances that are in default
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has narrowed the **definition of relatives** to check the flow of funds. Hence, funds under the **'maintenance of close relative' category** can be sent only to immediate relatives such as parents, spouses, children and their spouses. This has brought about by defining **'relatives'** under the Companies Act, 2013 instead of the same act of 1956.
- The Reserve Bank of India has issued the license to Bank of China to launch operations in India. With this, Bank of China becomes the **second Chinese bank after the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China to have a branch in India**. Bank of China is one of the four biggest state-owned commercial banks in China. Bank of China opened its first branch in South Asia in Pakistan's Karachi in 2017.

- No transactions in **cryptocurrencies** will be made by the commercial banks from 6th July onwards as per the RBI directive. RBI had already barred all its regulated entities in order to curb money laundering and other financial irregularities and protect consumers. All the regulated entities have been given three months to exit their relationship with businesses and individuals.

NEWS RELATED TO BANKING SECTOR

Banks
Catholic Syrian Bank tied up with Celebrus Capital Ltd (Celebrus) , to offer CSB's customers online trading and demat services.
IDBI Bank has cut its stake in Punjab Alkalies & Chemicals (PAC) by selling 18.11 lakh shares of PAC. IDBI Bank was holding 47.10 lakh shares, or 17.35% stake in PAC.
Karnataka Bank opened its first all-woman branch at Bull Temple Road in Bengaluru.
Axis Bank opened a representative office in Sharjah, to better serve its customers in the emirate and to expand its retail offerings to customers in the neighbouring northern emirates. The representative office is the 3rd Axis Bank office in the UAE after Dubai and Abu Dhabi.
UCO Bank is planning to merge its two branches in Hong Kong following RBI's ban on letters of

<p>undertaking. With almost zero capital needed for opening a branch in Hong Kong, the country has the second highest number of foreign branches by Indian banks after the UK.</p>	
<p>A Memorandum of Undertaking (MoU) was signed between the Indian Army and HDFC Bank on the Defence Salary Package. The first MoU between HDFC Bank and the Indian Army was signed in 2011 and was renewed on 13 Mar 2015.</p>	<p>Indian Army has MoUs on Defence Salary Package with 11 public and private sector banks.</p>
<p>Jio Payments Bank commenced its banking services. Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) was one of the 11 applicants which were issued the in-principle approval for setting up a payments bank in August 2015.</p>	<p>Telecom major Bharti Airtel was the first to begin payment bank services in November 2016.</p>
<p>Private sector lender IndusInd Bank has received RBI's approval to buy the securities services arm of IL&FS. In March 2017, the bank entered an agreement with Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) to acquire 100% stake in ISSL.</p>	<p>Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) is the promoter shareholder of IL&FS Securities Services Ltd (ISSL).</p>
<p>SBI has announced the launch of its UK subsidiary, SBI (UK) Limited, with an initial capital commitment of 225 million pounds from its parent entity. SBI became the first foreign bank in the UK to ringfence its retail division from its wholesale business.</p>	
<p>Small Industries and Development Bank of India (SIDBI) announced a plan to promote micro-enterprises in 115 aspirational districts across the country and for this it has tied up with Common Service Centre (CSC).</p>	
<p>Punjab National Bank has impounded passports of 150 wilful loan defaulters who are not repaying loans. This is the first such revelation made by any bank, following govt's instructions to banks on seeking passport copies of all those who have borrowed more than Rs 50 crore. PNB has already declared 1,084 wilful defaulters & has published photos of 260 such defaulters in newspapers.</p>	
<p>Bank of India has entered into an agreement with National E-Governance Services (NeSL) for Information Utility arrangement under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, and it will avail NeSL service to expedite corporate insolvency resolution process. In September 2017, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India registered NeSL as the first Information Utility.</p>	
<p>Axis Bank has reported a net loss of Rs 21.88 billion for the quarter ended March 2018. This is the first time the bank has posted quarterly loss since its listing in 1998. The loss has been attributed to higher provisioning for bad loans.</p>	
<p>Yes Bank launched 'YES GST', an OD (over draft) facility for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs). Through this first-of-its-kind, industry first initiative, an MSME can avail OD up to Rs. 1 crore, based on their annual turnover, backed by GST returns. This OD facility can be availed by a MSME against mortgage of residential or commercial property.</p>	
<p>Standard Chartered Bank has announced an alliance with Zoho to offer solutions to enhance corporate banking experience.</p>	
<p>Bank of Baroda has launched its first integrated SME Loan Factory in Gurgaon to cater the needs</p>	

<p>of MSME segment in NCR. It will function as a One Stop Shop' for MSME customers and will provide end to end solutions viz. acquisition, processing, disbursement & relationship management. BoB has also decided to centralize Government Sponsored Schemes loan processing at the district level.</p>	
<p>YES Bank has received approval from National Stock Exchange to be empanelled as Settlement Bank for National Securities Clearing Corporation (NSCC), a wholly owned subsidiary of NSE.</p>	<p>NSCC is responsible for clearing and settlement of all trades executed on NSE. The Bank is already an empanelled Clearing Bank for BSE, NCDEX & MCX.</p>
<p>Northeast India's first small bank, North East Small Finance bank (NESFB) started its services.</p>	<p>Rashtriya Gramin Vikas Nidhi (North East) Microfinance Limited received the Small Finance Bank License from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on March 31, 2017.</p>
<p>ICICI Bank's mortgage loan portfolio crossed the Rs 1.5-trillion milestone making it the largest private player in the segment.</p>	
<p>Private lender YES Bank has received final regulatory approval from the Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to start mutual fund business. This approval is subsequent to the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) approval. YES Asset Management (India), a wholly owned subsidiary of YES Bank, will launch fund offerings across the spectrum in both debt and equity markets.</p>	
<p>State Bank of India recorded its highest non-performing asset (NPAs) of Rs. 1.1 lakh crore in 2017-18, almost equal to what it had registered in the decade before.</p>	
<p>Union Bank of India will raise equity capital of Rs. 1500 crore and this capital raise will be in addition to the capital support which has been granted by the government.</p>	
<p>YES Bank will roll out a capacity building project with the focus on sustainable agricultural practices and digital literacy for farmers in Haryana and Rajasthan under its 'Livelihood and Water Security' CSR initiative.</p>	
<p>Housing finance major HDFC has been ranked as the 5th biggest public company globally in the 'consumer financial services category' on a list compiled by Forbes magazine. HDFC's rank has moved up from 7th place last year. American Express has topped this category, while Indiabulls Housing Finance is the only other Indian company (at 13th place) on the list.</p>	
<p>HDFC Bank has gone past Russia's Sberbank to become the most valuable bank in the emerging market outside China. HDFC Bank was one of the top performing major banks globally in 2017. The Bank's current market capitalization is \$78.4 billion. Globally, America's JPMorgan Chase is the most valuable with a market cap of \$353 billion, followed by Bank of America at \$282 billion.</p>	

DIGITAL BANKING

<p>News and Important Points</p>
<p>According to a report by National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), out of total 171.4 mn UPI transactions in February, Paytm contributed 68 million, or 40% of the total transactions. Paytm had recorded 37 million UPI transactions in December 2017, and 51.2 million in January 2018.</p>

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IndusInd Bank will partner with Ripple to facilitate payments into and out of India.	
ICICI Bank has launched instant overdraft 'InstaOD' facility for MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) customers in a completely online and paperless manner. They can get OD facility upto Rs 15 lakh for a year anytime, anywhere using the bank's Internet and mobile banking app.	
Yes Bank has launched a robotics-based 'Digital export Import' payments solution as a part of its Yes Transact Smart Trade product suite. It aims to bring over 1 lakh trade transactions going entirely digital, across major geographies including China, US.	
To provide first-and-last-mile connectivity, IRCTC announced a partnership with cab aggregator Ola, giving commuters an option book taxi on its app.	
Microsoft enabled digital payments services on its enterprise social network app 'Kaizala' in India. Microsoft has integrated payment services of YES BANK and MobiKwik.	
Equitas Small Finance Bank has launched a new 'Yellow Army Savings Account' to increase its customer base through its association with Chennai Super Kings as it is the principal sponsor of CSK and the banking partner of CSK for 3 years.	
Fino Payments Bank will set-up multi-utility Android-based mPOS devices across 10,000 banking points throughout the country in a phased manner.	
Kotak Mahindra Bank has launched the country's first artificial intelligence-powered voice-bot 'Keya' in the banking sector. Keya uses automatic speech recognition, natural language understanding and text-to-speech technology.	
IndusInd Bank launched a pilot program with WhatsApp enterprise solution in India to communicate with its customers.	
ICICI Bank launched first-of-its-kind service known as 'Social Pay' , available on Money2India (M2I), the bank's app for remittances. It enables Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to send money to a beneficiary in India using social media platforms like WhatsApp and e-mail.	
IndusInd Bank will collaborate with Samsung Electronics to enable its MasterCard and Visa credit card customers to use 'Samsung Pay'.	
ICICI Bank became the first Indian bank to go live on SWIFT's Global Payment Innovation, an improved cross-border payments service. The service enables real-time payments tracking across correspondent banks & has a facility to track payments instructions across correspondent banks globally.	
SBI has set up 60 digital branches, called 'sbiINTOUCH', across the country, in partnership with Dimension Data, a global technology integrator and managed services provider.	Expand SBI's reach with increasing profitability. It will offer services like instant loan approvals, assistance in choosing investment portfolios.
Kotak Mahindra Bank Ltd. beat India's largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) for the first time to become the second most valued bank in the country, with a market capitalization of Rs 2,22970.40 crore.	
HDFC Bank Ltd remained country's most valuable bank with a market capitalization of Rs5.04	

trillion.	
ICICI Bank has introduced a 'digital form' which will help open current accounts in a few hours in comparison to an industry average of a few days.	
Paytm Payments Bank claims that it now has over 100 million KYC -registered wallets which includes both complete & minimum KYC.	Paytm Payments Bank is owned 51% by Paytm founder Vijay Sharma & 49% by One97 Communications.
FIEO GlobalLinker is a digital platform for MSME exporters to digitise their businesses & join a global community of growing businesses.	FIEO GlobalLinker is setup with a view to make business growth of SMEs simpler, profitable & enjoyable.
Kotak Securities has unveiled ' Free Intraday Trading ' facility, allowing investors to trade intra-day without paying brokerage charges.	Intra-day trading refers to trades in which investors buy and sell the shares within the same trading session.
Fino Payments Bank launched a suite of digital products that can be accessed online and through mobile phones. The latest initiatives include Unified Payments Interface (UPI), BHIM app- using which customers can access UPI and make P2P payments.	Fino had launched its mobile banking app BPay in 2017.
HDFC Bank has launched its digital Loans against Mutual Funds in partnership with transfer agent CAM. Customers will be able to leverage their mutual fund portfolio to avail funds for any emergencies without liquidating their investments. The ticket size of the loans will range from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1 crore at an interest rate of 10.5 -11%.	
MobiKwik has announced the launch of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) on its platform via its own Virtual payment address (VPA) handle @ikwik. Users can simply scan and generate UPI QR functionality to send and receive money using VPA and phone number from the contact list.	MobiKwik is the first in the industry to offer UPI access to a huge base of three million merchants on its app.
Karnataka Bank has unveiled a novel card variant 'KBL Deposit Only Card'. The card aims to enable hassle free cash deposit transaction at Bank's 24x7 e-Lobby services. This card is specially meant for Bank's Current/Overdraft customers. By using this card they can perform card based cash deposit transactions even with higher deposit limit.	
HDFC Bank launched IRA 2.0, its interactive humanoid in Bengaluru. IRA will interact with customers, answer bank-related queries, frequently asked questions, and guide them inside the branch with voice-based navigation. The bank also launched its virtual assistant 'EVA' on Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant.	

DIGITAL WALLETS AND MOBILE APPLICATIONS

NAME	ORGANIZATION
UMANG	EPFO

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Pockets	ICICI bank
Buddy	SBI
Kitty	PNB
PayZapp	HDFC Bank
Lime Wallet	Axis bank
Speedpay	PNB & BSNL
YONO (You Need Only One)	SBI
TEZ	Google

GST (GOODS AND SERVICES TAX)

News	Facts
<p>Goods and Services Tax Council mandated the use of electronic way (e-way) bills from April 1 to track inter-state movement of goods worth over Rs 50,000, will have to generate e-way bills. For intra-State movement, the e-way bill will be rolled out in a phased manner beginning April 15, and will cover all the States by June 1.</p>	<p>E-Way Bill is an electronically generated document from the GSTN portal, which is required to be generated for the movement of goods of more Rs. 50,000 from one place to another.</p>
<p>Govt. has collected Rs 7.41 trillion in taxes in the first year of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) between August 2017 and March 2018. The revenues for four months have not being accounted for because of the mid-year rollout and an accounting lag.</p>	<p>Under GST, the tax levied on consumption of goods or rendering of service is split 50:50 between the Centre and the states.</p>
<p>Revenue from the Goods and Services Tax (GST) for April 2018 crossed the Rs. 1 lakh crore threshold, coming in at Rs. 1,03,458 crore. It Indicates that the indirect tax regime was stabilising and that economic revival was picking up pace.</p>	
<p>The GST Council decided on a new, simplified method of filing GST returns, based on the recommendations of the Group of Ministers on IT simplification. All taxpayers excluding a few exceptions like composition dealer shall file one monthly return.</p>	<p>Goods & Services Tax Council is a constitutional body & is chaired by the Union Finance Minister</p>
<p>Centre and the 'concerned state' will equally share the amount deposited by erring businesses in the consumer welfare fund. These funds are deposited in the national anti-profiteering authority set up as part of the GST anti-profiteering rules to penalise erring businesses. In case the customer is not identifiable, the money has to be deposited in the consumer welfare fund.</p>	

NEWS RELATED TO INDIAN ECONOMY & GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATIONS

News	Additional points
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<p>EPFO has made it mandatory to file online claims for withdrawals of above Rs 5 lakh under the Employees Pension Scheme 1995.</p>	
<p>NABARD has come out with a 'Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) Framework' for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), if they fail to meet the 'capital to risk-weighted assets ratio', assets (NPAs), and profitability (Return on assets). The framework is aimed at enabling RRBs that fail to meet prudential requirements like capital adequacy to take self-corrective action.</p>	
<p>The government has made the use of e-Invoices, e-Payments and e-Delivery orders mandatory across the maritime trade as it seeks to push digitisation of trade processes. The government has also directed stakeholders to use the Port Community System (PCS).</p>	<p>PCS is a centralised web-based message exchange platform for the Indian maritime community to exchange the documents.</p>
<p>The Central Vigilance Commission has drawn up a new set of guidelines for projects funded by international agencies such as the World Bank, IMF and Asian Development Bank. The new guidelines will put an end to existing practice of government departments and agencies adhering to the guidelines of foreign donors and will also draw a distinction between grants-in-aid and loans.</p>	
<p>The government has allowed startups to avail tax concession if total investment including funding from angel investors does not exceed ₹10 crore.</p>	
<p>India and Finland have reached an accord on the tax dispute with Nokia under the Mutual Agreement Procedure. The resolution covering the disputes pertaining to Nokia India as well as Nokia Corp brings to an end one of the biggest tax disputes involving multinational companies.</p>	<p>This paves the way for sale of Nokia's Chennai plant, which has been shuttered since November 2014.</p>
<p>The government will soon acquire the stake of Reserve Bank of India in housing finance regulator National Housing Bank (NHB). The Finance Bill 2018 has amended the National Housing Bank Act, 1987, for transferring RBI's stake in the NHB to the government.</p>	<p>RBI currently holds 100 per cent stake in the NHB</p>
<p>India along with Sri Lanka, Mauritius & Malta will pool into an innovative \$5 million fund for small states to obtain easier access to international trade finance. This new scheme is an example of innovative & collaborative approaches that are pioneered by Commonwealth.</p>	<p>Standard Chartered & BoB are the facility managers.</p>
<p>Govt has decided to set up a district plan to accelerate growth of districts by 3%. The initiative will begin with six districts, including Sindhudurg & Ratnagiri in Maharashtra, Varanasi in UP, Muzaffarpur in Bihar, Vishakapatnam in Andhra Pradesh & Solan in HP.</p>	
<p>Applications for setting up of Inland Container Depots, Container Freight Stations, and Air Freight Stations will now be handled by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs. The move will promote ease of doing business at trade front. Earlier, the commerce ministry used to handle these applications. The development would help India improve its ranking in trading across borders.</p>	
<p>In order to facilitate small and medium-sized trading members, NSE introduced a facility of 'managed co-location service'. In this facility, space will be provided to vendors along with provision for receiving market data and</p>	

<p>will enable the co-located entities to access the trade/order related data before other non-co-located entities.</p>	
<p>The government will come out with a Producers' Price Index for 10 services, including telecom & railways on an experimental basis. The move will help track inflation in these services, which will also include ports, insurance, banking, transportation & air travel.</p>	<p>Two major indices are used currently for tracking price movement - Wholesale Price Index & Consumer Price Index.</p>
<p>The CriSidEx score increased to 121 in SQ from 107 in October-December 2017, which validates the expectation of higher optimism made by the first quarterly survey.</p>	<p>CriSidEx is India's first sentiment index for MSEs which was launched in February. The index developed by Crisil and SIDBI is based on a diffusion index of 8 parameters-5 manufacturing and 3 services. It measures MSEs business sentiment on a scale of 0 to 200.</p>
<p>According to the report 'RemitSCOPE - Remittance markets & opportunities - Asia & the Pacific', India was the largest remittance-receiving country in the world in 2017. It was followed by China & Philippines. Cash-to-cash transactions was the most common form of transfer.</p>	
<p>United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will set up a skill development centre at 'Bharosa', in Hyderabad to empower vulnerable & marginalised women by imparting skills training.</p>	<p>'Bharosa,' an initiative of Hyderabad City Police, is a state-of-the-art centre to support women and children who are victims of violence.</p>
<p>China's largest bank, Industrial & Commercial Bank of China has launched country's first India-dedicated publicly offered investment fund. The fund will invest in exchange-traded funds listed on more than 20 exchanges in Europe & US that are based on Indian market.</p>	
<p>Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has introduced VIKALP scheme for passengers in wait-listing to provide berth in another train. Under the scheme, passengers from all classes & trains can select 5 trains, however, the scheme does not guarantee a confirmed berth. Passengers should be prepared as they can be shifted to another train leaving even 12 hours prior to the booked one.</p>	
<p>Based on the recommendation of the Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties, the revenue department has imposed an anti-dumping duty on import of Phosphorus Pentoxide from China for five years.</p>	<p>Phosphorus Pentoxide is used as a powerful desiccant and dehydrating agent and is a useful building block and reagent in the chemical industry.</p>
<p>ABB India & Niti Aayog have inked a pact to help India reap benefits of new technologies including</p>	

robotics & artificial intelligence.	
<p>European Union's new data protection laws have come into effect. The General Data Protection Regulation gives EU citizens more rights over how their information is used.</p> <p>It establishes consumers' "right to know" who is processing their information & what it will be used for. It also establishes the key principle that individuals must explicitly grant permission for their data to be used.</p>	
<p>The government has notified 8.55% interest rate on EPF for 2017-18, lowest in 5 years since the 2012-13 fiscal.</p>	<p>Employees' Provident Fund is a mandatory contribution from the salary of an individual that every company which more than 20 employees has has to deduct.</p> <p>EPF accounts are overseen by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation, which is under the Ministry of Labour & Employment.</p>
<p>India has signed a USD 500 million loan pact with World Bank to provide additional financing for PMGSY rural road projects. World Bank has supported PMGSY since its inception in 2004 & so far it has invested over \$1.8 billion in loans & credits.</p>	<p>Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana will build 7,000 km of climate resilient roads, out of which 3,500 km will be constructed using green technologies.</p>
<p>Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has for the second year in a row beaten ONGC to become India's most profitable state-owned company with a record net profit of Rs 21,346 crore in the fiscal year ended March 31, 2018.</p> <p>Reliance Industries retained the crown of being India's most profitable company for the third year in a row.</p>	
<p>The Indian economy grew 7.7% in the January-March quarter of 2017-18 on account of robust performance in manufacturing, construction and service sectors as well as good farm output according to the Central Statistics Office.</p> <p>However, the economic growth slowed to 6.7% in 2017-18 compared to 7.1% in 2016-17. The previous high GDP growth of 8.1% was recorded in April-June quarter of 2016-17.</p>	
<p>Government has met its fiscal deficit target for 2017-18 at 3.53% of the Gross Domestic Product.</p> <p>Government in the Budget had revised the fiscal deficit target for 2017-18 to 3.5% from the earlier estimate of 3.2%.</p> <p>For the current fiscal year(2018-19), government estimates to trim the deficit to 3.3% of GDP.</p>	<p>Fiscal deficit is the difference between total revenue & total expenditure of the government.</p>
<p>The Finance Ministry is planning to transfer shares of five sick Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) to the SNIF fund to meet SEBI's minimum 25 per cent public shareholding. These companies have time till August 21 to meet the 25% public share holding norm. Shares would be transferred on a proportionate basis to the fund to bring down government stake in these CPSEs to 75%.</p>	

<p>The combined losses posted by public sector banks (PSBs) in financial year 2017-18 were over Rs. 87,357 crore. Scam-hit Punjab National Bank (PNB) topped the list with a hit of nearly Rs. 12,283 crore followed by IDBI Bank. Out of 21 state-run banks, only two -- Indian Bank and Vijaya Bank -- posted profits during the year under review.</p>	
<p>Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for grant of permission to M/s. HDFC Bank Ltd. to raise additional share capital of up to a maximum of Rs. 24,000 crore. The composite foreign shareholding in the Bank shall not exceed 74% of the enhanced paid-up equity share capital of the bank. The proposed investment is expected to strengthen the capital adequacy ratio of the bank.</p>	
<p>The 220 MW Unit-1 of Karnataka's Kaiga Generating Systems (KGS-1) set a new record of the continuous operation of 766 days. The unit KGS-1 has been in operation since May 13, 2016. The 220 MW KGS-1 is an indigenous PHWR fuelled by domestic fuel.</p>	<p>It surpassed the earlier record of 765 days set by the Unit-5 of Rajasthan Atomic Power Station (RAPS-5) in 2014.</p>
<p>BHEL has entered into a technology collaboration agreement (TCA) with HLB Power, Republic of Korea. This TCA will help in establishing the capability for in-house design, manufacture and testing of very large size gates and dampers.</p>	
<p>The Sunil Mehta panel presented project 'Sashakt' and has recommended a five-pronged strategy. The plan will result in creating additional jobs by reviving businesses and will bring in credible long term external capital to limit the burden on the domestic banking sector.</p>	
<p>Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India has approved a proposal by LIC to raise its stake in IDBI Bank up to 51% from current 10.82%. It will save government from having to infuse more funds into IDBI Bank, which had received Rs 10,610 crore last fiscal, the most by any public-sector bank. The acquisition will be seen only as an investment & LIC will gradually lower its stake</p>	
<p>Iraq has overtaken Saudi Arabia by a wide margin to become India's top crude oil supplier. Iran was India's second biggest supplier of crude oil after Saudi Arabia till 2010-11 but western sanctions relegated it to the 7th spot in the subsequent years.</p>	
<p>The total amount involved in bank fraud cases this year has reached nearly ₹19,194 crore, which is 63% more than the total loss on all frauds in 2017.</p>	

NEWS RELATED TO INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

News	Additional points
<p>World Bank Group has endorsed a package of measures that include a \$13 billion increase in paid-in capital. The package approved by Development Committee of Board of Governors consists of \$7.5bn paid-in capital for IBRD & \$5.5bn paid-in capital for IFC. World Bank Group will now be able to support drivers of long-term sustainable growth, including investments in human capital & resilience.</p>	
<p>Asian Development Bank & International Solar Alliance have signed a cooperation arrangement to promote solar energy deployment in Asia & Pacific.</p>	

<p>The Asian Development Bank has agreed to give an aid of Rs 1,700 crore to Uttarakhand for the creation of infrastructural facilities, sewer treatment plants and water supply facilities in urban areas of Uttarakhand.</p>	
<p>SAARC Development Fund launched a Social Enterprise Development Programme (SEDP) to fund 80 entities annually across eight-member states. SDF has already committed \$73.74 million for social window projects out of which it has disbursed \$47 million</p>	<p>SDF was established in April 2010 and its council comprises finance ministers of these eight SAARC countries. The SDF CEO is Sunil Motiwal</p>
<p>World Bank Group members IFC has invested \$100 million in Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Ltd. This would enable the Mahindra group company to augment its growth by extending loans to individuals along with financing small and medium enterprises. The investment will be through secured non-convertible debentures.</p>	
<p>According to World Bank, India has retained its position as the top remittances receiving country with its diaspora sending about USD 69 billion back home in 2017.</p>	<p>China & Philippines were second and third respectively.</p>

NEWS RELATED TO INDIAN ECONOMY & BUSINESS WORLD

News	Important Points
<p>Aircel filed for bankruptcy at the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) claiming that it has a debt of ₹15,500 crore.</p>	<p>Ananda Krishnan-owned Malaysian parent Maxis Communications refused to infuse more funds into Aircel. Aircel's proposed merger with Anil Ambani's Reliance Communications had failed last year.</p>
<p>Department of Posts has launched the 'Cool EMS Service', which is one-way service from Japan to India which allows customers in India to import Japanese food items for personal use which is allowed under Indian regulations.</p>	<p>Initially, Cool EMS Service will be available in Delhi only.</p>
<p>The government invited bids to transfer management control along with 76% equity in Air India. The government will retain 24% stake in Air India and its subsidiary Air India Express.</p>	<p>Air India is India's flag air carrier with a significant market position in international and domestic operations.</p>
<p>SIDBI launched 'Samridhhi-the virtual assistant' on banks revamped universal loan portal 'www.udyamimitra.in' and will answer standard queries of aspirants 24*7.</p>	<p>SIDBI celebrated its foundation day as the day of Sampark (connect), Samwad (interaction), Suraksha (security) and Sampreshan (disseminate) on 2nd April.</p>
<p>RXIL, A.TReDS and M1xchange, three Trade Receivable Discounting Systems (TReDS)-digital invoice discounting platforms- jointly implemented a blockchain solution, which is expected to help reduce frauds in bills discounting or receivable financing. This is billed as India's first live blockchain implementation in the enterprise financial segment.</p>	

US-based MonetaGo has designed and implemented the production solution.	
The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) released a one-page simplified Income Tax Returns Form-1 'Sahaj' for the assessment year 2018-19.	It can be filed by an individual having income up to Rs.50 lakh and who is receiving income from salary, one house property/other income such as interest.
Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd entered the coveted Rs 1 trillion market capitalisation club, after its share price hit a fresh 52-week high on the BSE.	M&M has joined the ranks of Ultra Tech Cement, Power Grid Corporation, and IndusInd Bank.
Maruti Suzuki India's entry-level hatchback Alto has retained its status as the best selling passenger vehicle in India in 2017-18.	
Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) has launched home-delivery of diesel in Mumbai. 'HP Fuel Connect' will deliver diesel to select customers having fixed equipment, heavy machinery in their premises.	IOC had in March launched home-delivery of diesel in Pune.
Abu Dhabi National Oil Company has sent the first cargo vessel with 2 million barrels of crude oil for India's strategic petroleum reserve. ADNOC will use part of the crude oil to supply its customers, while the rest will remain as strategic storage for Govt of India to be released in event of an emergency. This will be the 1 st such investment by any foreign company in an Indian SPR facility.	
Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad's centre for innovation, incubation, and entrepreneurship has launched a \$25 mn Bharat Inclusion Initiative. It aims to mentor & invest in start-ups in early stage & seed segment over the next 3 to 4 yrs. The initiative received an initial pledge of \$12.5 mn from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Michael & Susan Dell Foundation & Omidyar Network.	
Paytm announced a programme called Paytm AshaKiran, which aims at educating rural women about financial services. In the first phase, the bank has partnered with United Nations Development Program under its Disha project to mobilize self-help groups and organize workshops.	
TCS became the first Indian company to close the trading session with over USD 100 billion market valuation.	TCS is the country's most valued firm, followed by Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank and Hindustan Unilever Limited.
Muthoot Fincorp Limited announced its partnership with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). Under the scheme, Muthoot Fincorp targets to train over 10,000 people over the next three years and make them job ready under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.	
GNFC (Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilisers & Chemicals) crosses another milestone by using Fertilizer subsidy disbursement through blockchain technology. NITI Aayog & GNFC signed a statement of Intent to implement a proof-of-concept using the Blockchain technology. Farmers will be benefited as the process transparency is evident, transactions cannot be altered and digital fraud can be altered.	
India's first private sector unit for manufacturing Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAV) and Light Bullet Proof Vehicles (LBPV)	The new defence unit in Kota is being set up under 'Make in India'

will be set up by DCM Shriram Industries Group in Kota. These UAVs and LBPVs are likely to be used by defence and para-military forces in the country.	initiative of the union government.
Samsung has set up what is the world's largest mobile factory at Sector 81 in Noida, Uttar Pradesh.	
The Centre has decided to set up a Centre of Excellence for blockchain technology in Hyderabad to drive innovation. The Centre of Excellence proposed to come up at C-DAC's Hyderabad unit. The plan is to use blockchain technology to digitise and secure land records for Telangana.	ICICI Bank was the first to execute transactions using Blockchain technology.

MERGERS & ACQUISITIONS

News	Additional points
Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries (RIL) has entered into definitive agreement to acquire NASADQ-listed Radisys Corp for \$1.72 per share in cash. The deal size works out to be ₹510 crore based on current outstanding equity share impact. This acquisition further accelerates Jio's global innovation and technology leadership in the areas of 5G, IOT and open source architecture adoption.	
The board of Tata Steel has approved the terms to create a 50:50 joint venture of Tata Steel's European steel businesses and Thyssenkrupp AG. The company plans to produce 35,000 million tonnes steel used in transformers for power sector against the current capacity of 10,000 mt . The JV would create it second-largest steelmaker after steel tycoon Lakshmi N Mittal's ArcelorMittal in Europe.	
Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries (RIL) has entered into definitive agreement to acquire NASADQ-listed Radisys Corp for \$1.72 per share in cash.	
Infosys completed the acquisition of US-based WongDoody.	WongDoody Holding Company is a US-based digital creative and consumer insights agency. WongDoody has clients across industries like telecommunications, consumer electronics, healthcare and consumer packaged goods. WongDoody is headquartered in Seattle and has an office in Los Angeles.
Cab aggregator Ola acquired public transport ticketing and commuting app, Ridlr.	
Walmart agreed to pay \$16 billion for about 77% stake in Flipkart. It will be the biggest ever acquisition in India by a foreign firm surpassing the about \$13 billion Vodafone spent in 2007 for buying Hutchison's Indian business.	The Walmart entered India in a joint venture with the Bharti Group in 2007 & started cash-and-carry stores named 'BestPrice Modern Wholesale' in 2009.

NEWS RELATED TO STARTUPS, BUSINESS WORLD

News	Additional points
Online grocery firm Grofers has raised ₹.400 crore in a fresh funding round led by the Japanese conglomerate SoftBank Group, Tiger Global and Apoletto Asia.	
Future Group, Asian Paints, Dream 11, and MakeMyTrip were associate sponsor with Star India for the Vivo-IPL 2018	
According to Brand Finance, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) has been named as the fastest growing IT services brand. It has a total brand value of USD 10.391 billion.	
Microsoft inaugurated Garage facility, a maker space for employees, its first in Hyderabad and the second largest in the world after its Redmond Garage facility. Microsoft Garage provides a platform to employees who want to explore ideas, build prototypes or experiment with existing products.	
Reliance Jio has signed an agreement for merging the digital music service Saavn with JioMusic to create a digital media platform with global reach.	
Rivigo will tie with YES Bank, IDFC and 10 other financial institutions to make cheaper funds available to truck owners and operators on its platform.	Rivigo is a homegrown logistics start-up that owns as well as acts as an aggregator of trucks.
OLX, India's leading online classifieds, launched its consumer safety initiative, 'OLX Webwise', with an aim to create awareness among users about measures to keep oneself safe while transacting online.	
Flipkart and MakeMyTrip (MMT) have struck a partnership wherein the online retailer will start to sell travel services on its platform.	MakeMyTrip's multiple brands, including MMT, Goibibo and redBus, will leverage the large customer base of Flipkart platform to drive online bookings in travel services.
Paytm has announced the launch of its offline payments solution - the Paytm Tap Card that will use Near Field Communication (NFC) technology to enable safe and convenient digital payments. These will be completely offline at Paytm-issued, NFC PoS terminals.	
App-based cab aggregator Ola plans to introduce 10,000 e-rickshaws and electric auto-rickshaws in India. Ola aims to bring one million electric vehicles on the road by 2021.	
Amazon has launched an international shopping feature that will enable customers across the world to shop more than 45 million items that can be shipped to their country from U.S.	
Amazon has launched an Android web browser app called 'Internet' for emerging markets. The app is only available to users in India for the time being & is supported on devices running Android 5.0 or higher.	
Infosys has formed a blockchain-based trade finance network with seven private-sector banks, to increase security and efficiency in the banking sector. Lenders currently testing its trade finance network are ICICI, Axis and Yes Bank among others. Blockchain allows all stages of transactions to be securely shared between network members, as opposed to each bank working independently.	

<p>In order to extend loans under the MUDRA scheme, Finance Ministry has tied up with 40 entities including Amul & Flipkart. These companies will identify people who need loans under MUDRA Yojana, underwrite them and then loans will be issued under the scheme.</p>	<p>Pradhan Mantri MUDRA (Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency) Yojana was launched in 2015, for providing loans of up to Rs 10 lakh to non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.</p>
<p>Microsoft has surpassed Alphabet, in the market capitalisation for the first time in three years, becoming the third most valuable firm after Apple & Amazon globally.</p>	<p>Microsoft reportedly had a market cap of \$753 billion at the close of trading, almost \$14 billion ahead of Alphabet. Apple leads with a market cap of \$924 billion & Amazon is at second spot with nearly \$783 billion.</p>
<p>Flipkart-owned digital payments firm PhonePe has tied up with Ola. Now, users will be able to book a cab or an auto using a micro-app built on its payments platform. The company has gone live with three such micro-apps, including that of redBus and Metro services, and plans to go live with 5 to 10 more in the ongoing quarter.</p>	
<p>Facebook-owned messaging service WhatsApp has started the mass rollout of WhatsApp Payments feature via UPI platform in India. The feature was rolled out to select users in February, but now, besides invite-based access, users can also access it after updating the app. WhatsApp will be able to send ₹5,000 in a single transaction.</p>	
<p>Google has announced 'Launchpad Accelerator India,' a mentorship program that would aim to support Indian start-ups that deploy artificial intelligence and machine learning to build solutions for local needs.</p>	

SEBI (HQ: MUMBAI, CHIEF-AJAY TYAGI, ALSO KNOWN AS THE CAPITAL MARKET REGULATOR)

News	Additional points
<p>Financial services platform Paytm's wholly-owned subsidiary, Paytm Money has received approval from market regulator SEBI to become a Registered Investment Advisor. It will roll out investment and wealth management products to consumers across the country.</p>	
<p>SEBI raised the exposure limit under exchange-traded currency derivatives trading for residents and FPIs to USD 100 million across all currency pairs involving the Indian rupee. The move will help entities engaged in forex transactions to maintain their currency risks in a better manner.</p>	
<p>SEBI accepted the majority of the recommendations made by the Uday Kotak Committee on corporate governance. It introduced the concept of 'product suitability' under which investors will have to show income or knowledge proof to deal in the derivatives segment.</p>	
<p>SEBI decided to double the investment limit by angel funds in venture capital undertakings to ₹10 crore while raising the maximum period of accepting funds from an angel investor to five years from three years.</p>	

SEBI raised the limit to process up to 100 orders per second by a user for algo trade from the existing limit of 20 orders per second at commodity derivatives exchanges.	Algorithmic trading or 'algo' in market parlance refers to orders generated at a super-fast speed by use of advanced mathematical models. 'Algo' is used by large institutional investors.
SEBI allowed stock exchanges to extend trading in equity derivatives by over 8.5 hours, between 9:00 am and 11:55 pm, effective October 1, 2018 to bring the timings in line with commodity markets.	
SEBI has said that the time period for announcing price band for Initial public offerings (IPO) will be reduced to 2 working days from current 5 days.	These proposals are based on suggestions made by SEBI's Primary Market Advisory Committee.
SEBI has asked listed companies to split the post of Chairman and Managing Director by April 2020. It has also made it compulsory for them to have six independent directors on board, including a women director.	The changes, which were first recommended by Kotak Bank chief Uday Kotak-led committee on corporate governance in 2017, have now been accepted and notified by SEBI.
Credit rating agencies (CRAs) will have to form a review committee of mostly independent members to decide on any request for a rating review. They will have to disclose on their website all ratings that are not accepted by an issuer for at least 12 months. SEBI has proposed these measures as part of its attempts to strengthen the governance, accountability and functioning of CRAs.	
SEBI amended its 'Takeover Code' to remove capital infusion hurdles in companies with approved resolution plans under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). The 'Takeover Code' barred acquirers of shares in a company from entering into any transaction.	
SEBI has slashed the 'additional expense' charged by Mutual Funds to just 5 basis points to help increase the penetration of such products among investors.	
SEBI has constituted an expert committee to examine the possibility of allowing unlisted Indian companies to do a direct equity listing overseas. Currently, Indian companies can only use the depository receipts route to list on the overseas exchanges.	

STOCK EXCHANGES

News	Additional points
Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) launched futures trading in brass for the first time globally. MCX Brass futures is the first non-ferrous contract with the compulsory delivery option.	
National Stock Exchange (NSE) launched its e-Gsec platform to allow retail investors to invest in government securities and hold them in existing demat accounts.	The government issues securities to borrow money from the market.
Bombay Stock Exchange has decided to launch trading in the	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A derivative is a contract

<p>commodity derivatives segment from October 1. It will begin commodity derivatives with non-agriculture commodities like metals, energy and base metals.</p>	<p>between two parties which derives its value/price from an underlying asset.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The most common types of derivatives are futures, options, forwards and swaps.
<p>Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) launched the country's first crude oil options contract.</p>	<p>India is the world's third-biggest consumer of crude oil. Crude oil futures contracts were most traded on the exchange platform in 2017/18 fiscal year ended on March 31.</p>
<p>BSE has received the recognition certificate of 'Designated Offshore Securities Market' (DOSM) from the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). This will help in the sale of securities to US investors through the BSE platform without registration of such securities with the US SEC. The BSE becomes the first bourse in India to receive the DOSM recognition.</p>	
<p>India's Multi Commodity Exchange has launched country's first copper options contracts. It will provide physical market participants an additional instrument to hedge their risk. Option contracts were launched with a lot size of 1 tonne in 3 contracts expiring in June, August and November 2018.</p>	<p>Copper ranks as the third most-consumed industrial metal in the world, after iron & aluminium.</p>
<p>BSE has received approval from RBI and SEBI to launch repo in corporate debt securities. The corporate repo debt will be launched in two models - Basket repo with settlement guarantee and Special repo without settlement guarantee.</p>	<p>Corporate bond repo is where a firm or a bank pledges corporate bonds with another company or lender to garner funds.</p>
<p>Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) has launched the country's first silver options contracts.</p>	<p>India is the world's biggest consumer of silver, which is mainly used for jewellery making in the county.</p>
<p>NSE IFSC, a subsidiary of the National Stock Exchange, has put in place a framework for 'omnibus' trade. It will help overseas investors escape direct registration process and go through authorised brokers. The move will also help in smooth transition of liquidity from Singapore Exchange (SGX) to Indian offshore exchange at Gujarat International Finance Tech (GIFT) City.</p>	
<p>NSE launched 'Tri-Party Repo Market' platform in its debt segment to facilitate repurchase of corporate debt securities. The platform is a kind of repo contract where a third entity, apart from the borrower & lender, called tri-party agent acts as an intermediary. It facilitates services like collateral selection, payment and settlement, custody & management during the life of transaction.</p>	
<p>India Index Services & Products Ltd (IISL) has launched Nifty 200 Quality 30 index, which will track the performance of select firms based on profitability and earnings growth variability. Index includes top 30 companies from its parent Nifty 200 index, selected on the basis of their 'quality' scores.</p>	<p>Weight of each stock in the index will be based on a combination of stock's quality score & its free float market capitalization.</p>

Asia Index, a joint venture between S&P Dow Jones Indices and Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), has launched arbitrage rate index. It will provide market participants with a transparent benchmark to compare the performance of similar arbitrage strategies.	The index will be rebalanced every month, effective after the close of business a day prior to the expiration of the futures contract.
The NSE's arm India Index Services & Products Ltd (IISL) launched Nifty equity savings index that will serve as a benchmark for equity saving funds offered by various mutual funds. The base date for the index is April 1, 2005 and base value is 1,000.	The index will capture the portfolio having exposure to equity, equity arbitrage & debt instruments.
Bombay Stock Exchange has entered into an agreement with Bombay Metal Exchange for growth & systematic development of commodity derivatives markets in non-ferrous metals complex.	BSE & BME will work jointly on initiatives to deepen the understanding of commodity market among stakeholders.

APPOINTMENTS IN THE BUSINESS WORLD

Appointments	Important Facts
Balesh Sharma will be the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Vodafone Idea Ltd.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vodafone India and Idea Cellular will merge to create the country's biggest mobile company. In the new merged entity, Vodafone Group will own 45.1 per cent stake, Idea's parent Aditya Birla Group will have 26 per cent and the remaining 28.9 per cent will be held by Idea's shareholders. The Aditya Birla Group has the right to acquire up to 9.5 per cent additional stake from Vodafone under an agreed mechanism with a view to equalising the shareholdings over time.
Akshaya Moondra will be appointed as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of an entity created by the merger of Vodafone Idea Ltd.	

GDP PREDICTION BY DIFFERENT NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES

REPORT AND AGENCY	GDP	Important Facts
Asian Development Outlook, 2018 by ADB Bank	2017-18: 6.6% 2018-19: 7.3% 2019-2020: 7.6%	Asian Development Bank is headquartered in Manila, Philippines. ADB is composed of 67 members, 48 of which are from the Asia and Pacific region.
Global credit rating agency Fitch	2018-19: 7.3% 'BBB-' 'stable' outlook.	'BBB-' rating indicates lowest investment grade. Fitch had last upgraded the rating from 'BB+' to 'BBB-' with stable outlook on August 1, 2006.
Deutsche Bank	2018-19: 7.5%	

Asia & Pacific Regional Economic Outlook by International Monetary Fund.	2018-19: 7.4% 2019-2020: 7.8% India will be the fastest growing major economy in 2018. After India, Bangladesh is projected to be fastest-growing economy in South Asia followed by Sri Lanka and Nepal.	Created in 1945, the IMF is governed by and accountable to the 189 countries that make up its near-global membership. Its headquartered in Washington DC,
Nomura report.	India's GDP is expected to grow by 7.7% in January-March, up from 7.2% in the preceding quarter.	-
UN World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP)	India's economy is projected to grow 7.6% in the fiscal year 2018-19, remaining one of the fastest growing economies in the world.	-
Moody's Investors Service	Cut India's 2018 growth forecast to 7.3% from the previous estimate of 7.5%. Moody's, however , maintained its 2019 growth forecast at 7.5%.	-
South Asia Economic Focus by World Bank.	Growth rate of 7.3% for India in 2018 and 7.5% for 2019 and 2020.	-
Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)	7.3-7.7% for 2018-19.	-
<p>India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth surged to 7.2% in the December quarter of 2017-18, restoring its status as the world's fastest-growing major economy. The economy grew at 6.7% in Gross Value Added (GVA) terms. The GDP growth rebounded from 6.5% in the previous quarter, reportedly indicating that the economy has moved past disruptions due to demonetisation and GST rollout.</p>		

FACTS ABOUT INDIA (CURRENT)

- India beat Germany to become the 4th largest automobile market. India's automobile sales, including passenger and commercial vehicles, grew 9.5 percent and more than 4 million units in 2017 were sold, making the country world's fourth-largest automobile market.
- India has overtaken Japan to become the world's second-largest producer of crude steel in February, according to the Steel Users Federation of India. At present, China is the largest producer of

crude steel in the world. India produced 8.4 million tonnes of crude steel in February 2018.

- According to World Bank, India has 19 crore adults without a bank account, making it the world's second largest unbanked population. India's adult population with a bank account has more than doubled to 80% since 2011. China has world's largest unbanked population, followed by India & Pak.
- According to the database of the IMF's



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World Economic Outlook for April 2018, India's GDP clocked in at \$2.6 trillion for 2017. **India is now the world's sixth largest economy, displacing France.**

The five economies ahead of India are the United States, China, Japan, Germany and United Kingdom.

- The USA has surpassed India as **top greenfield FDI destination** with a total FDI of USD 87.6 billion. The number of greenfield FDI projects sharply fell by 21% during this year in case of India as compared to previous year. China received a total FDI of USD 50.3 billion in the year 2017 while India received an FDI of 25.1 billion in 2017.
- India has moved up to **73rd place** in terms of money parked by its citizens & companies with **Swiss banks**. India had slipped to 88th place with a 44% plunge in such funds in 2016, but the latest data shows an increase of over 50% during 2017 to CHF 1.01 billion (about Rs 7,000 cr). UK continued to account for the largest chunk at about CHF 403 billion of the total foreign money with Swiss banks
- India exported a record 10,28,060 tonnes of spices and spice products valued at Rs

17,929.55 crore in 2017-18.

- **Indian tea industry** has recorded the **highest ever production** of 1,325.05 million kg as well as the export of 256.57 million kg during 2017-18. Total tea production in 2017-18 went up by 74.56 million kg or 5.96%
- **India is doing "extremely well"** on electrification with nearly 85% of the **country's population having access to electricity**, according to the World Bank. Between 2010 and 2016, India provided electricity to 30 million people each year, more than any other country. India is all set to achieve the target of universal access to electricity before the 2030 target date.

MISCELLANEOUS ECONOMY & BUSINESS NEWS

News
Women and Child Development Ministry has approved projects worth over Rs 2,900 crore under the Nirbhaya fund for eight major cities to make them safer for women. These cities are Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Lucknow.
Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), which will act as an independent regulator for the auditing profession which was one of the key changes brought in by the Companies Act 2013.
The Cabinet approved the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill - 2018 to deal with those escaping overseas to avoid getting caught.
ISRO has signed a Technology Transfer Agreement with BHEL to transfer the technology for the manufacture of space grade 'Li-Ion cells'. ISRO uses 'Li-Ion batteries' as power sources for satellite and launch vehicle applications due to their high energy density, reliability and long cycle life
According to 2018 economic impact report by World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC), India is expected to establish itself as the third largest travel and tourism economy by 2028. WTTC also called India the seventh largest travel and tourism economy in the world.
India's electricity production grew 34% from 2010 to 2017, and the country now produces more energy than Japan and Russia. It is third in the world behind China and the United States.

<p>Indian Oil Corporation Ltd and Tata Motors have launched the trial demonstration of the country's first hydrogen fuel cell bus.</p>	<p>The project is being executed with financial support from the Department of Science & Industrial Research, Ministry of Science & Technology and the Ministry for New and Renewable Energy.</p>
<p>According to the Airports Council International (ACI), New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport entered into the league of the top 20 busiest airports in the world for 2017 in terms of traffic volumes. Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) was ranked the busiest airport in the world.</p>	
<p>Reliance Industries Ltd. will set up India's first carbon fibre manufacturing unit to cater to aerospace and defence needs.</p>	
<p>NASSCOM unveiled a programme named Women Wizards Rule Tech that aims to increase the number of women in senior levels in the Information Technology (IT) industry.</p>	
<p>The Pakyong airport in Sikkim is the 100th operational airport in India with SpiceJet being granted permission to fly to Pakyong in Sikkim from Kolkata under the Civil Aviation Ministry's Regional Connectivity Scheme. Sikkim was the only state without an airport in the country.</p>	
<p>The GST Council approved a proposal to make the GST Network (GSTN) a government body. The government will acquire the 51% stake held by private entities and subsequently, the Central Government will own 50% in GSTN and states will collectively hold the remaining 50%. Currently, a 49% stake in GSTN is held by the Government.</p>	
<p>The Kannur International Airport Ltd (KIAL) will start its operation in September 2018.</p>	<p>With this, Kerala will be the state with the greatest number of international airports (4) in the country.</p>
<p>According to Randstad India, Bengaluru topped the list of salary trends this year followed by Pune, with NCR and Mumbai at third position.</p>	
<p>With the total project portfolios of US\$4.4 Billion, India has been the largest borrower of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) since the time the Bank started its operations.</p>	
<p>Saudi Aramco and ADNOC signed a MoU to jointly develop a refinery complex at Ratnagiri, Maharashtra, which will be implemented by Ratnagiri Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd. (RRPCL) and is estimated to be Rs. 3 lakh Crore.</p>	
<p>Venkatadri Express which started from Kacheguda towards Chittoor became the first train across South Central Railway (SCR) to have a 'Train Captain'.</p>	
<p>Tech Mahindra has set up the country's first 'Cyber Security Operations Centre' (APCSOC) in Vijayawada, in collaboration with the Andhra Pradesh government.</p>	
<p>Ride-sharing app Ola has set up a first-of-its-kind Safety Council to create a safe, inclusive, and sustainable mobility ecosystem. The Safety Council will act as a catalyst towards supporting the Government's agenda to halve the road deaths and injuries by 2020. According to the Brasillia declaration, every year, 1.5 lakh people are killed and 5 lakh injured on Indian roads.</p>	
<p>Swedish-Swiss multinational giant ABB has commissioned India's first industrial solar microgrid at its Vadodara manufacturing facility in Gujarat. Microgrids with integrated battery energy storage allow cutting down of planned and unplanned power outages.</p>	
<p>The Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) has developed a next-generation bulletproof jacket-</p>	

Bhabha Kavach for the Indian armed forces. The jacket is made of boron carbide and carbon nanotube polymer composite, is cheaper and 50% lighter than the ones being procured now.

According to the government data, all of India's 597,464 census villages now have access to electricity. The last village to be brought on the national power grid was Leisang village in the Senapati district of Manipur.

The PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) and the Indian Yoga Association (IYA) signed a MoU to facilitate interaction and cooperation between the two organisations to promote wellness, spiritual and cultural tourism in the Krishna Circuit. Places associated with Lord Krishna constitute the Krishna Circuit in Uttar Pradesh.

Tramadol, a painkiller pharma drug, has been declared as a **“psychotropic substance”** by the Union Government & its sale in the country will now be strictly monitored with its inclusion in the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

Bogibeel bridge, **India's longest rail-cum-road** bridge on the Brahmaputra connecting Dibrugarh to Dehamji is expected to be open for public by October 2018. It will boost defence logistics along the China border and reduce travel time for rail passengers and road users.

India has launched its biggest auction of city gas distribution networks, offering permits for selling compressed & piped natural gas in 86 geographical areas.

The Northeast Frontier Railway has started operating one lease Parcel Cargo Express Train (PCET) on fortnightly basis, connecting Northeastern part of the country to the West Coast.

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

Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur has set up first of its kind Centre for Energy Regulation in the country to strengthen policy and regulatory limitations in energy and power sector. The centre has been set up with the assistance of the UK government.

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

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 1st phase of Delhi-Meerut Expressway, which would be India's first 14-lane highway.

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

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first highway to be lit by solar power in Bagpat, Uttar Pradesh. Eastern Peripheral Expressway is 135 km long, stretching from Kundli on NH 1 to Palwal on NH 2. The highway has provisions of rainwater harvesting on every 500 metres on both sides and would showcase 36 national monuments and 40 fountains. It has been built in a record time of 17 months.

The first phase of **India's longest freight corridor connecting Uttar Pradesh and Mumbai** will be inaugurated on August 15, 2018.

Coal India Ltd (CIL) will develop its first-ever thermal power plant in the country in Odisha. The **project will be implemented through CIL's subsidiary, Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL)**. NTPC Ltd will be a joint venture partner and will likely have a 49 per cent stake.

'Air India's low-cost international arm Air India Express and budget carrier IndiGo are among the top five lowest cost airlines in the world, according to Melbourne-based travel planning site Rome2rio. India ranks fourth among 46 countries with lowest average air fares.

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

In a first of its kind initiative, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) issued draft guidelines to curb pesky calls and SMSes by using blockchain technology. Only those authorised to access details will be able to access subscriber details and only when they need to deliver service.

Ministry of Railways conducted a one day workshop **"Mission Raftaar"** aimed at raising the average speed of freight trains and coaching trains in New Delhi.

Facebook has partnered with National Commission for Women (NCW) to launch a digital literacy programme in collaboration with the Cyber Peace Foundation (CPF).

India's first superfast train, Deccan Queen express from Mumbai to Pune completed 88 years on June 1, 2018. Also known as 'Queen of Deccan' the train started on June 1, 1930.

IRCTC has rolled out the facility of delivering food to passengers on their train seats via Trapigo which provides last-mile logistics services for food products and other amenities such as medicines, travel, kits, handicrafts etc.

Google has successfully rolled out free public WiFi at 400 Indian railway stations in collaboration with RailTel. Dibrugarh railway station in Assam is the 400th station to go live.

Varanasi's Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport will become India's first airport to have an automated smart facial recognition system at its entry, security and boarding points. The initiative, which is part of the DigiYatra scheme, will ensure quicker entry into airports by facilitating automated check-ins.

Indian Railways launched 'Rail MADAD (Mobile Application for Desired Assistance During travel)' App so as to ease the travelling experience of the passengers.

Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has created a world record of distributing the maximum number of bee-boxes in one day.

States have collected taxes worth ₹10,000 crore online since the rollout of Transport Mission Mode Project (MMP) under the Centre's e-Governance initiative.

According to a report, nearly 121.4 crore Aadhar cards have been generated till 16 June 2018.

Google News Initiative India Training Network will select 200 journalists from cities across India and train them during 5 day train-the-trainer boot camps.

The Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO) at Hanle in Ladakh is Indian's 1st robotic telescope & is the one of the world's highest astronomical observatories at 4,500 m. It is a part of Global










Relay of Observatories Watching Transients Happen (GROWTH) program along US, the UK, Japan, Germany, Taiwan and Israel. The telescope is designed to observe dynamic events in the universe.

TRA BRAND TRUST REPORT 2018

Category	Topped by	Additional Information
Internet brand	Google	Facebook was second and e-commerce major Amazon, which had been ranking second since 2015, slipped to third position while e-Bay ranked fourth.
Most trusted bank (both public and private sector)	SBI	The leader among the private banks is ICICI Bank, rising nine ranks in overall ranking.
FMCG	Patanjali	Patanjali was established in 2006 by Ramdev along with Balkrishna, with the aim of establishing a science of Ayurveda in coordination with latest technology & ancient wisdom.

3. National Affairs

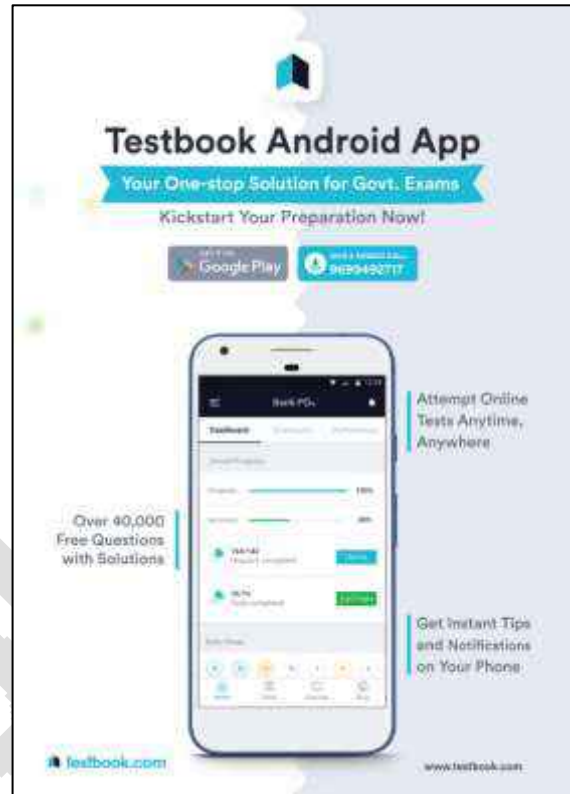
SUPREME COURT & HIGH COURT'S RULINGS

-  The Supreme Court ruled that **foreign law firms or foreign lawyers** cannot practise law in the country either on the litigation or non-litigation side.
-  The Supreme Court of India allowed **passive euthanasia** after citing that persons have right to die with dignity. The SC also allowed an individual to draft a living will specifying that they not be put on life support if they slip into an incurable coma in the future. In a '**living will**', a person can make a statement in advance that their life should not be prolonged by putting ventilator.
-  The Supreme Court ordered that the trial courts need to give only photocopies of case records to higher Courts as the transfer, to and fro, of original records impedes speedy trial.
-  The Supreme Court has upheld that domestic Violence Act, meant to punish men who abuse women in a relationship, extends to all man-woman relationships & also protects divorced women from their former husband.
-  The Supreme Court held that the Indian Railways must pay compensation in case of death or injury while boarding or deboarding trains.
-  The Supreme Court reserved its verdict on petitions challenging the Constitutional validity of the 2016 Aadhaar Act, which lasted for 38 working days spread over four months. This was the second longest oral hearing in the history of the Supreme Court. The first being the landmark Kesavananda Bharati case in which the apex court in 1973 outlined the basic structure of the Constitution.
-  The Supreme Court approved the Centre's draft Cauvery Management Scheme for smooth distribution of water among four southern states- Karnataka to Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry.
-  Insurance companies are not liable to compensate accident claims for public transport vehicles plying without permits, the Supreme Court said. 'Permits' are authorisation given by State authorities to use motor vehicles as transport vehicles.
-  Supreme Court ruled that **government**

authorities cannot charge more than ₹50 as application fee for those seeking information under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. Authorities cannot charge more than ₹5 per page for photocopy. The applicants also do not have to mention the "motive" in the RTI application.

- A two-judge bench, comprising Justices A K Sikri and Ashok Bhushan upheld the **CJI's role as "Master of Roster"**. The bench further held that CJI's role cannot be interpreted to include the Collegium in allocation for cases as it will make day-to-day functioning difficult.
- Lieutenant Governor of Delhi has no independent decision-making power and cannot behave as an obstructionist. The Supreme Court ruled that except for the three issues, including **land, law and order**, Delhi government should be allowed to legislate.
- The Supreme Court upheld the death penalty for the convicts of the 2012 **Nirbhaya gangrape case**, after hearing a review petition seeking a reduction of sentence. The death penalty was awarded to four of the six convicts, while the fifth, a juvenile, was sent to a correction home and the sixth had committed suicide inside the Tihar Central Jail.
- The Uttarakhand High Court declared the entire **animal kingdom** including birds and aquatic animals a **legal entity**

with rights of a living person. The entity acts like a natural person but only through a designated person, whose acts are processed within the ambit of law. Hence, the animal kingdom could be represented by a custodian.



CENTRAL GOVERNMENT DECISIONS

<p>Govt will link 22,000 rural markets to Electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) by 2020 as part of its drive to double the income of farmers. These rural markets will be upgraded to Gramin Agricultural Markets & linked with e-NAM to enable farmers to sell directly to potential buyers.</p>	
<p>Govt has notified Electoral Bonds, which may be purchased by a person, who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India.</p>	<p>Political Parties registered under Section 29A of Representation of People Act, 1951 shall be eligible to receive Electoral Bonds</p>
<p>The Union Home Ministry has given its approval to rename Robertsganj railway station in UP as Sonbhadra.</p>	<p>This is the second railway station in the state to be renamed within a year, with the first one being the Mughalsarai railway station that was renamed to Deen Dayal Upadhyay station in August 2017.</p>
<p>HRD Ministry launched 'Study in India' portal that aims to target foreign students to be admitted in Indian institutes</p>	

<p>Central Water Commission, India's apex technical organization in the field of Water Resources, has entered into a Collaboration Agreement with Google to use state-of-the-art advances made by Google in the in the field of Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning and geospatial mapping for effective management of water resources.</p>	<p>It will give flood-related information to the masses.</p>
<p>Free meals will be provided to passengers if trains get delayed by five-six hours because of maintenance works on tracks on a Sunday.</p>	
<p>Union Health Minister JP Nadda launched the National Health Resource Repository (NHRR), which is country's first-ever national healthcare registry of authentic, standardised and updated geospatial data of all public and private healthcare establishments.</p>	
<p>HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar launched the National Digital Library of India, which will become a single window platform for all educational needs.</p>	
<p>Power Ministry has suggested air-conditioner manufacturers to keep default setting at 24°C in a bid to save energy.</p>	
<p>Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has approved the construction of 3 lakh more affordable houses for urban poor under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) with the total investment of Rs. 8,692 Cr with central assistance of Rs.3,782 Cr.</p>	
<p>The Ministry of Electronics and IT in partnership with IIT -Delhi is working on a switch-based device in cars and buses to aid safety of women.</p>	
<p>The Union Cabinet has approved setting up of a National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation at Bhopal under the aegis of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.</p>	
<p>The government has reconstituted the Press Council of India for a three-year term. According to the Press Council Act, the council shall consist of a chairman and 28 other members. The Press Council of India is a statutory body with a mandate to act as a watchdog to oversee the conduct of the print media.</p>	
<p>Health Ministry has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to scale-up short-term healthcare courses and produce over 14 lakh trained manpower by 2025.</p>	<p>The signing of MoU is under the existing framework of 'Skills for Life, Save a Life' initiative.</p>
<p>External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj launched Mobile Passport Application, mPassportSeva.</p>	<p>People can apply for a passport from any part of the country.</p>
<p>Ministry of MSME launched the online portal "Sampark"</p>	<p>It will act as a bridge between the talent pool and those enterprises seeking trained man power.</p>

<p>Solar Charkha Mission of the Ministry of Micro Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME)</p>	<p>The Mission will cover 50 clusters and every cluster will employ 400 to 2000 artisans. The Mission has been approved by the Government of India and will disburse subsidy of Rs. 550 crore to the artisans. It was launched on the World MSME Day (observed on 27 June)</p>
<p>The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for building additional 6.5 Million Metric Tonne Strategic Petroleum Reserves in Odisha & Karnataka. It will be a 4.4-million-tonnes SPR at Chandikhol in Odisha, and a 2.5-million-tonnes facility at Padur in Karnataka.</p>	<p>It will provide an additional supply of about 12 days.</p>
<p>Government has unveiled draft of a bill to replace higher education regulator University Grants Commission with a Higher Education Commission. The commission will not have grant-making authority, will promote reduced inspection system & will focus on quality outcome at universities & colleges. It will be applicable to all higher education institutions established under any act of Parliament.</p>	
<p>Ministry of Women and Child Development held First National Conclave on Psychological Trauma, Child Protection and Mental Illnesses to provide analysis of research, service provision and clinical practice in addressing psychological trauma in Indian children and adolescents.</p>	
<p>The Government has formed a task force under the Chairmanship of MoS Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha for fast-tracking the roll-out of Unmanned Aerial Vehicle technology.</p>	
<p>Government has launched a Pilot Scheme for procurement of aggregate power of 2500 MW on competitive basis from commissioned power plants without 'Power Purchase Agreements' (PPA). This will help to revive commissioned power plants which are unable to sell electricity in the absence of valid PPA.</p>	
<p>Commission for Scientific & Technical Terminology has decided to adopt the acronym "AYUSH" as a word, both in English & Hindi languages, for scientific and technical purposes. AYUSH became popular as the acronym for 5 traditional systems of medicine - Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy.</p>	
<p>A National Tribal Museum along with a National Level Tribal Research Institute is proposed to be set up at Delhi by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.</p>	
<p>UIDAI will accept Virtual ID from their users from 1st July from service providers and agencies like banks and telecom companies.</p>	<p>The Virtual ID will be a temporary and revocable 16 digit random number mapped to a person's Aadhaar number.</p>

NITI AAYOG

- According to NITI Aayog report, **at least 21 major Indian cities**, including Delhi and Bengaluru, are expected to run out of groundwater by 2020.
- NITI Aayog has launched the **first Delta ranking (incremental progress)** for the Aspirational Districts based on self-reported data of districts across **five developmental areas** of Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development & Basic Infrastructure.
- Rajasthan has been ranked first by the

NITI Aayog among all states after it registered a significant increase in groundwater level due to the water conservation structures built under Chief Minister's Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan.

- **NITI Aayog and ITC** collaborated in the area of agriculture and allied sectors in order to strengthen farming systems for the period of four years, to increase net returns from farming through reduction in costs of production and increasing productivity of major crops in each of the identified district.
- Government think-tank Niti Aayog said 35.3 lakh new jobs were generated between September 2017 and February 2018 based on the additions made in payrolls from Employees' Provision Fund Organisation, Pension Fund Regulatory Development Authority.
- Google and NITI Aayog signed a Statement of Intent (Sol) to foster growth of **India's nascent AI and machine**

learning ecosystem. Google will train, mentor and incubate Indian AI startups.

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

STATE GOVERNMENT

State/City	News and Additional Information
Gurugram	The first cyber police station of Haryana has been established in Gurugram where cyber offences related cases will be registered.
Sikkim	Music composer AR Rahman has been appointed as the Brand Ambassador of the Sikkim government. Earlier this year, he was made the state's Brand Ambassador of tourism and business.
Rajasthan	Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu district, which had the lowest Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) in the state in 2011, has become the district with the highest SRB in the state. The district has increased its ratio from 837 girls per 1,000 boys in 2011
	to 955 girls in December 2017.
	It is the second State, after Madhya Pradesh to pass a Bill providing death penalty to those convicted of raping girls of 12 years and below. The Criminal Laws (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill, 2018 had inserted two new sections, 376-AA and 376-DD, in the IPC. Section 376-AA and 376-DD provide for capital punishment or rigorous imprisonment ranging from 14 years to lifelong imprisonment.
West Bengal	West Bengal has become the best performing State both in terms of allotting jobs and utilising funds under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. Tamil Nadu occupied the second spot.

Tamil Nadu	Renewable solution provider Suzlon Group installed and commissioned largest wind turbine generator in India- ' ₹128 ', at the Sangneri site in Tamil Nadu.
Bihar	Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off India's first high-powered electric locomotive assembled in Madhepura in Bihar. This first locomotive is part of a joint venture of the railways with Alstom, signed in 2015 and the first major FDI project in the rail sector.
Gujarat	Gujarat Government approved setting up a 5000 MW capacity solar park at the Dholera Special Investment Region (SIR), which would be the largest such entity in the world after its completion.
	The Gujarat government has decided to launch a dedicated ambulance service to shift critically ill infants to better equipped hospitals. Under the 'Neonatal ambulance service project for inter-hospital transfer', the government would deploy 10 specially-equipped ambulances across the state. This facility will be linked to the '108' service.
Odisha	The second longest river bridge of 2.5-km-length, built over the Ib river, which is a tributary of Mahanadi river, in Sambalpur district was made functional. The bridge establishes direct road connectivity between Sambalpur and Brajarajnagar and the

	distance has now been reduced by 50 km.
Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh has launched country's first Integrated Control & Command Centre for all the seven smart cities of the state in Bhopal.
Uttarakhand	The Uttarakhand Cabinet organised a meeting in a boat named Marina on the Tehri Reservoir. Notably, a cabinet meeting was held outside the capital of the state for the first time ever.
Jammu & Kashmir	Jammu & Kashmir's Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti submitted her resignation to the Governor after BJP announced to pull out of an alliance with Peoples Democratic Party (PDP).
	Governor's rule for the fourth time in a decade since Governor NN Vohra assumed the office. It is also the eighth time the state witnesses the Centre's rule in the last 41 years. This comes after the BJP pulled out of the BJP-PDP coalition government in J&K.
	Srinagar's Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden deemed as Asia's largest tulip garden was opened for the public. It is situated on the foothills of the Zabarwan mountain range by the banks of the Dal Lake.
	Jammu got its first tulip garden at Sanasar in Ramban district of Jammu region. This is the first tulip garden of Jammu region and second after the tulip garden of Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir.

	<p>PM Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the Zojila tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir. Zojila Pass is known as the gateway to Ladakh region and connects Kargil and Leh with Srinagar.</p>
Telangana	<p>We-Hub, India's first state-led incubator exclusively for women entrepreneurs was launched to exclusively promote entrepreneurship among women.</p> <p>The police have launched a mobile-based app 'Cop Connect', dedicated to provide real time information to over 60,000 police officers in the State.</p>
Haryana	<p>The government will introduce a scheme under which school children from Classes 6 to 12 of both government and private schools will be given ₹50 for planting trees every six months for a period of three years.</p> <p>Haryana government has adopted startup ranking framework issued by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Government of India for promoting start-up ecosystem & competitiveness. The framework is spread across seven areas of interventions with a total of 38 action points and overall score of 100 marks.</p> <p>The government gave its nod to a proposal to bring in a legislation that would have a provision awarding death penalty to those</p>

	<p>guilty of raping girls aged 12 years or less. Existing criminal laws related to sexual offences will be made more stringent. In case of rape of a girl upto 12 years of age, there will be a punishment of death or rigorous imprisonment of not less than 14 years.</p>	
	<p>Gave star rankings to its panchayats on the basis of 7 social parameters under state's 7-Star Gram Panchayat Rainbow scheme.</p>	<p>Ambala topped the star ranking with 407 stars followed by Gurugram with 199 stars & Karnal with 75 stars.</p>
	<p>Cabinet approved the development of trunk infrastructure components for the integrated multi-modal logistics hub known as 'Freight Village' at Nangal Chaudhary in Haryana under the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor Project. Freight villages are logistics centers, where the cargoes from different transport modes can be reloaded, compiled and prepared for transportation.</p>	
Assam	<p>The Assam government has extended the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), 1958 by six more months in the state.</p>	<p>AFSPA gives special rights to security forces to carry out operations in 'disturbed areas.'</p>

Chandigarh has become the first city in North India to install Automatic Speed Gun Cameras with digital displays for traffic management.	
The Diu Smart City has become the first city in India that runs on 100 percent renewable energy during the daytime.	
Andhra Pradesh	Govt launched NAIPUNYA RATHAM or World on Wheels, a multi-utility vehicle that aims to bring technology to remote corners. It will facilitate & look to improve digital literacy, digital skills & create an awareness on various govt schemes that are underway in Andhra Pradesh.
	Andhra Pradesh government has decided to notify 'Rose-ringed parakeet' popularly known as 'Rama Chiluka', as the state bird. The neem is the official tree of the Andhra Pradesh. The blackbuck is the state animal while Jasmine as its state flower.
Maharashtra	Government has imposed a complete ban on plastic carry bags and thermocol cutlery.
	Maharashtra become the first state in the country to sign an MoU with Centres Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA) Council to train state PWD officials to rate govt buildings. As per the agreement, the GRIHA Council would train PWD's civil & electrical engineers & architects to rate govt buildings as per its parameters
Kerala	It has become the first state to adopt a standard operating procedure (SOP)

	for determining brain death cases.
Meghalaya	The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, AFSPA has been removed completely from Meghalaya. This act empowers security forces to conduct operations and arrest anyone anywhere without prior notice.
Uttar Pradesh	Stanford University in the United States will partner with Uttar Pradesh to combat diseases like Japanese encephalitis and acute encephalitis syndrome.
	A MoU has been signed between the Women and Child and Development (WCD) Ministry and the Uttar Pradesh government for managing a shelter home for widows in Vrindavan.
Andhra Pradesh	The Union Cabinet approved the setting up of a central university in the Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. Andhra Pradesh had been left with no central university following its division into two states in 2014.
Arunachal Pradesh	Arunachal Pradesh has become the fourth state after Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana to prescribe the death penalty for those convicted of raping girls under 12 years. The State Assembly passed the Criminal Laws (Arunachal Pradesh) Amendment Bill 2018. The bill seeks to amend, among others, section 354, 354 (B), 354 (D) of Indian Penal Code for harsher punishment.
	Arunachal Pradesh

	<p>Assembly passed a bill to remove Anchal Samiti, intermediate level of the three-tier Panchayati Raj system, and set up a two-tier system in the state. In a two-tier system, the strength of elected members would be reduced, planning and execution of schemes would be faster as there would be a direct connection between Gram Panchayats and Zilla Parishad.</p>		<p>Lingayats community. This comes days after the CM Siddaramaiah-led government accepted the suggestions of Nagamohan Das committee to grant a separate religion status to the Lingayats community.</p>
Himachal Pradesh	<p>The food, civil supplies and consumer affairs department of Himachal Pradesh has launched a mobile app, ePDS for ration card holders. The app will function as a digital ration card and beneficiaries can open it on their android phones to make transaction at fair price shop, submit complaints and suggestions and contact department officers.</p>		<p>The Hyderabad city police launched the 'eOffice' System in the city Police Commissionerate office as a citizen-friendly initiative. eOffice is a 'product suit' developed by NIC and it aims at handling files in a more efficient and transparent manner to improve the responsiveness to citizens.</p>
Sikkim	<p>The 578-metre-long Theng Tunnel near Chungthang in north Sikkim is the longest tunnel of Sikkim. It was constructed on the Gangtok-Chungthang State Highway by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).</p>		<p>To enhance women's safety, Mumbai police are planning to use Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) for surveillance and install 'panic buttons' across the city. The use of UAVs for women's safety will be the first in the country.</p>
Karnataka	<p>The Government declared minority status to the</p>		

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

News and Additional Information	
<p>The Centre will soon install 'Justice Clocks'- LED message display boards, in all 24 High Courts. The clocks will display the daily rate of disposal of cases, the number of pending cases and the individual rank of each of these courts.</p>	<p>A model of this 'clock' was first installed in the Delhi office of the justice department.</p>

<p>The government has made providing passport details mandatory for taking loans of Rs.50 crore and above, which will ensure a swift action in case of fraud and prevent fraudsters from fleeing the country.</p>
<p>India's tallest national flag, 110 m high with a size of 120×80 ft, was unfurled in Belagavi (also known as Belgaum) in Karnataka.</p>
<p>Guinness world record was created by conducting the largest yoga session on International Yoga Day at Kota, Rajasthan where 1 lakh people together performed yogic exercises. The previous record was that of 55,524 people performing yoga in Mysore in 2017.</p>
<p>According to a document submitted by the ministry of health and family welfare, Maharashtra tops the list of biomedical waste generated in the country daily, followed by Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala</p>
<p>India's National Cultural Audio Visual Archives (NCAA) has been certified as the world's first trusted digital repository by Digital Repository Authorisation Body Ltd. (PTAB), United Kingdom. NCAA is the project of Ministry of Culture and is implemented by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts</p>
<p>Yamuna river water will be supplied to Churu, Sikar and Jhunjhunu districts in Rajasthan from Tajewala headworks in Haryana. As per an interstate Yamuna water-sharing agreement in 1994, 1917 cusec water was allotted to Rajasthan from Tajewala headworks.</p>
<p>The Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) successfully commissioned the 330 MW Kishanganga Hydro-Electric Project in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). The project is located on the river Kishanganga, a tributary of the river Jhelum, in Bandipora district of J&K.</p>
<p>Two new languages – 'Walmiki' and 'Malhar' were discovered. Walmiki is spoken in Koraput of Odisha and on the bordering districts of Andhra Pradesh. Malhar is spoken in a remote and isolated hamlet about 165 km away from Bhubaneswar.</p>
<p>According to a report from OpenSignal, a wireless coverage mapping company, Patna topped in 4G connectivity among 20 of India's largest cities.</p>
<p>The National Skill Development Corporation signed an MoU with the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited to provide skill training to 500 youth and women at Kudankulam in Tamil Nadu.</p>
<p>According to latest data released by National Crime Records Bureau, Bihar reports the highest rate of crimes against SC/ST population, while West Bengal reports the lowest. For crimes against SCs specifically, Madhya Pradesh is highest at 43.4% and for crimes against the ST population specifically, Rajasthan is the highest at 12.9%.</p>
<p>The first meeting of National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges under POSHAN Abhiyaan will be held in New Delhi. POSHAN Abhiyaan which was launched by PM Modi in Rajasthan aims to ensure holistic development & adequate nutrition for pregnant women, mothers & children.</p>
<p>The Madras High Court has become the first court in south India and eighth in the country to introduce e-court fee payment facility.</p>
<p>Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu has rejected the notice given by opposition parties for impeachment of CJI Dipak Misra citing lack of substantial merit in it. This is the first time ever that an impeachment notice has been filed against a sitting CJI.</p>
<p>Adilabad Dokra, an ancient bell metal craft popular in the tribal regions of Adilabad district in Telangana, and Warangal Durries have been issued the Geographical Indication (GI) Registration Certificate by the GI Registry, Chennai.</p>
<p>The Sunderbans Reserve Forest, spread of 4,260 sq. km. with over 2,000 sq. km. of mangrove forests and creeks, is likely to be declared a Ramsar Site soon. There are currently 26 sites in India recognised as Ramsar wetland sites of international importance.</p>

Dalmia Bharat Limited has signed a MoU with Ministry of Tourism for adoption of Red Fort monument under the “Adopt a Heritage” project.
In a first in the country, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences set up Virtual Bronchoscopy Navigation (VBN) system, which will be helpful for diagnosis and treatment of patients with small tumour-like spots in lungs.
Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) granted First Licence to M/s Gujarat Alkalies and Chemicals Ltd for Liquid Chlorine on All India basis. This product is in liquid form and stored in metal containers and used in paper, pulp, textile bleaching.
India will get a national database on disasters, which includes information on deaths, people affected and economic losses, by 2020, with the baseline using data from 2005-15. This is mandatory as India is a signatory to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
The Airports Council International (ACI) has projected India to be the second fastest growing country in the world for air passenger traffic, with Vietnam at the top position.
Dalmia Bharat Limited has ‘adopted’ Gandikota Fort in Andhra Pradesh under "Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan", which is a collaborative effort between the Ministry of Tourism, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), states and union territories.
The Centre has taken the first step towards privatisation of poppy cultivation and extraction of opium. Opium is the source of alkaloids such as morphine, codeine and the baine, used in anti-addiction therapies and medicines that treat extreme pain, such as in cancer patients. Opium production in India is highly controlled & farmers sell their produce to the government.
In a step that would spare animals from suffering due to drug experiments, the Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) has approved modern, animal-free tests for drug manufacturers. The IPC has replaced the pyrogen test carried out on rabbits and the abnormal toxicity test carried out on guinea pigs and mice.
In a first, a Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) run by an all-woman team has started operations in Phagwara, Punjab.
India will get its first national police museum in Lutyens Delhi that will depict the history of central and state police forces.
Scientist found the world’s second oldest rock in Odisha , which was recovered nearly eight years ago from Champua in Odisha’s Kendujhar district . It is estimated to be around 4,240 million years old.
The largest Indian flag, measuring 183 feet in length and 122 feet in breadth, was unfurled at NTR Stadium in Hyderabad to pay tribute to martyrs of India’s First War of Independence of 1857 .
India is among the hotspots where overuse of water resources has caused a decline in the availability of freshwater, according to study using an array of NASA satellite observations of Earth.
According to the 'World Health Statistics 2018' released by World Health Organisation (WHO), India saw an estimated 211 cases of tuberculosis (TB) per 1,00,000 people in 2016. India has pledged to eradicate tuberculosis by 2025, five years ahead of the global target set by WHO.
According to the AfrAsia Bank Global Wealth Migration Review, India is the sixth wealthiest country in the world with a total wealth of US \$8,230 billion. The US is the wealthiest country in the world with a total wealth of US \$62,584 billion. Total wealth refers to the private wealth held by all the individuals living in each country. It includes all their assets less any liabilities.
Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini completed its circumnavigation of the globe and returned to Goa. It was set out for sail on September 10, 2017 from Goa and was the first Indian all-women crew to circumnavigate the globe. The expedition titled ‘ Navika Sagar Parikrama ’, is aimed at promoting women empowerment.

<p>Election Commission will launch multi-lingual mobile application called "Model Code of Conduct Violation Reporting App" ahead of the 2019 elections. It was made available for the 1st time in Bengaluru in the run-up to the recently concluded Karnataka Assembly polls.</p>
<p>The Chau mask of Purulia, the wooden mask of Kushmandi, the Patachitra, the Dokras of Bengal, and Madhurkathi (a kind of mat) have been presented with the Geographical Indication (GI) tag.</p>
<p>Brahmaputra Study Centre would be set up at Gauhati University to conduct research on the causes of and how to prevent frequent floods in the river. The fund for setting up the study centre will be provided by the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region.</p>
<p>NTPC has adopted the iconic Charminar in Hyderabad under the 'Swachh Iconic Places' Projects of India.</p>
<p>According to the report released by ASSOCHAM and NEC, India is among the top five e-waste generating countries in the world besides China, the US, Japan and Germany. Among states, Maharashtra contributes the largest e-waste of 19.8% but recycles only about 47,810 tonne per annum (TPA).</p>
<p>Ten new iconic sites have been taken up under Phase III of the flagship project Swachh Iconic Places (SIP) of the Swachh Bharat Mission under Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation. Places are: RaghavendraSwamy Temple, Hazardwari Palace, Brahma Sarovar Temple, VidurKuti, Mana village, Pangong Lake, Nagvasuki Temple, ImaKeithal/market, Sabarimala Temple and Kanvashram.</p>
<p>The National Disaster Management Authority conducted a table-top exercise at the State Emergency Operation Centre (SEOC) in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. The exercise was held in the run-up to a State-level mock exercise on flood preparedness to be held in 23 flood-prone districts of Uttar Pradesh.</p>
<p>A committee appointed by the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has said that the Bellandur lake in Bengaluru has become the 'largest septic tank of the city'.</p>
<p>According to Thomson Reuters Foundation survey, India is the world's most dangerous country for women due to the high risk of sexual violence and being forced into slave labour.</p>
<p>UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's Facebook page has been judged the most popular among all other Chief Ministers in the country. The ranking is based on the total interactions that include total reactions, shares and comments on the page.</p>
<p>The Union Cabinet approved the draft Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill. National Investigation Agency (NIA) will be the nodal authority for probing cases of human trafficking. It also proposes a punishment of life imprisonment for repeat offenders. The draft Bill divides various offences into "trafficking" and "aggravated trafficking".</p>
<p>The Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has issued a notification for constituting the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal. The Tribunal will have its headquarters at Delhi and will have the members nominated by the Chief Justice of India. Union government formed the tribunal under the provisions of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956.</p>
<p>Lok Sabha members can ask only up to 5 questions per day now from the upcoming session of the House instead of 10 allowed. The Speaker's direction 10B as per Lok Sabha has been amended now due to the number of notices for the questions exceeding 230 per day. The speaker's new direction would be effective from the next sessions of the House, i.e., from the 15th session of the 16th Lok Sabha.</p>
<p>The Union Cabinet has approved the creation of one post each of Vice-Chairperson and member in the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis. It is intended to optimize the functioning of the Commission and fulfilling objectives of welfare and development. It is mandated to work towards the elimination of inequalities and to ensure rehabilitation for Safai Karamcharis and Manual</p>

Scavengers.

The National Board of Wildlife has recommended that states use Section 144, which prohibits the assembly of four or more people, during wildlife emergencies. The provision will be used to "prevent people from gathering in large numbers, which aggravates wildlife emergency situations".

4. Government Policies and Schemes

Name of the Scheme/Mobile Application/ Software	State / Department	Features
Cops Eye	Madurai Police	Help detect people with criminal backgrounds by clicking photographs.
Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas (Our Village, our development)	Odisha	Reach out to the people in rural areas and involve themselves in the developmental activities. Solve the grievances of the people quickly.
www.marinefishsales.com & marine fish sales	NICRA project of the CMFRI.	Help fishermen fetch better price for their catch without depending on middlemen. They can sell their catch directly to customers online.
Madhya Pradesh government will give ₹12,000 on the birth of a child in a poor family. ₹5,000 will also be provided for the last rites of a poor person. Government will also provide ₹ 2 lakh through insurance to people who died a natural death before reaching 60 years of age.		
Arogya Karnataka	Karnataka	Provide quality primary, secondary and tertiary treatment to both BPL and above-poverty-line (APL) families in the state. All the BPL households will get free treatment at government hospitals while for APL households.
LED Gram Light Training programme	Uttarakhand	Train 50 women from 10 SHGS in making LED bulbs, tubelights and chandeliers and help them stand on their own feet.
Happiness Index/ Quotient	Madhya Pradesh	Carry out a study to find how happy people are.
Himmat-Women safety app	Delhi government	
mKeralam	Kerala	An app that will serve as a single window for accessing thousands of government services.
Mission Sambhav	Assam	Spreading the message of toilet construction in 33 districts of the state

181-Sakhi toll-free women's helpline	Assam	Scheme of universalization of women helpline and is launched under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.
Kadakhnath app	Madhya Pradesh	Connect poultries that sale the breed with people from other parts of the country
'Uzhavan' app	Tamil Nadu	Bi-lingual app that will allow ryots to have access to nine types of services. Information on farm subsidies, book farm equipment and details about crop insurance
'Ganga Hariteema Yojana' (Ganga Greenery Scheme)	Uttar Pradesh	Enhancing green cover in the catchment areas of the river Ganga and to control the land erosion.
'Rupashree'	West Bengal	Provides one-time financial support to the marriages of poor women with an amount of Rs 25,000 credited to her bank account before her marriage.
Sanchar Kranti Yojana	Chhattisgarh	40 lakh phones will be given to women heads of households in villages having population of more than 1,000 to apprise people with the government's welfare schemes and about the processes to avail benefits.
Atal Amrit Abhiyan	Assam	Free medical care of up to Rs. 2 lakh for every individual from Below and Above Poverty Line families.
Sujalam Sufalam Water Conservation Initiative	Gujarat	Increase water conservation capacity.
'Go to Village' mission	Manipur	Identifying the eligible and deserving beneficiaries in every corner of the state and delivering government services at their doorstep
Pravasi pension scheme.	Kerala	Those hailing from Kerala but living outside the state or country will get a pension of 2,000 a month.
Reuse of Treated Waste Water Policy	Gujarat	Promote use of treated waste water and will see the setting up of sewage treatment plants.
Suryashakti Kisan Yojana (SKY).	Gujarat	Farmers would not only be able to generate electricity for their captive consumption but will also be able to sell the surplus power to the grid and earn an extra buck.
MahaVedh app	Maharashtra	Real-time weather-related information to farmers.
My MP Rojgar Portal	Madhya Pradesh	Provide jobs to youth as per their skills, interests and educational qualifications.

Chatra Parivahan Suraksha Yojana	Haryana	All the girl students will get free travel facility from their home to their educational institutions.
Kerala Fibre Optic Network (K-FON) project	Kerala	
'Paree Pain Katha Tiye' (A word for the little angel), an awareness campaign against child sexual abuse.	Odisha	UNICEF and the State police have joined hands for the campaign to create the awareness on the importance of preventing child sexual abuse.
Rythu Bandhu Scheme (Farmers' investment support scheme)	Telangana	Farmers will get ₹4,000 each an acre in the Kharif and Rabi seasons to take care of the credit needs ahead of the farm seasons.
Prakritik Kheti Khushhaal Kisaan Yojana' (PKKKY)	Haryana	Promote organic farming in a big way and plans to adopt an integrated approach for promoting organic and zero budget natural farming system.
Nidaan Software	Rajasthan	Presumptive diagnosis and monitoring of seasonal and non-communicable diseases.
Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana	Odisha	Health insurance scheme for journalists
Sandbox	Maharashtra	Sandbox is seen as a safe zone to test financial innovation which sees a limited rollout of new products to select customers.
Zero Based Natural Farming (ZBNF) scale-out scheme	Andhra Pradesh	Financial and investment support to the farmers.
Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana	Odisha	Provide health care assistance of Rs 5 lakh per family in government hospitals to around 3.5 crore people
'i-Hariyali' app	Punjab	Order free plant saplings.
















MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

- The first Mega Food Park in the state of Maharashtra, Satara Mega Food Park Pvt. Ltd. at Village Degaon, District Satara was inaugurated. It is also the 10th Mega Food Park being operationalized in the country.
- Kollam will become the first district in India to bring all food business operators under the provisions of the Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSA).
- On the International Women's Day, the Delhi government has announced a project under which state-run buses would be installed with Panic Alarm

Systems, in which a loud beeping alarm will be activated for 40 seconds on pressing the button. On hearing the alarm, the driver would stop the bus and identify the problem.

- The government is planning to develop a "freight village" in Varanasi which will lead to establishment of multimodal logistics hub in Varanasi to promote the use of waterway transport on river Ganga. The freight village to be developed by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) would reduce logistics cost in the eastern transport corridor and its

influence zone.

-  The **Karnataka** unveiled the State flag (nada dhwaja), which is yellow-white-red flag and has the State emblem "Gandaberunda" at the centre. If approved by the Centre, Karnataka will be the second State to have a flag after Jammu and Kashmir.
-  In an effort to make India a global hub for arbitration, the government will set up an Arbitration Council that will grade institutions that offer alternative dispute resolution mechanism for commercial disputes. The proposal to set up council is a part of the Arbitration and Conciliation Amendment Bill, 2018.
-  The Power Ministry has directed all central government departments and PSUs in the National Capital Region to switch to e-vehicles for local use.
-  The Human Resource Development Ministry would soon set up "innovation cell" that would explore ideas to strengthen innovation efforts in education. It would be headed by a scientist and would be comprised of a senior ministry official and young professionals.
-  The **Odisha State Disaster Mitigation Authority (OSDMA)** will collaborate with the Thailand-based Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for strengthening its early warning services and enhancing preparedness for management of hazards in the State.
-  In a first, **Kerala government will rope in qualified tribal instructors** to impart literacy in their respective settlements in a bid to improve literacy rates among tribal populations.
-  The Government of India has approved the setting up of a '**Plastic Park**' in **Deoghar District in Jharkhand**. A range of polymer products including woven sacks, moulded furniture, water tanks, bottles, pipes mosquito nets, etc would be manufactured in this plastic park.
-  The government has extended the facility of hiring workers on fixed-term employment to all sectors for improving the ease of doing business for companies.
- This facility was available only to the apparel manufacturing sector as per the Industrial Establishment (Standing Order) 1946. The fixed term employment was defined as a workman who is employed on a contract basis for a fixed period.
-  The Rajya Sabha passed the Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) bill, which will enhance the ceiling of tax-free gratuity to Rs 20 lakh from existing Rs 10 lakh for employers under the Payment of Gratuity Act. It is applicable to employees, who have completed at least five years of continuous service in an establishment that has 10 or more persons.
-  Assam began verification of citizenship documents of 29 lakh married women for updating the 1951 National Register of Citizens.
-  The government will now fully fund the education of martyrs' children. Before this, the education of these children was funded, but only up to Rs 10,000 a month.
-  The "**First Indian Sign Language Dictionary of 3000 words**" developed by Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre under Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment. was launched by Government of India, with the basic aim to remove communications barriers between the deaf and hearing communities.
-  The AAP government presented its Rs 53,000 crore budget for 2018-19 in the Assembly, which laid emphasis on environment, health, education and **water. This is the first "Green budget"** of the government for effective containment of pollution in the city.
-  The Unique Identification Authority of India will roll-out face authentication feature by July 1, 2018, to add another layer of security for inclusive authentication of Aadhaar card holders. Face authentication will only be used along with the previous authentication tool.
-  The Centre has approved construction of over 3.21 lakh houses for urban poor under its flagship Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban). Haryana was sanctioned the highest number of houses for

construction, followed by West Bengal, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Mizoram.

- The government approved the restructuring of National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to strengthen governance, implementation and monitoring framework. NSDC and NSDF were set up by the Ministry of Finance and registered in July 2008 and January 2009 respectively for implementing coordinated action for skill development.
- Haryana government will provide special benefits, including nutritional support of Rs 500 per month during treatment to notified TB patients. Free services would be provided to TB patients in government hospitals of Haryana, including X-Ray.
- Public Financial Management System (PFMS) achieved a historical record-breaking volume of Digital Transactions on 28th March. PFMS is an ambitious project of Government of India being implemented by Controller General of Accounts, Ministry of Finance that provides a platform for efficient management of funds through tracking of funds and real-time reporting of expenditure and receipts.
- **Uttarakhand's second food park at Mahuakhera Ganj village, Kashipur in Udham Singh Nagar district was inaugurated.** The first Mega Food Park in the state located at Haridwar has already become operational.
- Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb has launched the state component of Pradhanmantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY) in Agartala. Tripura is the first state in the country to implement pilot project for accreditation for skilled candidates.
- Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling announced monthly pension of 1000 rupees for farmers engaged in organic farming in the state. The government has banned sale and consumption of non-organic agricultural and horticultural products. Sikkim is the first fully organic state in the country.
- The Centre has allowed states to set up their own insurance companies for implementing Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). Presently, five public sector insurers and 13 private insurance companies are empanelled for implementation of the scheme.
- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has brought in secure digitally-signed QR code on eAadhaar that will contain the photograph of the Aadhaar holder to facilitate better offline verification of an individual.
- Manipur has set-up a fast-track court will facilitate the speedy trial of offences relating to narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.
- The Haryana government has prepared Water ATM Policy to provide clean drinking water to people at public places in cities. Under this policy, public places such as bus-stands, railway stations, parks, bus stops, parking areas and markets would be identified. There would be a distance of 400 meters between two water ATMs which could be adjusted according to the convenience of people.
- The Andhra Pradesh government will soon constitute a Happiness Commission that will take up a series of programmes **to promote "happiness" in the state.** AP became the second state in the country to introduce an exclusive ministry for happiness in April 2017. Madhya Pradesh is the first state.
- Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in partnership with civil society groups launched 6th edition of Heat Action Plan to protect city dwellers from scorching temperatures. The plan has an early warning system used during heat waves and a robust public education campaign about how to avoid harm from excessive heat. Ahmedabad was the first city to prepare and implement heat action plan.
- The Maharashtra government has set up an institution known as Quality Evaluation for Sustainable Transformation centre (QUEST) to evaluate and quantify special development budget allocations and their impact on tribal development.

- East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh is the country's first 'LED street light district'.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the first health centre under Ayushman Bharat Scheme in Bijapur. He also inaugurated the first phase of the Bastar Internet scheme under which a 40,000-km-long network of fibre optics cable would be spread across the seven districts of the tribal region.
- All new LED bulbs distributed under the UJALA scheme after July 1 will have to be BEE Star Rated in order to weed out poor quality bulbs that have pilfered into the **government's LED distribution** programme run by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL).
- A special pilgrimage train for senior citizens, under the 'Baristha Nagarika Tirtha Yatra Yojana', has been flagged off from Sambalpur to take senior citizens to Shirdi, Nasik and Trimbakeshwar during the seven-day tour.
- Delhi government has decided to set up '**Rogi Kalyan Samitis**' in each constituency and '**Jan Swasthaya Samitis**' in dispensaries and clinics, with each of them being provided Rs 3 lakh per annum as grand-in aid. These Assembly Rogi Kalyan Samitis will play advisory role and will assist health facilities, develop and customise strategies.
- The Telecom Commission approved the TRAI's recommendations for offering voice and data services in flights within Indian airspace, with a minimum height restriction of 3,000 meters in Indian airspace.
- In a move aimed at empowering mobile consumers, the Telecom Commission cleared a proposal for creation of an Ombudsman under the sector regulator to resolve subscriber complaints. The TRAI will be free to set up as many Ombudsman as per requirement.
- The draft of National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2018 aka National Digital Communications Policy 2018 has been uploaded for public consultations on the Department of Telecom's (DoT) and it proposes one Gbps connectivity to all Gram Panchayats by 2020 and 10 Gbps by 2022.
- Maharashtra has become the first state in India to provide digitally-signed land record receipts (also known as 7/12 receipts). The 7/12 receipt is extensively used by farmers for loan agreements, crop survey and for availing of government facilities.
- The government has doubled the investment limit to Rs 15 lakh under the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY) pension scheme and extended the subscription period by two years till March 31, 2020. PMVVY is for senior citizens and provides an assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8% per annum for ten years.
- Chhattisgarh is the first state to recruit transgenders for police while Tamil Nadu is the first state to hire India's first transgender police officer.
- To promote electric vehicles in India, the government has approved green licence plates bearing numbers in white fonts for private e-vehicles & yellow for taxis.
- Centre will set up 100 additional One-Stop centres in 9 states to help violence affected women. The centres will be set in Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, MP, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu & UP.
- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) released new draft regulations on food packaging. All packaged food with at least 5% content from genetically engineered sources need to be labeled so. Foods that exceed norms of sugar and fat will need to carry '**red**' and '**green**' labels specifying the extent to which they do so.
- Delhi government amended Minimum Wages Act under which employers violating labour rules in the city will now face fine ranging from Rupees 20,000-50,000 and jail term between one to three years. For an unskilled worker, the minimum wages is Rs 13,350 per month while for semi-skilled, it is Rs 14,698.
- The government has streamlined lending norms in schemes such as the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) to boost institutional

credit flow to small and marginal farmers. Under revised guidelines, standard security requirements, such as hypothecation of crops, now do not apply to loans of up to Rs1 lakh. Under KCC, **small farmers can avail of a "flexible limit"** of between Rs10,000 and Rs50,000.

- The government will expand the **'Buddhist Circuit'** to **21 other states**, with the Ministry of Tourism identifying stupas and viharas in these states, around which small intra-state Buddhist zones will be developed.
- A sum of Rs 16,500 cr has been earmarked by 71 ministries & departments of the govt for implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) in 2018-19. The amount is over & above the budget of Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation for SBM (Gramin) & Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs for SBM (Urban).
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has issued National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy with the objective to provide a framework for the promotion of large grid-connected wind-solar PV hybrid system for efficient utilization of transmission infrastructure and land.
- Minister of Commerce & Industry Suresh Prabhu launched the Intellectual Property mascot – IP Nani at the conference on National Intellectual Property Rights Policy. The mascot will spread awareness about the importance of Intellectual Property Rights among people, especially children.
- The states of Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana and Uttarakhand agreed to implement the ambitious national health protection mission (NHPM).
- The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) will be the apex national authority for all trade remedial measures including anti-dumping, countervailing duties and safeguard measures. It will also provide trade defence support to domestic industry and to exporters in trade remedy investigations instituted by other countries.
- Telangana government would provide life

insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh each to all farmers in the state.

- In a major step to give a big push towards the ease of doing business in Punjab, the state government has launched a "Business First Portal", which will facilitate the industrialists for Regulatory Clearances and Fiscal Approvals, real-time tracking of applications at common platform.
- Shillong, the capital city of Meghalaya has been selected as 100th Smart City. The total proposed investment in the finally selected 100 cities would be Rs.2,05,018 crores.
- Vahini is a first-of-its-kind all-female group of 32 railway personnel comprising 16 from the RPF and an equal number from the commercial wing of the division in the Waltair division of ECoR
- The Union Ministry of Earth Sciences will begin work on gauging marine litter and **their sources along the country's coastline as India had joined the United Nations' 'Clean Seas' programme.**
- The Centre has announced a comprehensive package of more than ₹8,000 crore to provide relief to sugarcane farmers and to clear their dues, which have crossed over ₹22,000 crore.

UNION CABINET APPROVALS

- The Union Cabinet has approved the North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS), 2017 in order to promote employment in the North East States. Government is incentivizing primarily the MSME Sector through this scheme.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the opening of 18 new Indian Missions in 18 African countries to enhance India's diplomatic outreach in the African continent and allow India to engage with Indian diaspora in African countries.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry to improve the productivity and quality of silk through R&D intervention. The brand promotion of Indian silk will be through quality certification by "Silk Mark".

- The Cabinet has approved the continuation of the urea subsidy till 2020. The government also approved implementation of direct benefit transfer (DBT) for disbursement of fertiliser subsidy.
- The Union Cabinet has approved the launch of a new Centrally Sponsored Ayushman Bharat -National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM). The scheme has the benefit cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year with the target beneficiaries belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on SECC database.
- The Cabinet has approved an Integrated Scheme on School Education by combining Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and Teacher Education from 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2020 with an aim to support the States in universalizing access to school education from pre-nursery to XII across India.
- The Cabinet approved rightsizing of Competition Commission of India (CCI) by halving the number of its members to three.
- The Union Cabinet approved the Protection of Human Rights (Amendments) Bill, 2018 for better protection and promotion of human rights in the country.
- The Union Cabinet allowed Ministers of Finance and Petroleum to award oil and gas blocks to winners in the ongoing auction based on the recommendations of the Empowered Committee of Secretaries. Till now, only the Cabinet headed by the Prime Minister had the powers to approve the award of a block or area for the exploration and production of oil and gas.
- Cabinet approved inclusion of some areas in Rajasthan under the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution so that the tribals living there can avail benefit of protective measures under its provisions. The Cabinet revoked the Constitution order (CO) dated February 12, 1981 and promulgated a new CO.
- Centre has approved an ordinance to amend the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act to provide for death penalty for rape of children below the age of 12. The move comes in the wake of public outrage over the Kathua rape & murder case where the victim was a minor. Cabinet also decided to raise the minimum jail term for rapists to 10 years if the victims are over 16 yrs old.
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved a restructured Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan aimed at building infrastructure & stepping up initiatives for e-governance. The scheme will extend to all states & UTs & will include institutions of rural local govt in non-Part IX areas, where panchayats do not exist.
- Cabinet has approved promulgation of an ordinance that will empower govt to attach properties both within the country & overseas of fugitive economic offenders. Only those cases where amount involved is more than Rs.100cr will be covered under this ordinance.
- Cabinet has approved National Policy on Biofuels which allows doping of ethanol produced from damaged foodgrains, rotten potatoes, corn & sugar beet with petrol. The Policy categorizes biofuels as 1st Generation, which produces bio-ethanol from molasses & bio-diesel from non-edible oilseeds. 2nd Generation ethanol can be produced from municipal solid waste & 3rd Generation fuels like bio-CNG.
- The Union cabinet has approved the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) supported scheme to provide mobile services in Left Wing Extremism-affected areas. Up to 4,072 towers will be set up in 96 districts of 10 states affected with the Left Wing Extremism.
- The Cabinet has cleared amendments to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, incorporating changes suggested by a government appointed panel. The panel had suggested that home buyers should be treated as financial creditors, which will allow them to equitably participate in an insolvency resolution process. The panel has also suggested relaxations for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

under the IBC.

- The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of the Three Year Action Plan (2017-2020) of the scheme for Agricultural Education Division and ICAR Institutes with an outlay of Rs.2225.46 crore. It comprises of: "Strengthening and Development of Higher Agricultural Education in India"
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the continuation of the Credit Guarantee Fund for Education Loans Scheme and continuation and modification of Central Sector Interest Subsidy Scheme. The scheme will cover loans for pursuing professional and technical courses to promote quality education.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the continuation of Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) and City Compost Scheme beyond 12th Five Year plan till 2019-20. Government is making available fertilizers, namely Urea and 21 grades of P&K fertilizers to farmers at subsidized prices through fertilizer manufacturers. The subsidy on P&K fertilizers is being governed by NBS Scheme.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for enhancing the scope of Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY). The informal sector workers would get social safety net and there would be more job creation. In this scheme, Government is paying the 8.33% contribution of Employers to the Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS) in respect of new employees.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for the increase in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Raw Jute based on recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Bamboo Mission under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture to ensure holistic development of the bamboo sector. The Mission will focus on the development of

bamboo in limited states where it has social, commercial and economical advantage, particularly in the North Eastern region.

- The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana beyond the 12th Five Year Plan to 2019-20 with a financial outlay of Rs 14,832 cr. PMSSY aims at correcting the imbalances in the availability of affordable tertiary health care facilities in different parts of the country. Under this scheme, new AIIMS are established & govt medical colleges are upgraded.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has renamed the Multi-sectoral Development Programme as Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram, and it would extend to 308 districts compared to 196 districts at present.
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved continuation of Umbrella Scheme Green Revolution - Krishonnati Yojana in the Agriculture Sector beyond 12th Five Year Plan to 2019-20. The Umbrella scheme comprises of 11 Schemes, which aim to develop the agriculture & allied sector in a holistic & scientific manner to increase the income of farmers by enhancing production & productivity.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval to provide financial assistance of Rs. 5.50 per quintal of cane crushed in sugar season 2017-18 to sugar mills. This will help sugar mills to clear cane dues of farmers.
- The Union Cabinet has approved corpus of Rs 5,000 crore for setting up of a **dedicated "Micro Irrigation Fund"** with NABARD under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana to provide states financial assistance on concessional rate of interest to promote micro-irrigation.
- The Union Cabinet has approved a proposal for enactment of a new Dam Safety Bill, 2018. The Bill seeks to establish a national regulatory body for dam safety and create a database of the existing dams.

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Name of the Scheme	Central Government	Features
Swadesh Darshan	Ministry of Tourism	13 thematic circuits have been identified for development.
PRASHAD scheme	Ministry of Tourism	Holistic development of identified pilgrimage and heritage destination.
Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)	Niti Aayog	Provide a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem where women do not face any gender-based barriers.
Suvidha under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)		100% Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin Available at all Janaushadhi Kendras
Udyam Sakhi Portal	Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)	Nurture entrepreneurship and create business models for low-cost products and services in order to empower women
National Nutrition Mission (NNM)		Reduce under-nutrition, low birth weight, anaemia among young children, women and adolescent girls.
National e-Mobility Programme	Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL).	EESL will procure electric cars to provide an impetus to the entire e-mobility ecosystem including vehicle manufacturers, charging infrastructure companies, fleet operators etc.
'Citizen Services' Mobile App	National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB)	Bouquet of 9 police related services
SATH('Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education')	Niti Aayog	Release comprehensive roadmaps and detailed timelines to introduce System-wide Governance Transformation in School Education. Roadmaps will be customized, action-oriented programmes, outlining interventions at the individual, district and State level.

LaQshya	Union Health Ministry	Improving quality of care in labour room and maternity operation theatre. Implementing 'fast-track' interventions for achieving results within 18 months
Videsh Aaya Pradesh ke Dwaar	External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division of the External Affairs ministry	MEA's engagement with the regional media based in different cities across India.
'Study in India' programme.	Ministry of Human Resource Development	Attract foreign students by branding India as an attractive education destination.
N-TB App	The Center for Nutrition Studies, Yenepoya University provided the content for the app, it was developed with technical support from McGill International TB Centre, Montreal	The app is specially designed for TB patients to provide them nutritional information.
'Gobar-dhan Yojana'- Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources Dhan		Launched from Karnal, Haryana Managing and converting cattle dung into manure and biogas one village in every district of the country would be selected for its implementation.
UTTAM stands for – Unlocking Transparency by Third Party Assessment of Mined Coal	Ministry of coal	All citizens and coal consumers to monitor the process of Third Party Sampling of coal across CIL subsidiaries.
Van Dhan Vikas Kendra	Ministry of Tribal Affairs	"Van Dhan Vikas Kendra" on the pilot basis for establishment in Bijapur District of Chhattisgarh. Skill and capacity building training and setting up of primary processing facility.
Project Dhoop	FSSAI	Encourage schools to shift their morning assembly to around noon-time to ensure maximum absorption of Vitamin D in students through natural sunlight. Schools should conduct their morning assembly between 11 am & 1 pm
e-FRRO (e-Foreigners Regional Registration Office) web-based application	Home Ministry	Transparent online platform for foreigners to avail of visa-related services.

DARPAN-Postal Life Insurance App	Department of Posts	Collection of premium for Postal & Rural postal life insurance policies at Branch Post offices anywhere in India, with online updation of policies.
e-Vidhan	Union Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA)	Digitize & make functioning of State Legislatures in India paperless.
m-Awas	Ministry for Housing and Urban Affairs	Allotment of Government accommodations in General Pool Residential Accommodation (GPRA).
Unnat Bharat Abhiyan-2	Human Resource Development Ministry	Students from 750 higher educational institutions from across the country will adopt villages and visit them
SWAYAM	HRD Ministry	Online professional development of 1.5 million higher education faculty using the Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC) platform SWAYAM
Samagra Shiksha scheme	HRD Ministry	Improving quality of education, enhancing learning outcomes & using technology to empower children & teachers
Green Skill Development Programme (GSDP)	Environment Ministry	Train over 5.5 lakh workers in environment and forest sectors in the country through 30 courses by 2021
PRAAPTI(Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generator) app		Bring transparency in power purchase transactions between Generators and power distribution company- Discoms.
'SevaBhojYojna'	Ministry of Culture, Government of India	Reimburse the CGST and IGST on purchase of raw items which go into preparation of food offered free of cost by religious institutions
Income Tax Informants Reward Scheme, 2018	Income Tax Department.	A person can get reward up to Rs. 50 lakh for giving specific information about substantial evasion of tax on income or assets in India which are actionable under the Income-tax Act, 1961
Benami Transactions Informants Reward Scheme, 2018	Income Tax Department.	A person can get reward up to Rs. 1 crore for giving specific information in prescribed manner

Utsonmobile mobile app		Enables booking & cancellation of unreserved tickets, issue and renewal of season and platform tickets, check & load R-wallet balance & helps maintain user profile management and booking history.
Solar Charkha Mission	Ministry of Micro Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME)	Disburse subsidy of Rs. 550 crore to the artisans.

Meeting/Event	Venue/Location	Features
First Meeting of the NE NITI Forum	Agartala, Tripura	Co-chaired by the Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog and Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region (DoNER).
Swachh Shakti	Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh	Organised by Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, in association with the Government of Uttar Pradesh. 8000 women sarpanches, 3000 women Swachhagrahis and women champions from across country were recognised for their outstanding contribution towards making Swachh Bharat.
SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2018	New Delhi	Provide rural women producers with a national platform and an opportunity to showcase their products and seek buyers. Organized by Ministry of Rural Development

5. International Affairs

Country	News
Afghanistan	President Ashraf Ghani offered to recognise Taliban as a legitimate political group in order to end the over 16-year-long war.
China	China has set its GDP growth target at around 6.5% for 2018, unchanged from that for 2017. The projected growth rate reflects China's position of not over-emphasizing speed but stressing improvements in the quality and effect of development. Chinese economy outperformed its annual growth target by expanding 6.9% last year, picking up for the first time in seven years.
	China is building the world's fastest hypersonic wind tunnel to develop a new generation of super-fast aeroplanes that could fly from Beijing to New York within two hours. A wind tunnel is a tool used in aerodynamic research to study the effects of air moving past solid objects.
	China successfully launched twin satellites via a single

	<p>carrier rocket in Xichang of southwest China's Sichuan province.</p> <p>This added two more members to its domestic "BeiDou Navigation Satellite System" (BDS). The satellites and the rocket were developed by the Innovation Academy for Microsatellites at the Chinese Academy of Sciences and China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology</p>		<p>Earlier in January, Saudi Arabia allowed its women, for the first time, to spectate at a football match.</p>
	<p>China successfully launched Gaofen-5 satellite, a hyperspectral imaging satellite for comprehensive observation of the atmosphere, including air pollution.</p> <p>It will help reduce China's dependence on foreign hyperspectral satellite data.</p>		<p>Saudi Arabia's cabinet approved the national policy of its atomic energy programme as the kingdom prepares to award contracts for its first nuclear power plants. The policy insists on limiting nuclear activities to peaceful purposes and for enhanced safety measures and safe disposal of nuclear waste.</p> <p>Saudi Arabia has signed cooperation agreements with countries to boost nuclear cooperation.</p>
	<p>China's amphibious aircraft, code-named Kunlong, the plane (AG600) stated to be the largest in the world is expected to be delivered to customers by 2022. It will mainly be used for maritime rescue, fighting forest fires and marine monitoring, according to its state-owned manufacturer.</p>	Egypt	<p>Egypt's top court has upheld a deal to transfer two Red Sea islands 'Tiran' & 'Sanafir' to Saudi Arabia.</p> <p>Court ruled that all previous court verdicts in the case are annulled. It also turned down a second case over the issue filed by the govt.</p> <p>Situated b/w the 2 countries, islands of Tiran & Sanafir are largely unoccupied but they lie in a strategically important & politically sensitive area.</p>
	<p>The European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) in China carried out its first chain therefore it has started. The reactor is not expected to be completed until the mid 2020s.</p>	Marshall Islands	<p>The Marshall Islands is creating its own digital currency in a bid to raise money. In doing so it has become the first country in the world to recognize a cryptocurrency as legal tender. Marshall Island nation passed the Sovereign Currency Act to create the 'sovereign', or SOV. The cryptocurrency will have equal status with the US dollar.</p>
Saudi Arabia	<p>For the first time in the nation's history, Saudi Arabia's women participated in an all-female marathon. The three-km-long marathon, held in the eastern province of al-Ahsa, reportedly saw participation from 1,500 women across several categories.</p>	Sri Lanka	<p>Sri Lanka lifted a state of emergency that was put in place after an outbreak of</p>

	<p>violence against Muslim communities. The development follows days of anti-Muslim attacks in Kandy, located in Sri Lanka's Central Province. Sri Lanka is the second country in the region to promulgate a state of emergency this year. In February, Maldivian President declared Emergency Rule for a fortnight. It was the first time in seven years Sri Lanka had imposed a state of emergency.</p>		<p>Pokhara city for the differently-abled and the elderly. 'Accessible tourism' is an emerging concept to ensure that tourist destinations, products and services are accessible to all people.</p>
	<p>The Sri Lankan government has decided to postpone International Workers' Day events from May 1 to May 7 this year. This has been done to avoid an overlap with the Buddhist festival of Vesak.</p>		<p>Nepal's Central Bank has allowed other commercial bank in the country to borrow money from foreign banks and financial institutions to finance sectors such as agriculture and infrastructure projects. Nepal's commercial banks could borrow loans up to 25% of their core capital. The banks can borrow loans for the period from one year to five years.</p>
<p>Bangladesh</p>	<p>Bangladesh observed a one-minute 'blackout' on March 25 to mark 'Genocide Day', in memory of the three million people killed by Pakistani forces during the country's Liberation War in 1971. The government will not suspend power supply, he said, but people will be asked to switch their lights off. Bangladesh started observing March 25 as 'Genocide Day' in 2017.</p>		<p>Nepal became the first country in south-east Asia to eliminate Trachoma. Trachoma is a kind of chlamydial infection that happens due to unclean water supply & lack of hygiene and spreads through contact with nose, throat or eye of infected person.</p>
<p>Nepal</p>	<p>Nepal's Chief Justice Gopal Parajuli has been sacked for faking his date of birth in order to remain in office longer. A judicial council concluded that Parajuli should have retired 7 months ago when he turned 65, the age of retirement for official positions in Nepal.</p>	<p>Bali, Indonesia</p>	<p>Nyepi Day 2018 in Bali (Bali Day of Silence) is a New Year's celebration unlike anywhere else on the planet. It's ultimately the quietest day of the year, when all of the island's inhabitants abide by a set of local rules. Internet service and flights were temporarily halted for a 'Day of Silence'.</p>
	<p>Nepal has launched its first "accessible" trekking trail in</p>	<p>United States</p>	<p>US has slapped a series of sanctions on top Russian spy agencies & cyber actors for their alleged interference in the 2016 elections & conducting separate cyber attacks. This move by Trump Administration is the</p>

	<p>first rebuke of Russia's interference during the election campaign.</p>
	<p>Donald Trump has signed a legislation that encourages US to send senior officials to Taiwan to meet Taiwanese counterparts & vice versa. The Taiwan Travel Act is a signal of improving ties b/w US & Taiwan, which have not maintained diplomatic relationships since 1979. China opposed to the legislation & urged US to abide by "one China" policy, that stipulates that Taiwan is part of China.</p>
	<p>US launched a challenge at World Trade Organization against China over intellectual property breaches.</p>
	<p>President Donald Trump released an order banning most transgender troops from serving in the military except under "limited circumstances".</p>
	<p>The US state of New Jersey has declared April as 'Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month' as part of its effort to promote awareness of the faith. The resolution was adopted unanimously by both the New Jersey House of Representative and the Senate. The move would promote public awareness of the Sikh faith, recognizing important contributions of the Sikh community to US.</p>
	<p>United States President Donald Trump announced the US withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or Iran nuclear deal. The deal was</p>

	<p>agreed between Iran and the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (US, UK, France, China, and Russia) and Germany. US terminated the JCPOA citing that the deal failed to protect America's national security interest.</p>
	<p>The Trump administration has eliminated funding for NASA's research program, Carbon Monitoring System (CMS), that tracks greenhouse gases around the world. CMS, a \$10m (£7m)-a-year project tracks the world's flow of carbon dioxide from space.</p>
	<p>The United States renamed its strategically important Pacific Command (PACOM) to U.S. Indo-Pacific Command. The renaming recognizes India's increasing military relevance for the US.</p>
	<p>Nikki Haley, the US Permanent Representative to the UN announced the withdrawal of the United States from the United Nations Human Rights Council. She accused the council of bias against US ally Israel.</p>
Philippines	<p>President Rodrigo Duterte announced immediate withdrawal of Philippines from the International Criminal Court. This comes after ICC started an investigation into allegations of crimes against humanity committed by Duterte in his war against drugs.</p>
Australia	<p>Australia has abolished its popular employer-sponsored 457 visa programme, widely used by Indians. The 457 visa programme</p>

	<p>allowed businesses to employ foreign workers for a period up to 4 years in skilled jobs where there was a shortage of Australian workers. Australia has replaced it with a new stringent programme that requires higher English-language proficiency and job skills.</p>
	<p>Australia unveiled a US\$34-million plan to help bring its koala population back from the brink, following a rapid decline in the furry marsupial's fortunes. Under the Aus\$45 million plan, thousands of hectares will be set aside to preserve the marsupial's natural habitat.</p>
	<p>A yoga session was organised in the Australian Parliament on for the first time, with over 50 people performing various asanas in the federal legislature. Organisers of the session claimed it was the first time that the International Yoga Day was celebrated in any Parliament.</p>
Venezuela	<p>Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro eliminated three zeros off the country's inflation-ridden currency, the bolivar. This new monetary denomination, which replaces the one he established in January 2017, will help the government fight the "economic war of financial persecution". 500 bolivars, the new maximum denomination of the country's bills will amount to only \$0.01.</p>
France	<p>French National Assembly passed a new immigration law</p>

	<p>that tightens the rules around asylum. Bill shortens asylum application deadlines, doubles time for which illegal migrants can be detained & 1 year prison sentence for entering France illegally. France received a record 100,000 asylum applications last year.</p>
North Korea & South Korea	<p>In a historic turn of events, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un stepped into South Korean border for a day of talks with the Southern President Moon Jae-in. Kim and Moon signed "Panmunjom Declaration," named after the truce village in the Demilitarized Zone between the two Koreas. Both leaders also agreed to work jointly for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.</p>
North Korea	<p>North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will move country's clocks 30 mins forward to unify with South's time zone. The two countries on divided peninsula had different time zones since 2015 when North changed its standard time to 30 mins behind the South. North will move to the time zone used before Japan's 1910-45 colonial rule of peninsula to mark the 70th anniversary of its liberation from Tokyo.</p>
	<p>North Korea has carried out demolition of its Punggye-ri nuclear test site in a series of huge explosions. It permitted a group of journalists from Britain, China, Russia, South Korea and US to watch the destruction.</p>

Russia	<p>Russia has unveiled the world's first floating nuclear power station to meet its growing electricity needs. The ship holds two 35 megawatt nuclear reactors that can produce enough electricity to power a town of 200,000 residents. It will be primarily used to power oil rigs as Russia pushes further north into the Arctic to drill for oil and gas and needs electricity in far-flung locations.</p>
Ireland	<p>Ireland has voted overwhelmingly in a referendum to overturn the abortion ban. Result was a landslide 66.4% 'yes' vote against 33.6% who voted 'no'. Currently, abortion is only allowed when a woman's life is at risk, but not in cases of rape, incest or fatal foetal abnormality. One of the key cases influencing the debate on abortion in Ireland was that of Indian dentist Savita Halappanavar.</p>
Columbia	<p>Colombia has decided to formally join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). With this Colombia becomes the 1st Latin American nation to join NATO as a global partner.</p> <p>Colombia will join as a global partner, which means it will not necessarily have to take part in military action & will be fully accredited in Brussels. Other global partners include Mongolia, Iraq, Japan & Pakistan.</p>
Canada	<p>Canada has become the second nation in the world and the first G7 nation to legalize marijuana. Uruguay was the first country to legalize</p>

	<p>marijuana's production, sale and consumption in December 2013. Medical marijuana is already legal in Canada.</p> <p>Canada will assume command of a new NATO training and capacity building mission in Iraq. It is part of the US-led coalition fighting the ISIS is contributing air power & helping in training Iraqi forces.</p>
Portugal	<p>The Portuguese parliament approved a law that will allow citizens to change their gender and name from the age of 16 without a medical report showing "identity disruption". Portugal joins Denmark, Malta, Sweden, Ireland and Norway to become "the sixth European country to grant the right to self-determination of transgender identity".</p>
Japan	<p>The world's first digital art museum opened at the MORI Building Digital Art Museum in Tokyo, a collaboration between the developer and art collective TeamLab. Owing to projection-mapping technology, the artworks react to movement and touch, inviting visitors to imagine they possess new superpowers.</p> <p>International Arbitration Centre in Tokyo will be Asia's first arbitration center specialising in Intellectual Property. It would try to resolve disputes within a period of 1 year. IACT is due to handle disputes between non-Japanese companies, if both parties agree.</p>
Pakistan	<p>A landmark Bill allowing Hindu widows to remarry has been</p>

	<p>passed by the assembly of Pakistan's Sindh Province. The bill allows Hindu widows to remarry out of their own free will but only after a period of six months has lapsed after their husband's death. The bill also grants Hindu women the right to file a petition for dissolution of a marriage if they want to terminate their marriage.</p>
	<p>Pakistan has reopened a major trade route with Afghanistan, the Ghulam Khan pass after four years. Authorities had closed Ghulam Khan border crossing in 2014, after the launch of military operation in North Waziristan.</p>
	<p>Global anti-terror financing watchdog, Financial Action Task Force has decided to keep Pakistan on its 'grey list'. US motion, to have Pakistan added to grey list of countries was reportedly backed by Britain, France & Germany. Pakistan was previously on the grey list from 2012 to 2015.</p>
	<p>The Maldives has signed a capacity-building agreement in the power sector with Pakistan, thus posing fresh security challenges for India. The Maldives has stopped issuing work permits to Indians.</p>
United Kingdom	<p>Britain's Queen Elizabeth granted royal assent to Prime Minister Theresa May's Brexit legislation. The E.U. (Withdrawal) Bill would repeal the 1972 European Communities Act through which Britain had become a member of EU. The Brexit day in British law slated as March 29, 2019.</p>

Colombia	<p>Being the ninth site in Colombia to be given the status of world heritage site, Chiribiquete park is the country's largest park and has one of the highest rates of plant diversity in the northern Amazon. It is located on one of the world's oldest rock formations, the Guiana Shield. It was first declared a national park in 1989. It also bears traces of ancient human life.</p>
Guatemala	<p>Guatemala has opened its embassy in Jerusalem, following in the footsteps of the United States, which recently inaugurated its embassy in the city. Guatemala, the second country to recognise Israel as a state in 1948, has had a long history of military cooperation with Israel.</p>
	<p>Guatemala's Fuego volcano erupted by shooting a dense cloud of ash into the sky. Fuego has been erupting since 2002, and was continuously active in 2017.</p>
	<p>Paraguayan President Horacio Cartes has inaugurated his country's Israel embassy in Jerusalem. Paraguay is now the third country to move its embassy to Jerusalem, following the United States and Guatemala.</p>
	<p>The United Arab Emirates (UAE) celebrated the completion of the first-ever Nuclear Power Plant not only in the country but the whole Arab Gulf Region. The \$20 billion Barakah Plant west of Abu Dhabi has been constructed by a consortium led by Korea Electric Power Corp in nine years. It's one of the four nuclear reactors being</p>

constructed with South Korea's cooperation.
The world's biggest cruise -liner, "Symphony of the Seas", left the shipyard of Saint-Nazaire in France to embark on its maiden voyage in the Mediterranean. The ship weighs 228,000 tonnes and is 362 metres long. The Symphony can hold up to 8,000 people including 2,200 staff. The Symphony will head to Malaga in Spain and spend its first season in the Mediterranean.
The European Union will deploy observers to Zimbabwe's general election expected in July, the first time in 16 years the bloc will monitor polls in the southern African country.
Epidolex is the world's first medicine made from marijuana. The drug does not cause intoxication or a high and is approved by US FDA. It is created by GW Pharmaceuticals. It is an oral solution of cannabidiol (OSC) will be used to cure severe forms of epilepsies in children. The New England Journal of Medicine had first provided the evidence that marijuana can cure epilepsy.

	of affected populations until the end of 2018.
	The UN member states have approved a 6.69 billion US Dollar budget for 13 peacekeeping operations for the year 2018-19. The United States is the biggest contributor to the United Nations
IMF	The International Monetary Fund will systematically address corruption and its impact on economic growth with all its member countries under new guidelines. The stricter new policy also aims to tackle how rich countries contribute to corruption in the developing world by failing to prevent bribery and money laundering or by allowing anonymous corporate ownership. IMF will not investigate specific instances of corruption. Rather, it will focus on the strength of key economic institutions: fiscal and central bank governance, market regulation, the rule of law and policies on money laundering and countering terrorism financing.
World Bank	The World Bank decided to provide \$480 million in aid to Bangladesh to address the needs of Rohingya refugees. The aid would include health, education, water & sanitation and other spheres. Nearly 7 lakh Muslim Rohingya have taken shelter from violence in Myanmar in Bangladesh, making it the world's fastest-growing refugee camp.
	The World Bank has approved \$700 million to help Bangladesh achieve its education for all vision by improving the primary education sector. The Quality Learning for All Program (QLEAP) will cover more than 18 million children studying in pre-primary level to grade 5. It will

UNITED NATIONS FAMILY

Agency/ Fund/ Program	News
United Nations	The United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) announced that Bhutan, Kiribati, Sao Tome and Principe and Solomon Islands will be recommended for graduation from the Least Developed Country (LDC) category. The improvement in ranking is due to their increasing national earning power as well as access to better health care and education.
	United Nations has issued an appeal for 951 million Dollars to meet the needs of nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. The appeal aims to support environmentally sustainable solutions, confidence-building & resilience

	also finance implementation of the government's Fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4).
WHO	WHO has launched a comprehensive plan to "REPLACE" to eliminate industrially-produced artificial trans fats from global food supply by 2023. REPLACE stands for Review dietary sources, Promote the use of healthier fats, Legislate, Assess changes, Create awareness and Enforce. REPLACE package is the first time WHO is calling for the elimination of something other than a noncommunicable disease
	The World Health Organization (WHO) and World Bank Group has launched a new mechanism that intends to strengthen global health security. The Global Preparedness Monitoring Board was created on the margins of the 71st Session of the World Health Assembly. The Board's Secretariat will be housed at WHO headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.
	World Health Organization in Geneva released the latest edition (11th) of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). The ICD is the standard disease coding for statistics and information regarding diseases around the world. These codes are common for healthcare professionals worldwide and provides a common sharing platform for reporting diseases and condition.
	World Health Organisation published its first essential diagnostics list, a catalogue of tests needed to diagnose the most common conditions as well as several global priority diseases. The step was taken to

	address the problem of people's inability to access diagnostic services.
UNESCO	The United Nations has released its first-ever guidelines on fighting anti-Semitism in education. Guide provides tools to strengthen the resilience of young people to anti-Semitic ideas and violent extremism. UNESCO launched the publication in Paris in collaboration with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE).
United Nations Security Council (UNSC)	The United Nations Security Council has unanimously adopted a resolution for renewing its peace mission in South Sudan for a year. It also threatened Sudan to impose an arms embargo if necessary. It is aimed at piling pressure on South Sudan's warring sides as they head into a new round of peace talks in Ethiopia next month to end the four-year war.
	The United Nations General Assembly voted to elect Germany, Belgium, South Africa, the Dominican Republic and Indonesia for a two-year term in the Security Council starting on Jan. 1, 2019. The council is the only U.N. body that can make legally binding decisions and has the power to impose sanctions and authorize the use of force. The General Assembly elects five new members in a year.
	UN Security Council has adopted resolution 2427 aimed at a framework for mainstreaming protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle. The resolution strongly condemns the recruitment & use of children by parties to the armed conflict as well as their re-

recruitment.

6. India and World



Name of the dignitary on visit to India	Country with which India signed agreement/mou/pact	Mandate	Special Highlights
Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein-King	Jordan	Defence cooperation paving the way for a joint strategy to counter common threats.	The two sides signed 11 agreements for long term supply of Rock Phosphate and Fertilizer/NPK, Customs Mutual Assistance Agreement
	Bangladesh and Russia	Construction of the Rooppur nuclear power plant in Bangladesh	Russia is building the nuclear power plant in Bangladesh on a turnkey basis.
Tran Dai Quang-President	Vietnam	Bilateral cooperation in areas of nuclear energy, trade and agriculture. India and Vietnam decided to deepen defence and security cooperation and resolved jointly for a free and open Indo-Pacific region.	The pacts were signed during Vietnamese President's Tran Dai Quang first visit to India as president.
	Israel	Enhance cooperation on 'National Campaign for Water Conservation in India'.	
Emmanuel Macron-President	France	Key pacts in the strategic areas of security, nuclear energy. Agreements in the field of education, environment, urban development and	Inaugurated Uttar Pradesh's biggest solar power plant in Dadar Kalan village of Chhanvey block in Mirzapur

		railways.	
Frank-Walter Steinmeier- President	Germany		First visit to India as the German President. Germany is India's largest trading partner in Europe and the sixth largest trading partner in the world.

FACTS ABOUT INDIA (CURRENT)

- India is the **12th largest holder** of US securities with \$144.7 billion. In 2017, China was the largest holder of US government securities with holdings to the tune of \$1.18 trillion, followed by Japan at \$1.06 trillion.
- UNICEF said 25 million child marriages were prevented worldwide in the last decade, with the largest reduction seen in South Asia. Currently, 27% of girls, or nearly 1.5 million girls, get married before they turn 18 in India. This is a sharp decline from 47% a decade ago
- As per data on international arms transfers released by International Peace Research Institute, arms import by India increased by 24% between 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 period making it the **largest importer of the world**. India is followed by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, China, Australia, Algeria, Iraq, Pakistan and Indonesia as the world top importers. The largest arms suppliers to India are Russia (62%), US (15%) and Israel (11%).
- India has now become the **largest importer of almonds** in the world as it has already imported 154 million pounds till February this crop year (August 2017 to July 2018), overtaking Spain and China. Spain was the biggest almond importer in 2016-17 with 210 million pounds, while China had 150 million pound import
- India ranked **third** in the list of countries where the highest number of cyber threats were detected, and **second** in terms of targeted attacks in 2017, according to security software firm Symantec. Symantec detected 133 targeted attacks in India which are the work of organised groups.
- India has become the **fourth-largest passenger vehicle (PV) market globally** for the first time ever, unseating Germany, in January and February 2018. India is behind China, US and Japan. Germany in the 5th position, followed by Brazil and France
- According to Mercom Communications India, India emerged as the **third largest solar market** in the world in 2017 behind China and the US. As per the report, India set a new record with 9.6 GW of solar installations in 2017, which was more than double the 4.3 GW installed in 2016.
- According to RSA Fraud Report, **India** is among top 3 countries most targeted for phishing. **Canada, U.S., India and Brazil** are the countries most targeted by phishing. As per the report, phishing accounted for 48% of all cyber-attacks during the period between January 1 to March 31, 2018.
- According to a new UNICEF analysis, India is among almost 90 countries in the world without national policies in place that ensure new fathers get adequate paid time off with their newborn babies. Almost **two-thirds of the world's children** under one-year-old, nearly 90 million, live in countries where their fathers are not entitled by law to a single day of paid paternity leave.

COUNTRY / AGENCY INVOLVED WITH INDIA	MANDATE/NEWS	SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS
Bangladesh	The Border Security Force (BSF) and the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) declared an 8.3 km stretch along the border a 'crime free zone.'	The stretch falls between the border outpost of Gunarmath and Kalyani of the BSF and Putkhali and Daulatpur of the BGB.
Bangladesh and Russia	Construction of the Rooppur nuclear power plant in Bangladesh	Russia is building the nuclear power plant in Bangladesh on a turnkey basis.
Nepal	India will build a strategic railway link between Raxaul in Bihar and Kathmandu in Nepal to facilitate people-to-people contact and bulk movement of goods. The 3 other railway projects in the pipeline are New Jalpaiguri-Kakrabhitta, Nautanwa-Bhairahawa and Nepalgunj Road-Nepalgunj.	
Nepal	Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nepal Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli launched the Rs 3.24 billion India-Nepal petroleum products pipeline from Motihari, Bihar to Amlekhgunj, Nepal. The Motihari-Amlekhgunj Pipeline project was approved by Indian Oil in September 2015.	This is the first international cross-country pipeline project in India.
United States	The first long-term liquefied natural gas (LNG) US cargo from the Houston-based Cheniere Energy Inc. arrived at the Dabhol LNG terminal in Maharashtra.	The first crude oil shipment from the US to India arrived in October 2017 in Odisha.
World Bank	The government has entered into a legal agreement with the World Bank for financing the research towards early development for bio-pharmaceuticals. The aim is to make India a hub for design and development of novel, affordable and effective bio-pharmaceutical products.	

VISITS OF INDIAN DIGNITARIES

NAME OF THE DIGNITARY	COUNTRY	MOUs/ Agreements signed	SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS
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Ram Nath Kovind	Madagascar	<p>Agreement under which, India and Madagascar will explore various ways of co-operation in the field of defence.</p> <p>Amended air service agreement to support efforts towards improving connectivity between the two countries.</p>	<p>The visit of the president to Madagascar will also be the first ever visit by an Indian VVIP to the island nation.</p> <p>The Madagascar President decorated President Ramnath Kovind with second highest civilian honour Grand Cross.</p>
Ram Nath Kovind	Mauritius	<p>India has offered a 100 million dollar Line of Credit (LoC) to Mauritius for defence procurement to help its security capacity.</p> <p>India also agreed to sell a Multi-Purpose Offshore Petrol Vessel to the island nation.</p> <p>The other agreements/MoUs signed between the two sides include a MoU on cooperation between Nalanda University in Bihar and Mauritius.</p>	<p>President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the World Hindi Secretariat building in Mauritius.</p>
Ram Nath Kovind	Equatorial Guinea		<p>First ever visit by an Indian President to Equatorial Guinea.</p>
Sushma Swaraj	Mongolia	<p>She co-chaired the 6th round of India-Mongolia Joint Consultative Committee meeting with her Mongolian counterpart in Ulaanbaatar. The meeting discussed trade, economic, cultural and scientific co-operation.</p>	<p>First Indian External Affairs Minister to visit the Mongolia in 42 years.</p>

COUNTRIES/ AGENCIES INVOLVED	MOUs/ Agreements	SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS
India and Iran	<p>Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion</p>	<p>Stimulate flow of investment, technology and personnel from India to Iran & vice versa.</p>
India and Sri Lanka	<p>Promote co-operation in the areas such as e-governance, m-governance, electronics-public services delivery, cyber security, software technology parks, startups etc.</p>	
European Investment Bank (EIB) and Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency	<p>Signed an agreement for the second line of credit of Euro 150 million on the non-sovereign basis.</p> <p>The line of credit will be used for financing Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency projects in India.</p>	

India and the European Union	Enable them to share earth observation data from each other's satellites.	The European Commission will provide India with free, full and open access to the data from the Copernicus Sentinel family of satellites and ISRO will share data from its earth observation satellites.
India and Hong Kong	Double taxation avoidance agreement, aiming to facilitate investment flow between both countries and prevent tax evasion.	
The U.S. government's Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and WaterHealth India Pvt Ltd.	The project will expand access to affordable clean drinking water to millions of people in India by installation of 900 decentralised plants in India.	
EXIM and ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID)	Agreement to Provide a \$500 million credit facility to ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) to fund various development projects in South-Western Africa.	
Asian Development Bank (ADB) and India.	Signed \$80 million loan to help modernize technical and vocational education and training institutions ecosystem in Himachal Pradesh.	
India, UK, and Northern Ireland	Cooperation and exchange of information for tackling organised crime	
India and South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP)	Cooperation on Oil and Chemical Pollution in the South Asian Seas Region. Indian coast guard will be the competent authority for implementation of "Oil spill contingency plan"	
India and Japan	Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) will provide a concessional loan of ₹500 crore for smarter mobility project in Chennai to develop Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS).	ITS will make traffic management system more efficient to ease the city's congestion.
India and World Expo 2020	Signed participants contract for India's pavilion in the prestigious World Expo 2020 held once in 5 years. The contract provides for the setting up of India pavilion at Expo 2020 on an extra large plot (about one acre) in the 'Opportunity' segment. The focus will be given to India's advances in Space, Pharma, IT, Renewable Energy, Telecom sectors.	













Food Safety & Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) and Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock (MAIL), Afghanistan		Cooperation in the field of food safety.
India and Bangladesh	Signed 6 pacts including one for the construction of a 129.5 km-long oil pipeline between Siliguri and Parbatipur. An agreement between Department of Atomic Energy, India and Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission, was signed. The other MoU was between Prasar Bharati and Bangladesh Betar	The MoU on the oil pipeline is aimed at transporting diesel from India to Bangladesh.
National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)	The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) inked a pact for its maiden international project, part of the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway. NHAI has signed an agreement for upgradation of Yagyi - Kalewa section in Myanmar to Two-Lane with Earthen Shoulder.	The project has been funded by Ministry of External Affairs.
India and Morocco	India has inked a pact with Morocco under which focus would be laid on the evaluation of potential mineral resources and promoting exploration and mining.	The focus of the MoU is on the development of the geological infrastructure for Geoscience Maps and geochemical maps. The MoU in the field of Mining and Geology for a period of 5 years was signed by both the countries.

Name of the event	VENUE	SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS
'ITB- Berlin World Tourist Meet'	Berlin, Germany	India won the ' Best Exhibitor Award ' at ITB – Berlin. India's Incredible India (Ministry of Tourism) presented a short film named ' Yogi of the Racetrack. '
Indo-French Knowledge Summit	New Delhi	Organized by the French Embassy in India and the Ministry of Human Resource Development. It was the first ever Indo-French Knowledge Summit where a landmark agreement on mutual recognition of educational qualifications between India and France.
Delhi End Tuberculosis (TB) Summit	Co-hosted by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare,	The participating countries signed the 'Delhi End TB Summit Statement of Action', which will ensure that their TB plans are fully funded. Countries of WHO's South East Asia Region

	WHO-SEARO and Stop TB Partnership in New Delhi.	pledged to end tuberculosis by 2030 and India assured its support to them for meeting their goals in eliminating the disease.
Elecrama 2018- World Utility Summit.		United Kingdom became the Indian electrical industry's international partner. Elecrama is the flagship showcase of the Indian Electrical Industry ecosystem and the largest congregation of power sector.
First International Justice Conference.	Marrakech, Morocco	
114th meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC)	New Delhi	The commission looks into the sharing of the waters of the Indus since the treaty was signed by the two countries in 1960. The Indus water treaty covers the water distribution and sharing rights of six rivers—Beas, Ravi, Sutlej, Indus, Chenab and Jhelum.
16th International Energy Forum (IEF) Ministerial Meeting	New Delhi.	The biennial IEF Ministerial Meetings are the world's largest gathering of Energy Ministers who engage in a dialogue on global energy issues. The IEF is an inter-governmental arrangement set up in 1991, based in Riyadh. There are 72 member countries of IEF, including India.
First India-Nordic Summit	Stockholm	Narendra Modi was the first Indian PM to visit Stockholm since 1988. The views on regional and global issues such as environment and climate, trade and investment and discuss areas of future cooperation were discussed.

NEWS RELATED TO ISA (INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE)	SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS
India and Iran	
The International Solar Alliance (ISA) is working for the deployment of over 1,000 GW of solar energy and aims to mobilise more than USD 1,000 billion into solar energy project by 2030	
Membership of International Solar Alliance will be thrown open to all countries, with no restrictions on duration of sunlight or geographical location.	When the ISA was announced in 2015, 121 nations situated between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn and receiving 300 days of sunlight were eligible for membership
The International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Ministry of External Affairs, signed the Host Country Agreement. The Agreement will give ISA the power to contract, to acquire and dispose off movable and immovable properties, to institute	The ISA became the first international intergovernmental treaty-based organization to be headquartered in India. Its headquarters are in National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE), Gwalpahari, Gurgram.

and defend legal proceedings.

-  An **India-UK Joint Team** has won the **Newton-Bhabha Fund** for a **project on Groundwater Arsenic Research in Ganga River Basin**. The Department of Science and Technology has undertaken the project with the Natural Environment Research Council, UK, to find solutions to the water challenges faced in the arsenic-affected Ganga River. The project will begin from Bijnor and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh.
-  India handed over the **18th diesel-electric locomotive to Myanmar**, thereby completing the **first project under the current Indian line of credit (LoC)**. These locos are fitted with the microprocessor control based system. The diesel locomotives have been customised for the Myanmar Railways. The locomotives have been built by Diesel Locomotive Works, Varanasi.
-  Naval ships of the **UAE and India** had the **first-ever joint exercise - 'Gulf Star 1'** - giving a further boost to bilateral ties.
-  A group of 20 nations including India have pledged a total of around \$100 million to the **United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees** in the Near East. **India** has pledged **\$5 million** while Switzerland has pledged **\$4.2 million**. The donor nations included Qatar, Norway, Turkey, Canada, India and Switzerland.
-  **Air India flight AI139** from **New Delhi to Tel Aviv**, became the **first commercial aircraft** en route to Israel to **fly over Saudi Arabia**. It is for the first time that Saudi has allowed an Israel-bound flight to enter its airspace, thus ending a 70 yr old ban. Many Arab & Islamic nations do not recognise Israel & therefore disallow airlines from using their airspace for flight services to that country.
-  **Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL)** has delivered second **Sri Lanka Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel (SL AOPV)** of Sri Lankan Navy ceremoniously at Vaddem, Vasco da Gama. The vessel will be the **largest and most advanced ship** in the Sri Lankan Navy fleet.
-  **China** pledged to continue data sharing of **Brahmaputra and Sutlej waters**. The data on water flows in both rivers is shared during the monsoons, to predict flooding, mainly in the northeast.
-  **India & Pakistan** have agreed to resolve the matter in line with provisions of a **1992 pact on treatment of officials posted at diplomatic missions**. Code states that two sides will not resort to intrusive & aggressive surveillance & actions such as verbal & physical harassment.
-  The **National Research Development Corporation (NRDC)** will establish a technology data bank for **ASEAN region as part of ASEAN-India Innovation Platform**. The corporation has been entrusted by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) to manage the platform for a period of four years.
-  **SBI** will be investing a total of Rs 80 billion in the **'Arun III' hydropower project of Nepal**, which will produce 900 megawatts of electricity. The SJVN, which has been awarded with the construction of the mega power project of Nepal, has made an informal agreement with the SBI to acquire the investment as a loan.
-  The US Treasury Department placed **India under a watch list** that monitors countries' currency practices. The department in its report observed that the foreign exchange policies of six countries were needed to be monitored. Earlier, the department had five countries - China, Germany, Japan, Korea, and Switzerland - under this list. India is now the sixth country.
-  India has won an election to a crucial Non-Governmental Organisation committee in the UN. The UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) held elections to a number of its subsidiary bodies. The ECOSOC focusses on advancing the three dimensions of

sustainable development economic, social and environmental.

- India has pledged **USD 5 million in assistance to UN agency working for welfare of Palestinian refugees** to help bolster its severe funding crisis. A total of 20 countries, including India, announced contributions to the 2018 budget of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. UNRWA relies entirely on voluntary contributions from states & US is the largest contributor.
- The British government announced a new **trade partnership between India-UK**. India would be investing more than 1 billion pounds in UK which will aid in creating 5,750 British jobs.
- India will join a club of 8 countries with a **sexual offender database to monitor and track those convicted of such crimes**. National Crime Records Bureau will maintain a national database and profile of sexual offenders. This data will be regularly shared with states and Union Territories for tracking, monitoring and investigation, including verification of antecedents by police.
- Bangladesh and Nepal have launched a trial bus service between their capitals through India. The proposed commercial bus service comes under the purview of **BBIN (Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal) Motor Vehicles Agreement**. Currently, passengers use the Lalmonirhat-Burimari-Changrabandha-Siliguri route to go to Kathmandu.
- India and China have decided to launch together a launch joint economic project in war-torn Afghanistan. This would be the first ever **Sino-Indian joint initiative in a third country**.
- In a first, **India and Pakistan** will be part of a multi-nation counter-terror exercise in Russia in September. The military exercise will take place under the framework of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation**. The military drill would be held in the Ural mountains of Russia, and almost all SCO member countries will be part of it.
- India has launched a flood & earthquake early warning systems in Myanmar aimed at helping the country mitigate the effects of natural calamities that affects people every year. Under the Flood Warning System, 12 automatic water level stations and 3 automatic weather stations have been established. Under the Earthquake Monitoring System, 10 telemetered seismic stations have been added.
- **India and Guatemala** agreed to support each other's candidature for the non-permanent membership of the **United Nations Security Council (UNSC)**. Guatemala will support India's candidature for UNSC membership for 2021-22, while New Delhi will do so in 2031-32 for Guatemala.
- India has sent to Bangladesh its 2nd relief consignment to help thousands of displaced Rohingya Muslims who fled Myanmar. India sent relief materials for 300,000 Rohingyas in 2017 under Operation 'Insaniyat' to support Bangladesh in its humanitarian efforts
- India has provided the **largest sum of Rs 180.74 mn Nepali rupees** for river training in Nepal to control floods that also affect India during the monsoon season. India has so far given 13 instalments since 2008 to Nepal for river training works totalling to over NRs 4.68 bn. River training & construction will carry on near the Indian border in 3 rivers - Lalbakeya, Bagmati & Kamla.
- In order to control wildlife poaching and trafficking of animal parts, **Nepal and India** are planning to carry out a joint operation. The operation is to be conducted in Shuklaphanta National Park in Kanchanpur district on Nepal's side and Krishnapur Wildlife Sanctuary in Uttar Pradesh. This move comes after both the sides realised that the two reserves are contiguous to each other.
- **UNICEF** has launched a '**data visualisation app**' which provides a user-friendly visual representation of complex analytics of the education scenario in the country. The app has been made with technical inputs from UNICEF, in collaboration with NIEPA and NCERT. UNICEF aims to provide humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers in developing countries.

- Prime Minister of Netherlands Mark Rutte launched the **'Clean Air India Initiative' in Delhi**. The campaign aims to **curb air pollution in Indian cities** by promoting partnerships between Indian start-ups and Dutch companies. The **Clean Air India Initiative** is a project between Get In The Ring, a platform for start-ups, the Government of the Netherlands, Start-up India, and INDUS Forum
- India and Indonesia have agreed to set up a special task force to enhance connectivity between the strategic Andaman and Nicobar Islands and provinces in Sumatra Island. This will promote trade, tourism and people-to-people contacts.
- Indian Navy** launched **'Operation Nistar'** to evacuate 38 stranded Indians around Socotra island located close to the horn of Africa between the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea. The Navy has already deployed its ship INS Sunayna as part of the **'operation Nistar' to evacuate the Indians**.
- An orchid at **National Orchid Garden in Singapore** was named **'Dendrobium Narendra Modi'**. Now three flowers are named after PM Narendra Modi. Last year, a fast-growing Israeli Chrysanthemum was named 'MODI' during the PM Modi's visit to the nation. An orchid grown in Sikkim was named 'Cymbidium Namu' in 2016 by the state CM Pawan Chamling.
- India will import its **first ever cargo of LNG from Russia** under a long-term deal. State-owned gas utility GAIL India Ltd will bring the shipload of LNG from Gazprom at Petronet LNG Ltd's import terminal.
- India extended a financial aid of Rs 99 mn to Nepal for the construction of 2,700 shallow tube well irrigation systems in 12 districts of the country. The assistance has been extended as part of the final payment for the Nepal-Bharat Maitri Irrigation Project, which was launched to boost growth to the Himalayan nation's agricultural sector.
- India will construct a war memorial at **Villers Guislain** to honour the valour and sacrifice of its soldiers, sailors and airmen who fought for peace in the World War-I.

During the World War I, Villers-Guislain had witnessed a fierce battle in which the British Indian cavalry regiments were heavily involved. This will be the second such memorial in Europe after Neuve-Chapelle Indian Memorial.

- According to a government statement, **India will make sure that Chabahar Port in Iran becomes operational by 2019**. The port is being developed as part of a new transportation corridor for land-locked Afghanistan and is expected to open way for millions of dollars in trade and cut its dependence on Pakistan.
- India has **lowered the limits** on the export of certain essential commodities such as potatoes, onions, and eggs to the **Maldives**. According to a bilateral pact that came into effect in 1981, India exports essential commodities in line with the requirement as communicated by the govt of Maldives.
- India & Seychelles** have agreed to work together on a project to develop a naval base at Assumption Island keeping each **other's concerns in mind**. **India is keen on** developing the Assumption Island in the Indian Ocean to expand its footprint in a strategically-key region where China has been trying to enhance its presence.
- US has postponed its inaugural 2+2 **dialogue with India, citing "unavoidable reasons"**. The **dialogue** was to be held on July 6, Sushma Swaraj and Nirmala Sitharaman were to take part in the meeting with US secretary of state Michael Pompeo and secretary of defence James Mattis.

Name	Designation
Professor JS Rajput	India's representative to the Executive Board (EXB) of UNESCO.
Shyam S Salim	Executive member of the 'International Institute of Fisheries Economics and Trade' (IIFET) based in the USA.

Awards

South Asian Cinema Foundation (SACF)	Frederick Pincott Award for 2017 from the Indian High Commissioner for promoting Hindi cinema in Britain.
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India and World Bank	India signed a loan deal worth \$200 million for POSHAN Abhiyaan. The loan would help Government in achieving its goal of reducing stunting in children 0-6 years of age from 38.4% to 25% by 2022. POSHAN scheme aims to ensure holistic development & adequate nutrition for pregnant women, mothers & children.
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Agencies, Countries or Financial Organisations	Mandate
Government of India, Government of Maharashtra and the World Bank	Help Small and Marginal farmers in the Marathwada and Vidarbha regions of Maharashtra. The project will help in increasing climate resilient practices in agriculture. The project will help the farmers in reducing risks of climate-related crop failure and increase their income.
NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission signed a Statement of Intent with SAP	Promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship. SAP will adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Laboratories for 5 years to nurture the science, technology, engineering and maths learning among school children.

The World Bank has approved Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY), a Rs.6000 crore Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. The scheme is to be implemented over a period of five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23. The scheme aims to improve groundwater management in priority areas in the country through community participation.

European Investment Bank (EIB) will be signing a new loan for large and small clean energy projects all over India. The EIB is the world's biggest financier of climate action and clean energy projects. In 2017 the EIB invested EUR 19.6bn in climate action projects.

7. Persons in News

Name	Designation	Organisation/Country	Additional Facts
BANKING & INSURANCE SECTOR			
A K Pradhan	Group Chief Risk Officer	PNB	
Sanjeev Nautiyal	MD & CEO	SBI Life Insurance Company Limited	
Arijit Basu	MD & CEO	SBI	
Sandeep Bankshi	COO	ICICI bank	Chanda Kochhar, ICICI Bank's managing director and CEO will remain on leave until a committee

			investigating allegations of impropriety completes its work.
OSCARS			
James Ivory became the oldest person to win an Oscar with his award win for best adapted screenplay for the film 'Call Me By Your Name'			
Late actress Sridevi and Shashi Kapoor were among those mentioned in the 'In Memoriam' section at Oscars 2018 as a tribute to personalities in the film industry who passed away.			
INTERNATIONAL APPOINTMENTS			
Krishna Kumari Kohli from	First ever Hindu Dalit woman Senator.	Pakistan's Sindh	She is a member of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari-led Pakistan People's Party.
Armen Sarkisian	President	Armenia	
Martin Vizcarra	President	Peru	He had earlier served as Peru's first vice president and his country's ambassador to Canada.
Vladimir Putin	President	Russia	He won fourth term as a president and will lead Russia for another six years
Dmitry Medvedev	Prime Minister		
Yi Gang	Governor of People's Bank of China	China	China's central bank does not operate independently of the government, and so Mr Yi will report to President Xi Jinping.
Wang Yi	State Councillor		China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi has been elevated to the post of State Councillor. The State Councillor, attached to the State Council, China's cabinet, is of a higher rank than Foreign Minister. Mr Wang will continue to retain the post of Foreign Minister.
Wang Qishan was elected as	Vice President		
Xi Jinping	President		China passed a constitutional amendment to remove any term limits enabling Xi Jinping to hold

			<p>presidential office beyond 2023. Xi is regarded as the most powerful leader of China after Mao as he held the posts of head of CPC, military & Presidency.</p>
Li Keqiang,	Prime Minister		<p>He was re-elected for his second five-year term by the members of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC). Traditionally, the Chinese Prime Minister is regarded as the top economic official of the country.</p>
John Bolton	National Security Adviser	United States	
Larry Kudlow	Chief Economic Adviser		
Jim Bridenstine	NASA chief		
Mike Pompeo	Secretary of State		
Gina Haspel	CIA's first female director.		<p>Central Intelligence Agency is a civilian foreign intelligence service of US federal government that analyses national security information from around the world.</p>
<p>Indian American Susheela Jayapal has been elected as a member of the Board of Commissioners of Multnomah County in Oregon, USA. With this Susheela becomes first South Asian to be elected in Oregon.</p>			
Omar al-Razzaz	Prime Minister	Jordan	
Mario Diaz-Canel Bermudez	President	Cuba	<p>Miguel is the first leader outside the Castro dynasty to lead the country since the 1959 revolution. Raul Castro will remain head of the Communist party, designated by the constitution as "the superior guiding force of society and the state".</p>
Pedro Sanchez	Prime Minister	Spain	
Angela Merkel	Chancellor	Germany	
Mahathir	Prime Minister	Malaysia	92 year old, Mahathir becomes the

Mohamad			oldest PM in the world.
Win Myint	President	Myanmar	
Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador	President	Mexico	
Mukhammedkalyi Abylgazyiev	Prime Minister	Kyrgyzstan	
Mario Abdo Benítez	Prime Minister	Paraguay	
Abdel Fattah el-Sisi	President	Egypt	
Tayyip Erdogan	President	Turkey	
Nicolas Maduro	President	Venezuela	
Saad Hariri	Prime Minister	Lebanon	Under Lebanon's sectarian power-sharing system, Prime minister must be a Sunni Muslim, Speaker a Shia Muslim & President a Maronite Christian.
Antonio Manuel de Carvalho Ferreira Vitorino	Director general.	UN's International Organization for Migration (IOM).	Established in 1951, IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration.
Gobind Singh Deo, an Indian-origin Sikh politician in Malaysia, has become a cabinet minister. He is the first member of the minority community in Malaysia's history to be appointed as a minister. He has been given the communications and multimedia portfolio.			
Giuseppe Conte	Prime Minister	Italy	
Ivan Duque	President	Colombia	
Omar al-Razzaz	Prime Minister	Jordan	
Jeremy Hunt will replace Boris Johnson as the U.K. foreign secretary following Johnson's resignation.			
UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed Christine Schraner Burgener of Switzerland as his new special envoy on Myanmar.			

BRAND AMBASSADORS



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Mahendra Singh Dhoni	Gaming platform Dream11	
Virat Kohli	Uber	This is the first time the company has announced a brand ambassador in the Asia Pacific region. In February it had named footballer Mohamed Salah as the brand ambassador for the Egypt market.
Aamir Khan	Vivo	
Mohit Chauhan	Green Ambassador of Sikkim	
Gauri Sheoran	Brand Ambassador for its Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccination campaign & Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK) of Haryana	Under the MR campaign, about 80 lakh children aged between 9 months and 15 would be vaccinated. RBSK is an initiative aimed at covering defects at birth, deficiencies, diseases, and disability.
Actor Sushant Singh Rajput will promote 2 major initiatives of NITI Aayog - BHIM app & the Women Entrepreneurship Platform.		
Akshay Kumar launched an advertisement campaign for the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen). The campaign was launched at a Collectors Convention for Toilet Technology. The campaign focuses on promoting the twin pit toilet technology in rural India. The advertisement campaign launched is an effort, supported by the World Bank.		
OBITUARIES		
Javed Abidi	Noted disability rights	Abidi was the Director of the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People and also the Global Chair of Disabled People International.
Jayendra Saraswathi Swamigal	Senior seer of Kanchi Kamakoti Mutt situated in Tamil Nadu	
Emily Nasrallah	Lebanese author	Nasrallah began her career as a journalist and published her first book, " Birds of September, " in 1962.
Stephen Hawking	British Physicist and the black hole theorist	He is also the author of the bestselling book, "A Brief History of Time".
Begum Hamida Habibullah	Former Rajya Sabha member and a pioneer in women empowerment	Ms Habibullah was known for working on women issues. She was the founder of "Self Employed Women's Association ", which promoted self-employment for women and the art of Lucknow's famous "Chikankari".
Sir John Sulston	British genome	Sir John won a Nobel Prize in 2002 for his work on the development of cells within a humble worm, which paved the way for innovations in cancer research.

Ranjan Roy	Senior journalist	Roy was the chief of the Times News Network (TNN) and a member of the paper's national editorial board.
Pyarelal Wadali	Sufi singer	He was the younger of the Sufi singing pair of Wadali Brothers.
Kedarnath Singh	Hindi Poet	A Jnanpith and Sahitya Akademi awardee, Kedarnath Singh was known for his simple style of writing. Some of his best-known works include the award-winning poetry collection "Akaal Mein Saras", "Bagh", "Abhi Bilkul Abhi", "Zameen pak Rahi Hai", "Yahan se Dekho", "Tolstoy aur cycle".
Bhimsain Khurana	Indian animation pioneer and multiple National Award winner	He is credited for the first Indian computer-generated animation series Lok Gatha (1992) that alone won him three national awards.
Barbara Bush	former US first lady and literacy campaigner	
S Nihal Singh	Journalist and former Chief Editor	Former Chief Editor of The Statesman and The Indian Express. He was the founding editor of The Indian Post in 1987. He was awarded the prestigious International Editor of the Year Award in New York for opposing the Emergency imposed by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
Keyur Bhushan	Gandhian, freedom fighter & writer	Bhushan took part in the 1942 Quit India movement as a student in Raipur and was incarcerated. He penned novels, collections of short stories and poems. He also edited 'Sapthahik Chhattisgarh' and 'Antyoday'.
Verne Troyer	Actor	One of the shortest men in the world, was born in 1969 with achondroplasia, a genetic condition that kept him less than 3 feet tall.
Nabi Tajima	Oldest Person	She died in Japan at the age of 117. She became the world's oldest person seven months ago after the death in September of Violet Brown in Jamaica.
EC George Sudarshan	Physicist	He worked on subjects of quantum Zeno effect, optical coherence, open quantum system, non-variance groups among others. In 2007, the Kerala-born scientist was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, the country's second-highest civilian award.
Lt Gen Zorawar Chand	India's most decorated General	Decorated with Maha Vir Chakra, Vir Chakra, Param Vishisht Seva Medal and Vishisht Seva Medal, Bakshi was instrumental in the historic

Bakshi		capture of strategic Haji Pir pass from Pakistan army.	
Alan Bean	4 th man to walk on the Moon	He spent a total of 69 days in space, including 31 hours on the moon.	
Arabinda Guha, (pseudonym Indramitra)	Author	The author was a recipient of Rabindra Purashkar, instituted by the West Bengal Government, twice for his books 'Karunasagar Vidyasagar' and 'Dekha Sakkhat', a collection of poems. His first book of poems was 'Dakkhin Nayak' and the last one, 'Prasthan Samay Upasthit' was published in 2014.	
BUSINESS & ECONOMY			
Parag Agrawal	Chief Technology Officer (CTO)	Twitter	
Sunil Nayyar	Managing Director (MD)	Sony India	Nayyar is the first Indian to be appointed as Managing Director for Sony India.
Debjani Ghosh	President	NASSCOM	NASSCOM is a trade association of Indian IT and Business Process Outsourcing industry.
Rishad Premji	Chairman	NASSCOM	
Uday Kotak	Chief Executive Officer	Kotak Mahindra Bank	
S Jaishankar	Predeint, Global Corporate Affairs.	TATA group	Jaishankar joined the IFS in 1977 holding key roles during his career including stints as High Commissioner to Singapore, Ambassador to China and US.
Nick Read	CEO	Vodafone	
Rakesh Bharti Mittal	President	Confederat ion of Indian Industry (CII)	
Anubrata Biswas	Managing Director & CEO.	Airtel Payments Bank	
Sunil Bharti Mittal,	Honorary Chairman	Internation al Chamber of Commerce	
Paul Polman	Chairman		

Saudi Arabia's Aramco, the world's top oil company has appointed its first female board member among five new members to its board of directors. Lynn Laverty Elsenhans, the former chairwoman, president and CEO of U.S. oil refiner Sunoco is the first female board member of Aramco. Elsenhans was named by Forbes as one of the world's **most powerful women in 2008**.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTMENTS		
Indu Bhushan	Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission (ABNHPM).	He is the Director General of East Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Manila, Philippines.
N Chandrasekaran	Indian Institute of Science	He has been elected as the 8th President of the Institute for the period 2018-21 and took over from K. Kasturirangan. He is Tata Sons Chairman.
Rajesh Ranjan	Director General (DG) of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).	The CISF provides security to various government installations including the airports of the country.
Krishnaswamy Vijay Raghavan	Principle Scientific Adviser to the government of India	
Sitanshu Kar	Director general of Press Information Bureau (PIB)	
Ajit Singh	BCCI's Anti-Corruption Unit	
Vineet Joshi	First Director-General of the National Testing Agency (NTA)	NTA is an independent body dedicated to conducting entrance tests for higher education in India.
Dr Promila Gupta	Directorate General of Health Services.	
Lieutenant General PP Malhotra	Director General of National Cadet Corps (NCC)	
Subhash Chandra Khuntia	IRDAI	
S Ramesh	Chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)	
Balram Bhargava	Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research and Secretary of the Department of Health Research	
Pawan Kumar Agarwal	CEO	Food Safety and Standards Authority of

		India (FSSAI).
Saraswati Prasad	CMD of Steel Authority of India	
Anil Kumar Jha	Chairman-Cum-Managing director (CMD) of Coal India Limited.	
Artist and sculptor Uttam Pacharne	Chairman of Lalit Kala Akademi	The Lalit Kala Akademi or National Academy of Art is India's national academy of fine arts.
Yudhvir Singh Malik	NHAI Chairman	
Mukul Rohatgi	Eminent Jurist in the selection committee for appointment of the Lokpal.	
Sushil Chandra	Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)	CBDT has six members, apart from the chairman, and is responsible for framing policy related to direct taxes and the Income Tax Department.
Justice Chandramauli Kumar Prasad	Chairman of the Press Council of India (PCI)	
Pravin L Agrawal	Director Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL)	
Pankaj Saran	Deputy National Security Adviser	
Justice R K Agrawal	President of the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission.	
Sanjay Mishra	Director General of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).	
Sudha Balakrishnan	Chief Financial Officer of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).	
Mahesh Kumar Jain	Deputy governor of RBI	
Sharad Kumar	Vigilance commissioner in Central Vigilance Commission (CVC).	
AMBASSADORS OF INDIA TO DIFFERENT COUNTRIES		
Subrata Bhattacharjee	Republic of Serbia.	
Vinay Kumar	Afghanistan	He has served in various positions and has worked in India's permanent mission to the UN in New York.

Pawan Chamling has created history by surpassing the record of former communist ruler of West Bengal, Jyoti Basu, as the longest serving chief minister in the country. Chamling became the chief minister of Sikkim on December 12, 1994, and has ruled the tiny Himalayan state ever since.

JUDICIARY APPOINTMENT

Indu Malhotra	Senior lawyer Indu Malhotra was sworn in as Supreme Court Judge. Justice Malhotra is the 7th woman Judge of the top court. Justice M. Fatima Beevi was the first woman judge of the SC. She was followed by Justice Sujata V. Manohar, Justice Ruma Pal, Justice Misra, Justice Desai and Justice Banumathi. She is the 1st woman lawyer from the Supreme Court bar to be directly elevated.
Justice Ramalingam Sudhakar	Chief Justice of the High Court of Manipur.
Swati Bidhan Baruah	She is the first transgender judge of Assam. She has been appointed as a judge to mediate cases in Lok Adalat. She is the third transgender judge in the country and will mediate in pre-litigation cases related to finance companies. Joyita Mondal of West Bengal is India's first transgender judge .

SPORTS

Himanta Biswa Sarma	President of the Badminton Association of India (BAI)
Mary Pierce	Ambassador of TCS World 10K 2018 Marathon.
Rajinder Singh	President of Hockey India
Shashank Manohar	Independent chairman of the International Cricket Council.

first person in the world to double cross Bangla Channel (from Saint Martin's Island Jetty to Teknaf in Bangladesh). Sampanna started swimming at about 5 am on 13th April and completed the journey of 32.2 kilometers in 9 hours and 10 minutes.

- Indian T20I vice-captain Smriti Mandhana is set to become the first Indian to play in **the Kia Super League (KSL), England's domestic women's T20 competition.**
- George Coronos, a 99-year-old Australian swimmer broke the world record for the 100-104 age category in the 50m freestyle. He completed the 50m freestyle in 56.12 seconds, surpassing the previous record of 1:16.92 set by the late Canadian swimmer Jaring Timmerman in 2009.
- Former South Africa Test captain AB de Villiers retired from international cricket. AB de Villiers holds the records for scoring the fastest fifty, hundred and 150 in ODIs.
- India's former shooter & national coach **Pawan Singh** has been appointed as the Chairman of Result Timing Score Jury by the International Shooting Sports Federation for the ISSF World Cup in Munich. With this appointment, Singh became the first Indian to chair the RTS Jury at a senior World Cup. He would be responsible to resolve any score related issue and provide an accurate result on time.
- Satyarup Siddhanta has become the second Indian mountaineer after Malli Mastan Babu to climb Mt Ojos del Salado, the highest volcano in the world. Ojos del Salado is a stratovolcano in the Andes on the Argentina-Chile border and the highest active volcano in the world at 6,893 metres. Satyarup is also set to be the first Indian to climb Mt Sidley, the highest volcano of Antarctica.
- Renowned journalist Rajat Sharma has been elected as the President of Delhi &

- Pune-based 17-year-old swimmer Sampanna Ramesh Shelar became the

District Cricket Association.

- Commander Abhilash Tomy of the Indian Navy will be participating in the prestigious Golden Globe Race that commences from Les Sables d’Olonne harbour in France on 1st July. The uniqueness of the race is that use of GPS, satellite communication, navigational aids, etc is forbidden. Cdr Tomy will be sailing in sailing vessel ‘Thuriya’ has been built by M/s Aquarius Shipyard Ltd at Goa.
- R Praggnanandhaa made history by becoming the 2nd youngest chess grandmaster in the world by earning his 3rd GM norm during Gredine Open. Praggnanandhaa who is just 12 years, 10 months and 14 days old is also the youngest Indian Grandmaster. Ukraine’s Serget Karjakin remains the youngest ever Grandmaster. Viswanathan Anand, India’s first ever GM, was 18 years old when he earned his 3rd norm.

WOMEN IN NEWS

- Flying Officer **Bhawana Kanth** became the 2nd woman pilot of IAF to fly solo in a fighter aircraft. She flew in a MiG-21 Bison aircraft from Ambala Air Force Station. Flying officer **Avani Chaturvedi** made history by becoming the first Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo
- Prakriti** has been inducted as the first direct-entry combat officer in the border guarding force, ITBP. The ITBP force is the last of the CAPFs to induct women officers in combat roles after the government first allowed it to enroll them in 2016. ITBP guards the 3,488 km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China.
- Pakistani lawmaker **Sherry Rehman** made history by becoming the first woman Leader of the Opposition in the Senate.
- President **Bidhya Devi Bhandari** has been elected for a second term, extending the tenure of the first female head of state for another five years. She is also the first Nepali woman to be elected as the country’s president twice.
- Airports Authority of India (AAI) has appointed its first woman firefighter,

Taniya Sanyal.

- The New York Stock Exchange has appointed Chief Operating Officer **Stacey Cunningham** as its first female president
- Sangeeta Bahl**, at the age of 53 has become the oldest Indian woman to scale the Mount Everest.
- Shivangi Pathak** from Haryana has become youngest women of the country to scale Mt Everest.
- Tamil Nadu’s **Anukreethy Vas** was named Miss India at the 55th Femina Miss India 2018.
- American diplomat **Rosemary DiCarlo** became the first woman to head UN political affairs. DiCarlo will replace Jeffrey Feltman, who held the post of Under-Secretary-General for political affairs since 2012.
- Dhivya Suryadevara** has been named the chief financial officer of the United States’ largest automaker, General Motors. Dhivya will report to chief executive officer (CEO) Mary Barra who is also the first woman in the auto industry.
- India’s biotech queen **Kiran Mazumdar Shaw** has been elected as a full-term member of the Board of Trustees of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).
- Vietnam’s **Nguyen Huong Giang** has been crowned this year’s “Miss International Queen” in Thailand at one of the world’s top beauty pageants for transgender women.
- NASA’s record-breaking astronaut, **Peggy Whitson**, retired after returning from her last and longest spaceflight. Whitson was the first woman to command the International Space Station, holding the position twice, and the oldest woman ever to fly in space. She was also the only woman to have served as chief of NASA’s male-dominated astronaut corps.

CHIEF MINISTERS AND GOVERNORS	
Post	State

Chief Minister of Nagaland	Neiphiu Rio
Chief minister of Meghalaya.	National People's Party (NPP) President Conrad Sangma
Chief Minister of Tripura	Biplab Kumar Deb
Chief Minister of Karnataka	HD Kumaraswamy
Governor of Bihar	Satya Pal Malik
Governor of Odisha	Professor Ganeshi Lal
Governor of Mizoram.	Kummanam Rajasekharan

who dethroned Russian President Vladimir Putin as the most influential person on the planet.

WORLD'S MOST FOLLOWED LEADER ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- According to a study conducted by **Burson Cohn & Wolfe**, PM Modi is the 3rd most followed world leader on Twitter with 42 million followers. Modi is just behind US President **Donald Trump & Pope Francis**.
- With over **11 million followers**, India's external affairs minister **Sushma Swaraj** is not only the most followed female world leader & but is also the most followed foreign minister in the world.

BILLIONAIRES INDEX		
Name	Topped by	Additional Information
Bloomberg Billionaires Index	Jeff Bezos	Mukesh Ambani is the richest person.
Forbes	Jeff Bezos	Mukesh Ambani is the richest Indian.

FORTUNE'S FIFTY GREATEST LEADERS

- Fortune Magazine's '50 Greatest Leaders' issue is dedicated to "thinkers, speakers, and doers who are stepping up to meet today's challenges".
- Reliance Industries chairman **Mukesh Ambani**, human rights lawyer **Indira Jaising** and architect **Balkrishna Doshi** are among Fortune magazine's 'fifty greatest leaders' of 2018. The issue, which was released yesterday, featured the three Indians at the **24th, 20th and 43rd** places respectively.
- The **first rank** in this year's list has gone to "The Students" of **Marjory Stoneman Douglas** and other schools in the US that suffered from gun violence.

FORBES LIST OF WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE

- PM Modi has been ranked **9th** among the top 10 most powerful people in the world by Forbes.
- The list is topped for the **first time** ever by the Chinese President **Xi Jinping**,

8. Places in News

Name of the Place	News	Additional Information
INTERNATIONAL		

Swaziland	Renaming of Swaziland to 'Kingdom of eSwatini'	The new name, eSwatini, means "land of the Swazis". It was this name that the king used when he addressed the UN general assembly in 2017
Macedonia	The country will be renamed The Republic of North Macedonia".	Macedonia has signed a pact to change its name which would end a three-decade dispute with Greece. After the break-up of Yugoslavia in 1991, Greece's northern neighbour took the name Macedonia but Greece refused to accept it implying it had territorial claims over Greek province of Macedonia. Both Countries agreed to rename it as "The Republic of North Macedonia" which requires a referendum.
Bali	Mount Agung volcano erupted and began spewing volcanic ash and vapor higher than two kilometers (6,500 feet) into the air.	Indonesia is the world's most active volcanic region and lies on the Pacific "Ring of Fire".
New York	PM Modi inaugurated 'YO1 Nature Cure Center' in the Catskills area of New York on the occasion of 4th International Day of Yoga.	YO1, which means youthful in Sanskrit, is the first of its kind nature cure center in America located in Monticello in the scenic region of Catskills.
Point Nemo	Oceanic pole of inaccessibility	It is the watery graveyard for titanium fuel tanks and other high-tech space debris
NATIONAL		
Uttar Pradesh	Hindon Elevated Road-It's a 10.3 km longest elevated road in the country.	It will be connecting Raj Nagar Extension in Ghaziabad to UP Gate, shortening an hour-long journey to just 18 minutes.
Rajasthan	Rajasthan's First Mega Food Park-Greentech Mega Food Park Private Ltd	Mega Food Park includes cold storage, deep freezer, and dry warehouse for raw materials, silos, and steam generator.
Madhya Pradesh	Geographical Indication (GI) tag for Kadaknath	It is a black-feathered chicken known for its flavourful meat and found mainly in the tribal district of Jhabua.
Tamil Nadu	India's first insect mueum	The theme of the museum is "BUGS ARE KINGS"
Kerala	Jackfruit will be the "official fruit".	The jackfruit is the largest tree-borne fruit known for its distinctive taste and aroma.
Gujarat	National Academy of Coastal Policing	National Academy of Coastal Policing will be launched from a campus of Gujarat's Fisheries Research Centre located in coastal Okha in the newly created Devbhoomi Dwarka district. It will be India's first national academy to train police forces in effectively safeguarding the Indian shoreline will start

		functioning from the next month.
Andhra Pradesh	Largest petroglyph site at Kandyanathi	The site has nearly 200 engravings, peckings that belong to Mesolithic, Neolithic period. The petroglyph at Kandyanathi reveal the presence of the Boya community divided into groups - Mandla (herdsmen) and Yenubothula (buffalomen).
Telangana	Ban usage of single-use plastic in the offices	Use of plastic below 50 microns of thickness is already banned as per Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016. The government plans to make Hyderabad a single-use plastic-free city by 2022.
Punjab	Install dust collectors on nearly 50,000-grain cleaning machines.	The pollution is the main cause of respiratory and lung diseases among labourers, farmers, and commission agents, as well as those living in the vicinity of the grain markets.
Mizoram	Green Mizoram day-11 June	It is being organised every year on June 11 since 1999.
Odisha	Blast Furnace-1 ' Parvati ' of SAIL, Rourkela Steel Plant (RSP)	Parvati is the first Blast Furnace of SAIL that was dedicated to the nation on 3rd February 1959 by the first President of India, Dr Rajendra Prasad. The Blast Furnace was put down on 6th August 2013 for total rebuilding.
Tripura	Queen variety pineapple declared as state fruit.	-
Bengaluru	Indian Institute of Science (IISc)	Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru has made it to the top 100 universities in the Times Higher Education's World Reputation Rankings 2018. Ranked in the 91-100 band, it is the only Indian institution to make it to the prestigious list this year.
Manipur	First state in Northeast & the third state in India to have solar toilets.	The solar panel, connected to the toilets, absorb heat to generate power & are efficient to transform waste material. Besides Manipur, these toilets have been installed in Tamil Nadu & Andhra-Pradesh.
	Karang is the first cashless island of the country.	
Delhi	According to new United Nations estimates, Delhi is projected to become the most populous city in the world around 2028.	Tokyo is the world's largest city with an agglomeration of 37 million inhabitants, followed by New Delhi with 29 million, Shanghai with 26 million.
Guwahati	India's first railway station run by	The solar power plant will save Rs 67 lakh

	solar power.	worth of electricity.
West Bengal	Digambarpur Gram Panchayat bagged the Centre's award for the best Gram Panchayat in the country.	-
Mumbai	Victorian Gothic & Art Deco buildings have been declared as a World Heritage site by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO.	With this, Mumbai gets its 3rd such site - Elephanta Caves and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus are also on the UNESCO list.
Haryana	Village - Godikan has passed 'No toilet, no bride' resolution.	The resolution is aimed at ensuring the security of their daughters in addition to hygiene.
Surat	Awarded best city award under the Smart City Mission's award for implementation of projects in urban environment, transport and mobility and sustainable integrated development.	-
Ahmedabad & Bhopal	Declared winner under Smart City Mission's award for innovative idea award category.	-
Madhya Pradesh	Bhopal has been declared winner under Smart City Mission's award for innovative idea award category.	-
Gujarat	World's 1st International Humanitarian Forensics Centre was launched at Gandhinagar	It is a joint venture of International Committee of the Red Cross in India, Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives. The Centre will conduct various academic and professional programmes, training, research and provide technical expertise to support operations in the field of humanitarian forensics.
Jagatpur village in Delhi	Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has adopted it under its Swachhata Abhiyaan.	-
Nizamabad	The Union Commerce Ministry along with Telangana government would set up a special cell for turmeric in Nizamabad.	-
Bhopal	Country's biggest data centre with a capacity to host 5 lakh servers.	It will be set up by the National Informatics Centre and will be 5th National Data Centre (NDC) after Bhubaneswar, Delhi, Hyderabad & Pune.
Pune	Indira Gandhi National Open	In this programmes like primary and

	University (IGNOU) has started its own FM radio network Gyan Vani with the help of All India Radio (AIR).	secondary education, adult education, technical and vocational education, higher education is been broadcasted at 105.6 MHz.
Amaravati	Larsen & Toubro (L&T) has bagged a construction project to build govt office building at Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh. The office will be the tallest government office building in India.	-
Kochi	Kochi Metro Rail Limited (KMRL) will open India's first exquisite air-conditioned bed space dormitory. The fully air-conditioned rooms are equipped with locker facility, free WiFi, round-the-clock check-in and check-out facility and security cameras.	-
Balharshah & Chandrapur Railway Stations	Bagged the first prize in the "most beautiful" stations category of the Indian Railways	-
Bengaluru	India's first e-waste recycling unit. The e-waste recycling unit will be set up by the Central Institute of Plastics Engineering and Technology (CIPET).	-

9. Days and Events

IMPORTANT DAYS

Day	Date	Theme/Slogan	Special Features
World Population Day	11 July	Family Planning is a Human Right.	This year marks the 50th anniversary of the 1968 International Conference on Human Rights, where family planning was, for the first time, globally affirmed to be a human right.
International Day of Cooperatives.	7 July	'Sustainable societies through cooperation'	-
GST day	1 July	-	The government celebrated July 1, 2018, as 'GST Day' to mark the first anniversary of the new indirect tax regime.

National Statistics Day	29 June	Quality Assurance in Official Statistics.	Birth anniversary of Professor P. C. Mahalanobis
United Nations Ministry of Micro Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) day	27 June	-	Celebrated for the first time in 2017 by the Un general Assembly.
International Day against Drug Abuse	26 June	Listen First - Listening to children and youth is the first step to help them grow healthy and safe	First observed by the UN General Assembly in 1987
International Widows' Day	23 June	-	-
International Yoga Day	21 June	Yoga For Peace	-
World Refugee Day	20 June	-	First time celebrated in 2001. UNHCR hosts the events
World Blood Donor Day	14 June	Be there for someone else. Give blood. Share life.	-
World Day Against Child Labour	12 June	Generation Safe & Healthy.	First time in 2002 by ILO
World Ocean Day	8 June	-	Celebrated each year on 8 June since 2009
World Environment Day	5 June	Beat Plastic Pollution: If you can't reuse it, refuse it ".	India was the host country for 2018.
World Bicycle Day	3 June	-	The first official World Bicycle Day and approved on 12 April 2018 as an official United Nations day of awareness.
World No Tobacco Day (WNTD)	31 May	Tobacco and heart disease	-
International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers	29 May	UN Peacekeepers: 70 Years of Service & Sacrifice.	-
International Day for Biological Diversity	22 May	Celebrating 25 Years of Action for Biodiversity	Date commemorates the date of Adoption of the Agreed Text of the Convention on Biological Diversity at Nairobi on 22 May 1992.
Anti Terrorism Day	21 May	-	-
International Museum	18 May	Hyperconnected	-

Day		museums: New approaches, new publics	
World Hypertension Day	17 May	Know Your Numbers	First inaugurated in the year 2005
International Day of Living Together in Peace	16 May	-	-
International Day of Families	15 May	Families & inclusive societies	-
World Migratory Bird Day	Observed on the second weekend of the month of May	Unifying our Voices for Bird Conservation	-
International Nurses Day	12 May	'Nurses: A voice to lead - Health is a Human Right'	-
National Technology Day	11 May	-	The first National technology day was observed in 1999. India successful carried out the nuclear test at Pokhran in Rajasthan.
World Laughter Day	First Sunday of May of every year.	-	-
World Press Freedom Day	3 May	'Keeping Power in Check: Media, Justice and The Rule of Law' .	Anniversary of the 'Declaration of Windhoek'
World Asthma Day	1 May	'Never too early, never too late'	Organised by the Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA)
International Labour Day/ International Worker's Day/ May Day	1 May	-	-
Ayushman Bharat Diwas	30 April	-	First time celebrated in 2018
World Day for Safety and Health at Work	28 April	Occupational safety health (OSH) vulnerability of young workers	Observed by International Labour Organization (ILO) since 2003.
World Intellectual Property Day	26 April	Powering Change: Women in Innovation and Creativity.	Established by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 2000.
World Malaria Day	25 April	Ready to beat Malaria	Established in May 2007

National Panchayati Raj Day (National Local Self-Government day)	24 April	-	The first National Panchayati Raj Day was observed in 2010.
English Language Day	23 April	-	-
Road safety week 2018	23 rd to 30 th April	-	Organised by Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, India . To create awareness about various causes of road accidents & measures to prevent them will be highlighted through various activities
World Book and Copyright Day	23 April	READING, it's my right!	The World Book Capital for World Book and Copyright Day 2018 was the city of Athens, Greece.
World Earth Day	22 April	End Plastic Pollution	-
National Civil Services Day	21 April	-	On this date in 1947 that the first Home Minister of Independent India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel addressed probationers of Administrative Services Officers.
World Liver day	19 April	Riding New Waves in Liver Diagnosis, Staging & Treatment	-
World Heritage Day	18 April	Heritage for Generations emphasizing on inter-generational transfer of knowledge	-
World Haemophilia Day	17 April	Sharing knowledge	Started by the World Federation of Haemophilia
Ambedkar Jayanti	14 April	-	-
World Homoeopathy Day	10 April	Innovate: Evolve; Progress: Exploring Science since 40 years.	Commemorate the birth anniversary of the founder of Homoeopathy, Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann.
World Health Day	7 April	Universal health coverage: everyone, everywhere" and the slogan is "Health for All	-
National Maritime Day	5 April	'Indian Shipping - An Ocean of opportunity'.	Commemorate the maiden voyage of the first Indian owned ship "SS Loyalty" which

			sailed from Bombay to London in 1919.
International Day for Mines Awareness	4 April	Advancing Protection, Peace and Development	-
World Autism Day	2 April	'Empowering women and girls with autism	-
World Theatre Day	27 March	-	-
International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade	25 March	Remember Slavery: Triumphs and Struggles for Freedom and Equality'	-
World Tuberculosis Day	24 March	"Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free world".	-
World Water Day	22 March	Nature for Water	The first World Water Day, designated by the United Nations, was observed in the year 1993.
International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	21 march	Promoting tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity in the context of combating racial discrimination	-
International Day of Forests	21 March	"Forests and Sustainable Cities".	-
World Sparrow Day	20 March	I Love Sparrows	An international initiative by the Nature Forever Society of India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France).
World Happiness Day	20 March	"Share Happiness" - focusing on the importance of relationships, kindness and helping each other.	-
Global Recycling Day	18 march	-	The Bureau of International Recycling announced that its 70th anniversary, 18 March 2018, will be known as the first Global Recycling Day.
World Consumer Rights Day	15 March	Making Digital Marketplaces Fairer	-
Pi Day	14 March	-	It was first recognised by physicist Larry Shaw in 1988 to

			honour the mathematical constant.
International Women's Day	8 March	Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives.	-
World Wildlife Day	3 March	Big Cats	-

Earth Hour 2018 was observed on March 24, from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm. It is a worldwide movement organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). Earth Hour is a global campaign wherein non-essential lights are turned off at 8:30 PM on a specific day towards the end of March. The concept of the Earth Hour began in Australia in 2007, and it is now being observed by 187 countries.

EVENTS

Event	Venue	Theme/ Slogan	Special Features
Vibrant North East 2018	Guwahati	-	Disseminate information about the schemes, grants and projects of the Central government.
Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav 2018	Tehri, Uttarakhand	-	Organised by Ministry of Culture under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat.
Children's theatre festival	Kolkata	Safe Drive Save Life, Save Kids' Life.	Organised by the 'Kolkata Eso Natak Shikhi'
Festival of Bharat	Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), Delhi	-	-
First Ever International SME Convention	New Delhi	-	Specific focus on inclusion of MSMEs in Make in India program & empowering women entrepreneurs.
Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities Day	New Delhi	-	India is hosting the event along with Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt of Korea GITC is an annual event & has been held in Asia-Pacific countries like Korea & China in the past
105th Indian Science Congress	Manipur University, Imphal.	"Reaching the Unreached Through Science and Technology" .	Second time in over a century that the Indian Science Congress is being held in the North-East.
8th Theatre Olympics	Mumbai	Flag of Friendship.	The Mumbai chapter of the 8th Theatre Olympics is organised

			by the NSD in collaboration with the Directorate of Cultural Affairs, Maharashtra. The eighth edition of this global theatre festival is being held in 17 cities.
'Print Biennale India 2018'-the first International Exhibition of Graphic Prints	New Delhi	-	Hosted by Lalit Kala Academy
Annual Conference of International Competition Network 2018 (ICN2018)	India	-	It was for the first time that India hosted this conference

State	Day/Date	Theme/ Slogan	Special Features
Bihar	22nd March- Foundation Day	Centenary of Champaran Satyagraha and Elimination of Dowry and Child Marriage.	On 22nd March in 1912, the State was carved out of a United Bengal.
Manipur	23 April - Khongjom Day	-	In 1891, in an armed conflict fought between the Kingdom of Manipur and the British Empire, Manipur lost its sovereignty.

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

10. Art & Culture

EVENTS & FESTIVALS

Name of the Event/ Festival	Venue	Additional Features
International Buddhist Conference	Lumbini, Nepal	The conference aims to disseminate teachings of Buddha and spread the messages of nonviolence, brotherhood, co-existence, love and peace to the international community. Lumbini is the birthplace of Lord Buddha.
Sindhu Darshan Festival	Bank of Indus River in Ladakh region of J&K	The programme is focused on national integration, communal harmony, and national pride.
Shirui Lily State Festival	Ukhruil district headquarters, Manipur	Spread awareness and conserve the endangered state flower 'Shirui Lily', while also promote the hill district as a potential tourist destination. The campaign is organized by The Giving Tree and


		Hill Wild.
Bisket Jatra	Bhaktapur and other parts of Kathmandu valley.	The nine day annual festival marks beginning of Nepali new year. The Jatra begins four days before the start of new year.
ArchaeoBroma	Mumbai	First-ever national meet on "food as culture Organised by the India Study Centre Trust and the Centre for Extra-Mural Studies of the University of Mumbai.
Women of India Organic festival	Mumbai	Theme of the festival is "Good for Women; Good for India; Good for You".
National Legislator Conference	New Delhi	Bring MPs and MLAs on a single platform where ideas and plans for development can be exchanged. Theme 'We For Development'
Madhavpur Mela	Madhavpur Ghed of Porbandar district in Gujarat	In a unique initiative, the four-day-long Mela saw its first-ever cultural integration with the North-East with which it is said to share its roots. The Madhavpur Mela of Gujarat shares its connection with the Mishmi Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh.
Media & Entertainment Services Market – enTTech 2018	Mumbai	The event was organized by SEPC in association with MEAI and TVAGA and supported by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
Andhra Pradesh	International Yachting Festival	It is the first step in developing sea tourism in Visakhapatnam.
New Delhi	5th National Standards Conclave	It was organised by Department of commerce and Confederation of Indian Industry(CII). The theme of conclave was Implementing the Indian National Strategy for Standardization.

FESTIVALS OF INDIA

Losar Festival	Buddhist Community of Itanagar celebrated the silver jubilee of the Losar Festival. The festival was full of cultural presentations from across the state, including the colourful Bhutanese and the Gorkha Cultural programs. For the locals, Losar gives them a good harvesting year ahead. For the Buddhist community, the festival is termed as the 'New Year' according to their Buddhist calendar.
Assam	The festival was held at Manas

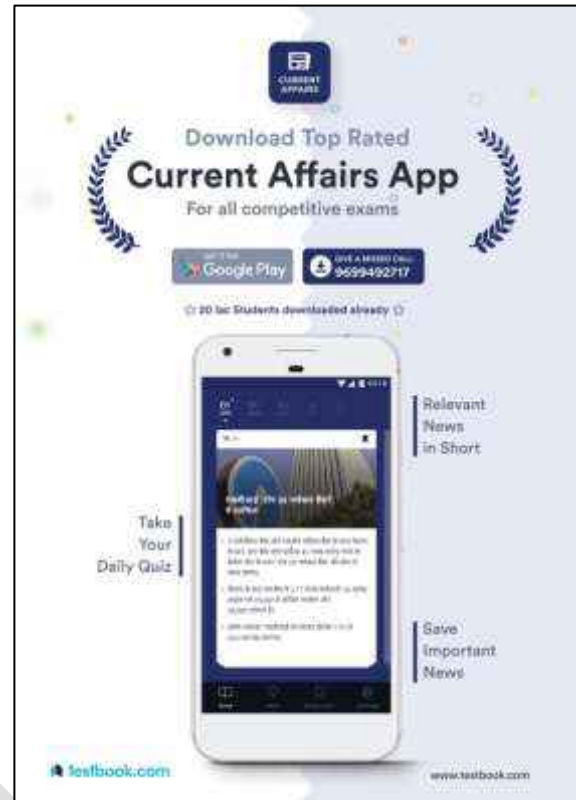
Spring Festival	National Park as visitors will get to experience the state's local food , music, handloom and handicrafts. The aim of the event is to promote the local food and culture of the fringe villagers.
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ART & CULTURE NEWS

-  Kerala tourism inaugurated the world's largest bird sculpture, Jatayu Earth's Centre in Kollam, Kerala. The replica of bird 'Jatayu', a character in the Ramayana is 65 feet tall & is positioned right at the top of a rock situated 1,000

feet above sea level.

- The not-for-profit organisation '**Indic Project**' has developed open source tools for **language digitisation**, that are being used by the central and state governments to provide regional language-related products and services.
- The **Manipur**-based indigenous '**Longpi Hampai pottery**' has started gaining prominence in the international markets owing to its intricate designs and technology used to produce them. The ancient art has originated from two **Longpi villages** in Manipur namely **Longpi Khullen and Longpi Kajui** near Ukhrul district. It is practised by **Tangkhul community** residing in the hill district of Manipur.
- '**Loving Vincent**' is the **world's first animated feature film** entirely **Painted by hand**. With 65,000 frames to be exact, all paintings are in the distinct style of **Dutch Post-Impressionist painter Vincent Van Gogh**. The film is based on a **probe into Van Gogh's untimely death**. Shot with a shoe-string budget of 5.5 million dollars, **Loving Vincent** was made with the help of 125 artists.
- The **world's longest sandstone cave** called '**Krem Puri**', which is 24,583 metres long has been discovered in Meghalaya. This underground cave is



more than 6,000 metres longer than the world record-holder, the '**Cueva Del Saman**' in **Edo Zulia, Venezuela**-a quartzite sandstone cave measuring 18,200 metre.

11. Defence

DEFENCE NEWS

News/ mandate	Additional Information
17 firing ranges have been approved for construction by the Defence Ministry at a cost of Rs. 238 crore in select military stations. Under the Southern Command, 7 ranges will be set, one in each Central and Southern Western Commands, 2 in Northern Command and 3 in Eastern Command.	60 firing ranges at present are operational across the country.
Commander Abhilash Tomy of the Indian Navy will be participating in the prestigious Golden Globe Race on the sailing vessel ' Thuriya '. The race commences from Les Sables d'Olonne harbour in France and the use of GPS, satellite communication, navigational aids, etc is forbidden in it.	
India is in the process of inducting the first batch of its intercontinental ballistic missile system - Agni-V into the elite Strategic Forces Command.	The missile system has a strike range of 5,000 km and is capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.
The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) opened a vital 35-	The bridge has been built under

meter bridge in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir that will ease vehicular movement to the base camp of Siachen Glacier, the world's highest battlefield.	Project HIMANK.
India and Seychelles signed six MoUs in areas of naval cooperation, cybersecurity, culture, development projects. India handed over a replica of Dornier Aircraft to President of Seychelles and also extended a line of credit worth 100 million USD for Seychelles.	
The 7 Garhwal Rifles Infantry Battalion Group was awarded the United Nations Medal for selfless service in the peacekeeping mission in Jonglei State, South Sudan.	
India's first indigenous, long- range artillery gun 'Dhanush' , reportedly called 'desi Bofors', successfully completed final user trials and is ready for induction into the Army. Dhanush is an upgraded version of the Swedish Bofors gun procured by India in the mid-1980s.	
To honour soldiers who have been disabled in line of duty, while serving the Nation and to celebrate the undying spirit of 'Soldiering', Indian Army is observing the year 2018 as the 'Year of Disabled Soldiers in Line of Duty' . A one-time financial assistance will be provided to the disabled soldiers.	
The US government approved a deal to sell six AH-64E Apache attack helicopters to India for \$930 million. It will also provide night vision sensors, control radars, Hellfire Longbow missiles and Stinger air-to-air missiles to India under the deal.	
The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved procurement of high powered radars for the Indian Air Force and air cushion vehicles for the Army and the Coast Guard together, worth over Rs. 5,500 crore indigenously under the 'Buy (Indian) IDDM' category .	
India has struck a Rs 40,000 crore deal with Russia, to procure S-400 Triumf air defence missile systems for the Indian Air Force. S-400 is Russia's most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile defence system.	
The Unmanned Aerial Vehicle- Rustom-II which is being developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), will be delivered to the armed forces by 2020. It can fly at around 280 km/h and carry a variety of payloads and will be used by all the three services of Indian Armed Forces.	
The World's longest S-500 surface-to-air missile test was conducted by Russia. This missile system is capable of destroying objects flying in space 62 miles above the Earth's surface , intercepting aircrafts, drones and hypersonic missile.	
India has set up a task force under the chairmanship of N. Chandrasekaran to finalise the specifics & framework to include Artificial Intelligence in its defence forces with an aim to enhance the operational preparedness of the armed forces.	
India successfully test-fired the Indo-Russian joint venture, BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from a test range along the Odisha coast. The missile was developed for the first time in India by DRDO and team BrahMos.	
The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), for the first time, has decided to include local representation in a special unit, numbered as 241 and named as 'Bastariya Battalion' in the Naxal-hit area of Bastar district in Chhattisgarh.	
The Aeronautical Development Agency has for the first time invited the private players in Tamil Nadu to build the Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft.	
The Border Roads Organisation (BRO) created history by establishing a road link to India's border with China beyond Limeking and along the Tama Chung Chung-Taksing Axis, covering a distance of approximately 80 kilometers.	

<p>A nine women Indian Army Women Officers team flagged off a Mountaineering Expedition to Mt. Bhagirathi-II. Mt. Bhagirathi-II is located in the Garhwal Himalayas in Gangotri National Park.</p>	
<p>The Army has finalised a mega ₹15,000-crore project under which a range of ammunition for its critical weapons and tanks will be produced indigenously. The project aims to create an inventory of all major weapons to enable the forces to fight a 30-day war.</p>	
<p>Indian Coast Guard vessel Vikram, the first in the class of seven new-generation offshore patrol vessels under the union government's 'Make in India' initiative, arrived at Mangaluru. It can carry a twin-engine light and heavy helicopters.</p>	
<p>The Indian Army tested the military concept of 'Air Cavalry' in Rajasthan, in this attack helicopters are fully integrated with tanks and mechanised ground forces. It was used by the US Army to locate and assault enemy ground forces during the Vietnam War.</p>	
<p>Indian Naval ship Sumedha, a Naval Offshore Patrol Vessel has been deployed to undertake joint EEZ surveillance of Maldives. It would interact & impart training to Maldives' National Defence Forces personnel. Joint EEZ surveillance is an endeavor of Govt of India & Indian Navy to ensure safety & security of the vast EEZ.</p>	
<p>India will station fighter airplanes in Andaman & Nicobar Islands to strengthen India's hold over the crucial Malacca, Sunda, and Lumbok Strait. This is the first time fighter airplanes will be positioned in Andaman and Nicobar islands since World War II.</p>	
<p>A restored Dakota aircraft has joined the Indian Air Force more than four decades after the fleet was phased out following an illustrious service record.</p>	<p>Dakota popularly known as Gooney Bird was the 1st major transport aircraft inducted in the Indian Air Force. Restored Dakota rechristened as Parashuram will join Vintage Fly of one each of Tiger Moth & Howard raised at Hindan air force station</p>
<p>The new Defence Planning Committee (DPC) met for the first time under the chairmanship of National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. The DPC will draft National Security Strategy (NSS) and other doctrines as well as ushering reforms in the country's higher defence management and planning. The Chief of Integrated Staff in the Ministry of Defence will be the member secretary of DPC.</p>	
<p>Militaries of India & China have agreed to set up a hotline between their headquarters after the informal summit between PM Modi & President Xi in Wuhan. India already has a hotline with Pakistan that was first used in 1991.</p>	
<p>India & China were among the 5 biggest military spenders which together accounted for 60% of the total global defence expenditure of \$1.739 trillion in 2017. The top five military spenders in 2017 were US, China, Saudi Arabia, Russia & India.</p>	
<p>National Disaster Management Authority conducted its first-ever Mock Exercise on Bio-Disasters at Lok Nayak Jayaprakash Airport in Patna. The exercise aimed at enhancing the preparedness of Airport Emergency Handlers to respond to CBRN emergencies at the airports. NDMA jointly with NDRF also conducted its first-ever full-scale Biological Management Emergency Exercise.</p>	
<p>The Defence Ministry approved military procurement worth Rs. 3,687 crore, which includes anti-tank guided missile NAG for the Army and long-range guns for the Navy. The DAC also approved the procurement of thirteen 127 mm calibre guns for the Navy.</p>	

<p>The Russian military successfully tested its intercontinental ballistic missile 'SARMAT' that can cross South Pole as well as the North Pole, the shortest route between Russia and US and can strike targets anywhere in the world. Sarmat is intended to replace the Soviet-designed Voyevoda, the world's heaviest ICBM known as 'Satan' in the West.</p>
<p>Defence Ministry has come out with a draft policy which envisages achieving a turnover of Rs 1.7 lakh crore in military goods & services by 2025. The policy aims to make India 1 of the top 5 manufacturers of defence platforms with participation of public & private sectors. Govt has identified 12 military platforms & weapons systems for production in India to achieve the aim of self-reliance.</p>
<p>INS Ganga, an indigenously built frigate of the Indian Navy, was decommissioned after over three decades of service. INS Ganga was a Godavari-class guided-missile frigate of the Indian Navy. The Godavari class was the first significant indigenous warship design and development initiative of the Indian Navy.</p>
<p>CISF launched its lost and found mobile app, UMANG for passengers at 59 airports across India. UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance), offers three facilities – lost and found items at airports, tracking complaints or request status and technical consultancy in security and fire services.</p>
<p>Russia is India's biggest arms seller followed by the US and Israel. India is the world's biggest importer of major arms.</p>
<p>The Indian Air Force (IAF) for first time flawlessly landed its largest transport US-manufactured aircraft, C-17 Globemaster at strategic Tuting Advanced landing ground in Arunachal Pradesh.</p>
<p>CISF has decided to offer security consultancy to 5-star hotels so that they can be prepared to deal with 26/11 type terror attacks.</p>
<p>India and France inked a strategic pact providing for the use of each other's military facilities including opening naval bases to warships. The agreement comes amid China's growing military expansionism in the Indo-Pacific region.</p>
<p>The Defence Ministry has started the process to set up the country's 1st defence industrial corridor connecting Chennai, Hosur, Coimbatore, Salem & Tiruchirappalli. It will promote industries manufacturing weapons and military equipment.</p>

JOINT MILITARY EXERCISES

Name of the exercise	Participating Countries/Organizations	Venue/Location	Special Highlights
Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC)- World's largest biennial multilateral naval		Hawaii in Western Pacific Ocean.	RIMPAC is known as the world's largest international maritime exercise. Four countries -- Brazil, Israel, Sri Lanka and Vietnam -- are participating in RIMPAC for the first time in 2018.
Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT)	India and Bangladesh	Chittagong, Bangladesh	First edition of bilateral navy exercise.
Malabar	India, US and Japan	Guam, Western Pacific Pacific	-

		Ocean.	
SURYA KIRAN	India and Nepal	Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand.	-
Prasthan	Navy, Coast Guard, Air Force, ONGC, Customs & Port Trust.	Western Offshore Development Offshore area in Mumbai	-
Gandiv Vijay	South Western Command's Chetak	Mahajan field, Rajasthan	-
Vijay Prahar	South Western Command	Suratgarh, Rajasthan	-
Balikatan	US and Philippines	Philippines	Annual military exercise
Harimau Shakti	India and Malaysia	Hulu Langat forest, Malaysia	-
Foal Eagle field exercise	South Korea and US	-	-
Varuna	India and France	Phase- I: Mormugao Port Trust (MPT), Vasco da Gama, Goa Phase -II: Chennai coast Phase-III: La Reunion Island	-
MILES	India, Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand.	Andaman sea	-
Samvedna	India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, UK and UAE	India	-
Juniper Cobra	US and Israel	Israel	-
Gulf Shield-1	23 countries including Gulf	Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia.	-

	Cooperation Council (GCC) member states	Organised by Ministry of Defence of Saudi Arabia.	
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12. Summit

NATIONAL SUMMITS

Event	Venue	Important Features
15th Asia Media Summit (AMS) 2018	New Delhi	Theme "Telling Our Stories – Asia and More". Hosted by Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. The AMS 2018, an annual summit of the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) Kuala Lumpur, is a prestigious summit in the Asia Pacific Region.
'Huddle Kerala'- Asia's largest startup ecosystem congregation	Kovalam	The initiative focused on emerging sectors like blockchain, cryptocurrency, IoT, VR among other latest technologies
National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement	New Delhi	The conference was organised by India's nodal drug law enforcement agency, Narcotics Control Bureau
First Apex Conference for the CEOs of Smart Cities	Bhopal	Provide a platform for cross-learning and knowledge sharing among the Smart City CEOs.
8th "3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) Regional Forum in Asia and the Pacific	Indore	The forum has provided a platform for addressing the needs and priorities of 3R in Asian countries and sharing best practices in waste management. The "Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific" was launched in 2009 in Tokyo, Japan.
106 th edition of the Indian Science Congress	Barkatullah University Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.	The theme for 2019 ISC will be "Future India: Science & Technology" . The first Women Science Congress was held in 2012.
International Solar Alliance (ISA) Summit	New Delhi	The ISA was initiated in 2015 and led by India and France aims to create solar projects in the Pacific nation.
ASEAN India Film Festival	New Delhi	The tagline of the Festival is proposed to be ' Friendship through Films '.

INTERNATIONAL SUMMITS/EVENTS

Summit/Event/Military Exercise	Venue	Special Highlights
World Ocean Summit	Mexico's Riviera	The summit is for business, government

	Maya	and environmental leaders to talk about the problems faced by the world's seas and to come up with solutions to protect the planet's vast ocean resources.
G20 meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank governors	Buenos Aires	First of five such meetings to be held before Argentina hosts the G20 Summit.
First SCO tourism ministerial meeting	Wuhan, China.	The meeting approved an action plan that will serve as a guideline for tourism cooperation between SCO member states from 2019 to 2020.
2018 World Robot Conference	Beijing, China	
2018 Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical & Economic Cooperation summit.	Nepal	BIMSTEC is an international organisation of 7 nations of South & South East Asia, including Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan & Nepal.
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation summit 2018	Qingdao, eastern Shandong Province	The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit concluded with the adoption of the Qingdao declaration, which calls for implementing the three-year plan to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism.
11th World Hindi Conference	Mauritius	The World Hindi Conference is a major event organised every three years by the External Affairs Ministry. The World Hindi Secretariat (WHS) supported by India is located in Mauritius.
Shanghai Cooperation Organisation-Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure Legal Experts meeting	Pakistan	India will attend the meeting. Pakistan will be hosting its first SCO meeting, since the country along with India became a member of the organisation in June 2017. Experts will discuss the terror threat faced by the region & ways to enhance counter-terror efforts.
World's first female foreign ministers' meeting	Canada and the European Union	Female foreign ministers from about 30 countries will be invited to the gathering, which is aimed at deepening global discussion on women's empowerment.
First edition of Global Wind Summit	Hamburg, Germany	The event will provide a platform for experts from across the globe to discuss innovative and green technologies for harnessing wind energy making.
44 African countries have signed an agreement establishing the "African Continental Free Trade Area" at a summit of the African Union in Kigali, Rwanda. The summit was a step forward for the African Union's 2063 project for closer African integration. If successful, it will be the biggest trade agreement since the formation of the World Trade Organization in 1995.		

13. Environment

NEWS RELATED TO FAUNA (ANIMAL KINGDOM)

- Only **13% of the tiger conservation areas** met the global standards of an accreditation system, the Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) conducted at **112 sites located in 11 tiger-range countries**, including India.
- CA|TS is a **new conservation tool** to set **minimum standards** for effective management of target species and to encourage assessment of these standards.
- The **Chilika lake in Odisha** has emerged as the **single largest habitat of Irrawaddy dolphins** in the world with **155 dolphins**. The finding is based on the preliminary report of the **first ever 'Annual Monitoring' of the lake**, conducted by the CDA to count the number of the dolphins and to study the hydrological impacts of removal of pen culture (locally known as gherries).
- Scientists from the Botanical Survey of India have identified a new plant species from two protected National Parks in West Bengal and named it **Drypetes kalamii**, after former **President Abdul Kalam**.
- An international team of scientists after creating a DNA map of the elephant family, have confirmed there are three species of modern elephant, apart from the commonly known African and Asian elephants. **African savannah** was listed a new species distinct from **African forest elephants**.
- The headquarters of the **Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI)** has been shifted from **Chennai to Haryana's Ballabhgarh** for "better coordination" between the environment ministry and the board.
- "Mega-colonies" of over **15 lakh Adélie penguins** have been discovered on Danger Islands near the Antarctic peninsula. Prompted by satellite images, scientists mounted on an expedition and used on-the-ground counts and drones to reveal **7,51,527 pairs of penguins**.
- Scientists have identified ancient reptiles dating back to **289 million years ago** that could detach their tails to escape the grasp of their predators. The reptiles, called **Captorhinus**, weighed less than two kilograms and were smaller than the predators of the time.
- Captorhinus** are small **omnivores and herbivores**, and its relatives had to scrounge for food while avoiding being preyed upon.
- Scientists from the **Zoological Survey of India** have discovered a new species of the water strider. The species, named **Ptilomera nagalanda Jehamalar and Chandra**, was found in the river Intanki in Peren district of Nagaland.
- A new freshwater fish species, locally known as **'Ngakha macha'** have been identified in the **north-eastern state of Manipur**. The new fish species, "Pethia poiensis", was found by a research team of **Manipur University's life sciences** department and a researcher from the Zoological Survey of India in the Challou River in Manipur.
- Sudan**, the **world's last male northern white rhino** died after living for nearly a decade in a 700-acre enclosure at **the Ol Pejeta Conservancy**, against the backdrop of the hulking Mount Kenya. Armed guards protected him 24 hours a day because he belonged to a subspecies on the verge of extinction from poachers.
- In Assam, the **rhino census** at the world heritage site **Kaziranga National Park** was conducted. The census is carried out every three years. As per the last census, **2401 rhinos** were found at the Kaziranga National Park conducted in 2015.
- Scientists have discovered a giant mosquito from the **'Holorusia mikado'** species with a wingspan of **11.15 cm** in **China**. First found in Japan, the Holorusia mikado species normally has a wingspan

of about 8 cm.

- In the highland plateaus of the **Western Ghats parts of Goa**, scientists have identified a new species of **frog** called '**Fejervarya goemchi**'. The new species is named after the **historical name of the state of Goa** where the species is discovered.
- The **Punjab government** along with WWF-India conducted the **first organised census** of **Indus dolphins** - **one of the world's rarest mammals**. Found only in India and Pakistan, the Indus dolphins are confined to only a 185 km stretch between Talwara and Harike **Barrage in India's Beas river in Punjab**.
- In the **first inter-state translocation of tigers project**, a female cub was shifted from **Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, MP to Satkosia Tiger Reserve, Odisha**. India has a population of 3891 tigers, according to 2016 census. The ambitious project is conceived by the Ministry of Environment, National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Institute of India to boost tiger population.

NEWS RELATED TO FLORA (PLANT KINGDOM)

- According to the **Forest Survey of India**, the forest cover has increased by **6,778 sq km** in the country during the last two years. The total forest and tree cover in India is **8,02,088 sq km**, which is **24.39% of the country's geographical area**.
- Indian researchers have discovered the **world's smallest land fern**- '**Ophioglossum malviae**', which is just one centimetre. It was found in the **Ahwa forests of the Western Ghats in Gujarat's Dang district**.
- Scientists have discovered what may be the **world's oldest recorded spider** - a 43-year-old arachnid in Australia. The **Giaus Villosus trapdoor matriarch**, had outlived the previous world record holder, a 28-year old tarantula found in Mexico.
- According to the report published by the Woods Hole Research Center, a think tank based in Massachusetts, USA, **India** has ranked ninth in the area of mangrove forests it lost between 2000 and 2015, but the rate of loss is only half the global average. While **Malaysia, Myanmar, Brazil, and Thailand** were other countries to lose maximum cover during the period of study.
- According to 'Status of Environment Report, India 2015', India's forest cover stood at 21.34% in 2015, an increase of 1.29 percent from 2009. **Mizoram** with 89% has the **highest forest cover** among the states and Union territories in the country. **Assam's** forest cover at 35% was the **lowest**.
- 539 new species of plants and animals were discovered by scientists in the country in 2017, say publications from ZSI and BSI. Animal Discoveries, 2017 lists 300 new species of fauna. Plant Discoveries, 2017 lists 239 new flora species. Besides these discoveries, the biodiversity in the country recorded another 263 species with 174 new records of animals and 89 of plants found.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS-NATIONAL

- **Maharashtra** banned the use of plastic from "Gudi Padva", the Maharashtra New Year, which is on 18 march, this year. The plastic used to cover medicines, forest and horticulture products, the use of plastic in special economic zones for export purposes are exempted from the ban.
- The **Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)** will set up **India's first offshore wind turbines** at **Arichamunai near Dhanushkodi** in Tamil Nadu.
- **Surat** has become the **first district** in the country to have 100 percent solar powered **Primary Health Centers (PHC)**.
- With an aim to combat the rising levels of air pollution in Delhi-NCR region, **New Delhi** is the **first city in the country** to switch from **BS-IV grade fuels** to BS-VI. The major difference in standards between the existing BS-IV and the new BS-VI auto fuel norms is the presence of sulphur.
- The **Haryana government** has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the **Indian Oil Corporation** for setting up a

biomethenation plant in Faridabad. The plant will produce cooking gas and compost from organic waste.

- **India** is tying up with the **United States and Finland** to develop a pollution-forecast system. The system will help anticipate particulate matter (PM) levels at least two days in advance and at a greater resolution than what is possible now.
- **Delhi and Varanasi** are among the 14 Indian cities that figured in a list of 20 most polluted cities in the world in terms of **PM 2.5 levels** in 2016, according to the data released by the WHO. Other Indian cities were Kanpur, Faridabad, Gaya, Patna, Agra, Muzaffarpur, Srinagar, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Patiala and Jodhpur. PM 2.5 includes pollutants like sulfate, nitrate and black carbon
- Govt has set up a central body - **National Water Informatics Centre** to maintain a comprehensive water resources data.
- **Green Good Deeds**, the societal movement launched by Union Minister for Environment, Dr Harsh Vardhan has found acceptance by the global community and the BRICS Ministerial meeting on **Environment will include "Green Good Deeds" in its official agenda in the next Ministerial in Brazil**. The movement aims to protect the environment and promote good living in the country.
- The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services has developed a model to predict how far sea water would travel. This would be a Level-3 alert under India's Tsunami Early Warning System
- The **BCCI and UN Environment** have signed an agreement to promote '**green Cricket**' in India. The partnership aims to spread greater awareness about key environmental challenges facing the country, and highlight alternate and more sustainable solutions, phasing out single-use plastic across stadiums in the country.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change and the Wildlife Trust of India rolled out the '**Gaj Yatra**' from **Tura, Meghalaya**. to raise awareness about the shrinking space for India's wild

elephants & the importance of securing elephant corridors.

- A '**Taj Declaration to Beat Plastic Pollution**' was adopted. Efforts would be made to make the 500-metre area around the 17th-century monument litter-free.
- According to a **World Bank** study titled "**South Asia's Hotspots**", **Maharashtra is among the states where people's standards of living are most vulnerable to climate change**. The study projects that India could shave off 2.8% of GDP by 2050 if greenhouse gas emissions continue unmitigated. Many districts will see 9% - 11% decline in standards of living with Chandrapur district topping at 12.4%.
- **BHEL** has inked a pact with **South Korean firm NANO Co Ltd** for design and manufacture emission control devices.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS-INTERNATIONAL

- The '**Brazzaville Declaration**' was signed
- by the **Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo and Indonesia** to protect the peatland ecosystems of Congo basin. The equivalent of three years of global **greenhouse gas emissions** is stored in the Congo peatlands.
- '**Aletta**' - the first named tropical storm of the east Pacific hurricane season formed off the coast of Mexico, is expected to build to hurricane strength early. It had maximum sustained winds of 45 mph (75 kph) and was moving west at 8 mph (13 kph).

14. Science and Technology

News/Mandate	Additional Information
NATIONAL	
The Bandicoot Robot, developed by a start-up in Kerala, GenRobotics, is a semi-automatic robotic system for manhole and sewer line cleaning. Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM), a start-up incubator under the Kerala government, funded the project proposed by GenRobotics to find a solution for manual scavenging.	Kerala will become the first state in India to be manual scavenging-free.
A cloned Assamese buffalo male calf, Sach-Gaurav, born for the first time at Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes in Hisar. The calf was born to a Murrah buffalo. It was also the first to be born in the field, 100 km from the cloning laboratory at Hi-Tech Sach Dairy Farm. This was the second cloned male buffalo after Hisar-Gaurav.	Assamese buffaloes are found in north-east India.
Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) has undertaken the development of a coded drug AYUSH QOL-2C for cancer patients. The clinical studies were conducted at St. John's Medical College, Bengaluru and AIIMS, New Delhi in breast cancer patients.	=
Manipur forest and environment minister, Thounaojam	Keibul Lamjao National Park, the only floating

Singh launched a floating research laboratory of Institute of Bio-Resources and Sustainable Development at Sendra.	park in the world, is located in the lake.
Tech giant Microsoft has inked its first renewable energy deal in India for powering its new facility in Bengaluru. The agreement will see Microsoft purchase 3 megawatts of solar-powered electricity from Atria Power for its new office building in Bengaluru.	The project will bring Microsoft's total global direct procurement in renewable energy projects to nearly 900 megawatts.
An instrument to measure traces of uranium in water has been developed by a unit of the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE). The instrument, "Fluorimeter", has been developed by the Raja Ramanna Centre for Advanced Technology (RRCAT), an Indore-based unit of the DAE.	It will be helpful in areas like Punjab where uranium traces in water sources have been found to be at dangerous levels.
INTERNATIONAL	
Scientists have discovered a tiny fossil of a prehistoric baby bird, which can help them understand how early avians came into the world in the age of dinosaurs. The fossil, which dates back to the Mesozoic Era (250-65 million years ago), is a chick from a group of prehistoric birds called Enantiornithes. It is according to researchers at the University of Manchester in the UK.	
Russia and China have agreed to set up a joint data centre for lunar and deep space projects.	
A team of astronomers including an Indian graduate student Nivedita Mahesh from Arizona State University	The universe was formed in the Big Bang event 13.8 billion years.

<p>have discovered for the first time signals from "cosmic dawn" - the moment when the universe's earliest stars emerged. This is a significant breakthrough in our understanding of the evolution of cosmos.</p>			<p>temperatures — as long as the pressure is high enough, ice-VII can form at room temperature.</p>
<p>Indian startup 'Uruvu' that has developed a technology to create water from the air is among the 5 finalists in a global competition. The 2-year competition is to create a device that extracts a minimum of 2,000 litres of water per day from using air by 100% renewable energy.</p>	-	<p>The scientists have confirmed the existence of 15 new planets - including one 'Super-Earth' that could harbour liquid water - orbiting small, cool stars near our solar system. These stars, known as red dwarfs, are of enormous interest for studies of planetary formation and evolution.</p>	
<p>A UK-based genomics data platform and an American genetics company collaborated to create the world's largest project to study Indian population. The genomic data will help understand Indian genes and find therapies for rare diseases. Genomic data generated will be paired with de-identified medical records from patients to examine links between human genetic variations and diseases.</p>	-	<p>Russia test-launched a hypersonic missile from a Mig-31 supersonic interceptor jet that took off from an airfield. The hypersonic missile has been described as "Kinzhal missile" - named after a type of dagger - as "an ideal weapon".</p>	<p>Geologists have discovered a mineral known as calcium silicate perovskite (CaSiO₃) trapped inside a tiny diamond that was mined from less than a kilometre of the earth's surface at the Cullinan Mine in South Africa.</p>
<p>Scientists have found the first-ever samples of naturally occurring ice-VII on Earth. The samples were found in a diamond.</p>	<p>Ice-VII is unique in that it remains stable even as pressure increases dramatically. It's 1.5 times more dense than normal ice. The formation of ice-VII doesn't require freezing</p>	<p>China's heavy-lift "Long March-5B carrier rocket", which is capable of carrying a payload of 25,000 kg in low earth orbit, will be launched into space in 2019. It will help carry the core module and experimental modules to China's space station. The carrier rocket will undergo testing this month in preparation for the first launch mission.</p>	<p>Washington State has signed a law that bars service providers from blocking websites or offering fast lane net access to companies willing to pay. Net neutrality is the principle that all internet traffic should be treated equally.</p>
		<p>The cybersecurity agencies have detected a new malware called Saposi, which is capable of taking over electronic devices and turning them into bots.</p>	<p>Scientists have detected the most distant star, Icarus, ever viewed, located more than halfway across the universe. The star was formally named MACS J1149+2223 Lensed Star-1. Scientists used NASA's Hubble Space Telescope to spot the star.</p>

<p>Scientists have discovered a hot, metallic, Earth-sized planet-"K2-229b"- orbiting a dwarf star located 339 light-years away. The planet is almost 20% larger than Earth but has a mass which is over two-and-a-half times greater. K2-229b is also the innermost planet in a system of at least three planets, though all three orbit much closer to their star than Mercury.</p>
<p>Blue Origin, the US aerospace company owned by Amazon founder Jeff Bezos, has launched its suborbital 'New Shepard' rocket and space capsule. The mission marked the company's first test flight of the year and second flight of the New Shepard 2.0 spacecraft. New Shepard is a reusable vertical takeoff, vertical landing space vehicle, consisting of a pressurized capsule atop a booster.</p>
<p>A team of scientists at Northwestern University, USA, led by an Indian, has developed an electronic device that can mimic the human brain. This device named "memtransistor" combines the functions of a memristor and a "transistor". The memtransistor has tremendous potential in Artificial Intelligence (AI), which requires unprecedented analytical and computational capabilities.</p>
<p>South Africa has unveiled the 64-dish MeerKAT radio telescope, slated to be the world's largest and most powerful telescope on its completion in 2030.</p>
<p>New Zealand scientists have performed the first-ever 3-D, colour X-ray on a human. The device is based on the traditional X-ray but incorporates particle-tracking technology developed for CERN's Large Hadron Collider. This colour X-ray imaging will produce more accurate pictures & help doctors give their patients more accurate diagnoses.</p>
<p>Pakistan has launched 2 indigenously built satellites into the orbit from Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in China. One of the satellites launched is PRSS-1, a remote sensing satellite that will enable Pakistan to meet its imagery requirements in areas of land mapping & agriculture classification among others. It is the 2nd time both China & Pakistan have collaborated in the space sector.</p>

SCIENCE	
<p>Hetero Healthcare Ltd. launched generic anti-retroviral fixed-dose combination of 'Emtricitabine & Tenofovir Alafenamide in India. The medication is indicated in combination with other anti-retroviral agents for the treatment of HIV-1 infection in adults and pediatric patients 12 years of age & older.</p>	<p>The product will be marketed and distributed under the brand name 'TAFERO-EM'.</p>
<p>Scientists have identified a new organ "interstitium" in the human body, which could help in understanding the spread of cancer within the body. "Interstitium" is a series of fluid-filled compartments, found beneath the skin, as well as lining of gut, lungs, blood vessels and muscles. These compartments join together to form a network supported by a mesh of strong, flexible proteins.</p>	-
ISRO	
<p>The launch of India's second lunar mission 'Chandrayaan-2' has been postponed from April to October 2018 as the experts have suggested some tests.</p>	<p>Chandrayaan-2, a totally indigenous mission costing about Rs.800 crore, would orbit around the moon.</p>
<p>NASA's Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) has launched on the first-of-its-kind mission to find worlds beyond the solar system . It will operate as a kind of exoplanet surveillance camera, making its journey around Earth every 13.7 days.</p>	
<p>Using NASA's Hubble and Spitzer space</p>	

<p>telescopes, astronomers have found evidence of water in the atmosphere of WASP-39b, exoplanet some 700 light-years away.</p>	<p>of NASA's Hubble Space Telescope and other science missions. The observatory will solve mysteries of our solar system, according to NASA.</p>
<p>NASA launched another of the world's most advanced weather satellite, GOES-S. It is the second satellite in an approx. \$11 bn effort that's already revolutionising forecasting with astonishingly fast, crisp images of hurricanes, wildfires, floods, mudslides and other natural calamities.</p>	<p>NASA is gearing up for the upcoming launch of its Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment Follow-On (GRACE-FO) mission. The mission will map changes in water and ice around the world by detecting variations in Earth's gravity & it involves 2 identical spacecraft that will orbit the Earth. The mission is a joint project between NASA and the GFZ German Research Center for Geosciences, Germany.</p>
<p>NASA will build spacecraft named Hammer (Hypervelocity Asteroid Mitigation Mission for Emergency Response), which is an eight-tonne spaceship which could deflect a giant space rock.</p>	<p>NASA is gearing up for the upcoming launch of its Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment Follow-On (GRACE-FO) mission. The mission will map changes in water and ice around the world by detecting variations in Earth's gravity & it involves 2 identical spacecraft that will orbit the Earth. The mission is a joint project between NASA and the GFZ German Research Center for Geosciences, Germany.</p>
<p>NASA's James Webb Space Telescope will get into interstellar reservoirs to know about the origin and evolution of water and key building blocks for habitable planets. This will help the scientists to know the conditions required for formation of the new habitable planets. Molecular clouds hold most of the water in the universe and serve as nurseries for newborn stars and their planets.</p>	<p>NASA has blasted off its newest planet-hunting spacecraft 'TESS' that aims to scan 85% of the skies for cosmic bodies where life may exist. TESS is expected to reveal 20,000 planets beyond our solar system, including more than 50 Earth-sized planets & up to 500 planets less than twice the size of Earth.</p>
<p>NASA is set to develop an 'X-plane' designed to fly faster than the speed of sound without producing the noise typical of supersonic flights.</p>	<p>NASA is conducting a study of the world's largest phytoplankton bloom in the North Atlantic to see how the tiny sea creatures influence the climate in every season. The name of the mission is The North Atlantic Aerosols and Marine Ecosystems Study (NAAMES). NAAMES will study how phytoplanktons give rise to small organic particles that leave the ocean and end up in the atmosphere.</p>
<p>The Advanced Supersonic Parachute Inflation Research Experiment (ASPIRE) was launched from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility in the US. The test was meant to mimic the conditions that a spacecraft would experience during Mars entry, descent and landing.</p>	<p>NASA's Parker Solar Probe — humanity's first mission to the Sun — is scheduled for launch on July 31, 2018. Parker Solar will orbit directly through the solar atmosphere - the corona - closer to the surface than any human-made object has ever gone.</p>
<p>NASA is all set to send the first-ever mission dedicated to explore the deep interior of Mars. InSight or the Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport mission, carries sensitive instruments to gather data. InSight aims to be the first NASA spacecraft to land on Mars since the Curiosity rover in 2012.</p>	<p>The Kepler Space Telescope, which is a famous planet-hunting telescope of NASA has been put to sleep since it is almost out of fuel.</p>
<p>NASA has delayed the launch of its much awaited, \$8 billion James Webb Space Telescope — set to be the world's biggest space observatory — until at least May 2020. The James Webb Space Telescope will be complementing the scientific discoveries</p>	

The telescope was launched by NASA in 2009 to learn more about the frequency and number of planets in our galaxy.

15. Committees and Recommendations

Head of the Committee/Panel	Mandates
Murali Manohar Joshi	Study the recovery of black money & performance of public sector banks
Committee will have representatives from Home Ministry, CISF, Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, IB & few other cargo handling agencies.	Ways to improve security at airport cargo terminals in the country against terror threats. Use of existing financial resources & to incentivise state governments' efforts towards fulfillment of well-defined health parameters in the country.
Randeep Guleria- AIIMS Director	Explore and give recommendations for a balanced expansion of the health sector.
Narendra Modi	Spread Mahatma Gandhi's legacy ' among the people at national & international level.
Sunil Mehta	Recommendations on formation of an Asset Reconstruction Company & Faster resolution of stressed accounts.
Suresh Mathur	Review the regulations

	pertaining to insurance marketing firms. Increasing insurance penetration in the country through an area-wise registration approach.
E Sreedharan, also known as 'Metro Man'	Lay down standards for metro rail systems in India.



Narendra Kumar Sinha, the I&B Secretary	Frame rules to regulate news portals and media websites
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16. Books and Authors

Name of the Author/Editor	Book/Magazine	Additional Information
Shri Tarun Vijay	Namaste Shalom	A magazine devoted to India-Israel relations.
Arvind Mohan	'Mister M K Gandhi Ki Champaran Diary'	Based on Mahatma Gandhi's Champaran movement of 1917.
Ashutosh Partheshwar	'Champaran Andolan 1917'	
Shrikant	Pir Muhammad Munis: Kalam Ka Satyagrahi'.	
C H. Hanumantha Rao.	'My Journey from Marxism-Leninism to Nehruvian Socialism' .	-
Lt Gen Gyan Bhushan	'Across the Bench - Insight into the Indian Military Judicial System'.	The book deals with military judicial system vis-a-vis command & management issues within the military establishments.
NABARD	'Water productivity mapping of major Indian crops'	The book is based on a study of 10 important crops including rice, wheat, maize, pulses, oilseeds, sugarcane, cotton and potato etc. The book suggests to realign cropping pattern keeping in view water scarcity of irrigation.
Acharya Agnivarat Naishthik.	"Vedvigyan Alok" (Maharishi Aitareya Mahidas Praneet - Aitareya Brahmina ki Vaigyanik Vyakhya)	-
Bikram Grewal	'The Great Indian Nature Trail with Uncle Bikky'	WWF- India's first -ever nature-themed comic book.
Paramveer Parwane	Dr Prabhakaran Jain	-
J K Rowling	Lethal White	The three previous Strike novels are "The Cuckoo's Calling" (2013), "The Silkworm" (2014) and "Career of Evil"(2015).