

February Current Affairs

Appointments

1. A.K.Prasad has been appointed as new Financial Commissioner (Railways).
2. Abdul Hamid has been re-elected as President of Bangladesh for 2nd term. Additionally, Bangladesh former Prime Minister Khaleda Zia was jailed for 5 years, after being found guilty in a corruption case.
3. Abhilasha Kumari is appointed as Chief Justice of Manipur High Court.
4. Anil Chauhan took charge as Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of Indian Army, succeeding A K Bhatt.
5. Antony Dominic is appointed as Chief Justice of Kerala.
6. Arvind P. Jamkhedkar is appointed as New Chairman of Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR).
7. B A Chopade has been appointed as the vice-chancellor of Banaras Hindu University (BHU).
8. Cyril Ramaphosa of African National Congress (ANC) has been appointed as new President of South Africa. He was elected after previous Prez Jacob Zuma was forced to resign recently.
9. Dinesh Srivastava has been appointed as Chief Executive Officer of Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC).
10. Google's Parent Company Alphabet appointed John L. Hennessy as new board chairman of company, replacing Eric Schmidt.
11. Hardayal Prasad is appointed as Managing Director (MD) & Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of India's second largest credit card issuer *SBI Card*.
12. Infosys cofounder AND former Chairman of UIDAI, Nandan Nilekani has been entrusted by Government for developing IT infrastructure for National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS).
 - NHPS aims to offer medical cover for up to Rs 5 lakh to more than 10 crore poor families, covering up to 40 % of India's population.
 - In 2018-2019 budget, initial corpus of Rs 2,000 crore has been allocated for NHPS.
 - Premium on insurance cover of Rs 5 lakh under NHPS has been decided at Rs 900-1,000 per family annually.
 - Central government will contribute 60 % fund, and remaining will be provided by states (90 % central share for special category states).
13. Japan's government reappointed Bank of Japan Governor Haruhiko Kuroda for another term.
14. Jnanpith recipient and Kannada litterateur Chandrashekhara Kambar is elected as President of Sahitya Akademi. Hindi poet Madhav Kaushik was elected as vice president of the Sahitya Akademi.
15. KP Sharma Oli has become Prime Minister of Nepal for his second term, after Sher Bahadur Deuba resigned as PM.
16. KS Dwivedi has been appointed as new Director General of Police (DGP) of Bihar.
17. Michael McCormack has been elected as new Deputy Prime Minister of Australia.
18. Misc. Recent Govt. Appointments -
 - Vinod Kumar Jain - Tezpur University (Assam).
 - Debashish Mukherjee - Executive director in Canara Bank
 - Murali Ramaswami - Executive director in Vijaya Bank
 - Rahul Mahajan - editor-in-chief of television channel Rajya Sabha TV.
19. Mountaineer Samina Baig is appointed National Goodwill Ambassador for Pakistan by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
20. Mukul Asthana is been appointed as Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Air). Also, Philipose George Pynumootil is appointed as Flag Officer Naval Aviation (FONA) and RB pandit appointed as Commandant of Indian Naval Academy Ezhimala (Kerala).
21. Murugappa Group appointed M.M. Murugappan as its executive chairman.
22. NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant has been given extension till 30th June 2019. He was appointed on 17th February 2016 for a twoyear term.
23. Naba Kumar Nayak has been appointed as the State Election Commissioner in Odisha.
24. National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) appointed Biswamohan Mahapatra as non-executive chairman for 2 years.
25. Neelam Kapoor has been appointed as Director General (DG) of Sports Authority of India (SAI).
26. New Brand Ambassadors (Feb 2018) -
 - Bata's new sport wears brand *Power* - Indian female cricketer Smriti Mandhana.
 - All India Chess Federation for the Blind (AICFB) - Grand Master Vidit Gujrathi.

- Muthoot Group - Actor Amitabh Bachchan.
- First T20 Mumbai League - Sachin Tendulkar.
- Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) - Shoaib Akhtar.

27. New Indian Ambassadors (Feb 2018) -

- Ashok Das - Brazil
- Pradeep Kumar Rawat - Timor-Leste.
- Thanglura Darlong - Romania.
- M. Subbarayudu - Bolivia.

28. Nicos Anastasiades won re-election for a second term as President of Mediterranean Nation Cyprus.

29. PepsiCo Chairman and CEO Indra Nooyi is appointed as International Cricket Council's (ICC) first-ever independent female director.

30. Rakesh Singh has been appointed as private banking head of HDFC Bank.

31. Sudhir Tripathi has been made appointed as new chief secretary of Jharkhand.

32. Syed Mahmud Hossain has been appointed as new Chief Justice of Neighboring Nation Bangladesh.

Awards

1. 71st British Academy Film Awards -

- The Shape of Water received max Nominations (12), while Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri received most awards (5)

- Best Film - Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri (Also named *Best British Film*)
- Best Director - Guillermo del Toro (for *The Shape of Water*)
- Best Actor in a Leading Role - Gary Oldman (for *Darkest Hour*)
- Best Actress in a Leading Role - Frances McDormand (for *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*)
- Best Actor in a Supporting Role - Sam Rockwell (for *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*)
- Best Actress in a Supporting Role - Allison Janney (for *I, Tonya*)
- Best Documentary - I Am Not Your Negro
- Best Original Music - Alexandre Desplat (for *The Shape of Water*)
- Best Non English Film - The Handmaiden (South Korea)
- Best Animated Film - Coco
- Best Short Film - Cowboy Dave
- EE Rising Star Award - Daniel Kaluuya

2. Filmmaker Ramesh Sippy will be awarded first *Raj Kapoor Award for Excellence in Cinema*, instituted by Asian Centre for Entertainment Education (ACEE) and other International Organizations. Ramesh Sippy will be presented with this honour at *Elevate 2K18* in Mumbai.

3. Former Liberian president Ellen Johnson Sirleaf won Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership, which is awarded to a democratically-elected outstanding African leader who served their stipulated term and finished their term within last 3 years. She is first female leader to receive this award.

4. Indian engineer Vikas Sathaye has been honoured with Scientific and Engineering Academy Award at Oscars Scientific and Technical Awards 2018 in Los Angeles (USA), for his contribution towards conceptualisation, design and implementation of *Shotover K1 Camera System* during his stint at Shotover Camera Systems in New Zealand.

5. Indian princess Sophia Alexandra Duleep Singh honoured with a Royal Mail stamp of the UK to mark centenary of suffragette movement.

- Sophia, daughter of Maharaja Duleep Singh, is only woman to have 1 of 8 stamps to herself. Image on stamp shows her selling copies of a Suffragette newspaper in 1913.

6. Industrial Awards in Feb 2018 -

- Reliance Industries (RIL) is awarded Golden Peacock Award 2017 for corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives.
- Tata Steel named *most ethical company* in 2018 by Ethisphere Institute, for 6th time in *Metals, Minerals and Mining* category.
- Morning Grocery Delivery Service Milkbasket is named as *Startup of the Year 2017* award at 7th Small Business Awards in New Delhi, organised by Franchise India Group.

- Sanjiv Bajaj (Managing Director of Bajaj Finserv) is named as *EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2017*. EY presented awards in 9 other categories also for *Entrepreneur of the Year Programme*. Bajaj will represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award (WEOY) in June 2018 in Monaco.
- 7. Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) committee will bestow V. Shantaram lifetime achievement Award to noted producer and director Shyam Benegal. It includes a trophy, cash price of 10 lakh rupees, a certificate and a shawl.
- 8. Odisha Government won *Geospatial World Excellence Award-2018* for successful IT application for tracking of mineral production, dispatch and value accrued on real-time basis through its i3MS web-based software. Award was presented at Geospatial World Forum Meeting IN Hyderabad.
- 9. Times Group celebrated invaluable contribution of women by introducing *Times Power Woman 2017 (Pune) awards*, honouring 34 select women with power, supremacy, command and control. Shabnam Asthana was awarded *Times Power Women of the Year 2017*.

Books

- 1. Actress Shilpa Shetty released her second book titled *The Diary of Domestic Diva*.
- 2. Book *Exam Warriors*, written by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been released. It includes Insights from PM Modi about handling exam stress and help students conquer bigger peaks in life.
- 3. Book *Hari Singh Nalwa: Champion of the Khalsaji (1791-1837)*, written by Vanit Nalwa has been released.
- 4. Book *Hisaab Kitaab*, written by Actress Anjana Sukhani on household budgeting has been released.
- 5. Book *Mere Sapnon ka Bharat*, written by Tarun Vijay has been released. It is It compilation of interviews of former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- 6. Noted cricketer Sachin Tendulkar launched a book on child health care titled *Even When There Is A Doctor*, written by Yashwant Amdekar along with Rajesh Chokhani and Krishnan Sivaramakrishnan.

Committees

- 1. Central Government constituted an Inter- ministerial Committee (IMC) under the Chairpersonship of Secretary, Women and Child Development to tackle menace of trafficking.
- 2. Government formed committee headed by Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog Rajiv Kumar to study Brahmaputra and flood control measures in Assam and neighbouring states.
- 3. Ministry of Defence (Department of Defence Production) constituted a 17 member task force headed by Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran to study use and application of artificial intelligence (AI) in military.
- 4. Ministry of Defence (MoD) constituted 13-member Raksha Mantri Advisory Committee on Ministry of Defence Capital Projects (RMCOMP), to be headed by former secretary Vinay Sheel Oberoi. It will monitor and expedite capital acquisition projects for modernisation of armed forces and bolster armed forces preparedness.
- 5. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) constituted an expert committee to look into issues relating to classification of bad loans, effectiveness of audits and rising incidents of frauds. It will be headed by Y H Malegam.
- 6. University Grants Commission (UGC) constituted a four-member Empowered Expert Committee headed by Former Chief Election Commissioner N Gopalaswami, for conducting appraisal of applications for shortlisting 20 Institutions of Eminence (IoE).

Days

- 1. Feb 02 - World Wetlands Day. It marks adoption of Convention on Wetlands (also called as Ramsar Convention) in 1971 in Ramsar (Iran). Theme for 2018 is *Wetlands for a Sustainable Urban Future*.
- On this occasion, Floating Treatment Wetland (FTW) was inaugurated in Nekkampur Lake in Hyderabad to purify polluted lake. Plants planted on FTW can clean lake by absorbing nitrates and other pollutants in water.
- 2. Feb 04 - World Cancer Day. 2018 Theme is *We can. I can*.
- Feb 4, 2018 is also 70th Independence Day of Neighboring Nation *Sri Lanka*. On Feb 4 in 1948, Sri Lanka achieved freedom from British rule.
- 3. Feb 06 - International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation.
- 4. Feb 1 - Foundation day of Indian Coast Guard (ICG).
- 5. Feb 11 - International Day of Women and Girls in Science.
- 6. Feb 13 - World Radio Day. 2018 theme is *Radio and Sports*.
- India's 1st Online Radio Station *Radio Umang* Has been launched, accessible through web / app.

- India's first radio festival held in New Delhi to mark World Radio Day, organized by International Association of Women in Radio and Television AND UNESCO.
- 7. Feb 20 - World Day of Social Justice. 2018 theme is *Workers on the Move: the Quest for Social Justice*.
- 8. Feb 21 - International Mother Language Day (IMLD). 2018 Theme is *Linguistic diversity and multilingualism count for sustainable development*.
- 9. Feb 24 - Central Excise Day.
- 10. Feb 28 - National Science Day. It marks discovery of Raman effect by Indian physicist Sir Chandrashekhara Venkata Raman on 28 February 1928. For this, he was awarded Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930.
- On this occasion, Department of Science and Technology awarded Raghbir Singh Khandpur for his contribution to science and his efforts to make Science City in Punjab's Kapurthala into an international-level facility.
- 11. Feb 28 - World Rare Disease Day. It is observed annually on Last day of February.
- 12. Google launched '#SecurityCheckKiya' campaign in India to create awareness around Internet safety. It was launched on occasion of Safer Internet Day (6 February).
- On this occasion, Google and National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) signed a pact to integrate a course on 'Digital Citizenship and Safety' in information and communication technology (ICT) curriculum.
- 13. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) launched National Deworming Initiative on National Deworming Day (10 February). It aims to reach over 32 crore children aged between 1 to 19 years to combat parasitic worm infections.
- National Deworming Day was launched in 2015 and is a single fixed-day approach to treating intestinal worm infections in all children aged 1- 19 years. It is held on 10 February and 10 August each year.
- 14. UN Chosen India to host World Environment Day to be held on June 5 with theme *Beat Plastic Pollution*.

Defence

1. 8th Biannual Indo-Seychelles joint counter insurgency/counter terrorism exercise named *Lamitye* held in Seychelles.
2. Central Government cancelled plan to produce 114 Single-engine Fighters with foreign collaboration under *Make in India* framework, in wake of political conflict between BJP and Congress over 36 French manufactured Rafale fighter jets.
- Point of contention in original plan was restriction on only single-engine fighters, which limited competition to just two jets (American F-16 and Swedish Gripen-E) Thus, Defence Ministry directed Indian Air Force to come up with a new proposal that will take both, single and twin-engine fighters into account.
3. Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved Proposals worth INR 9435 Crores for Tri Services and Coast Guard. It includes procurement of 41000 LMGs and over 3.5 Lakh Close Quarter Battle Carbines under Buy and Make (Indian) category.
4. Defence Acquisition Council approved capital acquisition of 7.4 lakh assault rifles, 17,000 light machine guns, 5,719 sniper rifles and Mareech advanced torpedo decoy systems for Indian Navy, worth INR 15935 crores. DAC is headed by Defence Minister (Nirmala Sitharaman Currently).
5. Defence Ministry has sanctioned INR 1487 crores to Indian Army to boost perimeter security and fortify its bases in Jammu and Kashmir, North East and several other sensitive places.
6. Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) conducted first flight of Hawk-i Trainer Jet, with indigenous Real Time Operating System (RTOS).
- Hawk-i is first indigenous RTOS developed in India and certified by Center for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC).
- RTOS is system software that provides standard run-time environment for real-time applications execution in a safe and reliable manner.
7. Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) for first time successfully flown home-made 5.8-tonne Light Combat Helicopter (LCH) with its own automatic flight control system, powered by 2 Shakti engines.
8. Home Ministry sanctioned approx INR 370 crore to Border Security Force (BSF) and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) to strengthen border infrastructure along Indo-Pak and Indo-China border.
9. India successfully conducted night trial of indigenously developed nuclear capable Prithvi-II missile with strike range of 350 km. Indigenously developed light transport aircraft SARAS PT1N also successfully completed its second test-flight.

10. India successfully test-fired nuclear-capable surface-to-surface Dhanush ballistic missile with a strike range of 350 km. DRDO flown it's Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle RUSTOM 2 in Karnataka. It has capability to fly for 24 hours at a stretch at over 200 km/hr speed.
11. Indian Army will contribute 2300 personnel to support United Nations Peacekeeping Missions to South Sudan (UNMISS) in order to bring peace and normalcy in the war-torn african country. It includes deployment of 7 Garhwal Rifles Infantry battalion group of Indian Army.
12. Indian Coast Guard interceptor boat V-410 has been launched. It is 6th in series of 15 interceptors for which BDIL had been given a contract.
13. Indian Navy unveiled Integrated Automatic Aviation Meteorological System (IAAMS) at INS Garuda naval air station in Kochi (Kerala). It is 4th air station installed with this integrated system. IAAMS aims to modernise Meteorological infrastructure of 9 Naval Air Stations (NAS), to bring accuracy in weather monitoring mechanism in Indian Navy.
14. Indian Navy's Andaman & Nicobar Command will host a multinational Naval Exercise MILAN 2018 in March, With underlying theme of *Friendship Across the Seas*, with 16 nations participating. Theme of 2018 MILAN International Maritime Seminar is *In Pursuit of Maritime Good Order - Need for Comprehensive Information Sharing Apparatus*.
15. Indian and Indonesian Armies begun 6th Garuda Shakti Joint exercise in West Java province of Indonesia.
16. Indigenously developed short-range nuclear capable ballistic Agni-1 successfully test-fired, with strike range of 700-900 KM.
 - Nuclear capable surface-to-surface Prithvi-II missile was also successfully test fired, with range under 350 km.
17. Maratha Light Infantry celebrated 250 years of its existence on 4 February 2018. first battalion of regiment was raised as 'Second Battalion Bombay Sepoys' on Feb 2 in 1768.
18. Siemens India commissioned a first-of-its-kind Medium-Voltage (MV) training lab at INS Valsura (Gujarat) for Indian Navy. It will facilitate Indian Navy officials to train, manage and operate modern equipment of Indian Navy without going to field.
19. Sterlite Technologies received INR 3500 crores order to build and manage an advanced digital communications network of Indian Navy. A high-capacity IP-MPLS (Internet Protocol – Multi Protocol Label Switching) network will be developed as part of the project.
20. Tri-service maritime exercise *Paschim Lehar* held off India's western coast, to build interoperability between Three forces and Coast Guard.

Economy

1. Aditya Birla Idea Payments Bank Ltd (ABIPBL) started operations, making it 5th payments bank in India.
 - Other payment banks - Airtel Payments Bank, India Post Payments Bank, Paytm Payments Bank and Fino Payments Bank.
 - ABIPBL is a JV between Aditya Birla Nuvo Ltd (51 % stake) and Ideal Cellular (49 % stake).
2. Airtel Payments Bank reduced its interest rate by 175 basis points to 5.5 % per annum from 7.25 % per annum earlier.
3. Approved continuation of Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) beyond 12th Plan for 3 years from 2017-18 to 2019-20 with outlay of INR 5500 crores.
 - PMEGP will aim at creating sustainable estimated employment opportunities for 15 lakh persons in 3 years. Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is the nodal implementation agency at national level.
 - Minimum target of 75 project/district is awarded to all districts in country to achieve Inclusive Growth. Higher rate of subsidy (25% to 35%) will be applicable for women, SC/ST, OBC, Physically Disabled, NER applicants in rural areas.
 - Portal can be accessed at <https://www.kviconline.gov.in/pmegpeportal/prneqphome/index.jsp>.
 - PMEGP -
 - It is a major credit-linked subsidy programme being implemented by Ministry of MSME since 2008-09, aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in non-farm sector.
 - 4.55 lakh micro enterprises have been assisted with a margin money subsidy of Rs 9564.02 crore providing employment to an estimated 37.98 lakh persons till now.
 - Modifications made in PMEGP Include -
 - 2nd loan of upto 1 crore to better performing PMEGP units for upgrading with subsidy of 15%.

- Merger of Coir Udyami Yojana (GUY) in PMEGP.

4. As per 2nd Advance Estimates of National Income in 2017-18 and Quarterly GDP estimates for 3rd quarter (Oct-Dec) by Central Statistics Office (CSO) -

- India's GDP grew 7.2% in 3rd quarter of 2017-18 (Oct - Dec 2017), more than 6.8% GDP growth rate of China in same period.

- Quarterwise GDP Growth Rate in 2017-18 - Q1 (Apr - June) - 5.7 %, Q2 (July - Sep) - 6.5 % (*revised from 6.3 % earlier*), Q3 (Oct - Dec) - 7.2 %.

- With such strong GDP Growth in 3rd quarter, India regained status of Fastest growing major economy. Manufacturing grew 8.1% in third quarter and is projected to expand at 5.1% for full year, indicating that factories / companies have come to terms with GST.

- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at constant (2011-12) prices in 2017-18 will remain 130.04 lakh crores, compared to 121.96 lakh crores in 2016-17, showing growth rate of 6.6 % as compared to growth rate of 7.1 percent in 2016-17.

- While, Real GVA (Gross value added) at basic constant prices (2011-12) will be 119.64 lakh crore in 2017-18, compared to 112.48 lakh crores in 2016-17. So, growth of real GVA at basic prices in 2017-18 is 6.4 % as against 7.1 % in 2016-17.

- Per capita net national income during 2017-18 is estimated to be INR 112764, showing rise of 8.6 % as compared to 103870 during 2016-17.

- GDP growth rates for 2017-18 and Q1, Q2, Q3 of 2017-18 at constant (2011-12) and current prices are -

	Constant prices (2011-12)	Current prices
Annual 2017-18 (Second advance)	6.6	9.8
Q1 2017-18(April-June)	5.7	9.2
Q2 2017-18(July-Sep)	6.5	10.0
Q3 2017-18(Oct-Dec)	7.2	11.9

5. Axis Bank opened an off-shore banking unit at International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) at Gujarat International Finance Tec-City (GIFT City) in Gandhinagar. Through this, Bank will offer more products to its clients including trading in foreign currency in overseas markets etc.

6. Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) increased Minimum Support Price (MSP) for *Milling Copra* for 2018 season. MSP for *Milling Copra* is now INR 7500 per quintal and INR 7750 per quintal for Ball Copra.

- Copra is the dried meat or kernel of coconut, which is the fruit of coconut palm.

7. Catholic Syrian Bank and Celebrus Capital Ltd partnered to offer CSB's customers online trading and demat services, enabling CSB customers to open a free Celebrus trading account and avail preferred rates on brokerage charges/ AMC fees.

8. Citi Bank India banned purchasing cryptocurrencies by credit and debit cards, as these decentralized currencies are not backed by any Government.

9. Commerce and Industry Ministry launched 3 tools to rank States / UTs on basis of measures taken to promote entrepreneurship. Tools are - *start-up-India ranking framework*, *compendium of good practices for promoting startups* AND *Startup India Kit*.

- *Startup India Compendium of Good Practises* aims at enriching startup ecosystem through ethical behaviours, currently followed by 18 States/UTs. It covers 95 good practises across 7 areas of intervention for evaluating the performance of startup ecosystem

- *Startup India Kit* acts as a guide on all Startup India offerings and offers vital information and assistance through stats, tools, templates, events, competitions and a glossary on startup terms.

10. Commerce and Industry ministry appointed four institutes to interact with stakeholders and suggest measures to push India's ranking in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index. They are National Institute of Construction Management and Research (NICMAR), Indian Institute of Foreign Trade (IIFT), Institute of Company Secretaries of India (ICSI) and Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI).

11. Competition Commission of India (CCI) imposed fine of Approx INR 136 crores on search engine Google for unfair business practices in Indian market for online search. It was alleged that Google is indulging in abuse of

dominant position in market for online search through practices leading to search bias and search manipulation.

12. Digital payments firm Paytm registered two insurance units with named *Paytm Life Insurance Ltd* and *Paytm General Insurance Corporation Ltd*, to enter growing Insurance sector.

13. Equitas Small Finance Bank rolled out *selfeSavings*, an interactive digital savings account that can be opened online with Aadhaar, PAN and other basic details. Balance Under INR 10 lakh fetches interest at 6 % and that above INR 10 lakh will get 6.5 % interest.

14. Federal Bank forayed into investment banking by acquiring 26 % stake in Equirus Capital, to add additional products to its portfolio, including financial solutions for debt and equity capital markets, capital market products, structured finance and advisory.

15. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley launched *CriSidEx* as India's first sentiment index for Micro and small enterprises (MSEs) developed jointly by credit rating body CRISIL and Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).

- CriSidEx is a composite index based on a diffusion index of 8 parameters and measures MSE business sentiment on a scale of 0 (extremely negative) to 200 (extremely positive).

- CriSidEx's readings will flag potential headwinds in production cycles and help improve market efficiencies. It will also offer actionable indicators on foreign trade, by capturing sentiment of exporters and importers.

16. Finance Ministry imposed anti-dumping duty of \$1.04 per kg on imports of ceramic tableware and kitchenware from China, to protect domestic producers.

17. Finance Ministry is planning to ban cryptocurrencies from payments system and at the same time appoint regulator to oversee unregulated exchanges that trade in crypto assets. Dinesh Sharma committee constituted by Government will look into issues relating to cryptocurrencies will finalise its recommendations by submitting its report by March 2018.

18. Finance Ministry's Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) categorised around 9,491 non-banking financial companies (NBFC) as high risk prone financial institutions (Out of approx 12000 NBFCs in India) as they have not complied with stipulated provision of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

19. Financial services Portal *Paisabazaar.com* tied up with Microsoft to drive an 'industry first' technology innovation on its platform, to move infrastructure of paisabazaar.com to Microsoft Azure, a cloud computing service.

20. Fitch Group's BMI Research stated that India's fiscal deficit in financial year 2018-19 is expected to be 3.5 % of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), higher than Government's fiscal deficit target of 3.3 % as per Union Budget 2018.

21. Flipkart Owned Payments platform PhonePe partnered with Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) to deploy its Point of Sale (POS) device at IOCL retail outlets. Phone Pe launched its Point of Sale (POS) device in October 2017.

22. GDP Forecasts in Feb 2018 -

- Moody's Investors Service stated that India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to grow at 7.6% in 2018 - 19.

23. Government approved creation of National Urban Housing Fund (NUHF) for INR 60000 crores, in Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council (BMTPC) under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

- NUHF will facilitate raising requisite funds in next four years so that flow of Central Assistance under different verticals including Beneficiary Linked Construction (BLC), Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP), In-Situ Slum Redevelopment (ISSR) and Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS).

24. Government made amendments in *Prevention of Money-laundering Act 2002 (PMLA)* through Finance Act 2018 to enhance its effectiveness and widen its scope.

- Definition of *proceeds of crime* has been amended to include *property equivalent held outside country*.

- Applicability of bail conditions has been made uniform to all offences under PMLA.

- Section 447 of Companies Act dealing with 'fraud' is being included as scheduled offence under PMLA.

- 90 days more time has been given for investigation to Enforcement Directorate, before prosecution is filed.

- Special Court has been permitted to consider claims for purposes of restoration of confiscated properties even during trial.

25. Government mandated Permanent Account Number (PAN) for financial transactions of over 2.5 lakh INR.

26. Government proposed merger of Government Savings Certificates Act 1959 and Public Provident Fund Act 1968 with Government Savings Banks Act 1873, to remove ambiguities due to multiple Acts and Rules for

Small Saving Schemes, in line with *Minimum Government, Maximum Governance*. This will also bring certain flexibilities for the investors, Including -

- Foreclosure of PPF Account - Depositors will be able to withdraw money from their PPF Account before 5 years.
- Investment in Small Savings Schemes can be made by Guardian On behalf of minors.
- Provisions for differently-abled people - In new umbrella Act, government will allow accounts in name of differently abled persons.
- Right of Nominees - As per existing provisions of the Acts, if depositor dies and nomination exists, the outstanding balances will be paid to nominee(s).
- Grievance redressal - New act will allow Government to put in place mechanism for redressal of grievances and for expeditious settlement of disputes relating to Small Savings.
- No change in interest rate or tax policy.

27. India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) will start pan-India roll out of its network from April 2018, as India's largest financial inclusion network. This will enable IPPB to provide digital payment services at doorstep with help of Postmen and Gramin Dak Sewaks (GDS). IPPB will enable acceptance of digital payments across 1.55 lakh post offices across India.

28. India Signed Loan Agreement with Beijing (China) Based New Development Bank for USD 100 Million for Rajasthan Water Sector Restructuring Project for Desert Areas. This is first tranche approved by NDB under Multi Tranche Financing Facility of USD 345 million for this project.

29. IndusInd Bank launched its new Sonic Identity, a musical logo called *MOGO*. Its aims to build brand imagery with strategic use of music and sound for brand experiences and audience connection.

30. IndusInd Bank partnered with Blockchain solution provider Ripple, to facilitate cross border remittances. Through this, IndusInd Bank will leverage Ripple platform based on blockchain technology for global payments as it lowers both costs and transfer time for customers.

31. Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation will revise base years of gross domestic product (GDP), Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) to 2017-18. While for CPI (retail inflation) it will be 2018.

32. NITI Aayog recommended setting up independent Debt Management Office for better servicing of loans that will lead to substantial reduction in India's interest payment. Currently, government debt (including market borrowings) is managed by Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

- Independent Debt Management Offices will help to resolve issues relating to conflict of interest as RBI decides on key interest rates as well as undertakes buying and selling of government bonds. It will also help in strengthen bond market and help to promote investment.

- It will be in pursuance global practice of shifting public debt management from central bank to a debt management office.

33. NITI Aayog will launch a special cell called *Women Entrepreneurial and Innovation Cell* to support women entrepreneurs and give a boost to their initiatives. It will be headed by Niti Aayog advisor Anna Roy. It will offer women financial support through INR 10000 crores fund of Micro Unit Development and Refinance Agency, or MUDRA micro-loan scheme.

34. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) prepared area development plans worth INR ₹1918 crore for farmers of Punjab, Including promotion of activities like dairy, vegetable cultivation, mushroom growing and bee keeping to provide income to farmers on sustainable basis.

35. National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) allowed Facebook-owned WhatsApp to beta test its BHIM UPI beta payments service with limited user base of 1 million and low transaction limit.

36. PFRDA identified 21 Banks as Makers of Excellence under Atal Pension Yojana Outreach Programme, with Number of APY subscribers crossing 86 Lacs mark. The list is topped by Canara Bank and it contains 6 Public sector banks, 14 Regional Rural Banks and 1 Cooperative Bank.

37. PNB Housing Finance tied up with World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation (IFC) to raise \$800 million for green and affordable housing. As per tie-up, PNB and IFC will bring in \$400 million each.

38. Public Sector Banks Wrote Off Bad Loans Worth INR ₹1683 Crores in 2016-2017, led by SBI which wrote off bad loans worth INR ₹20339 Crores in 2016-17. Loans written off by PSBs in past years are -

- 2012 - 13 -> 27231 crores
- 2013 - 14 -> 34409 crores
- 2014 - 15 -> 49018 crores

- 2015 - 16 -> 57585 crores

39. Punjab National Bank (PNB) detected fraudulent transactions worth over 11300 crore at its Mumbai branch. Amount is 1/3rd of bank's market capitalisation (36000 crores). It caused sharp fall in PNB's Shares.

- PNB lodged 2 complaints with Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against billionaire jewellery designer Nirav Modi and a jewellery company about fraudulent transactions.

- Jeweller Nirav Modi allegedly acquired fraudulent letters of undertaking from a PNB branch in Mumbai to secure overseas credit from other Indian lenders.

- After This, A K Pradhan has been appointed as Group Chief Risk Officer of Punjab National Bank (PNB).

40. RBI Will soon have an additional instrument for liquidity management Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) as an additional instrument for liquidity management, without the need for providing collateral in exchange. As proposed in Budget 2018 as *Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) Scheme*.

- It was first suggested by Urjit Patel Committee in January 2014. This proposal is now a part of the Finance Bill 2018 which is scheduled to be approved by Parliament by March 31, 2018.

41. Rating Agency Fitch placed Punjab National Bank on Rating Watch Negative (RWN), reflecting a possibility of downgrade following recent USD 1.77 billion fraud, biggest ever fraud in Indian banking history.

42. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) directed banks to link SWIFT (Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication System platform) with their core banking solutions (CBS) by end of April 2018. It aims to tighten internal controls in banks following Recent Over 12000 crores fraud at Punjab National Bank (PNB).

- The Mega PNB fraud surrounds around SWIFT technology which was misused by its branch officials to fraudulently issue LoUs (letters of undertaking), kind of Bank guarantees to diamond importer Nirav Modi-linked companies without getting proper approvals and without making entries in CBS. Failure of SWIFT-CBS link led to big fraud at PNB and enabled these transactions to go undetected for over 7 years.

- SWIFT (Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication Systems) is global financial messaging service that enables financial institutions worldwide to send and receive information about financial transactions in secure, standardized and reliable environment.

- SWIFT was founded in 1973 and is headquartered in La Hulpe (Belgium).

43. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) raised exposure limit under exchange traded currency derivatives (ETCD) trading for residents and foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to \$100 million (from \$15 Million Previously) across all currency pairs involving Indian rupee. It aims to help entities engaged in forex transactions to maintain their currency risks in better manner.

- ETCD is financial instrument that trades on regulated exchange, and whose value is based on value of another asset. They can be used to hedge exposure or speculate on wide range of financial assets like commodities, currencies, equities and even interest rates.

- Raised exposure limit permits persons resident in India and FPIs to take positions, without having to establish existence of underlying exposure, up to limit of \$100 million equivalent across all currency pairs involving Indian rupees, put together, and combined across all exchanges.

44. Reserve Bank of India announced setting up ombudsman for addressing customer grievances in non banking finance companies (NBFCs). RBI will start with deposit-taking NBFCs and widen the scope to cover NBFCs with asset size of INR 100 crore. There are 20 banking ombudsmen across India Currently.

45. Reserve Bank of India relaxed priority sector norms for banks by classifying all loans to micro small and medium enterprises (MSME) as priority sector lending, a long time demand from banks. Till now, loans up to INR 10 crore per MSME borrower was considered for priority sector calculation.

- Sub-target for lending to micro enterprises is 7.50 % of net credit. Foreign banks will also have to follow 8% sub-target for lending to small and marginal farmers.

46. Reserve Bank of India will link base rate with MCLR from 1st of April 2018 to ensure expeditious transmission of its policy rate to borrowers.

- RBI Observed that large proportion of bank loans continued to be linked to Base Rate, even after RBI introduced Marginal Cost of Funds based Lending Rates (MCLR) system in 1st April 2016.

- This will enable faster propagation of Effects of RBI Rate Changes to Interest rates of consumer Loans.

47. Reserve bank of India (RBI) tightened rules for bank loan defaults and asked banks to immediately identify defaults and make disclosures every Friday to the RBI credit registry from February 23.

- To accelerate resolution of bad loans, RBI abolished several loan-restructuring mechanisms including *Corporate Debt Restructuring Scheme, Flexible Structuring of Existing Long Term Project Loans, Strategic Debt*

Restructuring Scheme (SDR), Framework for Revitalising Distressed Assets, Change in Ownership outside SD, Scheme for Sustainable Structuring of Stressed Assets (S4A) and Joint Lenders' Forum (JLF).

- Revised Framework for Early identification and reporting of stress -
- Lenders shall identify stress in loan accounts, immediately on default, by classifying stressed assets as special mention accounts (SMA) as per given categories -
- SMA - 01 to 30 days
- SMA-1 - 31 to 60 days
- SMA-2 - 61 to 90 days
- Lenders shall report credit information, including classification of an account as SMA to Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) on all borrower entities having aggregate exposure of INR 5 crore or more.
- CRILC-Main Report will now be submitted on a monthly basis with effect from April 1, 2018.
- Lenders shall also report to CRILC, all borrower entities in default (with aggregate exposure of Rs 5 crore and above), on a weekly basis on Friday, from Feb 23 Onwards.

48. Retirement fund body Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) reduced interests rate on deposits to 8.55% for 2017-18 from 8.65%. It will affect around 6 crore subscribers and leave EPFO with a surplus of INR 586 crores against INR 695 crores in previous FY.

- EPFO made it mandatory to file online claims for provident fund withdrawals above Rs 10 lakh, and also made it mandatory to file online claims for withdrawals of above 5 lakh under Employees Pension Scheme 1995.

49. Singapore Telecommunications (Singtel) invested \$413 million on shares in Bharti Telecom, lifting its stake in Bharti Airtel to 48.9 % and 39.5 % in Bharti Airtel.

50. State Bank of India (SBI) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) signed agreement with National e-Governance Services Limited (NeSL) for utilizing its Information Utility Services envisaged under Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016.

- NeSL is first Information Utility entity registered by Insolvency and bankruptcy Board of India under IBBI (IU) Regulations 2017.

- IU (Information utility) is an information network which procures and stores financial data like borrowings, default and security interests of various entities. Having access to high-quality authenticated financial information helps stakeholders to counter frivolous litigations made by defaulters to delay the process.

51. State Bank of India (SBI) will do major restructuring of its business in United Kingdom from April, transforming it into subsidiary named *State Bank of India UK Limited* from April 2018, in compliance with wider ring-fencing of capital requirements by Bank of England. All SBI branches in UK will fall under a new UK incorporated banking entity instead of their status as overseas branches of Indian entity.

52. State Government Budgets 2018-19 -

- Kerala -
- INR 2000 crores package for restoration works in wake of cyclone Ockhi. Additionally, INR 900 crores investment will be made in coastal areas through Kerala Infrastructure Investment Board (KIIFB).
- To shore up revenues, sales tax on IMFL has been increased by 200 % and beer by 100 %.
- Allocated INR 2,500 crore to *Livelihood Inclusion and Financial Empowerment (LIFE) project* that ensures housing for all.
- 40,000 smart classes will be set up in 4,775 schools.
- Women welfare schemes have budget of INR 1250 Crores. It Includes *She Lodges* to be set up in Kochi and *Nirbhaya Homes* for survivors of Sexual Assaults. Financial assistance for unwed mother raised to INR 2000 per month.
- A Malayalam University will come up at Tirur.
- Uttar Pradesh -
- Total budgetary allocation is 4.28 lakh crores (11.4% higher than last fiscal).
- 20 new agriculture centres to be opened, with 5500 centres to be opened to procure wheat from farmers.
- Startup fund of Rs 250 crore has been created.
- INR 7482 crores for cleaning Ganga and keeping it pollution free.
- Goa
- Goa Govt. presented 17123 crores budget for 2018-19, an increase of 6.84% over the ongoing fiscal.
- Gujarat

- Gujarat Deputy CM and Finance Minister Nitin Patel presented state budget 2018-19. Budget size is INR 183666 crores. New scheme named *Mukhyamantri Apprenticeship Scheme* has been announced, under which Youth will get INR 3000 per month with training.
- 53. Telecom services provider Aircel filed for bankruptcy in National Companies Law Tribunal (NCLT), along with its units *Aircel Cellular and Dishnet Wireless*, amid fierce competition and high levels of debt.
 - Aircel is 4th telecom firm after Telenor, Tata Tele services and Reliance Communications to wind up after Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio debuted in September 2016. Jio started a disruptive price war in sector with its free voice calls and cheap data.
- 54. West Bengal government sold its 10-year-tenure securities for an aggregate amount INR 2000 crores, for several developmental projects, after obtaining consent of central government for this stock sale.
- 55. Yes Bank listed \$600 million bond issued under its maiden \$1 billion MTN programme on Global Securities Market (GSM) of India INX. Yes Bank's MTN (medium term note) bonds issuance is already listed on London Stock Exchange International Securities Market (LSE ISM) and Singapore Exchange Securities Trading Limited (SGX).
 - India International Exchange (India INX) is India's first international exchange at IFSC Gujarat International Financial Tech (GIFT) City, Gandhinagar (Gujarat), as a subsidiary of Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE).
 - It is one of world's most advanced and fastest trading technology platforms with turn-around time of 4 micro seconds. It operates for 22 hours a day.

International

1. 2 Indian institutes featured in top 50 Asian institutes in *TIMES Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings for educational institutes in Asia*. These institutes are Indian Institute of Science (29th) and Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (44). List is Topped by National University of Singapore.
2. According to *Military Balance 2018* report by International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) -
 - India overtook UK to become 5th largest defence spender in world in 2017, with \$52.5 billion defence expenditure in 2017 (compared to UK's \$50.7)
 - Top 5 - USA (\$602.8 billion), China (\$150.5 billion), Saudi Arabia (\$76.7 billion), Russia (\$61.6 billion), India (\$52.5 billion).
3. According to International Energy Agency, USA will overtake Russia as world's biggest oil producer by 2019. USA's crude oil output rose above 10 million barrels per day late last year for first time since 1970s, overtaking top oil exporter Saudi Arabia.
4. According to New York Post, Amazon became 3rd most valuable company in world with market cap of \$702.5 billion, getting past Microsoft. Apple and Alphabet stand ahead of Amazon as most valuable companies in world. Amazon also became first foreign e-commerce firm to start its own food retail venture in India called Amazon Retail, piloting its services in Pune.
5. According to global traffic scorecard published annually by *Inrix*, top 5 most congested cities are -
 - Los Angeles (USA)
 - New York City (USA)
 - Moscow (Russia)
 - Sao Paulo (Brazil)
 - San Francisco (USA)
 - Further, most congested country is Thailand, followed by Indonesia and Colombia.
6. An Indo-German MOU has been signed for *Implementation Agreement in Sustainable Urban Development and Smart Cities in India*, to develop and apply concepts for sustainable urban development about the provision of urban basic services and housing in selected cities and Smart Cities in India.
7. Andijan Region of Uzbekistan and India signed agreement for cooperation in pharmaceutical industry, for implementation of program for production of pharmaceutical, bio-pharmaceutical products and medical equipment in Andijan region of Uzbekistan.
8. As per *Water Resources Research*, Phosphorus levels in freshwater bodies across world are escalating, posing serious threat to ecosystem. About 1.5 teragrams of phosphorus (1.5 billion kilograms) is dumped annually into freshwater systems. China contributes most with 30%, followed by India (8%), USA (7%). Huang He river basin of China has highest phosphorus-related water pollution. India's Ganges basin is ranked 4th in list.

9. As per Airports Council International (ACI), Dubai International Airport retained No 1 rank as world's busiest airport for international travel, with 88.2 million passengers.
- Dubai witnessed 15% growth in tourist arrivals from India in 2017, hosting 2.1 million visitors, retaining top spot as source market.
10. Bank of Baroda will cease its 21 years long operations in South Africa by March-end, amid a probe into alleged compliance lapses by BOB there.
11. Bermuda became first country to legalize and then repeal same-sex marriage, after it reversed right of gay couples to marry.
12. Bharti Airtel joined *Seamless Alliance*, a new global collaboration to bring high-speed and uninterrupted in-flight data connectivity to mobile customers. It works towards leveraging satellite technology to offer high speed data connectivity to mobile users even when they are up in air.
13. Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and Natural History Museum of UK signed a MOU for cooperation in genetic/taxonomic studies, research and training, conservation etc.
14. Brazil declared *social emergency* on Venezuela border, to tackle influx of people fleeing crisis hit Venezuela. The declaration will free the authorities to allocate infrastructure funds and other humanitarian measures on Venezuela border.
15. Britain's Prince Charles launched a new 10-million-dollar Development Impact Bond (DIB) to help improve education for over 200,000 children in India, as largest such bond in South Asia. It is the latest fundraising initiative by British Asian Trust (BAT) set up by royal 10 years ago to fight poverty in South Asia.
16. Britain's fertility regulator Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) allowed doctors to create country's first 'three-parent' babies through mitochondrial donation therapy (or MRT), to prevent passage of incurable genetic diseases from mothers to offsprings.
17. British government introduced a new technology to remove extremist material from social media, developed by ASI Data Science. It uses advanced machine learning to study sound and visual of videos for "subtle signals" to check if they are extremist content.
18. Cabinet Approvals -
- CCEA Approvals -
 - Approved proposal of Department of Commerce to give focused attention to 12 identified Champion Services Sectors for promoting their development, Including IT & ITes, Tourism and Hospitality Services, Medical Value Travel, Transport and Logistics Services, Accounting and Finance Services, Audio Visual Services, Legal Services, Communication Services, Construction and Related Engineering Services, Environmental Services, Financial Services and Education Services. Fund of INR 5000 crores has been proposed for this purpose. It will enhance competitiveness of India's service sectors, thereby promoting GDP growth, creating more jobs and promoting exports to global markets.
 - Approved extension of Govt. Guarantee provided to lender Bank for providing credit limit to National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) to 19000 crores from INR 9500 crores for undertaking procurement operation of pulses and oilseeds under Price Support Scheme (PSS).
 - These Government Guarantees are provided for a period of five years i.e. till 2021-22 by Govt. of India and with waiver of 1% Government Guarantee fee.
 - Provision of Govt. Guarantee will help in protecting farmers producing these commodities from making distress sales during peak arrival period and to provide remunerative prices to encourage higher investment and production.
- Approved continuation of Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) beyond 12th Plan for 3 years from 2017-18 to 2019-20 with outlay of INR 5500 crores.
- PMEGP will aim at creating sustainable estimated employment opportunities for 15 lakh persons in 3 years. Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is the nodal implementation agency at national level.
 - Minimum target of 75 project/district is awarded to all districts in country to achieve Inclusive Growth. Higher rate of subsidy (25% to 35%) will be applicable for women, SC/ST, OBC, Physically Disabled, NER applicants in rural areas.
 - Portal can be accessed at <https://www.kviconline.gov.in/pmegportal/prneqphome/index.jsp>.
 - PMEGP -
 - It is a major credit-linked subsidy programme being implemented by Ministry of MSME since 2008-09, aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in nonfarm sector.

- 4.55 lakh micro enterprises have been assisted with a margin money subsidy of Rs 9564.02 crore providing employment to an estimated 37.98 lakh persons till now.
- Modifications made in PMEGP Include -
- 2nd loan of upto 1 crore to better performing PMEGP units for upgrading with subsidy of 15%.
- Merger of Coir Udyami Yojana (GUY) in PMEGP.
- MOUs -
- With Jordan for cooperation in Customs, Health, Manpower and mining / beneficiation of Rock Phosphate & MOP and setting up facility in Jordan for Phosphoric Acid / DAP / NPK Fertilizers.
- With Vietnam on Economic and Trade Cooperation.
- With Fiji on Cooperation in Renewable Energy.
- With Macedonia on cooperation in Health.
- Misc -
- Government reduced airfares for devotees travelling to Saudi Arabia or Haj, with prices of round tickets being slashed by INR 20000 (to INR 97000 now).
- 19. China is elected as vice chair of Financial Action Task Force (FATF), global body mandated to combat terror financing and money laundering. Further, FATF in its plenary meeting in Paris, placed Pakistan under *grey list*, subject to direct monitoring and intense scrutiny by International Cooperation Review Group till June 2018 for compliance of Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Finance of Terrorism regulations.
- 20. China resumed Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through Nathu La route, which was stopped by China amid Doklam military face-off with India last year.
- 21. China successfully launched 'Zhangheng 1', its first seismo-electromagnetic satellite to study seismic precursors. The Long March-2D rocket carried China Seismo- Electromagnetic Satellite (CSES) of 730 kg. Zhangheng 1 will let scientists monitor the electromagnetic field, ionospheric plasma and high-energy particles for five years.
- 22. China, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Pakistan signed USD 4 million agreement to provide assistance to people of Fata and Balochistan region in Pakistan.
- 23. Chinese Air Force commissioned its new generation J-20 fourth-generation stealth fighter into combat service. China is 2nd country (after USA) to commission domestically developed stealth aircraft.
- 24. Cobra Gold training exercise held in Thailand, that includes activities such as drinking cobra blood. This year, 7 countries participated - USA, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, and Singapore.
- 25. Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) and Russia's United Shipbuilding Corporation (USC) signed MoU to jointly Develop State-of-Art vessels for Inland and Coastal Waterways in India.
- 26. Corruption Perceptions Index 2017 by Transparency International (180 Nations) -
- India ranked 81st.
- Neighbours - Sri Lanka (91), Pakistan (117), Myanmar (130) and Bangladesh (143), Bhutan (26) and China (77).
- Top 5 - New Zealand (1), Denmark (2), Finland (3), Norway (4), Switzerland (5)
- Bottom 5 - Somalia (180), South Sudan (179), Syria (178), Afghanistan (177), Yemen (176)
- BRICS - Brazil (95), Russia (136), India (81), China (77), South Africa (72)
- 27. Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) signed MoUs with Andhra Pradesh State Government to invest INR 3730 crore in state in various developmental activities.
- 28. Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) partnered with Department of Science and Technology (DST) to implement ASEAN India Research Training Fellowship (AIRTF).
- AIRTF scheme was introduced to promote scientific cooperation between India and ASEAN member countries.
- It provides opportunities to upto 50 young researchers annually from ASEAN member countries to undertake research and training for period of 6 months at Academic and Research Institutions in India.
- Note that FICCI in partnership with Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and DS&T also gives away C V Raman International Fellowship for African Researchers, in line with efforts of promoting scientific and technological cooperation between India and Africa.
- 29. Fiji (island nation in South Pacific Ocean) signed partnered with India's The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) for assistance in tackling climate change effects and achieving environmental sustainability.
- 30. Forbes' First Ever Crypto Rich List (comprising 20 wealthiest people in cryptocurrency space)-
- Ripple Co-founder Chris Larsen at atop with crypto net worth of \$7.5-8 billion.

- Ethereum Co-founder Joseph Lubin (\$1-5 billion) is 2nd and Founder of cryptocurrency exchange Binance Changpeng Zhao (\$1.1-2 billion) is 3rd.
- 31. Gevora Hotel in Dubai became *world's tallest hotel* with 356.53 Metres height, 1 metre taller than previous title holder *JW Marriott Marquis*.
- 32. Global Democracy Index by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) (165 Nations and 2 Territories) -
 - India slipped to 42nd place among 165 Nations, from 32nd place last year.
 - List has been divided into 4 broad categories - *full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime and authoritarian regime*.
 - North Korea is ranked lowest 167th, while Syria is a 2nd worst at 166th place.
 - Top 5 - Norway (1), Iceland (2), Sweden (3), New Zealand (4) and Denmark (5).
- 33. Global IT Firm Capgemini acquired IT American IT Consulting firm LiquidHub for 400 million euros, to enhance its digital consulting capabilities in North America.
- 34. Google combined its two payment services, Google Wallet and Android Pay, into a new app called Google Pay.
- 35. Google launched *Bulletin* app that allows anyone to submit stories related to their local communities. Users can do this easily with their phone and it will be published straight away in the web. Google has not mentioned how it will verify the authenticity of the content.
- 36. Google signed USD 1.1 billion deal with HTC for talent acquisition, to acquire nearly 2000 HTC engineers, to expand in hardware sector and in Asia Pacific region.
- 37. Inclusive Internet Index (III) 2018 report by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) -
 - 2018 edition of report covered 91% of the world's population and expanded data set of 86 countries, up from 75 countries in 2017.
 - India ranked 47th out of 86 countries, slipping by 11 positions compared to 36th rank in 2017.
 - Top 3 Nations - Sweden, Singapore, USA.
- 38. India - UK Joint research projects on *Water Quality Research (WQR)* and *Energy Demand Reduction in Built Environment (EDR)* have been launched. WQR programme has 8 projects and EDR programme has 4 projects, with joint investment of up to £15 million.
- 39. India and Pakistan extended agreement of Thar Link Express, second solitary rail service between both countries for upto 2021. It links Jodhpur (India) and Karachi (Pakistan) via Munabao (Rajasthan)-Khokhrapar (Sindh) border crossing and carries only passengers.
- 40. India approved granting long-term visa (LTV) to minorities from Afghanistan seeking refuge in India.
- 41. India contributed additional \$1 million to India-UN Development Partnership Fund, earmarked for South-South cooperation. It aims to intensify partnerships with other developing countries in south
 - India pledged multi-year contribution of \$100 million to the fund established in June 2017. India has already provided \$6 million within 7 months since launch of fund.
- 42. India is ranked 7th in list of targeted countries for Web Application Attacks (WAA), as per report *Akamai State of the Internet Security Q4 2017*. It states that nearly 40 % of over 53000 cyber attacks in India occurred in financial sector during 2017.
- 43. India joined Ashgabat Agreement which envisages facilitation of transit and transportation of goods between Central Asia and Persian Gulf to significantly boost up trade and investment.
 - Ashgabat Agreement aims at establishment of International Transport and Transit Corridor between the Iran, Oman, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, signed in April 2011.
- 44. India revised Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Kenya, to enhance transparency in tax matters, control tax evasion, and eliminate double taxation. It offers reduced withholding tax rate on dividend and interest to 10 % from 15 %.
- 45. India's NTPC will supply 300 megawatts (MW) of electricity to Bangladesh for 15 years, earning 900 Crores in annual revenue. It is under a Tender by Bangladesh for supply of 500 MW power from India.
- 46. International Intellectual Property (IP) Index report by Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC) of US Chambers of Commerce (50 Nations) -
 - India Ranked 44th, increasing substantially from 25% in 5th edition of Index to 30% in 6th edition.
 - Top 3 - USA, United Kingdom, Sweden.
- 47. Israel successfully tested Its New advanced missile defense system capable of defending against ballistic missiles, named *Arrow -3*.

48. Maldives Govt. declared a state of emergency deepening political crisis, after armed troops stormed country's top court.
49. Mumbai is named among top 15 wealthiest cities globally, with a total wealth of \$950 billion. New York (USA) topped the list. Mumbai also features among top 10 cities in terms of billionaire population, with 28 billionaires.
50. Nancy Pelosi has set up record for longest speech in American Senate by delivering her speech for over 8 hours, breaking a record that dated back to 1909, set by Champ Clark (spoke for 5 hours and 15 minutes).
51. Nepalese tea received an international trademark, after over 150 years of beginning of cultivation in country. Now, tea will be sold in international market with a common logo, representing national identity.
52. New Manchester-India Partnership (MIP) aimed at connecting Indian companies with Northern regions of England has been launched in London (UK). This partnership is aimed at advancing trade, investment, science and innovation ties between India and Britain.
53. Pakistan declared Mandarin as an official languages of Pakistan, along with Urdu and English.
54. Ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) proposed amending China's Constitution to allow 3rd term of any Individual as President of China. It will allow Xi Jinping to continue as President beyond 2023.
55. Russian space agency Roskosmos launched *Progress MS-08* unmanned cargo spacecraft for International Space Station (ISS). It carried equipments for German-Russian ICARUS research project aimed at studying wildlife-migration patterns and other material.
56. Russian-drafted resolution on a technical rollover of Yemen sanctions regime is adopted by United Nation Security Council (UNSC). Note that a Britain-drafted resolution failed to adopt after being vetoed by Russia. It committed for action against Iran and censured it for providing missiles and drones to Houthi rebels in Yemen.
57. Rwanda (East Africa) became first low-income country to provide universal eye care for its 12 million population. Its Government partnered with *Vision for a Nation (VFAN)* to train over 3,000 eye care nurses based in over 500 local health centres.
58. Saudi Arabia Govt. allowed women to open their own businesses and benefit from government e-services without having to prove consent from husband or male guardian, as a major step away from country's strict guardianship system that has ruled it for decades. Saudi Arabia has also for the first time opened applications for women to enlist in military in rank of Soldiers.
59. Saudi Arabia conducted Groovz Jazz Festival as its first ever jazz festival, in Riyadh.
60. Singapore will impose a 'carbon tax' from 2019 to cut its greenhouse gas emissions and make companies more competitive as global agreements on climate change take effect. Tax will be SG\$5.0 (USD 3.8) per tonne of greenhouse gas emissions from 2019 to 2023.
61. South Africa declared a *national disaster* over a drought that has ravaged parts of country and threatened to leave city of Cape Town without domestic tap water.
- Cape Town is in grip of a catastrophic 3 year long drought as sparse winter rains have failed to bring relief, and dam levels have dropped to dangerously low levels.
62. Sweden signed Strategic Partnership Agreement with United Nations for committing record \$370 million dollars to UN World Food Programme, for next 4 years (2018-2021). It is biggest ever contribution made by a donor within a WFP Strategic Partnership Agreement.
63. Tanzania withdrew from United Nation's *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework*, citing security reasons and lack of funds. Tanzania is considered as safe haven for refugees, particularly from conflict hit Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi.
64. Tata Steel and Wipro are 2d Indian companies in US-based Ethisphere Institute's list of World's Most Ethical Companies for 2018, containing 135 companies from 23 countries. Tata Steel and Wipro are receiving the award for the sixth and seventh time respectively.
65. Tropical Cyclone Kelvin hit north coast of Western Australia, with winds up to a speed of 150 km per hour.
66. Tropical cyclone Gita hit small South Pacific island country Tonga with Category 4 intensity. with winds upto 145 mph. India contributed 1 Million USD as rehabilitation aid to Tonga.
67. UNICEF report on newborn mortality rate -
- Pakistan has worst NMR in world, with 45.6 babies dying out of every 1,000 births in 2016. Pak is Followed by Afghanistan and Central African Republic.
 - Japan has best NMR, followed by Iceland and Singapore.
 - India's NMR is 25.4, making it 12th worst among 52 'lower-middle-income countries' that pose risk for newborns. India aims to attain NMR of 12 by 2030.

- Further, As per report by NITI Aayog, sex ratio at birth (SRB) declined in 17 out of 21 large states of India, with Gujarat recording 53 points fall. Gujarat is followed by Haryana (35 points drop) and Rajasthan (32 points drop).
- 68. US India Business Council (USIBC) formed an 11 member India Advisory Council to enhance bilateral strategic and economic partnership between India and USA.
- 69. USA President Trump has signed an order to ban bump-stock devices, that enable a rifle to shoot hundreds of rounds a minute.
- 70. United Arab Emirates opened world's longest zip line in Ras al-Khaimah, measuring 2.83 km in length, entering Guinness book of World Records for the same.
- 71. Venezuela and Libya were suspended from voting in United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2018-19 session for not paying UN dues. It was for third time in three years these countries have been suspended from voting for unpaid dues. Their dues are - \$25 Million (Venezuela) and \$6 Million (Libya).
- 72. Venezuela become first country to officially launch its own cryptocurrency called *Petro*, backed by oil, gas, gold and diamond reserves to circumvent US-led financial sanctions. Venezuelan Government claimed that pre-mined cryptocurrency Petro raised US \$735 million on first day of its pre-sale.
- 73. World's first robot ski competition *The Edge of Robot: Ski Robot Challenge* held near PyeongChang (South Korea), with Eight humanoid robots participating and \$10000 Prize Money.

Meetings

1. 2018 World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS 2018) held at Vigyan Bhawan (New Delhi), with theme *Partnerships for a Resilient Planet*.
2. 22nd World Information Technology Congress (WITC) 2018 held in Hyderabad (Telangana), with theme *Future Enterprises*. India is hosting WITC for first time. Further, 26th Nasscom India Leadership Forum (ILF) was also held along with.
 - During this, Telangana government signed MOU with Taoyuan City of Taiwan for better technology partnership in state.
3. 4th Nepal Buildcon and Wood International Expo 2018 held in Kathmandu.
4. Bilateral Meetings in Feb 2018 -
 - Indian and Chinese armies held a Border Personnel Meeting (BPM) in Chushul sector of Ladakh region, on the occasion of Chinese spring festival.
 - 17th meeting of Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on Nepal-India relations concluded in Kathmandu (Nepal).
5. China will host 2018 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit at Qingdao (Shandong Province) in June 2018.
6. Chinese electronic firm Huawei unveiled *Balong 5G01* as world's first 5G chip at Mobile World Congress 2018 in Barcelona (Spain). It offers 3GPP standard 5G connectivity and provides downlink speeds of up to 2.3Gbps.
7. Global Digital Health Partnership Summit held at Canberra (Australia), attended by J P Nadda (Minister for Health and Family Welfare) on India's behalf.
8. India will host first International Solar Alliance (ISA) Summit in March 2018 in Delhi.
 - International Solar Alliance is a treaty based inter-governmental alliance. It comprises of 121 solar energy abundant nations located between Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn. It aims to make solar energy affordable.

National

1. Maharashtra government signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) worth Approx 35000 Crores Thrust Aircraft Pvt Ltd, company led by Amol Yadav who built six-seater aircraft. Under the MoU signed at *Magnetic Maharashtra* investors' summit, state will give Yadav's firm 157 acres of land in Palghar district.
 - During the summit, Reliance Industries announced to invest over 60000 crore in Maharashtra in 10 years for establishing an integrated digital industrial area.
 - Indian Railways signed MOU with Maharashtra government to set up a coach factory in Latur with an investment of INR 600 crores.
2. Uttar Pradesh Government in association with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched 'DASTAK', a door to door campaign to eradicate deadly Acute Encephalitis (AE) Syndrome and Japanese Encephalitis (JES) disease from state, with tagline *Darwaja khatkhatao, AES aur JE ko bhagao*

3. 23 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) will get largest portion of loans on offer under Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education (RISE) scheme.
- RISE Scheme was in Budget 2018-19, with a corpus of INR 100000 crores. Under this, all centrally-funded institutes (CFIs) can borrow funds over next 4 years to expand and build new infrastructure.
 - Out of allotted funds, INR 25000 crores will be set aside exclusively for 23 IITs.
 - Central Universities can borrow upto 20000 crores, National Institutes of Technology (NITs) can borrow INR 11300 crores.
 - All financing will be done through the Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA).
4. 2nd edition of 'Nobel Prize Series India 2018' started in Panaji (Goa). Its a month-long Nobel Science Exhibition in which Nobel laureates interact with school children and teachers. Theme of Nobel Prize Series India 2018' is *Science Impacts Life*.
5. *Advantage Assam*, Assam's first Global Investors summit held in Guwahati. During this, Assam Government signed MoU with National Building Construction Corporation (India) Limited for setting up a twin tower trade centre in Guwahati with a project cost of INR 1950 crores.
- During this, it was decided that Assam State Government would set up *Invest Assam*, as dedicated agency to look into all aspects of business and investment in state.
6. A new record was added to Golden Book of World Records, after over 2,100 saints and locals blew 'shankh' (conch shells) together, during Rajim Kumbh Mela in Chhattisgarh.
7. According to report by green energy market tracker Mercom Capital, India has achieved 20 GW (Giga watt) cumulative solar power capacity, Out of which, utility-scale cumulative installations is 18.4 GW and rooftop solar is 1.6 GW.
- By 2022, India is targeting installation of 175GW of renewable energy capacity. It includes 60GW of large and medium-scale gridconnected solar power projects, 60GW wind, 40GW solar rooftop projects, 10GW of bio power and 5GW of small hydro.
8. Actor Kamal Haasan launched his political party Makkal Needhi Maiam (*People Justice Centre*) in Madurai (Tamil Nadu).
9. Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh launched 6 new features in National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) platform to make it more user-friendly -
- MIS dashboard for better analysis
 - BHIM payment facility by traders
 - Mobile payment facility by traders
 - Enhanced features on mobile app such as gate entry and payment through mobile
 - Integration of farmer's database
 - e-Learning module.
10. Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu laid foundation for *Universal Peace Retreat Center of Prajapita Brahmakumari Eswariya University* in Amravati. It will propagate and teach Raja yoga, Dhyana, Youth development, women empowerment, stress relief activities, child care, positive attitude, life skills and moral values.
11. Annual multicultural festival *Kala Ghoda Arts Festival* held in South Mumbai (Maharashtra). This year's theme is 'Hara Ghoda' (Green Horse), focusing on sustainability and environment-friendliness.
12. As per Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu is richest CM in India with declared assets worth over 177 crores, followed by Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu (129 crores). Tripura CM Manik Sarkar has lowest Declared assets (INR 26 lakh).
13. As per Data by Census Directorate, 42 Indian languages are heading towards extinction as only few thousand people speak them.
- There are total 22 scheduled languages and 100 non-scheduled languages in India, spoken by one lakh or more people.
 - Andaman and Nicobar Islands has most Number of Languages headed towards Extinction (11 Languages), followed by Manipur (11).
14. As per a Report, Assam is worst in terms of Maternal Mortality Rate (*female deaths per 100000 live births*), with MMR of 300 against national average of 167. However, MMR in Assam has been declining as it was 383 four years ago and was 447 in 2002. In Assam, infant mortality rate (number of deaths per 1000 live births of children under 1 year of age) is also higher than national average (44 against national figure of 37). Fund spending under National Health Mission (NHM) in Assam is also just 13.58 % for 2017-18.

15. Assam Government will set up 3 Terminal Mart for agricultural products in state in order to give a boost to agricultural market.
16. Assam become 4th state (1st in North East) to issue Right of Way (RoW) guidelines for telecom service providers.
- A legal right, established by usage or grant is referred to as Right of Way (RoW).
 - These guidelines will regulate establishment of underground and overground telecom infrastructure in Assam.
17. Assam government will observe September 22 as Rhino Day (*On World Rhino Day*) to generate public awareness on protection of one-horned rhinoceros (pachyderm).
18. BJP's new headquarters opened on Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg in New Delhi, as largest political party office in world with area of 1.70 lakh square feet.
19. Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) bagged order worth INR 560 crores from National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) for setting up flue gas desulphurisation (FGD) system at National Capital Power Station (capacity 2×490 MW) at Dadri in Uttar Pradesh, aimed at controlling various harmful emissions.
20. Bihar Government banned sale of loose cigarettes, to be deterrent to kids and youngsters who start smoking by buying loose cigarettes.
21. Business Info Provider *Dun & Bradstreet* released *Port Logistics: Issues & Challenges in India* report, looking into various roadblocks and suggests policy recommendations to resolve challenges across ports in India.
- Report proposes 60 policy measures to strengthen ports sector, that represents bulk of India's merchandise trade.
 - Report introduces a 'Port Performance Index' to benchmark performance of various ports by combining qualitative perception of stakeholders with quantitative outcome based data. It covers 13 ports that handle around 67 % of India's maritime trade.
 - Out of 13 major ports, 3 ports (*Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT), Kamarajar Port, Visakhapatnam Port*) received 'Good' score.
22. Cab Aggregator Ola and Assam Government signed MoU to pilot an app-based river taxi service in Guwahati. River taxis will be machine-operated boats and users will be able to book rides through Ola app.
23. Cabinet Approvals -
- Cooperation Agreement with Morocco to develop long-term cooperation in railways.
 - Agreement with Israel on Film Co-production.
 - Cabinet approved Introducing 2 new Bills in Parliament, aimed at protecting savings of investors -
 - Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill 2018 - It aims to tackle menace of illicit deposit taking activities.
 - Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill 2018 - It aims at facilitating orderly growth of Chit Funds sector and remove bottlenecks being faced by Chit Funds industry. Amendments Proposed in Chit Funds Act 1982 Include Increasing ceiling of foreman's commission from a maximum of 5% to 7%, as rate has remained static since commencement of Act.
 - CCEA approved construction of 4.531 km long 2-Lane Bi-Directional *Silkyara Bend - Barkot Tunnel* along NH-134 (old NH- 94) in Uttarakhand, under Chardham Plan. It will be built over 4 years, at cost approx INR 1383 crores. Tunnel will provide all weather connectivity to Yamunotri (one of Chardhams).
 - CCEA approved methodology for auction of coal blocks for sale of coal to private sector under Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act 2015 and Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957. It will open coal sector to commercial mining by private sector, ending 41 year old monopoly of Coal India Ltd (CIL). It will allow power cement and steel producers to source coal more efficiently.
 - SC in September 2014 cancelled 204 coal mines and blocks allocated to various Companies since 1993 under Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act 1973. After this, Parliament enacted Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act 2015 to bring transparency in allocation of coal mines by way of auction and allotment for the sale of coal.
 - Approved setting up of tribunal for adjudication of long-pending dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over Mahanadi river waters. Tribunal was constituted under Inter-State River Disputes (ISRWD) Act 1956 on request of Odisha and is in line with SC's January 2018 order.
 - Approved Setting up crèche facility in Parliament House premises, to establish inclusive and supportive work environment for women employees, in line with Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017. Creche Facility is a nursery where babies and young children are cared for during the working day.

24. Cabinet Approvals on Feb 7, 2018 -

- MoU with Tunisia for cooperation on Youth matters.
- Protocol amending Agreement between with China for Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion.
- MOU with USA on Law Enforcement Training.
- MoU with UK on Cooperation in Skill Development, Vocational Education and Training.
- MoU for Secondment Programme with Australia.
- Ratification of Minamata Convention on Mercury, enabling India to become a Party of Convention. It gives flexibility for continued use of mercury-based products and processes involving mercury compound up to 2025. Minamata Convention was signed in October 2013 in Kumamoto (Japan), aimed to protect human health and environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.
- Government approved 2nd round of Discovered Small Field (DSF) auctions under Discovered Small Field Policy, to offer total 60 un-monetized discoveries with an estimated 194.65 Million Metric tonnes of oil.
- Of these, 22 fields belong to Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), 5 to Oil India Limited (OIL), 12 are relinquished discovered fields from New Exploration and Licensing Policy (NELP) blocks, and 21 fields that did not receive any investor interest in first round of DSF.
- Amendment to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act 2006 for classifying MSMEs from current *investment in plant and machinery* criteria to *annual turnover* criteria. It aims at encouraging ease of doing business, make MSME classification norms growth oriented and align them to new indirect tax regime revolving around Goods & Services Tax (GST). The amendment also empowers Central Government to vary turnover limits. New Classification Criteria -
 - Micro - It will be unit with annual turnover under INR 5 crores.
 - Small - It will be unit with annual turnover Between 5 - 75 crores.
 - Medium - It will be unit with annual turnover Between 75 - 250 crores.

25. Cabinet has Introducing Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill 2018 in Parliament, to address issue of human trafficking.

- Deals with confidentiality of victims and witnesses and complainants.
- Time bound trial and repatriation of the victims, within 1 year from taking into cognizance.
- Creates Rehabilitation Fund for the first time, to be used for well-being of victim including education, skill development, health care and psychological support, legal aid, accommodation etc.
- Creates dedicated institutional mechanisms at District, State and Central level.
- Punishment prescribed under it ranges from rigorous minimum 10 years to life and fine not less than Rs. 1 lakh.

26. Central Government disapproved execution Karnataka Government's *Mukhya Mantri Anila Bhagya Yojane* that promises free LPG gas connections for Below Poverty Line families.

- Central Govt wants State Govt to execute it through oil marketing companies (OMCs), unlikely current practice of directly going through the distributors' network.

27. Central Government sanctioned a special package to strengthen security in 3 eastern districts of Arunachal Pradesh - Tirap, Changlang and Longding.

28. Central Government will set up 562 more Ekalavya Model Residential School (EMRS) in tribal areas, aimed at providing best quality education to tribal children in their own environment. Currently, 190 EMRSs are operational, with approx 56000 tribal students enrolled.

29. Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) developed a multivendor e-commerce website and mobile app named *marinefishsales* to help fishermen sell their products and marine catch directly to customers, to increase income of coastal community.

30. Chhatrapati Shivaji International airport (Mumbai) created new world record for single-runway operations by handling 980 arrivals and take-offs in 24 hours. It has thus become world's busiest single-runway airport.

31. Chilika lake (Odisha) named as largest habitat of Irrawaddy dolphins in world (155 spottings), under first Annual Monitoring conducted by Chilika Development Authority.

32. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) signed MoU with Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT) of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for designating Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Lucknow (CSIR-CIMAP) as Coordinating Centre on Medicinal Plants.

33. Delhi government and Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) launched *Clean Air Campaign*, to focus on improvement of air quality, with 70 teams formed as a part of the campaign.

34. Delhi government launched *Mission Buniyaad* for improving learning skills of children studying in state and municipal-run schools. It will run from April to June for Class 3 to 5 in MCD schools and for Class 6 to 8 in government's schools. Children will undergo a reading level assessment based on which they will be enrolled in specialised *Mission Buniyaad* classes.
35. Department of Economic Affairs (Finance Ministry) signed loan agreement worth US \$ 375 million with World bank for Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP), JMVP for capacity augmentation of navigation on National Waterway-1(River Ganga) from Varanasi to Haldia.
- Total project cost is \$800 Million and is expected to be completed by March 2023. It will enable commercial navigation of vessels of capacity 1500-2,000 tons on NW-I and will lead to generation of upto 84000 jobs in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal.
36. Department of Telecom (DoT) and IIT Chennai, will jointly set up a development centre for 5G technologies. It will help provide applications like Internet of Things and Machine-to-Machine internet. A similar tie up had already been made between Ericsson and IIT Delhi.
37. Facebook and Andhra Pradesh government signed MOU to take up innovative pilot projects in state.
38. Feb 12 - National Productivity Day. 2018 theme is *Industry 4.0 Leapfrog Opportunity for India*.
39. First Mega Food Park in Maharashtra (10th in India) has been opened as *Satara Mega Food Park Pvt. Ltd* at Village Degaon in Satara District. Aim is to boost food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage at each stage of supply chain with particular focus on perishables.
- Mega Food Parks create modern infrastructure facilities for food processing along the value chain from farm to market with strong forward and backward linkages through a cluster based approach.
40. First high speed electric locomotive of Indian Railways, will be launched in March 2018, capable of running at of a maximum speed of 120 kmph.
- It will be launched during French President Emmanuel Macron's Indian visit. It has capacity of 12000 horsepower and is produced in collaboration with French Firm Alstom. It has been assembled at Madhepura plant in Bihar.
41. Foundation of Rhodendron Park laid in Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh). Tawang has 50 plus species of Rhodendron (*a genus of 1,024 species of woody plants*). More than 30 species of rhododendrons would be planted and conserved in park.
42. Gandhi Nagar railway station in Jaipur (Rajasthan) became railway station to be fully-managed by women, with 40 women staff at station.
43. General Conferences (Feb 1 - 10, 2018) -
- Lalit Kala Akademi organized First International Kala Mela in New Delhi.
 - International Conference on 'Demetrios Galanos and His Legacy' held in New Delhi.
 - 17 day Surajkund International Crafts Mela (32nd) began in Faridabad (Haryana). Uttar Pradesh is theme state and Kyrgyzstan is Partner Nation this year.
 - 7th India Energy Congress was held in New Delhi with theme *Energy 4.0: Energy Transition Towards 2030*. It is organized by World Energy Council India (WEC India).
 - NITI Aayog organized Conference on Jobs and Livelihood opportunities in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industries in Delhi.
 - 2 day International conference on Unani Medicine held at New Delhi.
 - 5th South Asia Region Public Procurement Conference held in New Delhi, with theme *Public Procurement and Service Delivery*.
 - 3 day International Conference on Operations and Maintenance - *Indian Power Stations 2018* held in delhi.
 - President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated 88th Mahamastakabhisheka of Lord Gomateshwara at Shravanabelagola in Hassan (Karnataka).
 - 4th meeting of Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister (EAC-PM) held in New Delhi under chairmanship of Bibek Debroy.
 - Institute Of Directors organised 12th International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility in Bengaluru (Karnataka).
 - National Informatics Centre (NIC) organized 3 day National Meet on Grassroot Informatics - *VIVID 2018* at India Habitat Centre in New Delhi, with Theme *Cyber Security and Innovation*.
44. General Conferences (Feb 11 - 20, 2018) -
- International Agricultural conference *Agricon 2018* and *Agriexpo 2018* held at Chandrashekhar Azad University of Agriculture & Technology (CSAUT) at Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh).

- Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare organized a National Conference *Agriculture 2022 – Doubling Farmers' Income* at National Agriculture Science Complex (NASC) in New Delhi.
 - National Banana Festival 2018 held in Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala).
 - India's biggest Global Conference on Pharma Industry and Medical Devices held in Bengaluru with theme '*Driving NextGen Pharmaceuticals*'.
 - Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) organized Youth Exchange Programme *Watan Ko Jano*, with special focus on youth of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - 3rd Global Procurement Summit in New Delhi, organized by All India Management Association (AIMA) and World Bank with Theme *New Frontiers faced in the Transformation process of Procurement Today*.
 - 10th international plastics exhibition, *PlastIndia* held in Gandhinagar (Gujarat), organized by Plastindia Foundation.
 - 12th International Conference on corporate social responsibility (CSR) held in Bengaluru (Karnataka).
 - 3 day International Conference on Operations and Maintenance, *Indian Power Stations 2018* held in New Delhi with theme *Technological Challenges: Risks and Challenges in Power Generation*. It is hosted by NTPC to commemorate synchronization of its first Thermal plant at Singrauli Super Thermal Power Station on February 13, 1982.
 - 54th annual Munich Security Conference held in Munich (Germany).
 - 6th Conference of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) of India Region held in Patna (Bihar).
 - Scientists observed *Darwin Week* in Kolkata, to effectively put an end to any confusion regarding Charles Darwin's 'Theory of Evolution'.
 - *International R&D Conclave* 2 day conference on Emerging Opportunities and Challenges of R&D in Indian Power Sector organised by Central Electricity Authority (CEA) in Delhi.
 - National Seminar on *Emerging Building Materials and Construction Technologies* held in New Delhi. During This, Hardeep Puri (Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs) launched Mobile App *Bamboo Housing & Construction. Technologies*.
45. General Conferences (Feb 21 - 28, 2018) -
- 3 day India International Textiles Expo (IITExpo) held in Sri Lankan capital of Colombo.
 - Regional conference of southern states on water resources held in Hyderabad (Telangana).
 - 44th Khajuraho Dance Festival 2018 held at Khajuraho temple (UNESCO world heritage site) in Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh.
 - Central Govt.'s Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology and Government Telangana organized 21st National Conference on e-Governance in Hyderabad.
 - 2 day International Conference on Sustainable Biofuels organized by Department of Biotechnology at India Habitat Centre in New Delhi.
 - Ministry of Culture organized a week long diversified cultural carnival '*Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav*' in Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh).
 - Economic Times Global Business Summit held in New Delhi with theme *New Economy – New Rules*.
 - Andhra Pradesh Government Organized 3rd Partnership Summit 2018 in Vizag, aiming to facilitate investments, foster innovations in creating business models.
 - 15th edition of BioAsia (*annual flagship event of Telangana Government*) held in Hyderabad (Telangana), with theme *Right Time, Right Now*. During it, Telangana government stated that it aims to double valuation of its life sciences ecosystem to \$100 billion in 10 years.
 - 7th Youth Festival held in New Delhi organised by Sahitya Kala Parishad and Delhi Government with theme *Let Love Live*.
 - 15th Vodafone Odeon Theatre Festival held in Kolkata, (West Bengal), to provide a platform for theatre artists to display their talent.
 - *Aadi Mahotsava*, a tribal festival organized by Assam Government held in Guwahati (Assam).
46. Google and Tata Trusts extended their *Internet Saathi* programme to 4,000 villages in six districts of Tamil Nadu, aimed at *Bridging the online gender divide in rural India*.
47. Government formulated water conservation scheme Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY) to tackle ever-deepening crisis of depleting groundwater level, with allocation of INR 6000 crores. It aims to create sufficient water storage for agricultural purposes. It will cover 78 districts, 193 blocks and more than 8,300 gram panchayats across Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

48. Government is developing tool named *soft power matrix*, aimed at calibrating effectiveness of India's soft power outreach. It will help in dealings with neighbouring countries and serve better as operational instrument in India's broader diplomatic doctrine.

- Currently, articulation of India's soft power abroad is done through Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), with some 36 foreign cultural centres working to promote artistic and cultural traditions through range of activities such as Festivals of India abroad.
- Standing Committee on External Affairs recommended that MEA should formulate comprehensive and well structured policy delineating India's soft power resources and their articulation abroad.

49. Government launched a ASH TRACK Web based and mobile application based Fly Ash monitoring System. It will enable better management of the ash produced by thermal power plants by providing an interface between fly ash producers (Thermal Power Plants) and potential ash users such as – road contractors, cement plants etc.

- ASH TRACK Mobile App will manage 200 million tonnes of fly ash by tracking coal based power plants situated within 100 km and 300 km from given location and availability of fly ash, along with prospective users within same radius.

50. Government sanctioned INR 1500 crore to promote organic farming in Uttarakhand, to be disbursed over 3 years.

51. Government sanctioned a new project to control pollution in River Sal at Navelim town (Goa), under National River Conservation Plan. It will be completed at cost of INR 61.74 crores (to be borne by Centre and State on 60:40 basis), scheduled for completion by January 2021.

52. Government will set up an international educational institution for minorities in Rajasthan's Alwar city, as 1 of 5 such institutes that Government is planning to set up across India. This plan was prepared in 2016 by a committee headed by Afzal Amanullah.

53. Govt. Owned Heavy Water Board signed agreement with Mumbai based Clearsynth for annual sale of 20 tonnes of Heavy Water for development of deuterium labeled compounds, NMR Solvents, d-labeled Active Pharma Ingredients (APIs), marking important event in Indian Nuclear industry leading to societal benefits for masses. It will initiate import substitution for the deuterated compounds and Heavy Water.

54. Govt. approved assistance of INR 6000 crores for 9 states which suffered from natural calamities during 2017-18, with Bihar getting 1710 crores, followed by Gujarat (1055 Crores). and other states - UP, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Bihar, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh.

55. Haryana Govt. approved death penalty (or min 14 years imprisonment) to those found guilty of raping girls aged 12 years or less.

56. Haryana Govt. launched *Parivartan* scheme, to address 10 issues in 46 developmental blocks of state.

57. Haryana State Government will establish *Kisan Kalyan Pradhikaran* as farmers' welfare department which will look to make agriculture remunerative by enhancing productivity and mitigate distress of farming households.

58. Haryana government opened subsidised canteens in 4 districts (Faridabad, Gurugram, Hisar and Yamunanagar) under *Antyodaya Aahar Yojana* to provide hygienic food at affordable prices to poor and needy persons. These canteens will serve food to concerned people at INR 10, having 4 chapattis, rice, dal, cooked seasonal vegetables, curd or raita, green chutney and gur.

59. Health Ministry approved proposal of Medical Council of India (MCI) to amend Screening Test Regulations 2002, making it mandatory to qualify National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) to pursue foreign medical course.

- A common National Entrance Exam, National Eligibility cum Entrance Test has been made mandatory for admission to all medical courses in the country.
- Indian students can also pursue medical education abroad, however, they need to qualify *Foreign Medical Graduates Exam (FMGE)* for practicing in India after obtaining MBBS overseas.
- Overseas Citizen of India shall have to mandatorily qualify NEET for admission to MBBS course abroad, from May 2018. Result of NEET will be treated as the Eligibility Certificate for such persons.

60. Home Minister Rajnath Singh has launched the Centre for learning Sanskrit language in Gujarat University (Ahmedabad), offering six-month course for people on how to speak Sanskrit.

61. India Health Fund (IHF) (launched by Tata Trusts) will financially support innovations and technologies designed to combat tuberculosis (TB) and malaria. IHF is not a fellowship programme to do research from scratch. It is long-term exercise aligned with country's goal of eliminating TB by 2025 and malaria by 2030.

62. India signed \$ 84 Million Loan Agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Improvement and Expansion of Water Supply in Bihar.
63. India started nationwide tiger census 2018, as largest survey of wildlife anywhere in world. India will now use more technology, including mobile app *MSTripes*, with higher focus on northeast to determine number of tigers in India.
- Tiger census 2018 by National Tiger Conservation Authority will be INR 10 crores exercise, which will involve 40,000 forest guards traversing 4,00,000 sq. km. of forests.
64. India will host its 1st (overall 8th edition) of Theatre Olympics 2018 in February - April 2018. This 51 day event will be organized by National School of Drama under Ministry of Culture, with budget of INR 51.81 crores, with theme *Flag of Friendship*.
- It will witness performances in 30 different Indian languages, 15 foreign languages as well as in non-verbal languages. Artists from 30 nations will participate.
65. India's First chat-based job search mobile app *Empzilla* launched, to do away with existing limitations of employers and job seekers making selection process quick and cost-effective.
66. India's IT Firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) recognized as one of world's best employers by Top Employer Institute for the third consecutive year.
67. Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and American pharmaceutical firm Pfizer signed MoU to establish a 'Centre to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance' in New Delhi, to help combat growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in India.
68. Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Limited (IRSDC) Launched Idea Competition called *SRIJAN* (Station Rejuvenation through Joint Action) at MyGov portal, under redevelopment of 635 major Railway stations across country. Last date for submission of entries in competition is 26-03-2018, with winner for logo competition to get cash prize of INR 75000.
69. Indian Railways and General Electric (GE) Jointly inducted 2 wholly designed in India Digitally Enabled Locomotives based on Insulated-gate bipolar transistor (IGBT) technology.
- IGBT Technology has 3 terminal power semiconductor device primarily used as electronic switch. It offers greater power gain than standard bipolar type transistor combined with higher voltage operation and lower input losses.
 - GE is providing locomotive technology to Indian Railway and by 2025, through JV (Indian Railways has 26% stake), it will manufacture 1000 fuel-efficient locomotives (100 per year) for freight traffic hauling. 40 fuel efficient diesel locomotives will be manufactured in GE facility at Erie in US and rest 960 diesel locomotives will be manufactured in Marhaura (Bihar).
70. Indian Railways introduced new General Conditions of Contracts (GCC) for Services, that defines terms & conditions for contractors engaged in service contracts for non-operational areas including *Facilities Management, Housekeeping, Consultancy etc.*
- Under new policy of GCC for Services, concepts of Digital Labour Management System and stepped Performance Guarantee in place of Security Deposit, have been introduced for first time.
 - As per digital management labour system, contractor has to compulsorily maintain a data base of all workers including their attendance data and salary details.
71. Indian Railways launched *Voluntary Safety Reporting* website for its employees to anonymously report internal safety issues and hazards. It allows employees to report issues anonymously OR to mention their contact details for confidential feedback.
72. India's first Aviation Multi Skill Development Centre (MSDC) is launched at Chandigarh Airport's old terminal, as a CSR initiative of Airports Authority of India (AAI). It will train about 2,400 youth and women in 8 aviation job roles over next 3 years.
73. India's first artificial intelligence (AI) research institute inaugurated in Mumbai as *Wadhvani AI*. It will focus on researching ways to harness power of AI to solve deep rooted problems in India. Indian-American tech entrepreneurs Romesh Wadhvani and Sunil Wadhvani are committing \$30 million to institute over first 10 years.
74. Jammu & Kashmir State Government constituted State Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (SCPUL), for promotion of Urdu.
75. Jharkhand Govt. will set up *Dada-Dadi Park* for senior citizens in each city across state, to relieve people from summer heat.

76. KPIT technologies signed MOU with NITI (National Institution for Transforming India) Aayog to promote innovative skills of students, as part of Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).
77. Kerala Government will geotag houses and farms of over 10 lakh livestock and poultry farmers, to compile digital repository of information of animal husbandry and dairying in Kerala and integrate data using Geographical Information System (GIS).
78. Kerala government made vaccination compulsory for school admissions from next academic year onwards.
79. Kerala government will soon be utilising services of robots called *Bandicoot*, to clean sewer holes in state, developed by startup *Genrobotics*. Services of robots will be initially utilised in Kerala's capital Thiruvananthapuram, which has over 5000 manholes.
80. Madhya Pradesh government introduced *Pollution Metre* mobile application to spread awareness against pollution in western part of state. Using it, users can check status of air, water and noise pollution in their areas.
81. Madhya Pradesh government launched a mobile application *pollution metre* to spread awareness against pollution in western part of state.
82. Maharashtra Government approved Ghodazari in Chandrapur district as new wildlife sanctuary in state. Located in North East of Tadoba, it will include 159 sq km of Brahmapuri forest.
83. Maharashtra Government became first state to set up a Transgender Welfare Board, to look after education, employment, housing, and health schemes for transgenders and protect their Constitutional and human rights.
84. Maharashtra Government launched 4 schemes aimed at promoting entrepreneurship in agriculture and allied sectors among economically backward segments (Beneficiaries in 18 – 41 years age group) -
- 1st scheme is about extending loan along with interest subsidy
 - 2nd is for promoting group farming.
 - 3rd scheme is for group projects related to agro-industries and small and medium scale entrepreneurs
 - 4th scheme relates to skill development training in agriculture under which, training will be imparted to 2.5 lakh rural youths.
- *Annasaheb Patil Arthik Backward Development Corporation (APABDC)* will be nodal entity for implementation of these schemes.
85. Maharashtra became first State to adopt a fintech (Financial Technology) policy for fostering an environment for fintech startups. Under this, State Government will provide infrastructure and financial support to facilitate 300 startups over 3 years, with INR 200 crores allotted for it.
86. Maharashtra government will roll out *Asmita Yojana* on International Women's Day (March 8, 2018) to provide affordable (subsidised) sanitary pads to school girls and women. Under this, schoolgirls studying in Zilla Parishad schools will get sanitary napkin packet at Rs 5 while rural women can avail it at subsidised rate of INR 24 and INR 29. State government appointed *Umed*, Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission, as a nodal agency for effective implementation.
87. Meghalaya Governor Ganga Prasad inaugurated *Friendship Gate* for Indian and Bangladesh border guards, aimed to have a Wagah-like beating retreat ceremony for India's Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guards Bangladesh.
88. Minister of Health and Family Welfare JP Nadda launched *Viral Load testing* for all People Living with HIV/AIDS, to provide free of cost viral load testing to 12 lakh PLHIV for treatment in India at least once a year. It will empower medical officers to detect failure on first line treatment and therefore save PLHIV from developing resistance to drugs.
89. Ministry for Development of North-East Region (DoNER) will set up *NITI Forum for North-East* to recommend suitable interventions for sustainable growth in North East Region (NER). It will be co-chaired by Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog (Rajiv Kumar Currently) and Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region (DoNER).
90. Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation developed a Sanitation Park in Delhi, named *Swatch Bharat Sanitation Park*.
91. Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation launched *Gangotri Swachh Iconic Place project AND Swajal*, a community owned drinking water programme in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand. Bagori Ganga Gram' project was also announced for Bagori village, which was declared open defecation free (ODF).
92. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) released 15th India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2017 (by Forest Survey of India (FSI)) -

- Total forest and tree cover in India increased over 8,021 sq km (80.20 million hectare), which is 1 % increase from 2015. Forest cover increased by 6778 sq km and tree cover increased 1243 sq km. Total forest and tree cover is 24.39% of geographical area of country.
- Globally, India is ranked 10th in terms of forest and tree cover.
- State-wise break-up -
- 7 States/UTs have more than 75% forest cover - Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Manipur.
- 8 States/UTs have forest cover between 33% to 75% - Tripura, Goa, Sikkim, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Chhattisgarh and Assam.
- Top 5 States with maximum Forest cover - Madhya Pradesh (77,414 sq km) Arunachal Pradesh (66,964 sq km) and Chhattisgarh (55,547 sq km).
- States with highest Forest cover in terms of percentage geographical area - Lakshadweep (90.33%), Mizoram (86.27%) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (81.73%).
- Mangrove cover is 4,921 sq km and has increased by 181 sq kms.
- Water bodies inside forests have increased by 2,647 sq kms during last decade. Maharashtra leads with 432 sq kms, followed by Gujarat (428 sq kms).
- 93. Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) launched *Green Good Deeds* campaign to sensitise people and students about climate change and global warming.
- 94. Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) extended Anti-Narcotics Scheme for 3 more years to combat illicit trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances, with an estimated budget of INR 21 crores. It was launched in October 2004 for 5 years and has been extended twice since then.
- 95. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs approved construction of 1.87 more affordable houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), that aims at building 2 Crore Houses for urban poor by 2022. This round has taken number of houses approved under PMAY to 39.25 lakh. Haryana has been sanctioned maximum number of houses in this round.
- 96. Ministry of New and Renewable Energy under *Development of Solar Cities* scheme approved 60 Cities including 13 Pilot and 5 Model Cities up to 12th Five-year Plan period.
- 97. Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has released India's first ever Highway Capacity Manual named Indo-HCM, to guide road engineers and policy makers about road expansion. It lays down guidelines for when and how to expand or manage different types of roads and their intersections and level of services to be put in place.
- 98. Ministry of Science & Technology has set up Mechanism in Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) to interact with Small-Scale Industry (SSI) for transfer of Technology from CSIR Labs. SSI sector is largest employment provider in country, next to agriculture.
- 99. Ministry of Shipping and IIT Chennai signed MoU to set up of a National Technology Centre for Ports, Waterways and Coasts (NTCPWC) at IIT Chennai, under Shipping Ministry *Sagarmala Programme*. It will act as a technology arm of Ministry of Shipping for providing technological inputs and support for Ports, Inland Waterways Authority of India and other institutions.
- 100. Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs will introduce first ever ranking system for National Sports Federations (NSFs), to build healthy competition between sports bodies. Sports federations will be ranked on the basis of administrative capability, transparency, talent-spotting ability, and medal count of athletes etc.
- 101. Ministry of Women and Child Development will establish National Women Entrepreneurship Council (NWECC) as an umbrella organization for socio-economic gender parity, financial inclusion and economic empowerment of women in India and to promote entrepreneurship among women.
- 102. NITI Aayog released a comprehensive 'Healthy States, Progressive India' report in New Delhi.
- Health Index is a weighted composite Index, which for larger States, is based on indicators in three domains – Health Outcomes (70%), Governance and Information (12%), Key Inputs and Processes (18%).
- Large States -
- Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu are top 3 states in overall performance.
- Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, and Uttar Pradesh are top 3 ranking larger States in terms of annual incremental performance.
- Smaller States -
- Mizoram ranked first, followed by Manipur in Overall performance.
- Manipur and Goa are top 2 in terms of annual incremental performance.

103. National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) launched ranking system for over 300 toll plazas, on the basis of cleanliness, staff behaviour, availability of ambulance and cranes in case of any emergency on highways. Every quarter, 3 best toll plazas will be identified.
104. National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will launch pilot project *Pay as you use tolling* on Delhi Mumbai national highway.
- It involves implementing a satellite based electronic toll collection system running on GPS/GSM technology for selected commercial vehicles on a national highway for 1 year.
 - This tolling system will work on combination of mobile telecommunications technology (GSM) and satellite-based Global Positioning System (GPS). It will deduct money from vehicle account, credit money to concessionaire within a day and open toll gate.
105. National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) retained its 'A' status of accreditation of Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) for fourth consecutive term.
- NHRC was awarded 'A' status for first time in 1999 which it retained in 2006 and 2011 reviews.
 - The 'A' accreditation is given to those human rights institutions, which are found fully compliant with UN mandated Paris Principles.
106. National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) New Delhi will conduct *INDIAsize* as a National Sizing Survey to develop a comprehensive size chart for ready-to-wear industry based on body measurements of 25000 Indians in age group 15 - 65 years. India will be 15th Nation to complete a national sizing survey.
- Findings of study will impact various other sectors like automotive, aerospace, fitness and sport, art and computer gaming where insights from this data can produce ergonomically designed products suited for Indian population.
107. Nine member committee constituted by Karnataka government recommended separate state flag, discounting any constitutional / legal hurdles for it.
108. Northeast India's first regional Centre for Agriculture with collaboration of Israel will be inaugurated in Mizoram in March 2018.
- It will be first such centre in North East region of India being established with Israeli collaboration.
109. Odisha approved long-term bauxite linkage policy that would help Vedanta's Lanjigarh alumina refinery to source bauxite from government-owned Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC). Now, 70 % of total production by OMC will now be available for long-term linkage.
110. PM Narendra Modi flagged off Palace Queen Humsafar Express between Mysuru (Karnataka) and Udaipur (Rajasthan), aimed to promote tourism between North and South.
111. PM Narendra Modi inaugurated 4th Container Terminal (FCT) of Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) in Mumbai, as India's Largest Container Terminal. It has been developed at estimated cost of INR 7915 crores.
- New FCT will add capacity of 24 lakh containers per year in Phase-I and after completion of Phase-II in 2022, capacity of JNPT will be 100 lakh containers per year.
112. PM Narendra Modi inaugurated newly constructed Dorjee Khandu State Convention Centre in Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh).
113. PM Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of Navi Mumbai International Airport, to cost approx INR 16700 crores.
114. PM Narendra Modi launched *Amma two-wheeler Scheme* meant to provide scooters at subsidised rates to working women on occasion of former Tamilnadu CM Jayalalithaa's 70th birth anniversary.
- Under this Scheme, beneficiary will be given 50% of cost of a two-wheeler or grant of INR 25000, covering 1 lakh working women annually.
115. PM Narendra Modi launched development schemes worth Rs 1,000 crore for UT of Daman and Diu, Including a flight connecting Ahmedabad to coastal town of Diu. PM Modi also flagged off *Run for New India* marathon in Surat (Gujarat).
116. Pelican Bird Festival-2018 is held for first in Atapaka Bird Sanctuary on at Kolleru lake in Andhra Pradesh. Recently, Atapaka Bird Sanctuary was recognised as one of the largest pelicanry in the world.
117. Power Ministry extended waiver of inter-state power transmission charges and losses for solar and wind power projects commissioned till 31 March 2022, to promote clean energy sources. Waiver will be available to solar and wind projects for 25 years from date of commissioning.
- It holds significance in view of India's ambitious target of having 175GW of renewable energy capacities (100GW of solar, 60GW of wind energy, 10GW energy from Biomass and 5 GW from Hydel).

- Earlier, waiver was available to solar and wind power projects commissioned till 31 December 2019, and 31 March 2019 respectively.

118. Punjab Government discontinued sale of 20 pesticides (insecticides) including Endosulfan harmful to health of humans and environment.

119. Punjab government formed 6 member Revenue Commission with an aim to bring greater efficiency and accountability in functioning of Revenue Department. It will be headed by Justice SS Saron.

120. Railways will set up of a rail coach factory in Latur district (Maharashtra), to help generate employment opportunities and bring economic development in this backward Marathwada region. Plant will manufacture Electric Multiple Units for suburban trains and coaches for metros.

121. South Central Railway (SCR) became first railway zone to complete 100% LED lighting at all 733 stations under its jurisdiction.

122. Supreme Court's Verdict on Cauvery Water Dispute -

- SC stated that Karnataka government will release 177.25 tmcft of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu from its inter-state Biligundlu dam, down from state's earlier allocation of 192 TMC water. Karnataka will now have an enhanced share of 14.75 tmcft water per year.

- Earlier, Cauvery Water Tribunal's order in 2007 stated Karnataka to have share of 270 tmcft of Cauvery water. Now it will go up to 284.75 tmcft.

- Verdict stayed 30 tmcft water to Kerala and 7 tmcft water to Puducherry as per Tribunal's 2007 Order. SC also allowed Tamil Nadu to draw an additional 10 tmcft 'groundwater' from a total of 20 tmcft beneath Cauvery basin.

- SC order on Cauvery water allocation will continue to hold for next 15 years.

- Cauvery Water Dispute -

- Water sharing of Cauvery River has been a major source of conflict between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Its origin is traced back to two agreements in 1892 and 1924, which had taken place between the then Madras Presidency and Kingdom of Mysore.

- 802 km long Cauvery River has 44,000 km² basin area in Tamil Nadu and 32,000 km² basin area in Karnataka.

- Cauvery Water Tribunal, in its ruling in 2007, allocated 192 TMC water to Tamil Nadu, 270 TMC water to Karnataka, 30 tmcft to Kerala and 7 tmcft to Puducherry per year.

123. Tamil Nadu government signed an agreement with IT Major Microsoft to improve integration of technology in teaching and learning in state, to reform education sector, build tech capacity and enhance digital literacy across all levels.

124. Telangana Government announced a health-cum-life insurance scheme worth INR 5 lakh for farmers in state, with allocation of INR 500 crores.

125. Telangana Government constituted a task force on urban mobility to study feasibility of the monorail model and other modes of transport for IT corridor in Hyderabad. Arvind Kumar is Member Convenor of task force.

126. Telecom Firm Bharti Airtel and Chinese telecom equipment maker Huawei successfully conducted India's first 5G (fifth generation) network trial, achieving over 3 gigabit per second (Gbps) data speed.

- 5G is wireless communication technology based on third-generation partnership project (3GPP). It is next generation mobile networks technology after 4G LTE networks. It is expected to offer enhanced mobile broadband (eMBB) through R15 repeaters that can cater to coverage requirements. India aims to roll out 5G Services by 2020.

127. Telecom Minister Manoj Sinha launched India's first locally developed 4G/LTE (*Long-Term Evolution*) telecom system, developed by telecom equipment manufacturer VNL Ltd. It ensures seamless connectivity at affordable prices and reduces import dependence for such equipments.

128. To save environment from air pollution caused by stubble burning, Punjab government made attachment of super straw management system with harvester machines mandatory for harvesting paddy (rice) crop.

129. UP Investors Summit 2018 Lucknow -

- Government will establish India's 2nd defence industrial production corridor in Uttar Pradesh, at approx INR 20000 crores and will generate about 250000 jobs. It will link Agra, Aligarh, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi and Chitrakoot. 1st of 2 defense industrial production corridors proposed in Budget 2018 will link Chennai & Bengaluru.

- UP's Khadi and Village Industries Board signed pact with Amazon India to facilitate online selling of Khadi products.
 - Uttar Pradesh (UP) became first state to clear business and investment projects digitally, without any human interface. This became possible with launch of 'Nivesh Mitra' digital platform. It will serve as a single-window clearance system.
 - UP government signed 1045 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) worth INR 4.28 lakh crores at UP Investors Summit 2018.
130. Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) rolled Under 5 years age version of Aadhaar Card, named *Bal Aadhaar*. It will have blue colour and will be linked with one of parent's Aadhaar card. No biometric details (Iris scan / fingerprint scans) will be captured as Biometrics are not developed for children before 5 years of age.
131. Uttar Pradesh State Government inaugurated state's first ever butterfly park in Kanpur, as pollution-free spaces which do not have chemicals/pesticides and play an important role in conserving endangered butterfly species.
- Further, Madhya Pradesh's first butterfly park opened in Raisen district.
132. Uttar Pradesh government launched a mass marriage policy for poor girls, under which financial assistance worth INR 35000 will be provided. It aims to discourage practice of dowry.
133. Virgin Group (USA) signed agreement with Maharashtra Government to build world's first hyperloop transportation system between Mumbai and Pune, during Magnetic Maharashtra investor summit in Mumbai. It aims to reduce travel time between two mega cities to 20 minutes from three hours at present, with capability of travelling up to 1000 km per hour.
- Hyperloop Technology is dubbed as fifth mode of transportation. It is system of magnetically levitating capsules (pods) that are sent at high speeds through low-pressure tubes. It uses linear Induction motors in it to control speed of pods.
 - Hyperloop is two-to-three times faster than fastest high-speed rail and has speeds even greater than commercial air travel.
 - Hyperloop departures could happen with a low frequency of a pod every 20 seconds which is not possible in railways.
134. West Bengal became first state to opt out of Central Govt's proposed NHPS (National Health Protection Scheme, informally called *Modicare*), Claiming that Bengal government had already enrolled 50 lakh people under its own Swasthya Sathi programme.

Persons

1. 4th International Young Chef Olympiad (YCO) concluded in New Delhi with Lai Jia Yi from Malaysia winning top spot and Indian student chef Surya Sekhar Roy Choudhury claiming 2nd position. It is Touted as *World's biggest culinary battle of student chefs*.
2. Avani Chaturvedi became first Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo, after She flew a MiG-21 bison. She belongs to first batch of female pilots, besides Bhawana Kanth and Mohana Singh, who were inducted into IAF in 2016.
3. Former President Pranab Mukherjee will be conferred an honorary D.Litt by Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology (IIST).
4. Indo-UK 8 year old girl Sohini Roy Chowdhury entered UK's Athletics Hall of Fame, online mathematics based competitive tool aimed at primary school pupils.
5. NASA named seven hills on planet Mars after 7 crew members, including India-born astronaut Kalpana Chawla, of Space Shuttle Columbia who lost their lives while returning from their mission on February 1, 2003.
6. Obituaries (Feb 2018) -
 - Francisco Nunez Olivera (France) - World's oldest man.
 - Kalamandalam Geethanandan - Noted Ottanthullal (A dance form of kerala) artist.
 - Louis Zorich - Noted American Actor.
 - Lakshmi Devi - Noted Telugu actor.
 - Madavoor Vasudevan Nair - Noted Kathakali maestro.
 - John Mahoney - Noted American Actor.
 - Johann Johannsson - Noted Golden Globe awardee Icelandic musician.
 - Asma Jahangir - Noted Pakistani human rights activist.

- Chandrasekhar Rath - Noted Odia author.
 - Parbati Ghose - First female filmmaker of Odisha.
 - Sudha Karmarkar - Pioneer of Children's Theatre.
 - John Gavin -Noted American Actor.
 - Bevan Congdon - Former New Zealand cricketer.
 - Muzaffar Hussain - Noted Scribe , writer and journalist.
 - Ruud Lubbers -Longest serving prime minister of Netherlands.
 - Rev. Billy Graham - Noted Christian evangelist.
 - Ram Swarup Sharma - Padma Shri Awardee from UP for Folk Art *Rasa Lila*.
 - Gundu Hanumantha Rao - Noted Telugu actor.
 - Kunhiraman Panoor - Noted Malayalam writer.
 - M S Anantharaman - Noted violinist.
 - Sri Devi - Noted Bollywood Actress.
 - Neelabh Mishra - Noted senior journalist.
 - Nanette Fabray - Noted America Actress. She had won 3 Emmy awards and received SAG Life Achievement Award in 1987.
 - T.S.R. Subramanian - Former Cabinet Secretary.
 - Jayendra Saraswati Swamigal - Kanchi Shankaracharya (69th pontiff of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam).
 - Kanakalata Mohanty - Noted Odia writer.
 - Penny Vincenzi - Noted British novelist.
7. Pakistan Peoples Party's Krishna Kumari will become country's first woman Hindu Parliamentarian (MP).
8. Pune-based swimmer Rohan More became first Asian (9th globally) to swim across Ocean Seven. He swam across the Cook Strait between North and South Islands of New Zealand in 8 hours and 37 minutes.
9. South Africa's President Jacob Zuma resigned, after ruling party African National Congress (ANC) threatened to eject him from office. Further, Hailemariam Desalegn resigned as Prime Minister of Ethiopia (Horn of Africa).
10. Sports Persons in Forbes India 30 Under 30 list 2018 - Jasprit Bumrah and Harmanpreet Kaur (Cricket), Savita Punia (women's hockey team goalkeeper), Heena Sidhu (Shooting).
11. Visits From India (Feb 11 - 20, 2018)
- Finance and Corporate Affairs Arun Jaitley visited Saudi Arabia, to co-chair 12th India-Saudi Arabia Joint Commission Meeting (JCM).
 - PM Narendra Modi completed his tri-nation visit to Palestine, United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Oman.
 - This is the first ever visit by an Indian PM to Palestine, and PM Modi's second visit to UAE and first to Oman.
 - Oman Visit -
 - India and Oman signed 8 MoUs in different areas. It Includes -
 - Agreement on Legal and Judicial Cooperation in Civil and Commercial matters.
 - Agreement on mutual visa exemption for holders of diplomatic, Special, service and official passports
 - MOUs for co-operation in health, peaceful uses of outer space, Foreign Services, Academic and Scholarly areas, Tourism and Military Matters.
 - India secured access to strategic Port of Duqm in Oman in Arabian sea for military use and logistical support. Following this, services of Duqm port and dry dock will be available for maintenance of Indian military vessels.
 - Port of Duqm is strategically situated on southeastern seaboard of Oman, overlooking Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. It is straddled along critical sea lanes in Arabian Sea and Gulf of Aden, located close to Chabahar port in Iran (developed by India open a trade route to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan) and Gwadar Port in Pakistan developed by China as part of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor.
 - UAE Visit -
 - PM Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of first traditional Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi (UAE), as first traditional Hindu stone temple in the Middle East. It will come up on 55,000 square metres of land.
 - India and UAE inked 5 MOUs -
 - MOU between a consortium led by ONGC and Abu Dhabi national oil company for acquisition of 10% stake in offshore concession.
 - Under this, ONGC consortium of Indian state oil firms have acquired 10% stake in Abu Dhabi's offshore Lower Zakum Concession for \$600 million. With this deal, Indian oil and gas companies for first time have

acquired stake in development of Abu Dhabi's hydrocarbon resources. It gives Indian oil companies, access to about 2 million tonnes of annual share from field, with term of 40 years.

- MoU aiming to institutionalize employment of Indian workers in UAE to safeguard their interests.
- MoU aiming at technical cooperation in rail sector, financial services, Securities exchanges.
- MoU between Jammu and Kashmir and DP World signed to establish multi-modal logistics park and hub in Jammu.
- 6th World Government Summit (WGS) 2018 held at Madinat Jumeirah in Dubai (UAE), with India as guest country.
- India's Aadhaar and Umang App won awards at 6th World Government Summit 2018 in Dubai.
- Umang App won in Best m-Government Service for Accessible Government Category. Umang stands for Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance. It provides users unified platform that combines government departments and services, facilitating transactions for citizens.
- Aadhaar won *Best Government Emerging Technology Award*.
- Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA) launched tests of world's first autonomous pods at World Government Summit, in cooperation with Next Future Transportation (US-Based).
- Palestine Visit -
- India and Palestine have signed 6 MoU s worth USD 40 million.
- Setting up of India-Palestine Super-specialty hospital at Beit Sahour in Bethelhem Governorate at a cost of US\$ 30 million.
- Construction of India Palestine Centre for Empowering women, "Turathi" at a cost of US\$ 5 million.
- Setting up new National Printing Press at Ramallah at a cost of US\$ 5 million.
- Construction of school in Muthalth Al Shuhada Village at a cost of US\$ 1 million
- Construction of school in Tamoon village in Tubas Governorate in Palestine at a cost of US\$ 1.1 million.
- Assistance of US\$ 0.25 million for construction of additional floor to Jawahar Lal Nehru for Boys at Abu Dees.

12. Visits from India (Feb 1 - 10, 2018) -

- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj Visited Nepal.
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj visited Saudi Arabia, to attend opening ceremony of 32nd Al Jana driyah festival in Riyadh.

13. Visits from India (Feb 21 - 28, 2018)

- Satya Pal Singh, Minster of State in HRD Ministry visited Fiji to attend 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers on India's Behalf. Theme of Conference was *Sustainability and Resilience: Can Education Deliver?*.

14. Visits to India (Feb 1 - 10, 2018) -

- Chief of US Air Force, General David L Goldfein Visited India. He flew a sortie in indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas and became first foreign military chief to fly Tejas aircraft.
- Nepal's last monarch Gyanendra Shah visited India to attend International Gau Sambardhana Mahotsav in Odisha.
- Sergey Beletskiy, Deputy Agriculture Minister of Russia Visited India for India-Russia Agriculture Business Summit in New Delhi.

15. Visits to India (Feb 11 - 20, 2018)

- Iran President Hassan Rouhani Visited India.
- MOUs Signed during Visit -
- Agreement for Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on Income.
- Exemption from Visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic Passports.
- Instrument of Ratification of Extradition Treaty signed in 2008.
- Cooperation in - Traditional Systems of Medicine, Agriculture and Allied Sectors, Health and Medicine and Postal Departments.

16. Visits to India (Feb 21 -28, 2018)

- Spiritual leader Prince Karim Aga Khan visited India.
- Mr. Khalid Bin Abdulaziz Al-Falih, Minister of Energy, Industry and Mineral Resources of Saudi Arabia visited India.
- Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau Visited India -

- MOU signed with Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), to usher programme based research support in addressing developmental challenges.
- India and Canada signed several agreements in different fields -
- Co-operation in Sport, Higher Education, Intellectual Property Rights and Science, Technology and Innovation, Information Communications Technology and Electronics.
- Terms of Reference for India-Canada Ministerial Energy Dialogue.
- Canada's first franchise-based Twenty20 Cricket league *Global T20 Canada* has been announced. It will be functioning from July 2018 at three venues in Toronto. It is designed by Mercuri Group with Cricket Canada. Cricket Canada became first Associate member of ICC to start a Twenty20 franchise league in North America market.
- India's Mahindra Aerospace and Canada's Viking Air signed MoU to form a strategic alliance for making smaller aircraft to support regional air connectivity in India. Both companies will work together to boost market penetration in identified territories and provide multiple options to prospective customers based on specific operational requirements.
- Baek Woon kyu, South Korea's Minister of Trade, industry and Energy Visited India for participating in Second India-Korea Business Summit organized in New Delhi.
- King of Jordan *Abdullah-II bin Al-Hussein* visited India.

Science

1. A long-lost NASA satellite - *Imager for Magnetopause-to-Aurora Global Exploration (IMAGE)* has been spotted back.
 - Engineers from NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center used NASA's Deep Space Network which consists of a series of groundbased radio telescopes to study signals, only to discover that these signals were from IMAGE satellite.
 - IMAGE satellite was launched in March 2000, and exceeded its initial 2 year mission by operating through 2005. NASA lost contact with It in December 2005.
2. According to a new study by Swedish scientists, small molecules that specifically restrain a selenium containing enzyme in the human body may become an important tool to fight cancer. Researchers at Karolinska Institute (Sweden) treated cancer in mice with these molecules and observed rapid tumor-killing effects.
 - Selenium is a chemical element that is an essential micronutrient. A selenium-containing enzyme, called TrxR1, can be used to support growth of various cells and protect them from oxidative stress (*imbalance between production of free radicals, which are highly reactive with other molecules, and body's ability to counteract or repair resulting damage*).
3. According to study based on data from India's Chandrayaan-1 mission and NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO), Moon's water may be widely distributed across its surface and not confined to particular region. It contradict earlier studies that suggested that more water was detected at Moon's polar latitudes.
 - Researchers after analyzing data from Moon Mineralogy Mapper spectrometer onboard Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft, suggested that water may be present primarily as OH, a more reactive form of normal water (H₂O). OH also called hydroxyl does not stay in its form for long, and attaches itself chemically.
4. As per new study at University of Colorado (USA) based on 25 years of satellite data, It is found that global sea level rise rate is accelerating a little every year.
 - Sea level rate is increasing by about 0.08 millimeters per year (mm/year). It means annual rate of sea level will rise to 10 mm/year by 2100, mainly driven by rapid melting in Antarctica and Greenland.
 - If oceans keep on to growing at this pace, sea level will rise 65cm by 2100, causing trouble for several coastal cities.
5. CSIR - National Institute of Oceanography Goa announced discovery of methane gas flares and active cold seeps from seabed in Krishna Godavari basin in Bay of Bengal, distributed over water depth of 900 – 1900 metres. Gas hydrates are a potential source of alternate energy.
6. Health-tech startup mCURA launched *Smart OPD* as India's first integrated mobility platform that reduces waiting time in counters and provides e-prescriptions. It helps patients to escape long queues at admission and billing counters, labs, pharmacies and hospitals.
7. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will build igloos (referred to as lunar habitats) on Moon, by sending robots and 3D printers to Moon. It aims to help astronauts spend more time on moon.

8. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch Chandrayan-2 Mission in April 2018 as India's second lunar mission. It will cost approx INR 800 Crores.
- ISRO is also planning to launch India's second space observatory, AstroSat-2, to help observe distant planets, galaxies and other astronomical objects more clearly than from Earth. Currently, only USA, Japan, Russia, Europe and India have their own space observatories. AstroSat-1 was launched in September 2015 with life span of 5 years.
9. Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) launched world's smallest rocket with ability to put a tiny satellite into orbit. It carried a microsatellite TRICOM-1R, a three-unit CubeSat weighing about 3 kilograms.
10. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) will introduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) injection technology in its Gandhar oil field in Gujarat, as first large scale CO₂-injected project in Asia. It aims to recover extra 20 million barrels of crude oil under enhanced oil recovery (EOR) programme.
- CO₂ injection technology is a proven concept in West, especially USA and Canada. Under it, CO₂ gas is injected with residual oil in ageing field in which total oil production has been declining. It reduces its viscosity and makes it easier to displace oil from rock pores.
11. Researchers identified a new shark species in Atlantic Ocean, named *Atlantic sixgill shark*. They are very different from ones in Indian and Pacific Oceans on a molecular level. New species of sharks have six-gill slits, while most sharks have five-gill slits.
12. Scientists confirmed discovery of nearly 100 new exoplanets outside our solar system based on data from second mission of NASA's Kepler Space Telescope (K2 mission) released in 2014. With this, number of exoplanets found using NASA's K2 mission has reached almost 300.
13. Scientists discovered massive reserves of mercury hidden in permafrost (*thick subsurface layer of soil that remains below freezing point throughout the year, occurring primarily in polar regions*).
- Study says that all frozen and unfrozen soil in northern permafrost regions contain a combined 1656 gigagrams of mercury, making it largest known reservoir of mercury on planet.
 - This discovery may have significant implications on human health and ecosystems worldwide as exposure to mercury can cause serious health problems. There would be severe environmental problems if these reservoirs do not remain frozen, as evident by Warming temperatures. Melting permafrost could release a large amount of mercury that could potentially affect ecosystems around the world.
14. Scientists from Botanical Survey of India (BSI) identified new plant species named *Drypetes kalamii* from Buxa and Jaldapara National Parks in West Bengal, named after former President Dr. APJ Kalam. It is close relative of medicinal plant known in Sanskrit as Putrajivah.
15. Scientists from Britain and USA for first time grew human eggs in laboratory from earliest stages in ovarian tissue all way to full maturity. This is first time human eggs have been developed outside human body. It can widen scope of available fertility treatments and can help in developing regenerative medicine therapies and new infertility treatments.
16. Scientists from Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru indigenously developed country's first super critical carbon dioxide (S-CO₂) Brayton Test Loop facility. It is first test loop technology coupled with solar heat source in world that will generate clean energy from power plants, including solar thermal, as part of Indo-US consortium- Solar Energy Research Institute for India and United States (SERIUS).
- It uses supercritical CO₂ (SCO₂) instead of steam to generate more power. Supercritical refers to state of CO₂ above its critical temperature of 31 C and critical pressure of 73 atmospheres, which makes it twice as dense as steam.
 - This Next generation and waterless super critical CO₂ Brayton cycle test loop for power generation will be useful for meeting energy needs. It has potential to replace steam based nuclear and thermal power plants, reducing carbon foot print significantly.
17. Scientists from Rockefeller University (USA) discovered of a new class of antibiotics called malacidins, produced by microorganisms living in soil and dirt and is capable of killing off several antibiotic-resistant pathogens.
- Malacidins are distinctive class of antibiotics that are commonly encoded in soil microbiomes. They have never been reported in culture-based NP (Natural Products) discovery efforts. This discovery could be a useful weapon in field of medicines.
18. Scientists from Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) discovered 3 new species of eel along northern Bay of Bengal coast - *Gymnothorax pseudotile*, *Gymnothorax visakhaensis* and *Enchelycore propinqua*.

- There are about 1,000 species of eels identified so far across the world. In India, there are around 125 species of eels identified.

19. USA space flight company SpaceX launched the world's most powerful operational rocket 'Falcon Heavy' into space, carrying a red Tesla Roadster car belonging to SpaceX and Tesla founder Elon Musk.

- The car was outfitted with a mannequin dressed in a spacesuit, a high-data storage unit containing Isaac Asimov's science fiction book series, Foundation Trilogy, and a plaque bearing names of 6000 SpaceX employees.

Sports

1. 2018 Chennai Open Challenger Tennis Title -

- Singles - Jordan Thompson (Australia), Defeating India's Yuki Bhambri

- Doubles - India's Sriram Balaji AND Vishnu Vardhan

2. 2018 Maharashtra Tata Open Men's Tennis Championship -

- Singles - Gilles Simon (France), Defeated Kevin Anderson (South Africa)

- Doubles - Netherlands' Robin Haase AND Matwé Middelkoop

3. 23rd Winter Olympic Games 2018 hosted by Pyeongchang (South Korea) -

- 2922 Athletes from 92 Nations participated in Events 102 of 15 sports.

- Sports List - Figure skating, Speed skating, Short track speed skating, Ice hockey, Curling, Cross-country skiing, Alpine skiing, Ski jumping, Nordic combined, Freestyle skiing, Snowboarding, Biathlon, Luge, Bobsleigh, Skeleton, Biathlon / Military Patrol.

- Next (24th) Winter Olympic Games will be hosted by Beijing (China) in 2022.

- Medal Table -

Rank	NOC	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Norway	14	14	11	39
2	Germany	14	10	7	31
3	Canada	11	8	10	29
4	United States	9	8	6	23
5	Netherlands	8	6	6	20
6	Sweden	7	6	1	14
7	South Korea	5	8	4	17
Rank	NOC	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
8	Switzerland	5	6	4	15
9	France	5	4	6	15
10	Austria	5	3	6	14

- India at Winter Olympic Games 2018 -

- 2 Indian athletes participated - Jagdish Singh (Cross country Skiing), Shiva Keshavan (Luge). Indian participants could not secure a medal.

- Other Facts -

- Norwegian cross-country skier Marit Bjoergen won her 14th medal at Winter Games by taking bronze with her Norwegian teammates in team sprint. With this, she became most decorated Winter Olympian of all time, breaking the tie she held with Norwegian biathlete Ole Einar Bjoerndalen.

- Japan's Yuzuru Hanyu became first figure skater in 66 years to win back-to-back Winter Olympic gold medals in the men's singles event. He also became 1000th gold medal winner in history of Winter Olympics.

- 2018 Winter Olympics saw Record-setting performance of 1218 drones (unmanned aerial vehicles), flying in sync to create huge formations of various Olympic sports and Olympic rings, set by Intel. Drones set world record for 'most unmanned aerial vehicles airborne simultaneously, which was previously held by 500 drones during a 2016 performance in Germany.

- Opening ceremony was named *Peace in Motion*. North and South Korean teams marched together with a "unification flag". *Let Everyone Shine* was Official event song.

- Czech Republic's Ester Ledecka became first woman to claim gold medals in 2 sports at a Winter Olympics (snowboarding AND skiing).

- US won gold medal of Women's Ice Hockey, defeating Canada. In men's Ice Hockey, *Olympic Athletes from Russia (OAR)* defeated *Germany* to win Gold.

- Olympic Athlete from Russia (OAR) is International Olympic Committee's designation of select Russian athletes permitted to participate in 2018 Winter Olympics. It is result of suspension of Russian Olympic Committee after recent Olympic doping controversy.
- 4. *India A* team won gold at 5th Commonwealth Nations Bridge Championships (*trick-taking card game*) in Gold Coast (Australia). Team was headed by Kiran Nadar and comprised of Keyzad Anklesari, B. Satyanarayana, Rajeshwar Tewari, Jaggy Shivdasani and Sunit Chokshi.
- 5. Australian Noted female Cricketer Alex Blackwell announced her retirement from all forms of cricket.
- 6. Australian cricketer Steve Smith won his 2nd Allan Border Medal, making him best Australian male cricketer in past year. Further, Ellyse Perry won her 2nd Belinda Clark Award Medal, as best female cricketer of Australia in past 12 months.
- 7. Badminton player Pullela Gopichand initiated India's largest 'train the trainers' programme by inducting 1500 Physical Education (PE) teachers from across Gujarat for advanced training, envisioned by ELMS Sports Foundation.
- 8. British Athletics announced that London will host a new World Cup in July 2018, as a 2 day event with 8 participants - USA, Poland, China, Germany, France, Jamaica and South Africa. 1 male and 1 female athlete from each country will be selected for every field event and each track race up to 1500 metres.
- 9. Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) won 8th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2018 (B Division), defeating Kerala.
- 10. Davis Cup (Tennis), which is in existence since 1900, will be converted into a 'World Cup of Tennis' from 2019. New format will feature 18 teams playing a week-long event at one venue, instead of the existing 16 teams playing across four different months.
- 11. First edition of Khelo India School Games (KISG) held from 31st January to 8th February, 2018 at Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi.
 - It was held across 16 disciplines in Under-17 age category, with 5000 school children participating. Total 199 gold, 199 silver and 275 bronze medals were awarded.
 - Haryana emerged overall champions with 102 medals (38 G, 26 S and 38 B). Maharashtra 2nd with 111 medals, Delhi 3rd with 94 medals.
- 12. Gymnastics World Cup 2018 held in Melbourne (Australia). Aruna Budda Reddy became 1st Indian gymnast to win an individual medal at Gymnastics World Cup as she won bronze in women's vault event.
- 13. IDBI Federal Life Insurance New Delhi Marathon -
 - 65 Elite Indian athletes participated in event.
 - Reigning Asian Champion Gopi Thonakal won in men's category with timing of 2:15:16, followed by Nitendra Rawat. However, Gopi could not qualify for 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games as its criteria was 2:12:50.
 - Monika Athare retained her women's title with timing of 2:43:46.
- 14. India Open International Boxing Tournament 2018 held in Delhi -
 - India won 10 medals (Including 6 gold) at event, including one by noted Boxer Mary Kom.
- 15. India Open badminton 2018 (Held in New Delhi)-
 - Men's Singles - Shi Yuqi (China)
 - Women's Singles - Beiwen Zhang (USA), Defeating India's P V Sindhu
 - Men's Doubles - Indonesia's Marcus Fernaldi Gideon AND Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo (Indonesia)
 - Women's Doubles - Indonesia's Greysia Polii AND Apriyani Rahayu
 - Mixed Doubles - Denmark's Mathias Christiansen AND Christinna Pedersen
- 16. India at Miscellaneous Sports Events (Feb 2018) -
 - Indian boxers won 10 medals, including 5 gold, at the Asian Games Test event in Jakarta, Indonesia.
- 17. India defeated Australia to win its 4th Under 19 Cricket World cup Title, held in New Zealand.
- 18. Indian Badminton Player Parupalli Kashyap won his first international title as Austrian Open International Challenge badminton tournament, by defeating Malaysia's June Wei Cheam.
- 19. Indian Olympic Association (IOA) signed *Edelweiss Financial Services* as sponsor of Indian team for 2018 Commonwealth Games, 2018 Asian Games and 2020 Olympic Games and National Games 2018 and 2019.
- 20. Indian women cricketer Jhulan Goswami became first woman in world to take 200 wickets in ODI cricket.
- 21. India's Saurav Ghosal jumped to No 14 to become highest ranked Indian in Professional Squash Association (PSA) rankings.

22. India's Shubhankar Sharma won Maybank Golf Championship (USA) as his 2nd victory on both Asian Tour and European Tour, after his recent win in Joburg Open. With This, Shubhankar is also named as best Indian golfer in world, grabbing 72nd position in Official World Golf Ranking (OWGR).
23. Karnataka won Vijay Hazare Trophy ODI tournament for 3rd time, defeating Saurashtra.
24. Karnataka's Kishan Gangolli won 13th National 'A' Chess Championship for blind in Mumbai, becoming champion for 5th consecutive time.
25. Laureus World Sports Awards 2018 -
- Sportsman of the Year AND Comeback of the year - Swiss Tennis star Roger Federer. With this, He became most decorated winner ever in Laureus World Sports Awards (total 6 awards).
 - Sportswoman of the Year - Serena Williams (USA). She is now most decorated female Laureus Award winner with five Laureus statuettes.
 - Breakthrough of the Year - Golfer Sergio Garcia (Spain).
 - Team of the Year - British F1 Team Mercedes AMG Petronas.
 - Action Sportsperson of the Year - French sailor Armel Le Cléac'h.
 - World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability - Swiss wheelchair racer Marcel Hug.
 - Lifetime Achievement Award - American former track and field athlete Edwin Moses.
26. Odisha government will sponsor Indian National Hockey teams for next 5 years, along with upcoming Men's Hockey World Cup in November - December 2018 in Kalinga Stadium (Bhubaneswar).
27. Portuguese Footballer Cristiano Ronaldo became first player in UEFA Champions League history to score 100 goals for a single club (Real Madrid).
28. Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) won 8th Senior National Women's Hockey Championship, defeating Madhya Pradesh in Ranchi.
29. Sharmila Nicollet become first Indian golfer to qualify for China Ladies PGA Tour.
30. Shikhar Dhawan became first Indian cricketer to score a century in his 100th One-day International.
31. Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament at Sofia in Bulgaria
- India won 2 Gold, 3 Silver and 6 Bronze Medals.
 - Gold - Amit Panghal (defeated Morocco's Said Mordaji in 49 KG Category), Vikas Krishan (won gold in 75 kg category, was also adjudged best boxer of event).
 - Silver - Mary Kom (48kg), Seema Poonia (81kg).
32. Swiss Tennis Ace and Twenty Grand slams winner, Roger Federer became oldest world number one, after he defeated his Dutch opponent Robin Haase in Rotterdam at the ABN Amro World Tennis Tournament.
33. Tamil Nadu won Senior Women's National Football Championship for the first time, defeating Manipur in Cuttack (Odisha).
34. To set a Guinness World record for ice hockey on highest altitude, an international level tournament was organized at a new ice hockey rink at height of 4371 meters, at Chiba Kargyam in Ladakh (Jammu and Kashmir).
35. Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games committee announced that 2 futuristic figures, inspired by anime, have been chosen as mascots for the mega sporting event, aimed at boosting children's participation in Games. Mascots will be launched in late 2018.
36. USA's Christian Coleman broke 20 year old world record of Maurice Greene in 60 metres sprint with 6.34 seconds timing, at US Indoor National Championships in Albuquerque.
37. Virat Kohli became first batsman to score 500 runs in a bilateral ODI series, after he scored the same during ODI series against South Africa. Kohli also became 2nd batsman (After AB De Villers) to cross 900-point mark concurrently in Tests & ODIs. Also, Bhuvneshwar Kumar became first Indian bowler to take 5 wicket hauls in all three formats in international cricket.
38. World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) suspended Romania's drug-testing laboratory for six months, due to several nonconformities with regulations.