

Current Affairs March 2018

Appointments

1. Abiy Ahmed has been appointed as new Prime Minister of Ethiopia (East Africa).
2. Angela Merkel has been appointed as Chancellor of Germany for 4th Term. It ended 6 months long political uncertainty in Germany, longest time it has been without a govt in its post-war history.
3. Anil Kumar Chaudhary has been appointed as chairman of SAIL (Steel Authority of India).
4. Armen Sarkisian has been appointed as new president of European Nation Armenia.
5. BSE (Bombay Stock Exchange) has appointed David Wright as a Public Interest Director on its board.
6. Balesh Sharma has been named as CEO of Merged Entity of Vodafone India and Idea Cellular. It will be India's biggest telecom Firm. Kumar Mangalam Birla will be non-executive chairman of merged company.
7. Biplab Kumar Deb is named as new Chief Minister of Tripura, by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) that won clear majority in recent state assembly elections. He will replace Manik Sarkar who ruled for over 20 years.
8. Chandra Bhushan Kumar has been appointed as Deputy Election Commissioner.
9. Chinese Prime Minister Li Keqiang is re-elected for his 2nd five-year term. Note that Xi Jinping was recently allowed to stay as President of China for his lifetime.
 - China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi is promoted to post of State Councillor, country's top diplomat.
 - Yi Gang has been named next governor of China's central bank, the People's Bank of China (PBOC).
10. Cricketer Rahul Dravid has been named as state election icon for Karnataka Assembly polls, to be held on 12th May 2018.
11. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi has been re-elected to the post for second time.
12. Gina Haspel became first-ever female director of USA's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Also, Larry Kudlow is appointed as next head of White House National Economic Council.
13. Government appointed Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu as Minister of Civil Aviation, as additional Charge.
14. Government appointed former CBSE chairman Vineet Joshi as first Director-General (DG) of National Testing Agency (NTA), with tenure of five years.
15. Government nominated former NCERT Director J S Rajput as India's representative to Executive Board (EXB) of UNESCO.
16. Indian Army appointed Harpal Singh as Director General Border Roads (DGBR).
17. Indian-origin Neil Basu became first Asian to be appointed as Counterterrorism Chief of Scotland Yard (London Police).
18. Indu Bhushan is appointed as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Government's Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission (ABNHPM). Bhushan served as Director General of East Asia Department at Manila (Philippines) based Asian Development Bank (ADB).
19. John Bolton has been appointed as USA's New National Security Adviser.
20. Krishnaswamy Vijay Raghavan is appointed as Principle Scientific Adviser to government of India.
21. Martin Vizcarra has been appointed as President of South American Nation Peru.
22. Misc Govt. Appointments -
 - Surendra Nath Tripathi - Secretary in Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs.
 - Anil Gopishankar Mukim - Secretary in Ministry of Mines.
 - Bhupendra Singh - Chairperson in National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention.
 - Sumanta Chaudhari - Managing Director in Small Farmers' Agri-business Consortium (SFAC).
 - Sailesh - Registrar General of India.
 - R Subramanyam - Secretary of Higher Education in Ministry of Human Resource Development.
 - RKS Shera - Air Officer- in- Charge Maintenance at Air Headquarters.
23. Mohammad Ashraf Sehrai is appointed as new chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Political Party Tehreek-e Hurriyat.
24. Myanmar's Parliament elected Win Myint as country's new President.
25. National People's Party (NPP) President Conrad Sangma will be new chief minister of Meghalaya. There would be no deputy chief minister for the state.
26. Neiphiu Rio has been appointed as new (9th) Chief Minister of Nagaland, replacing TR Zeliang.
 - In recent Assembly elections in Nagaland, Naga Peoples Front (NPF) emerged as largest party with win over 27 seats (out of 59 seats).

27. Nepal's first woman president Bidya Devi Bhandari has been re-elected for second term as President. Nanda Bahadur Pun has been re-elected as Vice-President of Nepal for second term.
28. New Brand Ambassadors (March 2018) -
 - Cricketer Virat Kohli - Uber's first Brand Ambassador in India.
 - Actress Katrina Kaif - International non-profit organisation *Educate Girls*.
 - Actor Aamir Khan - Vivo India.
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30. Pradosh Kumar Rath has been named as new chairman cum managing director (CMD) of RINL (Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd).
31. R Dinesh has been elected Chairman of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)'s Southern Region for 2018-19.
32. Rangarajan Raghavan has been appointed as Managing Director of Mainstream IT Firm HCL Infosystems.
33. Reliance Asset Reconstruction Company (RARC) appointed Ravindra Rao as its new Chief Executive Officer.
34. Satya Pal Malik, Governor of Bihar has been given additional charge of Governor of Odisha, after S.C. Jamir retired.
35. Sebastian Pinera has been appointed as new president of South american Nation Chile.
36. Sherry Rehman became first woman Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, upper house of parliament of Pakistan.
37. Sitanshu Kar will be next head of Government's Press Information Bureau (PIB).
38. Social Media Platform Twitter appointed India's Parag Agrawal as its chief technology officer.
39. Sony India appointed Sunil Nayyar as its Managing Director (MD).
40. Supreme Court appointed Jawad Rahim as acting Chairperson of National Green Tribunal (NGT).
41. Tata sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran is elected as President of court of Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru for 2018-21.
42. USA's Rosemary DiCarlo become first woman to head United Nations Department of Political Affairs.
43. Vijay Sankar has been appointed as Honorary Consul General for Denmark in Chennai.
44. Vivek R Wadekar is appointed as Special Director in Enforcement Directorate (ED) under finance ministry. ED enforces Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) in country.
45. Vladimir Putin won his 4th term as Russia's President after he won 2018 Preliminary Presidential elections with 76.67 % of votes, well ahead of his nearest competitor Pavel Grudinin of Communist Party (who received 11.79 %). It gives Putin another 6 Years of Power.

Awards

1. 90th Academy Awards (known as Oscars) held at Dolby Theatre in Hollywood (California (US)).
 - Facts -
 - Awards were presented in 24 categories by Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS).
 - *The Shape of Water* won most number of awards (4), after being nominated into highest 13 categories.
 - Winners -
 - Best Picture - *The Shape of Water*
 - Best Actress - Frances McDormand for *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*
 - Best Actor - Gary Oldman for *Darkest Hour*
 - Best Director - Guillermo del Toro for *The Shape of Water*
 - Best Supporting Actress - Allison Janney for *I, Tonya*
 - Best Supporting Actor - Sam Rockwell for *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri*
 - Best Original Song - *Remember Me* from *Coco*.
 - Best Foreign Language Film - Spanish Film *A Fantastic Woman* (Chile)
 - Best Visual Effects - *Blade Runner 2049*.
 - Best Animated Feature Film - *Coco*.
 - Best Animated Short Film - *Dear Basketball*.
 - Best Documentary (Feature) - *Icarus*

- Best Documentary (Short Subject) - Heaven is a Traffic Jam on the 405
 - Best Live Action Short Film - The Silent Child
2. Actor Jackie Shroff's short film "Shunyata" won an award at Best of India Short Film Festival in Los Angeles (USA). Also, Filmmaker Nila Madhab Panda's *Halkaa* won Grand Prix de Montreal at the gala (Canada).
3. Aleksandra Liashkova from Belarus won Miss Supermodel Worldwide 2018 in Gurugram (Haryana). India's Shweta Parmar was awarded Miss Congeniality.
4. Architect Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi became first Indian to win the Pritzker Prize, highest award in architecture. Doshi's most noted works include a low-cost housing project in Indore which accommodates 80000 people. This award is announced by Tom Pritzker of the Chicago-based Hyatt Foundation.
5. Britain's Queen Elizabeth II recognised Srishti Bakshi from India as 26th Commonwealth Point of Light in honour of her exceptional service to empowering women in India. Srishti is founder of the CrossBow Miles movement.
6. Central Banking's 5th annual awards -
- Bank of Canada - Central Bank of the Year
 - Other winners -
 - Transparency - Central Bank of Ireland
 - Reserve manager of the year - Bank of Korea
 - Banknote and currency manager of the year - Norges Bank
 - Economics in central banking - Alberto Cavallo and Roberto Rigobon – Billion Prices Project/PriceStats.
 - Asset manager of the year - BlackRock
 - Innovation in reserve management - HSBC
 - Securities lending services provider of the year - Northern Trust
 - Banknote and currency services provider of the year - Landqart
 - Risk management services provider of the year - Openlink
7. Chhattisgarh's Krishi Vigyan Kendra in Kanker district has been named best among 650 agriculture science centres in India for its initiatives like nutrition gardens and integrated farming techniques. It received *Pt Deendayal Upadhyay Krishi Vigyan Protsahan Award-2017*, consisting cash prize of 25 lakh and a citation certificate.
8. Indian Actor-politician Shatrughan Sinha is honoured with a lifetime achievement award for his contribution to the fields of arts and politics at a ceremony in UK's Parliament complex, under annual *Political and Public Life Awards* by Britain's Asian Voice weekly newspaper.
9. Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) won 2017 Kochon Prize for building tradition of excellence in Tuberculosis (TB) research and development. It was awarded for establishing India TB Research Consortium to accelerate R&D efforts in the country.
10. Indian activists Mirnalini Dayal and Yogesh Kumar have been selected among 20 finalists for Commonwealth Youth Awards 2018 for their contribution towards achieving gender equality. Mirnalini Dayal is chosen for her work as a campaign leader for 'Health Over Stigma', while Yogesh Kumar is shortlisted for establishing social enterprise *Even Cargo*.
11. Indian actress Simi Garewal received *UK Golden Flame Award* at Tongues of Fire UK Asian Film Festival in London.
12. Indian-American scientist Navin Vardarajan has been granted over USD 1.1 million for cancer research, for working on improving effectiveness of T-cell immunotherapy. Grant was issued by Cancer Prevention & Research Institute of Texas (CPRIT).
13. Indian-origin Harry Athwal is among 11 winners of 2018's *Pride of Birmingham's Outstanding Bravery Award*, for risking his life in order to help a fatally injured young boy in 2017 Barcelona terror attack.
14. Indian-origin steel tycoon Sanjeev Gupta appointed by Britain's Prince Charles as official ambassador for Industrial Cadets programme designed to nurture manufacturing skills.
15. London based South Asian Cinema Foundation (SACF) received Frederick Pincott Award 2017 from Indian High Commissioner to UK, Y K Sinha for promoting Hindi cinema in Britain for last 18 years.
16. Malayalam film personality Sreekumaran Thampi received J.C. Daniel Award in recognition of his contributions to Malayalam film industry.
17. Norwegian Academy of Sciences and Letters named Canadian mathematician Robert Langlands as winner of Abel Prize 2018, regarded as Nobel Prize in mathematics. He will receive 6 million Norwegian kroner (\$776,000) from Norway's King Harald V.

18. Noted actor Amol Palekar has been honoured with the 'Godavari Gaurav' award in Nashik (Maharashtra), by Nashik-based 'Kusumagraj Prathishthan'.
19. Noted journalist Karan Thapar has been honored with G.K. Reddy Memorial National Award for journalism.
20. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport (Ahmedabad) received award for Most Improved Airport in Asia Pacific region, in Airport Service Quality awards 2017 organised by Airport Council International (ACI).
21. Telangana Sports Journalists Association annual awards 2017 -
 - Sportsperson of the Year - Indian women's cricket team captain Mithali Raj.
 - Kidambi Srikanth and PV Sindhu won best senior male and female athletes.
 - Best coach of the year - Pullela Gopichand.
 - Lifetime Achievement - Former national hockey player N Mukesh Kumar.
22. USA Conferred *Academy Award for Nobel Peace* on Ketzia David Prakasam, an Indian philanthropist and social worker in Coimbatore. Ketzia is the first Indian woman to receive this award.

Books

1. Book *Fulfilling Bapu's Dreams – Prime Minister Modi's Tribute to Gandhiji* has been released.
2. Book *How to be a Human* written by Manjeet Hiraniwas (wife of Filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani) has been launched.
3. Book titled *Paramveer Parwane*, written by Prabhakaran Jain has been released. It has 11 short stories / poems highlighting history of battles in which the brave soldiers sacrificed their lives and shown utmost courage.
4. Government launched *Namaste Shalom* as a magazine on India-Israel relations, edited by Tarun Vijay.

Committees

1. Finance Ministry constituted a Steering Committee under Chairmanship of Secretary in Department of Economic Affairs (Subhash Chandra Garg), to consider issues related to development of Fintech space in India.

Days

1. 12th *Earth Hour* observed across world on 24 March 2018 to take a global call on climate change. To mark this, cities worldwide turned their lights off for one hour from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm local time.
2. Govt. stated that birth anniversary of BR Ambedkar (14th April) will be celebrated as 'Social Justice Day'.
3. Mar 08 - International Women's Day, observed since 1908. 2018 Campaign Theme is *#PressforProgress*. On this occasion -
 - Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) launched a portal for women entrepreneurs of India - www.udyamsakhi.org. It is a network for nurturing entrepreneurship and creating business models for low cost products and services to make them self-reliant. It provides learning tools, incubation facility, training programs for fund raising, investor meets etc.
 - Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers and Parliamentary Affairs, Ananth Kumar launched *Suvidha*, 100% Oxo biodegradable Sanitary Napkin, under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP). It will be available for INR 2.50 per pad at over 3200 Janaushadhi Kendras across India.
 - President Ram Nath Kovind presented Nari Shakti Puraskars 2017 to 30 eminent individuals and 9 distinguished institutions. It includes Acting Chief Justice of Delhi High Court, Justice Gita Mittal.
 - South District Police in Delhi launched an all women patrolling squad named *Knightingale*, formed to ensure safety and security of women at public places.
 - Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched *#YesIBleed* menstrual hygiene campaign.
 - Madhya Pradesh Govt. announced 'Mukhyamantri Mahila Kosh' scheme. Under this, unmarried women of over 50 years age will be given pension.
 - Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Uttar Pradesh Government organized Swachh Shakti 2018 Women's Convention in Lucknow. In this, 8000 women sarpanches, 3000 women Swachhagrahis and women champions from across country were recognised for their outstanding contribution towards making Swachh Bharat.
 - NITI Aayog launched Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) along with WEP's theme song *Naari Shakti* composed by Kailash Kher. It is aimed at building a vibrant ecosystem for women across India to help realise

their entrepreneurial aspirations, scale-up innovative initiatives and chalk-out sustainable, long-term strategies for their businesses. Pillars on which WEP is built are Ichha Shakti, Gyaan Shakti and Karma Shakti. - PM Narendra Modi launched Pan India Expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) covering all 640 districts. 10 districts were also awarded - Effective community engagement (6 districts), Enforcement of PC&PNDT Act (2 districts) and Enabling education of Girl Child (2 Districts).

- PM Modi also launched National Nutrition Mission, as a comprehensive approach towards raising nutrition level in the country on a war footing. It will comprise mapping of various schemes contributing towards addressing malnutrition, incentivizing states/UTs for meeting targets, incentivizing Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) for using IT based tools, eliminating registers used by AWWs and introducing measurement of height of children at the Anganwadi Centres (AWCs). It has been set up with 3 year budget of Rs 9046.17 crore commencing from 2017-18.

4. Mar 1 - Zero Discrimination Day. It is also observed as World Civil Defence Day.

5. Mar 12 - Commonwealth Day 2018. It is observed on 2nd Monday of March.

6. Mar 14 - International Pi (π) Day. It is observed on 14 March (3/14 in American month/day date format) since 3, 1, and 4 are first 3 significant digits of π .

7. Mar 15 - World Consumer Rights Day. 2018 theme is *Making Digital Marketplaces Fairer*. On this occasion, Minister of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Ram Vilas Paswan launched integrated portal for consumer services at URL jagograhakjago.gov.in.

8. Mar 18 - Global Recycling Day.

9. Mar 20 - International Day of Happiness. 2018 theme is *Share Happiness - focusing on the importance of relationships, kindness and helping each other*.

10. Mar 20 - World Sparrow Day (WSD).

11. Mar 21 - UN International Day of Forests. 2018 Theme is *Forests and Sustainable Cities*.

- On this occasion, Chhattisgarh was handed over National Water Digest Award for Water Conservation - Diversion, and increasing irrigation capacity.

12. Mar 21 - UNESCO World Poetry Day.

13. Mar 21 - World Down Syndrome Day. Down syndrome is a naturally occurring chromosomal arrangement that generally results in various effects on learning styles, physical characteristics or health.

14. Mar 22 - World Water Day. It puts emphasis on importance of freshwater and need for sustainable management of freshwater resources. 2018 theme is *Nature for Water*. The first World Water Day was celebrated by UN on 22 March, 1993. Mar 22, 2018 is also observed as Bihar's 106 Foundation day with Theme *Centenary of Champaran Satyagraha and Elimination of Dowry and Child Marriage*.

15. Mar 23 - Observed as *Shahed Diwas* in India. It marks martyrdom of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev, that were executed on this day in 1931.

16. Mar 23 - World Meteorological Day.

17. Mar 24 - World Tuberculosis (TB) Day. 2018 theme is *Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free world*. TB INDIA 2018 Report and National Drug Resistance Survey Report was released on this occasion, along with *NikshayAushadi Portal*. Global target to end TB is 2030, with India aiming to end it by 2025.

18. Mar 25 - International Day of Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade. 2018 theme is *Remember Slavery: Triumphs and Struggles for Freedom and Equality*.

19. Mar 27 - World Theatre Day.

20. Mar 3 - World Hearing Day. 2018 Theme is *Hear the future*.

21. Mar 3 - World Wildlife Day. It marks signing of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) on this day in 1973. 2018 Theme is *Big Cats: Predators under Threat*.

22. Mar 8 - World Kidney Day. It is celebrated annually throughout world on second Thursday of March.

23. Mar 21 - International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination. 2018 theme is *Promoting tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity in the context of combating racial discrimination*.

24. March 26 - Independence day of Neighbouring Nation Bangladesh.

Defence

1. Defence Ministry will now fully fund education of martyrs' children, removing earlier limit of Upto INR 10000 a month.

2. First-ever multi-nation naval exercise at sea *MILES-18* began at Andaman sea with 8 countries and India Participating.

3. Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) delivered 2nd Sri Lanka Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel (SL AOPV), as largest and most advanced ship in Sri Lankan Navy fleet. This is 4th Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) delivered in the current financial year.
4. INS Ganga, an indigenously built frigate of the Indian Navy, has been decommissioned.
5. Indian Air Force's (IAF) largest transport aircraft C-17 Globemaster made a historic landing at Tuting Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) in Arunachal Pradesh. It is strategically important as China Claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of its territory (McMahon Line).
6. Indian Coast Guard (ICG) commissioned interceptor boat ICGS C-437.
7. Indian Navy concluded 2 month long War Games on both Seaboards of India, Eastern and Western. War Game on Eastern seaboard was codenamed ENCORE (Eastern Naval Command Operational Readiness Exercise) and on Western seaboard the codename was *Exercise Paschim Lehar*.
8. Indian Navy's INS Tarkash carried out joint training exercise with U.S. Navy's Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group (TRCSG) and guided-missile destroyers USS Preble, USS Halsey and USS Sampson.
9. Indian and French Navies will conduct 16th bilateral Joint maritime exercises called *Varuna - 18* in three sea areas - Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and South Western Indian Ocean. Phase 1 has begun in Goa.
10. Ministry of Defence released draft policy on defence production, aiming to bring India among top 5 manufacturers of defence platforms. Objectives Include -
 - Achieve turnover of INR 170000 crore and export of 35000 crores in military equipment and services by 2025.
 - Attract additional investment of nearly Rs 70,000 crore and create employment for nearly 2 to 3 million people.
11. Samvedna 2018, first multilateral Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise of Indian Air Force (IAF) in association with South Asian Region nations held off coast of Kerala.
12. Supersonic cruise missile BrahMos was successfully flight-tested for first time with indigenously developed seeker. So far, *seeker's* technology in missiles was imported from Russia.
 - Brahmos is capable of carrying warhead of 300 kilogram (conventional / nuclear) and has top supersonic speed of Mach 2.8 to 3 (3 times speed of sound). After India's entry to Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), its range was extended to 450 km.
13. Three Minesweeper ships of Indian Navy - INS Konkan, INS Cannanore and INS Cuddalore have been decommissioned.

Economy

1. According to Monster Salary Index (MSI) -
 - Women in India earn 20 % lesser than men, although gender gap narrowed down by around 5 % points in 2017.
 - In India, men earned a median gross hourly salary of Rs 231, while women earned Rs 184.8.
2. Allahabad Bank received approval from Ministry of Corporate Affairs for amalgamation of its fully-owned subsidiary All Bank Finance Ltd. (ABFL) with itself. All Bank Finance offers fee-based services like debenture trusteeship, distribution of mutual fund schemes, investment advisory and portfolio management and security valuation.
3. As per *Transactions 2025* by digital payments company AGS Transact, India will have INR 1 lakh crore worth of digital transactions every year, by 2025.
4. Axis Bank opened a representative office in Sharjah, as third such Axis Bank office in UAE after Dubai and Abu Dhabi.
5. Bank of India (BOI) closed down its operations of representative office in Yangon (Myanmar) from January 2018. Apart from Yangon, Bank of India is also said to have closed down its office in Botswana.
6. CBDT (Central Board of Direct Taxes) extended deadline for PAN-Aadhaar linking from the current last date of 31 March 2018 to 30 June 2018.
7. Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance partnered with Canara Bank Subsidiary Can Fin Homes for a 3 year bancassurance tie up to sell its policies to home buyers.
8. Capital markets regulator SEBI raised exposure limit under exchange-traded currency derivatives trading for residents and FPIs to USD 100 million across all currency pairs involving Indian rupee, to help entities engaged in forex transactions to maintain their currency risks in a better manner.

9. Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) constituted a task force to review Income Tax Act 1961 and to draft a new Direct Tax Law which takes into consideration the prevailing economic scenario and economic needs of contemporary India.

10. Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) scrapped export duty of 20% on raw and refined sugar to boost shipments. This will help export excess sugar output and will prevent falling prices.

- Sugar output is estimated to be 29.5 million tonnes (MT) in 2017-18 marketing year (October-September), from 20.3 MT in previous year. While domestic demand is 24-25 million tonnes annually. Removing export duty will help export surplus sugar conveniently.

11. Citibank introduced a new variable interest rate mortgage product that will be linked to 90-day Treasury bills and will change every quarter. Citibank will charge a spread above 90-day Treasury bill rate based on borrower profile. Changes will be made in rates on March 1, June 1, September 1 and December 1.

12. DCB Bank launched *DCB Remit*, a online remittance service to enable customers to send money online globally. It enables Indians to send money to 20 countries.

13. Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg stated that India's economy will double to to \$5 trillion by 2025. India is currently 6th largest economy in world.

14. Equitas Small Finance Bank (SFB) rolled out *Yellow Army Savings Account* to commemorate its association with Indian Premier League (IPL) franchise Chennai Super Kings (CSK). It will fetch interest rate of 6 % per annum for balance below Rs. 10 lakh and 6.5 per cent per annum for balance above Rs. 10 lakh.

15. Federal Bank partnered with *Celebrus Capital* and *Fortune Wealth Management Co India* for providing Portfolio Investment Scheme (PIS) services to Non-resident Indians (NRIs).

- RBI's Portfolio Investment Scheme enables NRIs to purchase and sell shares and convertible debentures of Indian companies on a recognized stock exchange through their NRI Savings Account with a designated bank branch. Federal Bank has so far partnered with 9 broking companies.

16. Financial Firm Paytm's subsidiary Paytm Money received approval of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to become a registered investment advisor. It will allow it to roll out investment and wealth management products to consumers across country.

17. Fino Payments Bank will deploy multi-utility Android-based mPOS devices across 10000 banking points across nation. mPOS is a handheld device with in-built finger print scanner, card reader, camera, printer and tablet. FINO aims to reach 5 crore customers in 5 years.

18. First sale of world's first ever electoral bonds started from March 1, 2018 for period of 10 days at four SBI branches in Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and New Delhi.

- These bonds will have a life of 15 days, buyable by any citizen / entity incorporated in India. It aims to increase transparency in political funding by rooting out anonymous cash donations made to political parties that lead to generation of black money.

- These electoral bonds can be bought for any value in multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10 lakh or Rs 1 crore after fulfilling all existing Know Your Customer (KYC) norms and making payments from bank account. It will not carry name of payee.

19. GST Council decided to roll out e-way bill for intra-State movement in a phased manner beginning April 15, and will cover all States by June 1. Businesses will continue to file summary sales return GSTR-3B until June as the GST Council extended present system of return-filing by three months.

20. Gandhinagar (Gujarat) Based GIFT City signed MoU with Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP (DTTILLP), that renders consultancy services, for mutual cooperation in areas related to international financial services. It will assist domestic and international clients set up operations at GIFT-located International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).

21. Government has made providing passport details mandatory for taking loans of 50 crore rupees and above to ensure a swift action in case of fraud and prevent fraudsters from fleeing the country.

22. Government issued its borrowing programme for 2018-19 and finalised borrowing calendar for first half of 2018-19.

- For 2018-19, Gross G-Sec borrowings will be INR 6,05,539 crores. Government will borrow INR 100000s crore from NSSF (National Social Security Fund) as against budgeted amount of Rs. 75,000 crore.

- Gross G-Sec borrowing will be only Rs. 2,88,000 crore in H1 of 2018-19.

- Government and RBI are in final stage of discussions for increasing FPI limits from April 1, 2018.

- Government will introduce two benchmarks during this half year - 2-year and 5-year - to meet the market demand.

- T Bill programme for first quarter is to raise Rs. 1,95,000 crores.

23. Government raised import tax on crude and refined palm oil to support Indian farmers. Import tax on crude palm oil has been raised to 44 % from 30 % while for refined palm oil, it has been raised to 54 % from 40 %.

24. Government will sell 76 % stake in Air India, along with subsidiary Air India Express and a 50% stake in Air India SATS (Singapore Airport Terminal Services).

25. HDFC Bank and business expense management solution provider *Happay* collaborated to introduce a new prepaid card-linked Travel and Entertainment (T&E) expense management solution which will help Indian firms to efficiently manage their business travel expenditure.

26. HDFC Bank signed an agreement with Government e-Marketplace (GeM) under which the bank will facilitate a host of services to the public procurement portal for Central and state government organisations. It will bring transparency and efficiency in procurement process with assured and timely payment to sellers.

27. ICICI Bank launched instant online overdraft 'InstaOD' facility for MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) customers, enabling overdraft facility up to Rs 15 lakh in an year.

28. India attracted US \$208.99 billion foreign direct investment (FDI) during April 2014 to December 2017 period. Sectors receiving maximum FDI include services, computer software and hardware, telecommunications, construction, trading and automobile.

29. India signed \$120 million loan agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) for completion of works for double-tracking and electrification of railway tracks along high-density corridors to improve operational efficiency of Indian railways. It is tranche 3 loan of \$500 million multi-tranche financing facility for Railway Sector Investment Program approved by ADB in 2011.

30. India signed USD 80 million loan agreement with Manila (Philippines) based Asian Development Bank (ADB) to help modernise Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and improve skills ecosystem in Himachal Pradesh.

31. India's GDP Growth Forecasts (March 2018) -

- World Bank projected India's GDP growth at 7.3% in 2018 - 19 and 7.5 % in 2019-20.

- USA Based agency Fitch projected India's economic growth to be 7.3 % in 2018-19 and 7.5 per cent in 2019 20.

32. India's Government owned Re-insurer General Insurance Corporation (GIC) will start operations at Lloyd's London office in April 2018, increasing its share of international business. *GIC Syndicate 1947* will be first Lloyd's syndicate to be backed solely by capital from an Indian reinsurance group.

33. Indian IT Firm Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is named fastest growing IT services brand in the world in an assessment done by leading brand valuation firm, Brand Finance.

34. Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) and European Investment Bank (EIB) signed loan agreement for second line of credit (LoC) of Euro 150 million on non-sovereign basis for renewable energy financing in India. It has tenure of 15 years including grace period of 3 years.

35. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) signed MoU with Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for increased cooperation in effective implementation of insolvency law.

36. Jana Small Finance Bank commenced operations as a small finance bank. It will initially open 19 branches in 18 states, with financial inclusion as core strategy.

37. Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB) introduced *Vikas She Plus* a loan scheme for women to help them with new ventures and for expanding or modifying their existing businesses. It offers loan up to INR 2 lakhs with Repayment period of 60 months.

38. Kotak Mahindra Bank launched voicebot 'Keya', first artificial intelligence-powered voicebot in Indian banking sector. *Keya* is developed on basis of a library of millions of phone-banking conversations over past three years. *Keya* is powered by Nuance (the technology behind Apple's Siri).

39. Ministry of Finance approved providing government guarantee of INR 5000 crores in current financial year for Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) bonds to be subscribed by Life Insurance Corporation (LIC). It will ease flow of borrowed funds for Ministry of Railways to undertake projects.

40. Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) launched World's First Brass Futures Contracts. It is first time that a Brass Futures contract will be traded on an organised exchange anywhere in world. Availability of Brass Futures contracts will help in price discovery and will help brass merchants to hedge risk arising out of price fluctuation. Lot size of contract will be 1 metric tonne with expiries in April, May and June 2018.

41. Muthoot Finance tied up with Global IME Bank to expand its money remittance services between Indo Nepal Corridor. Muthoot Finance is the only NBFC to extend the money transfer services from India to Nepal.
42. Online food ordering platform Swiggy and ICICI Bank partnered to roll out 2 solutions to facilitate a convenient transfer funds to Swiggy. First is a Unified Payment Interface (UPI) based solution that enables instant fund transfers and other is a facility for depositing cash at ICICI branches / ATMs.
43. Public Financial Management System (PFMS) portal processed record INR 71,633 crore transactions on a single day. Public Financial Management System (PFMS) It is end-to-end solution for processing payments, tracking, monitoring, accounting, reconciliation and reporting. It is implemented by Controller General of Accounts and administered by Department of Expenditure (Ministry of Finance).
44. RBI will conduct additional variable rate repo operations for longer tenors up to 31 days every Tuesday in March 2018 for INR 25000 crores each to provide additional liquidity support to banks, to provide 1 Lakh INR liquidity to banking system in March 2018.
45. RBL bank partnered with global commerce-enabling technology firm First Data to help transfer its credit card customers' data to its latest proprietary software providing end-to-end card processing services.
46. Reliance Industries announced integration with music app *Saavn* for its digital music service *JioMusic*. Combined entity is valued at over \$1 billion, with JioMusic's implied valuation at \$670 million.
47. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) allowed a limit of INR 5000 crores for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to go long in Interest Rate Futures (IRFs).
- An agreement to buy or sell a debt instrument at a specified future date, at a price that is fixed today, is referred to as Interest Rate Futures (IRFs). IRF is a derivative instrument based on an underlying security, which can either be a Government Bond or a Treasury Bill.
 - Currently, FPI limit for Government Securities (G-Secs) is interchangeable between investments in G-Secs and investment in IRF, with long position in IRF capped at 90% of G-Sec limit. Increasing position limit will boost market development and ensure that FPIs can access IRFs in an uninterrupted way.
48. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) imposed penalty of 3 crore on Axis Bank for violation of non-performing asset (NPA) classification norms, and 2 crore on Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) for not complying with Know Your Customer (KYC) regulations. Another penalty of 40 lakh was put on SBI for non-compliance of its directions on detection and impounding of counterfeit notes.
49. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued a Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework aimed at maintaining the sound financial health of banks. It stipulates risk thresholds for key areas such as capital, profitability and asset quality (tracked in terms of the net Non-Performing Assets ratio). On breach of any of these thresholds, bank will be mandatorily required to take corrective measures in a timely manner.
50. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will roll out limited edition coins of Rs 350 denomination to mark 350th Birth Anniversary of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. Front face of coin shall bear Lion Capital of Ashoka Pillar in the centre with legend "Satyamev Jayate" inscribed below.
51. Reserve Bank of India has slapped monetary penalty of INR 58.9 crores on ICICI Bank for non-compliance with regulatory directions on direct sale of securities from bank's Held To Maturity (HTM) portfolio.
52. Reserve Bank of India scrapped bank guarantee instruments such as Letter of Undertaking (LoU) and Letter of Comfort (LoC), to plug loopholes in the trade finance activities of banks. It has been taken in wake of INR 14000 crores PNB fraud, which revolved around unauthorised use of LoU by bank officials.
53. Revenue Department imposed anti-dumping duty on import of 'Ofloxacin', a pharma product used in treatment of certain infections from China, to protect domestic producers from below-cost shipments. Ofloxacin is in class of antibiotics called fluoroquinolones. It is used to treat certain infections including bronchitis, pneumonia and infections of skin etc.
54. Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) will facilitate to set up 'WomenInTech (WIT) Forum in India that will work towards encouraging women to take up careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).
55. SBI Card partnered with Indian Medical Association (IMA) to launch 'Doctor's SBI Card', designed to complement distinct lifestyles and needs of doctors. Among several facilities is an insurance cover of Rs 10 lakh to protect doctors against professional risks and liabilities.
56. SBI and India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation (IMGIC) signed a pact to offer mortgage guarantee scheme for prospective nonsalaried and self-employed home loan customers. It will help increase home loan eligibility up to 15% within the regulatory norms.
57. SBI raised its lending rates by 20 basis points to 8.15 %, as first lending revision by the bank since April 2016. SBI also recently hiked interest rates on deposits by upto 50 Basis Points.

58. SBI slashed charges for non-maintenance of Average Monthly Balance (AMB) in savings accounts by nearly 75 percent, to be effective from April 01, 2018. Charges for non-maintenance of AMB for customers -

- Metro and Urban centers - Reduced from maximum of INR 50 to 15 / month.
- Semi-Urban / Rural - Reduced from INR 40 to 12 / month.

59. Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) allowed physical settlement of both stock options and stock futures. At present only cash settlement of derivatives is allowed.

60. Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) doubled investment limit by angel funds in venture capital undertakings to INR 10 crores, to encourage early-stage start-ups.

- Angel funds/investors, encourage entrepreneurship by financing small start-ups at a stage when they find it difficult to obtain capital from conventional sources of finance such as banks and financial institutions.

61. Securities and Exchanges Board of India (SEBI) accepted 40 out of 80 recommendations suggested by Uday Kotak Committee on Corporate Governance.

- One of major recommendations was to separate post of CEO or MD and Chairperson of the listed companies. As per SEBI, separation of posts would come into effect from April 1, 2020. Initially only for top 500 listed firms in terms of market capitalisation.
- Major Recommendations accepted by SEBI Include -
- Reduction in maximum number of listed entity directorships from 10 to 8 by April 01, 2019 and to 7 by April 1, 2020.
- Mandatory disclosure of consolidated quarterly results with effect from FY 2019-20.
- Requirement of minimum 6 directors in top 1000 listed entities by April 1, 2019 and in top 2000 listed entities by April 1, 2020.
- At least one woman independent director in the top 500 listed entities by April 1, 2019 and in top 1000 listed entities by April 1, 2020.
- Top 100 entities to hold AGMs within 5 months after the end of FY 2018-19 i.e. by August 31, 2019.
- Shareholder approval for Royalty payments to related party exceeding 2 percent of consolidated turnover.

62. Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) signed MoU with CSC e-governance Services (CSCeGS) to take Udyami Mitra portal (*Udyamimitra.in*) to underserved MSMEs. *Udyami Mitra* aims to improve accessibility of credit for MSMEs.

63. 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.
- Assam -
- In Budget 2018-19, Assam Govt. proposed an insurance scheme for journalists and their families, to ensure security and protection of the journalists and their families.

- After Andhra Pradesh, Assam is the second state to have an e-budget.
 - Pension for senior citizens, ex-gratia of INR 5 Lakh to next of kin of who lost their lives during the Bodoland agitation are among main Points.
 - Providing relief to small tea growers, State Government will deposit 25% of outstanding dues of Farmers', upto 25000 in each loan account.
 - To promote digital literacy and usage, each line Sardar (head) in tea garden will be provided with a smart phone costing approx 3000.
 - Maharashtra -
 - 13000 gram panchayats will be connected digitally under the Centre's BharatNet project.
 - Mahasamadhan, a toll-free helpline will be set up for farmers, through which, they can avail information on seeds, fertilisers and various policies.
 - A web portal will be started for providing literature on BR Ambedkar, Annabhau Sathe, Savitribai Phule.
 - State Autorickshaw Welfare Corporation will be established for the welfare of state's 20 lakh auto-rickshaw drivers.
 - India's first battery-operated submarine will be used for underwater tourism at Vengurla, Sindhudurg. Physically challenged people in the state will be given free mobile stalls, so they can earn their livelihood.
 - National Snake Venom Research Institute will be set up at Haffkine Institute, Mumbai.
 - Delhi -
 - Delhi government presented an INR 53000 Crores *green budget* aimed at controlling pollution and monitoring its impact on environment. 26 initiatives include procuring 1000 electric buses, subsidies to restaurants to replace coal tandoors with electricity- or gas-based tandoors and undertaking a joint study with University of Washington to explore possibility of using technology to ascertain source of air pollution.
 - 26 % of budget is towards education, 12 % for health and 11 % for infrastructure development.
64. Yes Bank launched robotics based *Digital export Import* payments solution as a part of its Yes Transact Smart Trade product suite. It will help in eliminating requirement of documents submission for import and export payments.

International

1. 11 Pacific Rim countries entered into Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership or CP TPP or TPP11 in Santiago (Chile). It is revised version of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) proposed by US, finalized after US withdrew from it.
- TPP11 includes Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.
- It will be world's third largest trade bloc after European Union (EU) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It will come into effect 60 days after 6 of 11 member countries ratify it domestically.
2. 44 African countries from total 55 members of African Union (AU) have signed agreement to create African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), one of world's largest free trade blocs, during a summit held in Kigali (Rwanda). AfCFTA will bring together 1.2 billion people with combined gross domestic product (GDP) of more than \$2 trillion from Africa.
3. *Gulf Shield* – 1 military exercise of 23 countries including Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states held in Saudi Arabia. This 1 month exercise is largest military drill in region.
4. *We Are Sikhs*, A campaign to create awareness of Sikhism and its followers in USA has won a top award for excellence in public relations programming to promote public causes. It won 2018 PRWeek US award in category of Public Cause.
5. A rare signed photo of M K Gandhi, walking alongside Madan Mohan Malaviya, was auctioned for USD 41806 in USA. It dates back to August - December 1931.
6. According to Chinese General Administration of Customs, India-China bilateral trade reached \$84.44 billion last year, a historic high with 18.63% year-on-year growth. This is well above previous high of \$71.18 billion registered in 2016.
7. According to International Energy Agency (IEA), global energy-related carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions rose to historic high of 32.5 gigatonnes in 2017. It was due to higher energy demand and slowing of energy efficiency improvements. While, Global energy demand rose by 2.1% in 2017 to 14,050 million tonnes of oil equivalent.

8. According to US Treasury Department, India is now 12th largest overseas holder of US government securities, with India's exposure being US \$144.7 billion.
- Overall, China is largest holder of US government securities with holdings to tune of \$1.18 trillion, followed by Japan at \$1.06 trillion. Ireland third with \$326.5 billion.
9. According to global property consultancy Knight Frank's Wealth Report 2018 -
- Mumbai ranked 47th on *city wealth index* among 314 cities in world, while Guangzhou (China) tops the list.
10. Afghanistan offered to recognise Terror Group Taliban as a legitimate political group in order to end over 16-year-long war.
11. Air India flight (AI 139) became first flight to land at Tel Aviv Airport (Israel), after passing through Saudi Arabia air space. This is first time, Saudi Arabia has allowed a commercial flight to Israel to use its airspace. Saudi Arabia's decision to permit Air India to use its airspace enabled it to take a shorter route, saving 2.10 hours of travel time.
12. Airports Council International (ACI) named Mumbai (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport) and Delhi (Indira Gandhi International Airport) for top position among airports handling over 40 million passengers annually, in its annual airport service quality (ASQ) awards. Beijing and Shanghai Pudong (China) have been ranked 2nd.
13. Andhra Pradesh ranks 51st globally in Multidimensional Poverty Index according to a household survey conducted in state, in association with University of Oxford (UK). It is first Indian state to conduct a household survey at state and district level to estimate multidimensional poverty.
14. Arab Nation Qatar announced \$50 million donation to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). India also increased aid for Palestinian refugees to \$5 million, from \$1.5 Million Initially.
15. Arms import by India increased by 24% between 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 period as per data by International Peace Research Institute.
- India is followed by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, China, Australia, Algeria, Iraq, Pakistan and Indonesia as world top importers.
 - Largest arms suppliers to India are Russia (62%), US (15%) and Israel (11%).
16. As per Hurun's Global Rich List 2018 -
- India has 3rd highest number of Billionaires across world with 131 names (31 added this year). Mukesh Ambani remains India's richest person with net worth of \$26 billion.
 - China with 819 names and USA with 571 are at top 2 places.
17. As per a World Bank Report, India's new Indirect Tax System, The goods and services tax (GST) is one of most complex with the second highest tax rate in the world (After Chile), among 115 countries which have a similar indirect tax system. Further, there are several exempted sales and exports are zero-rated, which allows exporters to claim refund for taxes paid on inputs.
18. Australia abolished its employer-sponsored 457 visa programme which was mainly used by Indians. It has been replaced with a new programme that requires higher English-language proficiency and job skills.
19. BHEL commissioned 1st unit of 110 MW of Kishanganga hydroelectric project (HEP) of NHPC in Jammu and Kashmir, Located on Jhelum Tributary Kishanganga. All three units of 340 MW project will generate 1,350 million units (MU) of clean electricity annually.
20. BHEL signed a Technology Collaboration Agreement (TCA) with South Korea's HLB Power. It is for in-house manufacturing of large size gates and dampers used in coal fired power plants that would be commissioned or retrofitted with high capacity emission control equipment.
21. Bank of America launched new chatbot named *Erica* that can help customers check balances, remind about bills and answer bank-related questions.
22. Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced USD 170 million projects aimed at advancing women's economic empowerment in India, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Projects are focused on advancing gender equality, increasing job opportunities, spreading digital financial inclusion, and supporting agricultural sector and women's support groups.
23. Bolivia unveiled its 200 km long flag and 3 metre wide, claimed to be world's biggest flag. It extended between cities La Paz and Oruro. Bolivia is demanding access to Pacific Ocean, which it lost to Chile in a war in the 19th century.

24. Brazzaville declaration was signed to promote better management and conservation of world's largest tropical peatlands-Cuvette Centrale region in Congo Basin from unregulated land use and prevent its drainage and degradation.
- It was signed by Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo and Indonesia during 3rd Partners Meeting of Global Peatlands Initiative held in Brazzaville (Republic of Congo).
 - Peatlands are wetlands that contain mixture of decomposed organic material, partially submerged in layer of water, lacking oxygen. Their high carbon content makes them uniquely vulnerable to incineration if they are drained. They are globally important carbon store.
25. China abolished 2 term limit on Presidency, allowing Xi Jinping to remain as country's leader for life.
26. China is constructing world's fastest wind tunnel, to help in development of spacecraft. This 265 meter long tunnel would be used to test hypersonic aircraft that can travel up to a speed of 30,625 kph.
27. China launched 2 Beidou-3 MEO satellites (Beidou-30 and Beidou-31) as part of its third and final stage of launching its domestic Beidou (Compass) satellite navigation system. The new Twin satellites are MEO (Medium Earth Orbit) satellites, as third phase of Beidou satellite navigation system. BeiDou is 2nd generation of Chinese homegrown navigational system seen as rival to US's Global Positioning System (GPS). It comprises total 35 satellites (including 27 MEO (21,500 km orbits), 3 IGSO and 5 GSO satellites).
28. China will build its first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Liaoning by 2025, as part of its plans to achieve weaponry and technical developments for People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy by 2025.
- At present, China's navy has 2 aircraft carriers running on conventional oil. French Navy's *Charles de Gaulle* is only non-US aircraft carrier powered by nuclear reactors. USA's Nimitz-class and Ford-class carrier are run by nuclear power.
29. E-Commerce Major Amazon launched its first-ever debit card in North American Nation Mexico.
30. European Nation France approved making 15 years as legal age of sexual consent.
31. Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) signed line of credit (LoC) agreement with Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) to provide US \$500 million credit facility to fund various development projects in 15 member countries of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region in western-south Africa.
- ECOWAS is regional group of 15 West African countries. It was founded in May 1975, with signing of Treaty of Lagos. It aims to promote economic integration in all fields of activity of constituting countries.
32. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg apologised for recent data breach controversy related to Data analytics firm *Cambridge Analytica*.
- Cambridge Analytica (CA) is 2013 established data analytics firm, under its British parent company Strategic Communications Laboratories (SCL) Group. Main objective of CA is to come up with political campaigns and reach out to potential voters by combining data from multiple sources.
 - CA alleged assisted in Donald Trump's victory in US Presidential Elections 2016, by using unethically gathered data to manipulate voter behaviour. CA also allegedly worked with the Leave EU camp during Britain's exit from the European Union (Brexit).
 - Facebook controversy -
 - One of CA co-founders, Christopher Wylie stated that CA exploited Facebook to harvest millions of people's profiles without their permission and used information to create a psychological profile of users as well as their friends. This was then used for targeted political advertising during UK's Brexit referendum as well as during the 2016 US presidential elections.
 - How -
 - Facebook lets app developers seek permissions from users to use their personal data to help develop the app. CA reportedly got private data from a Cambridge researcher - Aleksandr Kogan, who created an app called 'thisisyourdigitallife' to offer personality predictions online. Though Kogan got access to the data, it was only meant to be used by him for developing the app and not be shared with others. However, he allegedly sold the data to the CA.
 - Issues related to India -
 - CA reportedly planned expanding its services to other nations' electoral processes, especially India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh as they approach elections.
 - CA reportedly reached out to the two main political parties of the nation for a possible collaboration for the upcoming 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

- Recently, IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad delivered a sharp warning to Facebook stating that Government would take stringent action including summoning its CEO Mark Zuckerberg to India, in case of any data theft of Indians.

- Meanwhile, both ruling party and main opposition party of India reportedly accused each other of having links with Cambridge Analytica and engaging the firm in past elections.

33. For first time in nation's history, Saudi Arabia's women participated in an all-female marathon, held in al Ahsa. Over 1500 women participated in event.

34. For the first time, Nepal Rastra Bank (Nepal's Central Bank) permitted domestic commercial banks to borrow funds from foreign banks and financial institutions, aiming to resolve liquidity crunch prevailing in Nepal's banking system since past few months. Banks of Nepal can now borrow loans up to 25 % of their core capital for 1 - 5 years.

35. Forbes' billionaires List 2018 -

- Top 5 -

- Amazon founder Jeff Bezos (\$110 Billion)

- Microsoft founder Bill Gates (\$90 billion),

- Warren Buffet (\$84 billion)

- Bernard Arnault and family (\$72 billion)

- Facebook founder-CEO Mark Zuckerberg (\$71 billion)

- India's Mukesh Ambani (chairman of Reliance Industries) is 19th on list with worth of \$40.1 billion. Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma (aged 39 years) is youngest Indian billionaire with net worth of \$1.7 billion.

36. Global Firepower index 2017 (133 Nations) -

- India's military strength is ranked 4th, after USA, Russia and China. France is ranked 5th. Pakistan is ranked 13th.

37. Global cyber security provider Kaspersky stated that India ranks 33rd worldwide in facing web-borne threats.

38. Greece's first space agency named *Hellenic Space Agency* has been officially launched. It is expected to benefit the country in various sectors viz. telecommunications, defense, medical applications, environmental monitoring, agriculture, fire prevention and control.

39. India and European Union (EU) signed cooperation agreement related to sharing of earth observation satellite data. Under this, EU will provide India with free, full and open access to data from Copernicus Sentinel family of satellites using high bandwidth connections from data hub to data hub. India will provide Copernicus programme and its participating states with free, full and open access to data from ISRO's earth observation satellites.

- This comprises data from land, ocean and atmospheric series of ISRO's civilian satellites (Oceansat-2, Scatsat 1, Megha- Tropiques, SARAL, INSAT-3D, INSAT-3DR) with exception of commercial high-resolution satellites data.

40. India became 3rd largest electricity producer, with Electricity production of 1,003.525 Billion Unit between April 2017 – January 2018, as per data by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) under commerce ministry. Top 3 Producers of Electricity are - China, USA and India.

41. India for first time started importing Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) from USA, under 20-year Sale Purchase Agreement (SPA) with USA's natural gas exporter Cheniere Energy signed in December 2011. Under it, GAIL will purchase around 3.5 Million Tonne of LNG per year from Sabine Pass.

42. India overtook Germany to become fourth largest automobile market, growing its Automobile by 9.5%. China topped the list followed by USA and Japan.

43. India received its first Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) cargo from United States (US) under long-term supply deal, on board GAIL's LNG ship *Meridian Spirit*.

44. India signed agreement with UN to build homes 50000 Houses for Nepal's April 2015 earthquake quake victims. India will give USD 8.41 million to UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services) and USD 7.41 Million to the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) to build 50000 homes by this agreement.

45. India will become 69th member of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

Membership process includes purchase of shares by India at an estimated cost of around 1 million euros.

46. India's BSF and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) declared 8.3 km stretch of Indo-Bangladesh border as first 'crime-free zone', stretching Gunarmath and Kalyani Border Out Posts (BOPs) in India and Puthkhali and Daulatpur BOPs in Bangladesh. Bangladesh and India shared 4156 km long international border.

47. India, Bangladesh and Russia signed MoU for cooperation in construction of 2*1200 MWs Capacity Rooppur nuclear power plant near Dhaka (Bangladesh). It is first initiative under India-Russia nuclear deal to undertake atomic energy projects in third countries. It will India's first atomic energy venture abroad and Bangladesh's first atomic energy project.
48. India-United Kingdom (UK) Joint Team won Newton-Bhabha Fund for project on Groundwater Arsenic Research in Ganga River Basin. Project is aimed to assess problem of arsenic poisoning and to understand aggravation such situation in next 25 to 30 years and its influence on groundwater management practices and suggest water remedial technologies accordingly, conducted from 3 sites – Bijnor and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Nadia in West Bengal.
- Newton Bhabha Fund is provided by the British Council and aims to bring together UK and Indian scientific research and innovation sectors to find joint solutions to the challenges facing India in economic development and social welfare.
49. Indian Railways handed over eighteen 1350 HP AC/DC diesel electric locomotives to Myanma Railways, to develop cordial relations with neighboring Nation.
50. Indian Steel Association (ISA) state that USA's move to levy steep tariff on steel imports may hit India's domestic steel market. Recently, USA proposed to impose tariffs of 25% on steel imports and 10% on imported aluminium to protect domestic steel industry from cheap imports.
51. International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) signed Host Country Agreement here, to ISA a juridical personality and gives it power to contract, to acquire and dispose off movable and immovable properties. Under this, ISA shall have such privileges, applicable tax concessions and immunities as are necessary for ISA's Headquarter to independently discharge its function..
- ISA is headquartered in Gurgaon (Haryana) with Upendra Tripathy as Interim Director General.
52. Iraq overtook Saudi Arabia as India's top crude oil supplier by supplying 38.9 million tonnes (MT) crude oil in the current financial year. India is 80% dependent on imports to meet its oil needs.
53. Malaysian Government proposed 10 years in jail and hefty fines for publishers of fake news. Under Anti Fake News Bill, anyone who publishes fake news could face fines of up to 500000 ringgit (USD 128140), up to 10 years in jail, or both.
54. Maldives Parliament approved anti-defection bill which states that MPs elected on political party tickets will lose their seat if they leave their party, get expelled, or change parties.
55. Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE) 2018 -
- India ranked 52 among 57 countries.
 - Ghana (46.4 %) ranks first in world with highest number of women business owners, followed by Russia (34.6 %), Uganda (33.8 %), New Zealand (33 %) and Australia (32.1 %).
56. Ministry of Communications launched Cool EMS Service with Japan, as a one-way service from Japan to India which allows customers in India to import Japanese food items for personal use which is allowed under Indian regulations. Initially available in Delhi only.
57. Mumbai is named 16th among top 20 costliest cities in world, according to Knight Frank Wealth Report 2018, based on 4 major indicators - wealth, investments, lifestyle and future. Top 3 Wealthiest Cities - Guangzhou (China), Hong Kong (China), New York (USA).
58. Myanmar deferred signing agreement with India to streamline free movement of people within 16 km along the open border between two countries, citing domestic compulsions and asked for more time for the agreement to be sealed.
- India and Myanmar share 1643 km unfenced border along Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.
59. Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi's human rights award conferred by US Holocaust Memorial Museum has been taken back, which they had presented to her in 2012. It was done after ongoing violence against Rohingya Muslim minority community in Rakhine state of Myanmar.
60. NASA launched GOES-S (*Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite*), an advanced weather satellite meant to safeguard Western USA, by forecasting natural calamities such as hurricanes, wildfires, floods etc. GOES-S will not only keep a watch over West Coast of USA, Alaska and Hawaii, but also over Mexico and Central America.
61. Neighbouring Nation Sri Lanka declared a state of emergency for 10 days, to curb heightening violence targeting Muslim minority, mainly in Kandy.

62. New Delhi ranked 22nd globally and 8th in Asia in TripAdvisor's top 25 travellers choice of destinations list 2018, topped by Paris (France). It is followed by London (UK), Rome (Italy), Bali (Indonesia), Crete (Greece).
63. ONGC Videsh Ltd signed MoU with IDRO Oil (a subsidiary of state-run Iranian Development and Renovation Organisation) for developing Susangerd field in Iran. OVL and IDRO Oil will jointly bid for a USD 1 billion contract for development of Susangerd oilfield in southern Iran.
64. Oklahoma will become first US State to use Nitrogen Gas for executions. Nitrogen is an odourless and tasteless gas that makes up about 78 % of air that humans breathe. However, it causes death when inhaled without any oxygen.
65. Pacific Ocean Nation Marshall Islands will become first country to recognize cryptocurrency as its legal tender and adopt transparent crypto monetary system. Its Parliament passed law to create a digital currency called *Sovereign* (symbol SOV) to raise cash and boost economy. It will be implemented with Israeli fintech startup Neema.
- Initially, 24 million SOVs will be circulated and will be backed by Govt as a legal tender in country. SOV will be different from other cryptocurrencies because it will be officially recognized by law as legal tender and effectively backed by government.
66. Philippines formally Withdrawn from Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), mentioning that ICC was a righteous stand against those who politicise and weaponise human rights.
67. Quality of Living survey 2018 by Mercer -
- Austria's capital city Vienna has been rated world's most liveable city for 9th consecutive year.
 - Top 3 - Vienna (Austria), Zurich (Switzerland), Auckland (New Zealand) AND Germany's Munich tied for third place.
 - Hyderabad and Pune have been rated India's most liveable cities as they have tied for 142nd place.
 - Iraq's capital Baghdad is rated least liveable city for the tenth consecutive year.
68. Renowned Indian painter Raja Ravi Varma's untitled painting of Tilottama was sold for \$795,000 (around Rs 5 crore) at Sotheby's Modern and Contemporary South Asian art auction in New York.
69. Russia successfully test fired its latest nuclear Inter Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) RS-28 Sarmat, with Speed over Mach 20 (20 times speed of light) and Operational range over 11000 kilometres. RS-28 Sarmat is a heavy liquid-propellant ICBM capable of carrying nuclear charges. It aims to replace R-36M2 Voevoda ICBM, which is Russia's only Strategic Missile Force since 1988. Pakistan Navy also test fired indigenously developed Submarine Launched version of Cruise Missile (SLCM) *BABUR*, with range under 500 KMs.
70. Russia tested hypersonic missile named *Kinzhal*, said to travel at 10 times speed of sound and have a range of 2,000 km.
71. SWIFT (Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication System) platform expanded its GPI (Global Payment Innovation) Tracker system to help banks track their global transactions and keep full vigil on payments activity. From November 2018, GPI Tracker system will be included in all payment instructions carried between all 11,000 customers on SWIFT at all times. It will extend transparency and drive more banks to join service to make GPI new normal in cross-border payments.
- SWIFT GPI was launched in May 2017 to help banks to track their global transactions at all times, keeping full vigil on payments activity. It accounts for 10% of cross border payment traffic on SWIFT network.
 - SWIFT is global financial messaging service that enables financial institutions worldwide to send and receive information about financial transactions in secure, standardized and reliable environment.
72. Saudi Arabia approved national policy of its atomic energy programme, as it prepares to award contracts for its first nuclear power plants. Policy insists on limiting nuclear activities to peaceful purposes and calls for enhanced safety measures as well as use of best practices for radioactive waste management.
73. Scientists from Australian Institute of Marine Biology have developed an ultra-fine biodegradable film, some 50000 times thinner than a human hair, to prevent coral bleaching, that had spread across the Great Barrier Reef in Australia in 2016 and 2017. Shield has been designed to sit on the surface of the water above the corals rather than directly on corals to provide an effective barrier against sun.
74. Seychelles' govt. refused to ratify a deal signed with India to build military infrastructure on its Assumption Island, signed in 2015 during Indian PM Narendra Modi's visit to Seychelles.
75. Singapore's Changi Airport is named world's best airport for 6th consecutive year by consultancy firm Skytrax.
- Incheon International Airport in South Korea and Haneda Airport in Japan were placed 2nd and 3rd respectively.

- Mumbai airport (Chhatrapati Shivaji Airport) is ranked 63rd, Bangalore (Kempegowda Airport) and Delhi (Indira Gandhi Airport) are at 64th and 66th place respectively.

76. Technology Firm Google acquired US-based Tenor, a GIF platform for Android, iOS, and desktop. Tenor's GIF-searching functionality will be integrated into Google Images and Gboard, company's virtual keyboard.

77. US state of New Jersey declared April as 'Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month' as part of its effort to promote awareness of Sikhism.

78. USA Aerospace Firm *Lockheed Martin* announced setting up of F-16 jet production unit in India, under *Make in India* initiative.

79. USA and Israeli forces held *Juniper Cobra 2018* Joint military drill.

80. USA banned use of Venezuelan cryptocurrency (Petro) by its Citizens, stating that its introduction is intended to skirt US sanctions.

81. USA challenged China at World Trade Organisation (WTO) over intellectual property breaches, alleging China of denying foreign patent holders (including US companies), basic patent rights that prevent Chinese entity from using technology after a licensing contract ends. US also accused China of violating WTO norms by imposing discriminatory contract terms against imported foreign technology.

82. United Arab Emirates (UAE) became first arab nation to have Nuclear Power after constuction of its \$20 billion Barakah Plant west of Abu Dhabi has been Completed, led by Korea Electric Power Corp.

83. United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) announced Bhutan along with Kiribati, Sao Tome and Principe and Solomon Islands will be recommended for graduation from least developed country (LDC) category. These four nations will be recommended to move up from ranks of poorest nations on account of increasing national earning power as well as access to better health care.

84. United Nations children's agency (UNICEF) stated that India has seen a sharp decline in child marriages over past 10 years, with only 27 % of girls getting married before 18 years in comparison to 47 per cent a decade back.

85. United Nations has issued an appeal for 951 million Dollars to meet the needs of nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Recently, Rohingya influx has become world's fastest-growing refugee crisis with tens of thousands fleeing by land and sea daily from Myanmar's northern Rakhine state.

86. Venezuelan Government led by President Nicolas Maduro decided to remove three zeros off Venezuelan currency Bolivar, to counter hyperinflation and crippling economic crisis. It is aimed to guarantee commercial activities and it will come into effect from June 4, 2018.

- Government will take out of circulation current bills and put into circulation new bills, to be known as *sovereign bolivar*.

- Largest bill in circulation is 100000 bolivar note, which trades for about \$0.50.

- A kilo of sugar (2.2 pounds) costs around 250,000 bolivars, while average wages are approx 450000 Bolivars only.

- Venezuela's new set of monetary denomination will consist of 2 coins of 1 bolivar and 2 bolivar. There will be Notes of 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 bolivars.

- Venezuelan government also recently launched cryptocurrency *Petro*.

87. Vietnam's Nguyen Huong Giang is named winner of *Miss International Queen* in Thailand at one of world's top beauty pageants for transgender women.

88. Washington become USA first state to enact its own net-neutrality requirements after U.S. regulators repealed Obama-era rules designed to keep internet an even playing field. New law also requires internet providers to disclose information about their management practices, performance and commercial terms.

89. West African country Sierra Leone became first country to deploy blockchain technology in election process. Blockchain based solution used in Sierra Leone's election was developed by a Switzerland based voting technology company *Agora*.

90. World Economic Forum's (WEF) released Report Energy Transition Index 2018 titled *Fostering Effective Energy Transition*. It ranks countries on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability

- India was ranked at 78th among 114 countries.

- Top 5 - Sweden (1st), Norway (2nd), Switzerland (3rd), Finland (4th), Denmark (5th).

- BRICS - Brazil (38th), Russia (70th) and China (76th).

91. World Happiness Index 2018 by UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network -

- In this report, Several parameters are used to generate a happiness score of country on a scale from 1 to 10.

- India is ranked 133rd among 156 countries, down from 122 rank last year.
 - 2018 edition, for the first time ranked happiness of foreign-born immigrants in 117 countries.
 - Top 5 Happiest - Finland (1st), Norway (2nd), Denmark (3rd), Iceland (4th), Switzerland (5th). USA ranked 18th and Britain 19th.
 - Neighbours - Pakistan (75th), Nepal (101st), Bhutan (97th), Bangladesh (115th), Sri Lanka (116th).
92. World Health Organization (WHO) invited pharmaceutical companies around world to submit proposals to manufacture affordable versions of newer medicines for treatment of drug resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB). It requested drug makers to submit Expression of Interest (EoI) for Bedaquiline and Delamanid, two new generation drugs, recommended for DR-TB.
93. World Trade Organization (WTO) will set up panel to examine whether India has complied with its 2016 ruling in case against US regarding domestic content requirements (DCR) rules for solar cells and modules.
- In 2016, WTO ruled against India for favouring local manufacturers in its solar power programme, on petition filed by USA.
 - Afterwards, USA alleged that India continues to apply WTO-inconsistent measures and had approached WTO demanding action against India for non-compliance of WTO ruling in December 2017.
94. Worldwide Cost of Living report 2018 by the Economist Intelligence Unit -
- Top 5 Costliest Cities - Singapore (1st for 5th straight year), Paris (France), Zurich (Switzerland), Hong Kong, Oslo (Norway).
 - Syrian capital Damascus is world's cheapest city.
 - Indian cities of Bangalore, Chennai and New Delhi and Pakistan's Karachi featured among ten cheapest locations surveyed.
95. World's biggest cruise-liner, "Symphony of the Seas", has been set sail in France, to embark on its maiden voyage in Mediterranean.
96. World's longest sandstone cave named 'Krem Puri' has been discovered in Meghalaya.
- It was discovered in 2016, but its actual length was found between 5th February and 1st March 2018.ii. It is 24583 metres long, over 6000 metres longer than world record-holder Cueva Del Saman, a sandstone cave in Edo Zulia, Venezuela.

Meetings

1. An informal World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial meeting held in New Delhi with Representatives from 50 countries attending it.
2. First G20 meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors held in Buenos Aires (Argentina).
3. India and France co-hosted first International Solar Alliance (ISA) Summit at Rashtrapati Bhavan Convention Centre in New Delhi. It was attended by 21 heads of government and several top. Its focus was to mobilise \$1 trillion of investments needed by 2030 for massive deployment of solar energy. Key Takeaways Include -
 - 10-point action plan presented by India.
 - Common risk mitigation mechanism announced by France.
 - Delhi Solar Agenda that states that countries will pursue increased share of solar energy in final energy consumption in their respective national energy mix to tackle global challenges of climate change.
 - India will give \$1.4 billion in aid to 15 other developing nations for 27 more solar projects. France will provide €700 million in loans and support by 2022 to emerging economies for solar energy projects.
 - During 1st ISA Summit, ISA Signed signed Joint financial partnership Declarations with African Development Bank (AfDb), Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Green climate fund (GCF), and New Development Bank (NDB).
 - International Solar Alliance (ISA) is headquartered in Gurugram (India) and Upendra Tripathy is current Chief of ISA.
4. India hosted 17th Annual Conference of International Competition Network 2018 (ICN2018) in New Delhi.
5. World Ocean Summit 2018 held in Mexico's Riviera Maya.

National

1. Cabinet Approvals on Mar 28, 2018 -
 - New Central scheme namely *Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS)* will be implemented during 2018-19 and 2019-20, aimed at bringing more transparency and efficiency in distribution of foodgrains as it will improve the mechanism to identify fake/duplicate ration cards.

- Approved restructuring of National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to strengthen governance, implementation and monitoring framework.
 - CCEA Approvals -
 - Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved continuation of Credit Guarantee Fund for Education Loans Scheme and continuation and modification of Central Sector Interest Subsidy Scheme with outlay of INR 6600 crores for period from 2017-18 to 2019-20. This will provide education loans to 10 lakh students during this period. Modifications -
 - Ceiling on loan amount has been refixed at Rs. 7.5 lakhs.
 - Moratorium period would be course period + 1 year.
 - Department of School Education and Literacy's Proposal to formulate a Integrated Scheme on School Education by subsuming Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE) from 1st April, 2018 to 31st March, 2020, with allocation of INR 75000 crores. It aims to ensure inclusive quality education from nursery to senior secondary stage, with emphasis on 2 two T's - Teacher and Technology.
 - Enhancing scope of Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY). Govt will now contribute Employer's full admissible contribution for the first 3 years from the date of registration of new employee for all sectors including existing beneficiaries for their remaining period of 3 years.
 - Informal sector workers would get social safety net and there would be more job creation.
 - Continuation of Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) and City Compost Scheme beyond 12th Five Year plan till 2019-20, with expenditure INR 61972 crores. Subsidy on P&K fertilizers and Market Development Assistant (MDA) on City Compost will be provided on subsidy rates approved by CCEA on annual basis. Continuation of these schemes will ensure that adequate quantity of P&K is made available to farmers at statutory controlled price
 - Removal of prohibition on export of all varieties of edible oils except mustard oil.
 - MOUs
 - With Zambia in the field of Judicial Cooperation.
 - With Canada to establish bilateral cooperation in field of Intellectual Property (IP).
 - With United Kingdom and Northern Ireland regarding cooperation and Exchange of Information for Combating International Criminality and Tackling Serious Organised Crime.
 - With South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) for cooperation on response to Oil and Chemical Pollution in the South Asian Seas Region (Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). It aims at protection and preservation of marine environment in region.
2. 105th Indian Science Congress held in Imphal (Manipur) with theme *reaching the unreachable through science and technology*. ISC is being held for second time in North-East. Earlier it was held at Shillong in 2009.
- 106th Indian Science Congress will be held in Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) with theme *Future India: Science and Technology*.
 - 7TH Women Science Congress, Children's Science Congress and 11th Science Communicators' Meet were also held during this event.
 - Drdo Pavilion has been Adjudged As Most Informative at 105th Indian Science Congress.
3. According to Minister of State for Rural Development, West Bengal is the best performing State in terms of allotting jobs and utilising funds under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- WB so far spent over INR 7335 crores and generated over 28.21 crore work days under MGNREGA. West Bengal is followed by Tamil Nadu (TN) which spent INR 5981 crores and generated 22.17 crore work days during 2017-18. Goa is ranked at bottom.
4. According to study *India's digital divide: how broadband speed splits the nation* by Ookla, Chennai has highest fixed broadband download speed among 20 largest cities of India. Top 5 Cities -
- Chennai - 32.67 Mbps
 - Bengaluru - 31.09 Mbps
 - Hyderabad - 28.93 Mbps
 - Visakhapatnam - 26.59 Mbps
 - Delhi - 23.57 Mbps
5. Airport Authority of India (AAI) signed MoU with Assam government for sustainable development of human settlements at villages in Kamrup district, under its Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) initiative. AAI will

provide financial assistance of Rs. 4.58 crore for same. AAI also tied up with National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to develop a green corridor covering 16.55 km in Varanasi.

6. Andhra Pradesh Government launched multi-utility vehicle NAIPUNYA RATHAM (also called World on Wheels), under Smart village Smart Ward Programme. It will look to improve digital literacy and create awareness on various government schemes. As part of it, a 20-seater bus enabled digital facilities and learning lab equipped with smart technology gadgets as well as with elearning tools.

7. Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS) ranked Pune (Maharashtra) at top with a score of 5.1 and Karnataka Capital Bengaluru at bottom with a score of 3.

- Top 5 - Pune, Kolkata, Thiruvananthapuram, Bhubaneswar and Surat.

- Bengaluru is at bottom, with Chandigarh as 2nd worst and Dehradun 3rd from bottom in Urban governance.

8. Arunachal Pradesh Assembly passed Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill 2018 to remove Anchal Samiti, intermediate level of 3 tier panchayati raj system and set up a two-tier system in state.

- It is being done under 73rd Amendment of Constitution that enables state having less than 20 lakh population not to have intermediate level (Arunachal has population of 13.84 lakh). 3 tier panchayati raj institutions were set up in state in 2003, 2008 and 2013.

- Anchal Samiti (3rd Tier) is being removed to standardise use of limited financial resources and avoid delay in passing policies as they delayed at Anchal Samiti level (intermediate level).

- In 2 tier panchayati raj system, execution of schemes will be faster as there will be direct connection between Gram Panchayats and Zilla Parishads.

9. As per data by Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Madhya Pradesh has highest number of 55770 fully covered tribal habitations with safe drinking water in country followed by Odisha and Jharkhand. Under *National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP)*, 10% of total allocation of funds is earmarked to be used for supply of drinking water to Scheduled Tribe (ST) dominated habitations.

10. Asia's largest tulip garden, Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden is opened in Srinagar (Jammu & Kashmir). 12.5 lakh tulip bulbs of 48 varieties were sown in garden by floriculture department.

11. Assam Government launched a special programme to build 1 lakh toilets across the state under Swachh Bharat Mission, named *Mission Sambavh* (Mission Possible), under which, construction works will be completed within 10 days.

12. Assam government launched a toll-free helpline for women, to tackle recent surge in crime in state. The helpline is called Sakhi and is available at 181.

13. Assembly Elections 2018 in North East States of Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland -

- Tripura -

- BJP (Bharatiya Janata party) emerged as largest party with win over 35 seats (out of 60 seats). Communist Party of India (Marxist), that ruled Tripura for 25 years (led by Manik Sarkar), won 16 seats. Vote percentage - BJP (43%), CPI (M) - 42.7%.

- Nagaland -

- Naga Peoples Front (NPF) emerged as largest party with win over 27 seats (out of 59 seats), followed by Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (16 Seats) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with 12 Seats. Vote percentage - NPF (38.8%) NDPP (25.2%) BJP (15.3%).

- Meghalaya -

- Indian National Congress (INC) emerged as largest party with win over 21 seats (out of 59 seats), followed by National People's Party (19 Seats).

14. Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) launched Free Wi-Fi Facility at Udwada Village, in Valsad District (Gujarat). It is Union minister Smriti Irani's selected village under Saansad Adarsh Gram scheme.

15. Buddhist Community of Itanagar celebrated silver jubilee of the Losar Festival in Arunachal Pradesh. This festival is termed as *New Year* according to their Buddhist calendar.

16. Cabinet Approvals -

- MOU with Iran in field of Traditional Systems of Medicine, agriculture and allied sectors.

- Agreement with Iran for Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on income.

- MoU with Sri Lanka for promoting cooperation in field of Information Technology and Electronics.

- Approved *Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts (Amendment) Bill 2018* for introduction in Parliament.

- It brings down specified value of a commercial dispute to 3 Lakhs from the current 1 Crore. Hence, commercial disputes of a reasonable value can be decided by commercial courts. It reduce time taken (presently 1445 days) to resolve commercial disputes of lesser value and will improve India's ranking in the Ease of Doing Business.
- It provides for establishment of Commercial Courts at district Judge level for territories over which respective High Courts have ordinary original civil jurisdiction i.e. in Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and State of Himachal Pradesh.
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved continuuing Urea Subsidy Scheme upto 2019-20 at a total estimated cost of 164935 crores and for disbursement of fertilizer subsidy.

17. Cabinet Approvals -

- MOUS / Agreements -

- Approved signing of Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement between India and France. It represents major milestone in enhancing people-to-people contacts, fostering mobility of students, academics, researchers and skilled professionals and strengthening cooperation on issues related to irregular migration and human trafficking between two sides.
- MoU with Hellenic on Cooperation in Renewable Energy.
- MoU between India's Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and Public Service Commission of Mauritius, for sharing expertise of both parties in area of recruitment.
- Agreement with France to prevent illicit consumption and reduction of illicit traffic in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Chemical Precursors and related offences.
- Introduction of Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill 2018 in Parliament -
- It aims to encourage institutional arbitration for settlement of disputes and make India a centre of robust Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism. It will amend Act of 1996 and will improve institutional arbitration by Creation of an independent body *Arbitration Council of India (ACI)* which will grade arbitral institution and accredit arbitrators by laying down norms and take steps to promote arbitration, conciliation, mediation and other ADR Mechanism.
- Release additional instalment of Dearness Allowance (DA) to Central Government employees and Dearness Relief (DR) to pensioners wef 01-01-2018, representing increase of 2% over existing rate of 5% of Basic Pay/Pension, for a period of 14 months from January 2018 to February 2019).
- Recommendations of Inter-Ministerial Group on Stressed Assets in Telecom Sector, Including -
- Restructuring deferred payment liabilities of spectrum auction of telecom service providers and revising limit of the cap for spectrum holding for telecom service providers. It gives one-time opportunity to opt for higher number of instalment (max. 16 instalment) apart from currently permitted 10 instalments.
- Revision of limits of cap for spectrum holding Based upon the recommendations of TRAI and Telecom Commission, from current limit of 25% to 35%.
- Shifting Headquarters of Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) from Chennai (Tamilnadu) to Ballabhgarh (Haryana).
- CCEA approved INR 1151 crores Central Sector Scheme for in-situ management of crop residue in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. It will promote agricultural mechanization for upto 2020 to provide cost effective solution to farmers to deal with stubble burning.

18. Cabinet Approvals Mar 1, 2018 -

- Approved proposal for establishment of National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), as an independent regulator for auditing profession which is one of key changes brought in by Companies Act 2013. It is expected to improve investments, globalisation of business by meeting international practices, and assist in development of audit profession. NFRA will be 15 members body, consisting of Chairperson, three full-time Members and one Secretary.
- Approved Introducing *Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill 2018* in Parliament, to lay down measures to deter economic offenders from evading process of Indian law by remaining outside jurisdiction of Indian courts. Cases with offences valued Over 100 crores will come under purview of this Bill.
- It is expected to re-establish rule of law with respect to the fugitive economic offenders as they would be forced to return to India to face trial for scheduled offences.

19. Cabinet Approvals on Mar 21, 2018 -

- Approved launch of new Centrally Sponsored *Ayushman Bharat -National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM)*. Scheme has benefit cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year and will target over 10 crore families

belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on SECC database. AB-NHPM will subsume on-going Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS).

- Approved second and final extension of term of Commission constituted to examine issue of Sub categorization of Other Backward Classes in Central List for upto June 2018. It was constituted under article 340 of Constitution in October 2017 and is headed by Justice (Retd.) G. Rohini.
- Approved formation of 100% owned C Corporation of Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd.(TCIL) in USA in the state of Texas. Its initial capital will be 5 Million USD.
- Approved closure of India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI) to enhance synergies in channelizing Diaspora's contributions to India's flagship programmes such as National Mission for clean Ganga and Swachh Bharat Mission.
- IDF-OI was set in 2008 as an autonomous not-for-profit Trust, to facilitate Overseas Indian donate into social projects in India. As Foundation received only 36.80 Lakhs between December 2008 and March 2015 as donation from Indian community, it was reviewed in 2015.
- After Review and adding Flagship programmes like National Mission for Clean Ganga and Swachh Bharat Mission etc. into mandate of IDF-OI, It received INR 10.16 crores in 3 years.
- Now, to enhance synergies and improve efficiency, it was decided that Trust would be closed down by March 31, 2018.
- Approved North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS) 2017 with outlay of 3000 crores upto March, 2020. NEIDS is a combination of incentives covered under the earlier two schemes with a much larger outlay. Overall cap for benefits under all components of incentives will be of INR 200 crores per unit.
- Foreign Affairs -
 - Revision of the Agreement with Qatar for avoidance of double taxation and for the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income.
 - MoU with Guyana on cooperation in Renewable Energy.
 - Approved opening 18 new Indian Missions in Africa by 2021. It will increase number of Resident Indian Missions in Africa from 29 to 47.
 - Approved inclusion of the communities namely *Parivara* and *Talawara* as synonym of *Nayaka*, in list of STs of Karnataka.
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approvals -
 - *Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry* for 2017-18 to 2019-20, with allocation of INR 2161.68 Crores. It will be implemented by the Ministry through Central Silk Board (CSB). It will focus on multidimensional development of Sericulture sector.
 - Continuation of Centrally Sponsored Scheme *Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)* from 1-04-2017 to 31-03- 2020. It seeks to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio of the country to 30% by 2020. Funds allocated for concerned period are 9604 Crores.
 - Funding ratio - Central and State Governments ratio of 90:10 for North-Eastern States, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, 60:40 for other States and UTs with Legislature and 100:0 for UTs without Legislature.

20. Chennai based Geographical Indication Registry and Intellectual Property India awarded Geographical Indication (GI) Tag to Madhya Pradesh's Kadaknath chicken. It will ensure that no one else can use name Kadaknath Chicken while selling any other black chicken.

- Kadaknath chicken breed is unique for its black colour due to its black-feathers. This breed of chicken is popular for its adaptability and flavourful good-tasting black meat, which is believed to have medicinal properties. It is native tribal districts of Jhabua, Alirajpur and parts of Dhar in Madhya Pradesh.
- Kadaknath chicken contains 25-27% of protein in comparison with other breeds of chickens that contain 18% protein. It is also known for its high iron content.

21. Competition Commission of India (CCI) imposed penalties upon 3 Airlines for concerted action in fixing and revising Fuel Surcharge (FSC). Jet Airways (39.81 Crores), Indigo Parent InterGlobe Aviation (9.45 Crores) and Spice Jet (5.10 Crores).

22. Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) approved National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) to development *Hansa- NG*, a next generation trainer aircraft of two-seater Hansa-3 aircraft.

23. Delhi Government launched *Delhi's Date with Democracy* mobile application to serve as a platform for aspiring singers and dancers in city to showcase their talent on a big stage. Sahitya Kala Parishad and Delhi Kalyan Samiti have collaborated with the Delhi Government for this initiative.

24. Delhi Metro in association with IndusInd Bank launched a dual purpose Metro Plus' debit card that will enable customers of IndusInd bank to use it for metro train rides as well as for all other regular debit card transactions.
25. Delhi government approved delivering rations in sealed packets at doorstep to 72 Lakh Public Distribution System (PDS) beneficiaries, to address problems such as theft of ration, poor quality of supplies and shops remaining closed.
26. Delhi government will establish State Sanskrit Education Council to improve formal education of Sanskrit in Delhi.
27. Department of Biotechnology constituted Field Inspection and Scientific Evaluation Committee (FISEC) to investigate matter of illegal cultivation of Herbicide Tolerant (HT) or BG-III cotton in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Maharashtra, after several complaints regarding illegal cultivation of HT cotton.
- Cultivation of HT cotton (BG-III) is not approved by country's biotech regulator, Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of Ministry of Environment. HT Cotton (Herbicide-Tolerant (HT) Cotton / BG-III cotton) takes care of weeds problem at much lower cost as compared to physical labour required for weeding. It contains Round-up Ready and Roundup Flex (RRF) gene.
 - The herbicide-resistant gene in HT cotton can spread through pollen into biodiversity system leading to transformation of weeds into super weeds on large-scale. It will threaten growth and yields of all crops in future and also increase cultivation costs and lead to health hazards.
28. Diu become only Union Territory to be fully run on solar energy. It generates 13 megawatts (MW) of electricity from solar power generating facilities daily. 3 MW is generated by rooftop solar plants and 10 MW by its other solar power plants.
29. Election Commission announced dates for Assembly elections 2018 for Southern State of Karnataka. Elections for 224 Seats will be held on May 12, 2018.
30. Endangered Asiatic lion, which only live in Gir Forest National Park of India, has seen its population rising to over 600 from just about 180 in 1960s. Asiatic lions separated from african lions approx 100000 years ago. Their territory is restricted to 1400 square kilometre Gir Sanctuary in Gujarat.
31. Expert committee headed by HN Nagamohan Das, constituted by Karnataka Government to examine demand for a separate religion tag for Lingayats, has recommended *Religious Minority* status for Lingayat community. It concluded that there is enough evidence to show that Lingayat religion is different from Hindu religion.
32. First Indian Sign Language Dictionary of 3000 words launched by Thaawarchand Gehlot, developed by Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre (ISLR&TC). It aims to remove communications barriers between deaf and hearing communities as it is focused on providing more information in Indian sign language. It consists words of five categories Everyday Terms, Legal Terms, Academic Terms, Medical Terms and Technical Terms.
33. First phase of 2000 MW Capacity *Shakti Sthala* solar park inaugurated in drought-prone Pavagada region of Tumkur district (Karnataka), claimed to be world's largest solar park.
- It is in line with Central Government's plans to enhance solar power capacity to 100 gigawatts (GW) by 2020.
 - First phase of this INR 16500 crores Project will generate 600MW power, while balance 1,400MW will be commissioned in 2nd phase by of 2018.
34. Forbes India released the *W-Power Trailblazers* issue 2018, featuring 25 rising women stars in business. It is 2nd edition of this report.
35. Gadchiroli book reading event created a new Guinness world record breaking Guinness world record created in Turkey in 2017. Approx 7000 people participated in book reading event conducted at Gadchiroli (Maharashtra), organised by police authorities.
36. General Conferences (Mar 1 - 10, 2018) -
- 27th Technological Conference of Indian Jute Industries' Research Association (IJIRA) held in Kolkata.
 - Cutural Festival *Shigmotsav* organized in Goa, with Shigmo parades offering glimpses of Goan life depicted through folk dance and music performances by locals.
 - 46th Know India Programme (KIP) organized by Government in New Delhi, aiming to engage and make students and young professionals of Indian Diaspora, connected with their motherland.
 - Conference on *Indian Metros: Collaborating for Excellence* held in Nw Delhi. During this, I-METROS, an association of all Indian Metro Rail companies was launched. It will be a forum for exchange of ideas, pooling of knowledge and sharing of experience, best practices, innovations etc.

- Biennial event *WINGS INDIA 2018* held in Hyderabad (Telangana) with theme *India-Global Aviation Hub*. During this, International Air Transport Association (IATA) signed MoU with Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and National Aviation University (NAU) to enhance human resource availability in India's aviation industry.
- India International Institute for Democracy and Election Management (IIDEM) Delhi conducted a training programme on 'Capacity Development for Election Management.
- 29th International Yoga Festival (IYF) held at Rishikesh (Uttarakhand).
- Event named *Vision for Future* held in New Delhi to commemorate 70 years of Indo-Russia ties.
- Large scale Media & Entertainment Services Market - enTTech 2018 organized in Mumbai.
- National Legislators Conference held in New Delhi with theme *We For Development*'.
- World ATM Congress (WATMC) 2018 held in Spain as world's largest international air traffic management (ATM) exhibition.
- 4th India-Europe 29 Business Forum (IE29BF) held in New Delhi with theme *Synergising Economic Vision for Expanded Relations* and Czech Republic as *Focus Country*.
- *FICCI Frames 2018* Conference held in Mumbai and released FICCI-EY Media & Entertainment Report 2018 named *Reimagining India's M&E Sector*.
- *End TB Summit* held in New Delhi, highlighting India's aim to be TB-Free by 2025. Member Countries of World Health Organization-Regional Office for South-East Asia (WHO-SEARO) adopted 'Delhi End TB Summit Statement of Action'.
- Executive Committee tasked with overlooking all Nutrition related activities under POSHAN Abhiyaan (*PM's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment*) held its first meeting in New Delhi.
- 2018 World Conference on Tobacco or Health held in Capetown (South Africa).

37. General Conferences (Mar 11 - 20, 2018)

- IARI's Annual Krishi Unnati Mela 2018 held in Pusa (Bihar) and New Delhi. Krishi Vigyan Mela (Agriculture Science Fair) is held since 1972 and is a highly important annual event of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Objective is to create awareness among farmers about the latest agriculture-related technological developments.
- First Indo-French Knowledge Summit for university, scientific and technology cooperation held in New Delhi.
- National Conference on Counterfeiting and Role of Enforcement Agencies held in New Delhi, organised by Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) in collaboration with European Union (EU).
- 2 day Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) held in New Delhi with theme *Challenges to Policing in 2020*.
- First edition of *Soldierathon* held in New Delhi, as a special marathon aimed at raising funds for welfare of Indian soldiers and their families.
- First regional conference on *Mass Rapid Transport System (MRTS) for Urban Areas – Opportunities and Challenges* held in Kolkata.
- *Indian Images: People and Places*, a photo exhibition about India organized in Cairo (Egypt), as part of annual cultural festival *India by the Nile*.
- Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (FINE) held at Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi. On this occasion, President Ram Nath Kovind presented Gandhian Young Technological Innovation awards instituted by Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institutions [SRISTI].
- First India-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction held in New Delhi.
- 3rd National Conclave on Mines and Minerals Held in New Delhi. During This, Ministry of Mines launched Sand Mining Framework to help states deal with the sand mining issues, including demand supply deficit and illegal extraction.

- There have been various issues in mining activities related to sand like non availability of sand, environmental degradation, high sand prices, illegalities in sand mining etc.

38. General Conferences (Mar 21 - 31, 2018)

- An International Yoga Fest held in New Delhi, as a curtain raiser for International Yoga Day (IYD) to be held on 21st June 2018.
- First edition of Delhi Energy Dialogue (DED) 2018 organised by Ashden India Collective (AIC) in alliance with the Climate Parliament and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).
- 1st meeting of Working Group on making India a USD 5 Trillion Economy held in New Delhi, chaired by Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu.
- Rising India Summit organized by Network 18 held in New Delhi.

- 5th *Nadi Mahotsava* held at Bandrabhan in Hoshangabad (Madhya Pradesh).
 - Bihar Govt. inaugurated first 'Startup hub' of Bihar in Patna.
 - First National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement held in New Delhi.
 - 5th India Maize Summit 2018 held in New Delhi, to harness the potential of maize and technological innovations.
 - 46th All India Police Science Congress held in Shimla (Himachal Pradesh).
 - 11th Rashtriya Rifles Biennial Conference is being conducted at Nagrota (J &K).
 - National Conference on Down Syndrome organised by National Trust under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in New Delhi.
 - 1st *International Print Biennale*, an International Exhibition of Graphic Prints held in New Delhi.
 - 1st National Conclave on Psychological Trauma, Child Protection, and Mental Illnesses held in New Delhi.
 - SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2018 organized in New Delhi under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM). It aims to provide to rural women producers a national platform and an opportunity to showcase their products and seek buyers, either individuals or bulk buyers for sale nationally/internationally.
 - Smart India Hackathon Grand Finale 2018 (Software edition) held in New Delhi. 1 lakh students from 1200 colleges participated in this world's largest Hackathon.
 - International Yachting Festival held in Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), conducted by the Andhra Pradesh government.
39. Government approved creating Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Police Investigation, aimed to promote high professional Investigation of Crime in State/UT Police and Central Investigating Agencies (CIAs).
- Officers from rank of Sub-Inspector to Superintendent of Police will be eligible for this honour.
 - Names of awardees will be declared every year on 15th August.
 - Based on the average crime data for last three years, total 162 medals will be awarded every year, of these, 137 will be for States/UTs and 25 for CIAs viz. National Investigation Agency (NIA), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Narcotic Control Bureau (NCB).
40. Government approved setting up of a Plastic Park in Deoghar District (Jharkhand), at a cost of Rs. 120 crores in an area of 150 acres and a range of polymer products including woven sacks, moulded furniture, water tanks, bottles, pipes mosquito nets, etc would be manufactured. It will provide direct employment to about 6000 people and indirect employment to over 30000 people.
41. Government declared 2018 as 'National Year of Millets' to boost cultivation of millets like ragi and jowar on a mission mode to achieve nutritional security.
42. Government will launch Swachh Bharat Summer Internship (SBSI) 2018 aimed at engaging college youth with Swachhata work in villages in coming Summer vacation. It will be launched by Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Ministry of Human Resource Development. Under it, candidates will undertake 100 hours of activities including creation of sanitation infrastructure, system building, behaviour change campaigns and other IEC initiatives around nearby villages.
43. Govt. launched *National E-Mobility Programme* aimed boosting e-mobility ecosystem including vehicle manufacturers, charging infrastructure companies, fleet operators, service providers etc, to be implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL). EESL will procure electric vehicles in bulk to get economies of scale, to replace existing petrol and diesel vehicles. With 20000 Procured electric cars, India is expected to save over 5 crore litres of fuel every year, and reduction of over 5.6 lakh tonnes of annual CO2 emission.
44. Gujarat govt. will set up a seawater desalination plant with capacity to desalinate 100 million litre water per day, near Jodiya town in Jamnagar district.
45. Haryana's first cyber police station, equipped with a digital forensic laboratory, inaugurated in Gurugram. It will have modern equipment to deal with crimes in cyber world.
46. High-speed interceptor boat ICG C-162 has been commissioned into service by Indian Coast Guard (ICG), built by Bharati Defence and Infrastructure Ltd (BDIL).
47. Himachal Pradesh CM Jai Ram Thakur released *Mahila Suraksha* handbook on women's safety, brought out by Shimla administration.
48. Himachal Pradesh Government approved setting up of a regional-cum-facilitation centre of National Medicinal Plants Board of Ministry of Ayush, in Jogindernagar town in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh.

49. Hindon Elevated Road, India's longest elevated road inaugurated in Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh) by UP CM Yogi Adityanath. It will make it easier to commute between Delhi and Ghaziabad, saving approx 40 minutes of travel. It is 10.5KMs long, built on 227 single pillars. It was built at a cost of about Rs 11,000 crores.
50. Human Resources Development ministry will set up an innovation cell to develop new ideas and encourage innovation in India.
51. IRCTC partnered with Ola Cabs, in order to provide a book taxi option in its app and website. This will offer Ola Cabs booking services to customers in IRCTC Rail Connect App and on its website.
52. ISRO signed Technology Transfer Agreement (TTA) with Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), to transfer technology for manufacture of space grade Li-Ion cells.
- ISRO uses Li-Ion batteries as power sources for satellite and launch vehicle applications due to their high energy density, reliability and long cycle life.
 - This Technology Transfer will enable BHEL to produce space grade Li-Ion cells which can meet country's space programme requirements.
53. Indian Army signed MoU with Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and National Integrity and Educational Development Organisation (NIEDO) to provide quality faculty for professional coaching of Kashmir Youth.
54. Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) and Technology Information, Forecasting & Assessment Council (TIFAC) signed MoU to provide livelihood opportunities and augment income of forest based communities, valid for 10 years.
55. Indian Oil Corp (IOC) started doorstep delivery of diesel on a pilot basis in Pune and has become first company in India to provide such service after receiving clearance from the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO).
56. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) introduced billing through Point of Sale (POS) hand-held machines in trains to check overcharging by vendors, initially introduced in New Delhi –Karnataka Express on a pilot basis.
57. India's first helicopter taxi service launched in Bengaluru to fly passengers from Kempegowda International Airport to Electronic City, to reduce time taken to cover the distance from 2 hours to 15 minutes.
58. India's first insect museum with state-of-the-art amenities is unveiled at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University campus in Coimbatore. It will display insects preserved as specimens as also live ones depicting their different developmental stages.
59. India's first national coastal policing academy, National Academy of Coastal Policing (NACP) to train police forces in effectively safeguarding country's shoreline will start functioning from April 2018. It will be launched from campus of Gujarat's Fisheries Research Centre in coastal Okha town in Devbhumi Dwarka district of Gujarat.
60. India's tallest national flag with 9,600 sq.ft on a 110 m flag pole unfurled in Belagavi (Karnataka).
61. Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)'s National Cultural Audiovisual Archives (NCAA) project has been certified as the world's first Trusted Digital Repository as per ISO 16363:2012 standard, granted by Primary Trustworthy Digital Repository Authorisation Body Ltd. (PTAB), United Kingdom.
- Primary objective of NCAA is to preserve cultural heritage of India available in audiovisual form through a process of digitization and making it accessible to people.
62. Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Laboratory (IBSD) Imphal has set up a floating laboratory in northeast India's largest freshwater lake, Loktak to constantly monitor its water quality and improve it.
63. Jackfruit (कटहल) has been named as official fruit of State of Kerala.
64. Jaipur will co-host 8th Theatre Olympics, largest international theatre festival being held for the first time in India, to be organised by National School of Drama (NSD). Theme of 51 day long festival is *Flag of Friendship*. It will cover 17 cities in India with more than 25,000 artists performing 450 shows, 600 ambience performances and 250 youth show. 30 countries participated in the festival from across the globe.
65. Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) cabinet approved adopting Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) for horticulture crops such as apple and saffron in state. Under RWBCIS, farmers will be provided insurance coverage and financial support in event of failure of any of notified crops due to adverse weather incidences. RWBCIS will be in addition to Central Government's Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.
66. Karnataka Government accepted state flag as official flag in place of an unofficial red and yellow flag currently used in state to signify local pride. New tricolour having yellow (at top), white (in middle) and red (at

bottom) colorus, with state's emblem Gandaberunda (a two-headed mythological bird) in centre. Karnataka is 2nd state after J&K to have its own state flag.

67. Karnataka Govt. recognised Lingayats as a 'religious minority' and included Veerashaivas who follow Basavanna as a group within community, approving recommendations of HN Nagamohan Das Committee.

68. Karnataka Govt. unveiled healthcare scheme *Arogya Karnataka* aimed at benefitting about 1.43 crore households in state. It will provide quality primary, secondary and tertiary treatment to both below-poverty line (BPL) and above-poverty-line (APL) families in state.

69. Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan launched M-Kerala app, at #Future, Kerala's first-ever global digital summit held in Kochi. It will help citizens to avail nearly 100 government services using their mobile phones. Theme of the Summit was *Towards a Digital Future*.

70. Law ministry will file a review petition against Supreme Court's ruling on the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, that puts a stop to immediate arrests in complaints filed under its provisions.

- Previously, to curb misuse of SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989) and protect honest public servants, Supreme Court stated that

- An arrest is not mandatory under the SC/ST Act, and automatic arrest has been scrapped.

- SC directed that public servants can only be arrested with written permission of their appointing authority.

- Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was enacted in 1989. It is a comprehensive law which not only defines atrocities against SCs and STs but also make several rules and regulations. One provision states that public servant (non SC/ST) neglecting his duties related to SCs/STs will be punished with imprisonment for a term of 6 months to 1 year.

71. Madhya Pradesh Animal Husbandry Department signed MoU with Bharat Financial Inclusion Ltd (BFIL) to launch *Pashu Dhan Sanjeevani – 1962* Programme. It offers range of veterinary services, available on toll-free helpline number 1962. Services Include emergency treatment, artificial insemination, vaccination and deworming etc. It will be monitored through 'Bharat Sanjeevani' software.

72. Madhya Pradesh Govt. increased retirement age of Madhya Pradesh government employees from 60 to 62 years.

73. Madhya Pradesh West Power Distribution Company (MPWPDC) launched *Pink Electricity Zone* to be managed by 25 women staff. They will manage the energy maintenance work of 13,000 power connections in Aranya Nagar.

74. Maharashtra Government banned use of plastic in time-bound manner, citing environmental and public health concerns. Also, Punjab Government imposed a permanent ban on Hookah bars in state, to prevent diseases caused by the use of various tobacco products.

75. Maharashtra government partnered with Wikipedia, to spread Marathi language and enhance its online usage. It was announcement on Marathi language day (Feb 27).

76. Microsoft opened *Garage* at Microsoft India Development Centre in Hyderabad (Telangana), as a platform for Microsoft employees that encourages experimentation, working together across organisations and to discover ideas and develop prototypes, adding value to existing products.

77. Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated *Greentech Mega Food Park Private Ltd* as first mega food park in Rajasthan at Roopangarh Village in Ajmer, set up for 113.57 crores.

78. Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship signed MoU to conduct skill development training programmes for agriculture and allied sector, at Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVKs).

79. Ministry of Culture for the first time organised Madhavpur Mela in Madhavpur Ghed in Porbandar (Gujarat), under *Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat* programme. Its purpose is to bring various parts of country especially North-East, close to each other.

80. Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF's) gave environmental clearance to India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) project to be set up in Bodi West hills in Tamil Nadu.

- MoEF's Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) showed there will be no impact of blasting on any habitation in vicinity, along with no scope for radioactivity and leaching of water.

- INO) Project aims at building a world-class underground laboratory with a rock cover of approximately 1200 meter. Its mandate is to conduct basic research on elementary particle called neutrino. Underground Observatory will provide shielding to neutrino detector from cosmic background radiation.

- The non-accelerator based high energy and nuclear physics underground research complex will be approached by a 2-kms long tunnel. It also envisages construction of 50,000 tonne magnetised iron calorimeter detector (ICAL).

81. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) launched *Videsh Aaya Pradesh ke Dwaar* Initiative in Hyderabad (Telangana), with an aim to bring domain of foreign policy closer to people.

82. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) launched *Videsh Aaya Pradesh ke Dwaar* engagement programme with regional media in Hyderabad, Telangana. It aims at enhancing public diplomacy outreach of MEA and its commitment to take objectives of foreign policy to people at grassroot-level.

83. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare approved amending regulation for admission to PG medical courses in order to expand scope of persons with disabilities getting the benefit of reservation. Now, seats reserved for people with disabilities for admission to postgraduate medical courses will be increased from 3 to 5 %.

84. Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched *LaQshya* Program aimed at improving quality of care in labour room and maternity Operation Theatre (OT).

- Under this, Quality Improvement in labour room and maternity OT will be assessed through NQAS (National Quality Assurance Standards). Facilities with 70% score on NQAS will be certified as *LaQshya* certified facility. Facilities scoring more than 90%, 80% and 70% will be given Platinum, Gold and Silver badge accordingly.

85. Ministry of Human Resources Development (HRD) approved *Study in India* programme to attract foreign students to pursue higher education in India, with expenditure of INR 150 crores for 2018-19 and 2019-20. It aims to double India's market share of global education exports from less than 1% to 2%.

- Under it, 100% waiver of tuition fees will be only for the top 25% students, 50% waiver of tuition fees only for the next 25% students, 25% waiver of tuition fees only for next 25% students and no waiver of tuition fee for remaining 25% of students.

86. Ministry of Power partnered with Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship to train manpower in six states for speedy implementation of its Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojna (Saubhagya Scheme). States - Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh. Under this, 47,000 Distribution Lineman-Multi Skills and 8,500 Technical Helpers will be trained to meet requirement of power sector projects under Saubhagya scheme.

87. Ministry of Tribal Affairs launched android based mobile application called *Tribal Diaries* for internal monitoring as connecting with officials concerned with implementation of schemes / programmes for tribal development.

88. Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation constituted Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal for adjudication of longstanding disputes between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over sharing of Mahanadi river water. It will have 3 members with A M Khanwilkar nominated as chairman. Other members are Ravi Ranjan and Indwermeet Kaur Kochar.

89. Ministry of Women and Child Development approved projects worth INR 2919 crores under Nirbhaya Fund for creating eight safe cities - *Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Lucknow*.

90. NITI Aayog and Piramal Foundation signed inked Statement of Intent (Sol) to develop a 4 year collaboration with District Administration of 'Aspirational Districts' to support their transformation in terms of healthcare, education and nutrition.

- Government selected 115 backward (aspirational) districts for rapid transformation by 2022 in line with Government's vision to create 'New India'.

91. NITI Aayog launched baseline ranking for the Aspirational Districts based on published data of 49 indicators across 5 developmental areas of Education, Health and Nutrition, Agriculture and Water Resources, Basic Infrastructure and Financial Inclusion and Skill Development.

- Additionally, *Champions of Change* Dashboard (created by NITI Aayog in partnership with Government of Andhra Pradesh) for real-time data collection and monitoring will be open for public viewing from April 1, 2018. District Collectors of aspirational districts will be able to input latest available data of their respective districts through this Dashboard.

92. NITI Aayog released comprehensive roadmaps and detailed timelines for its initiative 'Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E)' project.

- NITI Aayog Launched SATH program with a vision to initiate transformation in education and health sectors. SATH identifies 3 states in each of Health and Education Sectors.

- Health - Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Karnataka, Education - Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Jharkhand.

93. NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) signed Statement of Intent (SOI) with German tech company SAP to promote culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across 100 Atal Tinkering Labs across India. SAP will adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATL) in 2018 for five years to nurture science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning among secondary school children across India.
- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) AIM is flagship initiative to promote culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in country. Its mandated is to create umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of country and revolutionize innovation ecosystem.
94. Nasscom, Facebook and WeWork launched Design4India Studio in Bengaluru (Karnataka), as a dedicated design studio for web, mobile, augmented reality and virtual reality platforms for start-ups and designers. It aims to eliminate gap between design and technology by providing spaces for start-ups and designers to explore, innovate and build together.
95. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) launched a mobile app called 'Citizen Services' on occasion of its 33rd Inception Day.
96. New train between Naharlagun (Arunachal Pradesh) and Anand Vihar Terminal (Delhi) named Arunachal Express has been flagged off, as 2nd direct train for Arunachal Pradesh and overall 14th for North East to connect with Delhi. Its route is 2013 kilometres long.
97. Nitin Gadkari (Minister of *Road Transport and Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation*) inaugurated Mormugao Port Trust and Drishti Marine's ambitious inland ferry services in Goa.
98. Odisha Government signed MoU with British Council for cooperation in several areas including education, skills and culture. British Council will support Odisha State governments *Mo School (My School)* initiative by contributing to development of English language skills for learners and teachers.
99. Odisha forest department launched an app to track and fight forest fires during summer.
100. Odisha government and Tata Trusts signed MoU for implementing state's decision on land rights settlement for slum dwellers in urban areas. Recently, Odisha Government discontinued evicting slum dwellers in urban areas (by treating them as encroachers), and granted them land rights.
101. Odisha government launched KHUSHI scheme to provide free sanitary napkins to school girls across state. Under this, govt. will provide free sanitary napkins to 17 lakh girls studying in Classes 6 to 12 in government and government-aided schools.
102. Odisha government launched programme named *Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas* to reach out to people in rural areas and involve themselves in developmental activities.
103. Odisha government will collaborate with Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for strengthening its early warning services and enhancing preparedness for management of hazards in state.
104. Online hospitality service provider Airbnb signed four MoUs with North Eastern Council (NEC), the North East Tourism Development Council (NETDC), aimed at creating hospitality micro-entrepreneurs across key destinations in North East India.
105. POWERGRID completed Laying Over 16KM Long cables for 50,000 consumers through serpentine lanes in crowdest city of Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), under Integrated power development scheme (IPDS) project.
106. Passed Bills in March 2018 -
- Parliament passed Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill 2017 to empower government to fix period of maternity leave and tax-free gratuity amount.
 - It seeks to amend Payment of Gratuity Act 1972 that allows for payment of gratuity to employees in any establishment, factory, mine, oilfield, plantation, port, railways, company, or shop employing 10 or more workers. Employees are paid gratuity if they have provided at least 5 years of continuous service at time of termination.
 - Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill 2017 empowers government to notify period of maternity leave eligible for qualifying as continuous service and determine amount of gratuity available to employees. Bill removes reference to 12 weeks in Maternity Benefit Act 1961 and empowers central government to notify maximum maternity leave. Maximum maternity leave was changed from 12 to 26 weeks by Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017. Bill removes ceiling of INR 10 lakh amount of gratuity payable to an employee and ceiling may be notified by central government.
 - After implementation of 7th Central Pay Commission recommendations, ceiling of tax-free gratuity amount for central government employees was increased from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh.

- Lok Sabha passed Specific Relief (Amendment) Bill 2017 to further ease procedures for doing business by amending Specific Relief Act 1963.
 - This bill sets out remedies available to parties whose contractual or civil rights have been violated. It also provides a remedy that aims at fulfilment of an obligation or specific performance of contract rather than a general relief or compensation or damages.
 - Lok Sabha passed a bill (Without debate) that will exempt political parties from the scrutiny of funds they have received from abroad since 1976. It included amendment to Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 2010 that bans overseas corporations from funding political parties.
107. President Ram Nath Kovind released INR 1000 and INR 10 commemorative coins on occasion of Nabakalebar festival in Puri (Odisha), marking festival which is a symbolic recreation of sibling deities — Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra.
108. Punjab Government signed MOU with Nandan Nilekani's e-Governments Foundation (e-Gov) for managing of electronic governance of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across state.
109. R K Singh (Minister of Power (IC)) laid foundation stone for 60 MW Naitwar Mori Hydro Electric Project in Uttarkashi (Uttarakhand), on Tons River (a tributary of Yamuna). It will give 265.5 Million Units of renewable energy to grid and cut CO2 emissions by 0.21 Million Tons annually.
110. Raja Ramanna Centre for Advanced Technology (RRCAT), an Indore-based unit of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has developed an instrument called Fluorimeter, to measure traces of uranium in water, capable of examining traces of uranium in sample of water from 0.1 PPB (Parts-per-billion) unit to 100 PPB. DAE has transferred its technology to its Electronics Corporation of India Ltd (ECIL) for mass production. It will be especially helpful in states like Punjab where uranium traces in water sources have been found to be at dangerous levels.
111. Rajasthan and Haryana assemblies approved death penalty for convicts involved in rape of girls below 12 years of age.
112. Road Transport & Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari launched a mobile App and Toll-free Emergency number for Highway users.
- Sukhad Yatra mobile application is prepared by National Highways Authority of India to allow Highway users to enter road quality-related information or report any accident or pothole on highway, and several other related info.
 - Toll-free number 1033 will enable users to report an emergency condition, or highway-related feedback, across highway.
113. Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari (also minister for *Shipping and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation*) inaugurated Inland ferry services in Vasco (Goa).
114. SpiceJet became first airline to operate a commercial flight from Kolkata to Pakyong Airport near Gangtok in Sikkim, becoming first passenger plane to land in Sikkim. Pakyong Airport is 32 km away from Gangtok.
115. Supreme Court (SC) allowed passive euthanasia and right to give advance medical directives or 'Living Wills', stating that human beings have the right to die with dignity as part of fundamental right. Passive euthanasia is act of withdrawing medical support to dying patient who has no hope for revival or cure.
- Fundamental right to life and dignity under Article 21 of Constitution includes right to die with dignity. Dignity is lost if man is allowed or forced to undergo pain and suffering because of unwarranted medical support.
116. Surat (Gujarat) become first district in country to have 100% solar powered Primary Health Centers (PHCs), with All its 52 PHCs now powered by solar system. Surat has set an example by developing villages that use sustainable forms of energy, when global warming is mounting.
117. Suzlon Energy commissioned S128 as largest wind turbine generator (WTG) in India, at Sangneri (Tamil Nadu). S128 WTG is available in 2.6 MW to 2.8 MW variants.
118. Tamil Nadu Government launched 24-hour helpline number 14417, claiming to be the first in India, to offer information and guidance on education to students.
119. Tata Boeing Aerospace Ltd (TBAL) inaugurated facility to manufacture fuselages for AH-64 Apache helicopter in Hyderabad, as only global producer of fuselages for AH-64 Apache helicopter delivered by Boeing.
120. Tech firm Microsoft inked its first renewable energy deal in India for powering its new facility in Bengaluru, to be operational in June. It will see Microsoft purchase 3 megawatts of solar-powered electricity

from Atria Power for its new office building in Bengaluru, meeting 80% of projected electricity needs at facility.

121. Telangana Govt. mandated teaching Telugu as a compulsory subject in all public and private schools of state. Telugu University and Sahitya Academy will decide the Telugu syllabus for various standards.

122. Telangana government is setting up an INR 100-crore Apparel Super Hub in Sircilla, under an MOU with Kay Ventures.

123. Telangana government launched *T App Folio* mobile governance application for delivery of government to citizen (G2C) and business to citizen (B2C) services efficiently. Telangana is 2nd state to launch a mobile governance application in place for provision of G2C services, After Karnataka.

124. Telangana government launched Women Entrepreneurship Hub (WE-Hub), India's first state-led incubator for women entrepreneurs, to help women entrepreneurs establish their own enterprises by providing services including seed funding, mentoring, and business guidance.

125. Telangana government signed a MoU with Safran Electrical and Power SAS for establishing an aerospace unit in Telangana.

126. Telangana govt. reduced Value Added Tax (VAT) on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) to 1 % from 16 %, to boost air traffic at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport located near Hyderabad.

127. Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) (under Ministry of Tribal Affairs) launched E-Tribes India banners on e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Snapdeal, Paytm & GeM. It also launched TRIFED's website tribesindia.com / trifed.in.

128. Tripura government will set up a well-equipped crime branch under state police to deal with unlawful activities in state such as drug and narcotics peddling.

129. Union Territory of Lakshadweep signed MoU under UDAY Scheme, to ensure operational turnaround of Lakshadweep's Electricity Department. Lakshadweep will receive an overall net benefit of around Rs. 8 crore through UDAY Scheme.

130. University Grants Commission (UGC) has so far granted full autonomy to 62 higher educational institutions that have maintained high standards of excellence under Autonomous Colleges Regulation. These include 5 central universities, 21 state universities, 26 private universities and 10 other colleges.

- Complete autonomy will allow these institutions to start new courses, new departments, new programmes, skill courses, research parks, appoint foreign faculty, take foreign students etc.

131. Uttar Pradesh Government launched an anti-graft portal, aimed at taking action against any official who is involved in corruption. It was launched on occasion of 1st year completion of current government led by CM Yogi Adityanath.

132. Uttar Pradesh Govt. passed Uttar Pradesh Control of Organised Crime Bill (UPCOCB), a stringent bill to curb organised crime and deal strictly with those trying to fuel terror. It seeks to curb organised crime and deal strictly with those trying to foment terror or dislodge government forcibly or through violent means.

133. West Bengal government introduced a new scheme called *Rupashree*, to provide marriage assistance to girls coming from economically weaker families with a budgetary allocation of Rs 1500 crores. It proposes financial assistance of INR 25000 to family of girl whose annual income is up to Rs 1.5 lakh.

Persons

1. 25-year old Prakriti has been inducted as first direct-entry combat officer in Indo-Tibetan Border Police. ITBP is last of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) to induct women officers in combat roles after government allowed it in 2016.

2. Andhra Pradesh government appointed shuttler Kidambi Srikanth as a Deputy Collector in Group-1 service, After he won title at Indonesian Championship in June 2017.

3. Former Indian pacer Venkatesh Prasad resigned as chairman of junior national selection committee.

4. India Post issued a special stamp to pay tribute to noted British theoretical physicist and Stephen Hawking, who passed away recently. 'A Brief History of Time', 'The Universe in a Nutshell', 'On the Shoulders of Giants' are some of the popular books written by Stephen Hawking.

5. Indian Express List 2018 of Top 100 Influential Indians -

- PM Narendra Modi retained top spot. BJP President Amit Shah is 2nd, with UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi at No. 5 as most powerful woman on list.

6. Obituaries (March 2018) -

- Davide Astori - Noted Italian international footballer.

- Literateur Prafulla Das -Noted Odia Litterateur.
- Pyare Lal Wadali - Noted Sufi singer.
- Shammi -Noted Bollywood actress.
- Narendra Jha - Bollywood Actor.
- John Sulston - Noted British genome scientist.
- Stephen Hawking - Noted British theoretical physicist and cosmologist. He was well known for his work on black holes and relativity.
- Ken Dodd - Noted British comedian.
- Kedarnath Singh - Eminent Hindi poet and Jnanpith awardee.
- M Sukumaran - Noted Malayalam writer.
- Sunil Sharma - Noted journalist.
- Les Payne - Noted American Journalist and Pulitzer Prize winner.
- C.V. Rajendran - Noted Tamil film director.
- Ghulam Muhammad Mustafa - Noted Journalist.
- V. Sriharsha - Noted Journalist.
- Seo Minwoo - Noted South Korean pop singer.
- R K Dorendra Singh - former Manipur Chief Minister.

7. Persons Resigned / Retired (Mar 2018) -

- Ameenah Gurib-Fakim - President of Mauritius (Island Nation in Indian Ocean).
- Robert Fico - Prime Minister of Slovakia (Central Europe).
- Miro Cerar - Prime Minister of Slovenia (Central Europe).
- Mukund Rajan - Tata Son's Chief Ethics Officer.
- Tommy Haas - Noted German Tennis Player.
- Kevin Pietersen - English cricketer, retired from all Formats of Game.
- Htin Kyaw - Myanmar's President

8. Visits from India (Mar 1 - 10, 2018) -

- India won *Best Exhibitor Award* at ITB- Berlin World Tourist Meet in Germany. India was represented by Minister of State (I) for Tourism K. J. Alphons.

9. Visits from india (Mar 11 - 20, 2018)

- Indian President Ram Nath Kovind Visited Mauritius and Madagascar.
- Mauritius (Indian Ocean) -
- India announced new Line of Credit of USD 100 million for defence procurement by Mauritius. It offered a Multi- Purpose Offshore Patrol Vessel (MPOPV) to Mauritius to augment its security capacity.
- Other Agreements Include -
- Cooperation between Nalanda University in Bihar and Mauritius and establishment of an Ayurveda Chair at University of Mauritius
- MoU between Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) in India and Public Service Commission of Mauritius.
- President Kovind attended 50th anniversary celebrations of independence of Mauritius.
- President Kovind inaugurated World Hindi Secretariat building in Port Louis (Mauritius).
- Madagascar (East Africa) -
- This is the first ever visit by a President or Prime Minister of India to Madagascar.
- 2 bilateral agreements were signed, on defence cooperation and aviation cooperation.
- President Kovind was conferred Grand Cross of the Second Class by President of Madagascar, as highest honour
- Madagascar bestows on a non-citizen.
- Indian Navy Chief Sunil Lanba Visited USA.

10. Visits to India (Mar 1 - 10, 2018) -

- President of Vietnam Tran Dai Quang Visited India. 3 MOUs were signed on this occasion -
- Economic and Trade Cooperation, Agriculture and Nuclear Energy.
- King of Jordan *Abdullah-II bin Al-Hussein* visited India. 12 MOUs were signed during this visit, Including -
- Defence, Manpower, Mass Communication, Journalism, Health and Medicine, Cultural Exchange Programme, Visa waiver for diplomatic and official passport holders, Customs.
- Twining Agreement between Agra and Petra (Jordan)
- MoU for setting up of a Hindi Chair at University of Jordan.

- Long term supply of Rock Phosphate and Fertilizer/NPK
- Setting up of the next generation Centre of Excellence (COE) in Jordan
- He also attended conference titled *Islamic Heritage: Promoting Understanding and Moderation*, in New Delhi.
- French President Emmanuel Macron Visited India -
- 14 Agreements were signed on this occasion -
- Co-operation MOUs include - Solar Energy, Hydrography and Maritime Cartography, Nuclear Power, Space Exploration, Urban Development, Environment, Railways, Migration and Mobility, Mutual Recognition of Academic Qualifications.
- Signed strategic pact providing for use of each other's military facilities including opening naval bases to warships. It will facilitate reciprocal provision of logistic support, supplies and services between armed forces of India and France during authorised port visits, joint exercises.
- Prevention of Illicit Consumption and Reduction of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Chemical Precursors and Related Offences
- Letter of Intent between India and France for creation of a permanent Indo-French Railways Forum.
- France will Invest 100 Million Euros in Smart City Project Under smart city mission.
- Indian and French companies exchanged 19 contracts and agreements worth over 13 billion euros in several sectors, during Indo-French Economic Partnership (IFEP) ceremony in New Delhi.
- First ever Indo-French Knowledge Summit held in New Delhi.
- Indian PM Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron jointly inaugurated 101-megawatt solar power plant at Dadar Kala village in Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh.

11. Visits to India (Mar 11 - 20, 2018)

- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of WHO Visited India. During this, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and World Health Organization (WHO) signed an Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) for co operation in Health Sector.

12. Visits to India (Mar 21 - 31, 2018)

- German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier visited India.
- Constantino Chiwenga, Vice President Zimbabwe Visited India.
- Sameh Hassan Shoukry, Foreign Minister of Egypt Visited India for 7th Joint Commission Meet.
- China's Trade Minister Zhong Shan Visited India. China agreed to renegotiate bilateral trade and investment agreement and jointly prepared a road map to reduce massive trade imbalance in favour of China.

Science

- 2 Indian start-ups Neewee and EFLIGHT accelerated at Airbus Bizlab India, signed their first contracts with Airbus and subsidiary NAVBLUE to implement their unique innovative ideas in aerospace.
 - Neewee has come up with a solution called procuSense, to improve certainty in manufacturing, supply chain and procurement operations at Airbus. EFLIGHT has developed a trip support solution that provides a set of services that enables business jet pilots to optimise plans for fuel, time, route and weather.
- A new species of Himalayan Butterfly named *Eucyclodes gavissima* discovered in Papikonda National Park in Andhra Pradesh.
- An International team of scientists provided first proof of an exotic new state of matter, known as Rydberg polarons. It can be created, by essentially putting atoms inside other atoms.
 - *Rydberg polarons* basically involves making use of the space between electron and nucleus inside an atom, enough to fit other atoms inside. Goal was to hit it in precisely right way to boost one or more of its electrons into an orbital far from nucleus, creating an excited state called a Rydberg atom.
- Astronomers from Arizona State University (USA) discovered signals from period when universe's earliest stars emerged, named *Cosmic Dawn*. It could provide insights into elusive 'dark matter', believed to form a fundamental part of our universe. A radio telescope called *Experiment to Detect the Global Epoch of Reionization Signature (EDGES)* based in Western Australian desert, was used in this research.
- Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) has developed coded drug AYUSH QOL-2C for improving quality of life in cancer patients.
- Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes (CIRB) claimed that India's first cloned Assamese buffalo male calf named Sach- Gaurav is born in Hisar (Haryana).

- Animal cloning conserves and multiplies selected superior animals of buffalo breeds. It is second cloned male buffalo produced by ICAR-CIRB after Hisar-Gaurav born in December 2015.

7. China's Unoperational and out-of-control space station, Tiangong-1 will re-enter Earth between March 31 and April 1. The space lab with a length of 10m and weight of more than 8 tonnes, is larger than most of the man-made objects that routinely re-enter Earth's atmosphere. Most parts of it will burn up on re-entry into atmosphere and hence, there is a very low risk of any part hitting a populated area.

8. Cybersecurity agencies detected a new malware called *Saposhi* that can take over electronic devices and use them for Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks. Saposhi is capable of taking over electronic devices and turning them into bots (device taken over by malware) which can then be used for any purpose.

9. ISRO successfully launched GSAT-6A Satellite, onboard Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV F08). This is 5th consecutive successful launch achieved by GSLV carrying indigenously developed Cryogenic Upper Stage. GSAT-6A is a communication satellite built to provide mobile communication services through multi beam coverage, equipped with S and C band transponders.

10. Indian Space and Research Organisation (ISRO) postponed launch of India's second lunar mission 'Chandrayaan-2' from April 2018 to October-November 2018.

- It will be launched on board of Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mk III (GSLV-F10). Chandrayaan 2 Chandrayaan 2 is India's second mission to Moon and is advanced version of previous Chandrayaan-1 mission (launched in 2008).

- It consists of Orbiter, Lander and Rover configuration. In this mission, ISRO will for first time attempt to land a rover on moon's south pole.

11. NASA partnered with space launching firm SpaceX to launch Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) to search for exoplanets using transit method. TESS is designed to carry out first spaceborne all-sky transiting exoplanet survey. It is planned to be launched in April 2018 on board of SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket.

- Primary objective of TESS is to survey brightest stars near Earth for transiting exoplanets over 2 years. It will use array of wide-field cameras to perform all-sky survey. It will create catalog of thousands of exoplanet candidates using transit photometry method.

12. NASA will send first-ever mission named as InSight (Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport) dedicated to exploring deep interior of Mars, in May 2018. It will be first NASA mission since Apollo moon landings to place seismometer, a device that measures quakes on the soil of another planet.

13. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) will launch 2 new satellite missions and conduct an array of field research in 2018 to enhance understanding of Earth's ice sheets, glaciers, sea ice, snow cover and permafrost (collectively called cryosphere).

- Changes in cryosphere have shown impact on people all around world like sea level rise affects coastlines globally and melting of snowpack affects billions of people who rely on the water.

- Missions Include -

- *Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment Follow-On (GRACE-FO)* which would be launched by NASA along with the German Research Centre for Geosciences. Twin satellites will continue original GRACE mission's legacy of tracking fluctuations in Earth's gravity field in order to detect changes in mass, including the mass of ice sheets and aquifers.

- *Ice, Cloud, and land Elevation Satellite-2 (ICESat-2)*, which will use a highly advanced laser instrument to measure changing elevation of ice around the world, providing a view of the height of Earth's ice with greater detail than previously possible.

- Together, two missions will make critical, complementary measurements of Earth's glaciers and ice sheets. GRACE-FO will also measure groundwater reserves and deep ocean currents and ICESat-2 will measure sea ice thickness and vegetation height.

14. Researchers at Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) Bengaluru have developed silver copper telluride (AgCuTe), a novel compound that exhibits poor thermal conductivity but shows good electrical conductivity.

- AgCuTe has good thermoelectric properties and is made from silver, copper, and tellurium. It exhibits poor thermal conductivity in 25-425 degree C range but shows good electrical conductivity.

- Due to this property, one end of 8 mm-long AgCuTe rod which is contact with waste heat remains hot while other end maintains cold temperature. This temperature difference results in generation of electrical voltage.

- This compound shows ideal promise as thermoelectric material for converting waste heat into electricity. Its applications are in automobile, thermal, chemical and steel power plants where large quantities of heat are wasted.

15. Scientists discovered hot, metallic, Earth-sized planet named K2-229b orbiting dwarf star located 260 million light years away, using NASA's Kepler 2 telescope. They employed Doppler spectroscopy technique also known as 'wobble method' to discover and characterise this faraway planet. K2-229b is almost 20% larger than Earth and 2.5 times heavier. Its day side temperature reaches over 2000 degrees Celsius.

16. Scientists discovered new organ in human body and have named it as 'interstitium', as 80th organ in human body.

- It might be might be also the biggest organ in human body. It was discovered while doctors were investigating patient's bile duct, searching for signs of cancer. Discovery of interstitium will help to explain how cancer spreads in body and pave way for new ways to detect and treat the disease.

- Interstitium is network of interconnected, fluid-filled spaces all over the body. It is found everywhere in human bodies, acting as shock absorber in all places where tissues are moved or subjected to force. It is made up of both flexible (elastin) and strong (collagen) connective tissue proteins, with interstitial fluid moving throughout.

- It also acts as fluid 'highway' i.e. thoroughfares to transport critical fluids within organs and around body. It also plays important role in carrying lymph, a fluid that supports immunity and also travels through lymphatic vessels.

- It lies beneath top layer of skin, but is also in tissue layers lining gut, lungs, blood vessels, and muscles.

17. Scientists from China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology (CALT) developed artificial heart using rocket technology, currently being tested on animals. The artificial heart uses magnetic and fluid levitation from rocket system. This technology can reduce friction in device to increase working efficiency and extend life span of power generator. It can reduce damage to the blood and enable blood pump to work longer.

18. Scientists from Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) discovered new species of water strider named Ptilomera nagalanda Jehamalar and Chandra in Nagaland. It was found in river Intanki in Peren district of Nagaland. This newly discovered species belongs to Ptilomera agriodes genus.

19. Sudan, the last surviving northern white male rhinoceros of the world, died in Laikipia national park of Kenya. He was 45 years old and was only surviving male northern white rhin. Now, only 2 female rhinoceros of that sub-species are living. Genetic material from Sudan was collected when he was healthy. Through advanced cellular technologies, this sub-species might be prevented from extinction.

20. Vodafone Germany, Nokia and Audi are jointly working to support project to implement first mobile phone network on Moon by 2019. PTScientists, a Berlin-based company, is also working on this project.

Sports

1. Indian Wells Masters tennis Title (also known as BNP Paribas Open), held at Indian Wells Tennis Garden in Indian Wells, California (US) -

- Men's Singles - Juan Martin Del Potro (Argentina) (*defeated Roger Federer (Switzerland)*)

- Women's Singles - Naomi Osaka (Japan) (*Defeated Daria Kasatkina (Russia)*)

- Men's Doubles - USA's John Isner AND Jack Sock

- Women's Doubles - Hsieh Su-wei (Chinese Taipei) AND Barbora Strycova (Czech Republic)

2. 17th IAAF World Indoor Championships held in Birmingham (United Kingdom) -

- 632 athletes from 144 nations participated in 26 Events.

Rank	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	USA	6	10	2	18
2	Ethiopia	4	1	0	5
3	Poland	2	2	1	5
4	Great Britain & Northern Ireland	2	1	4	7
5	Authorized Neutrat Athletes (ANA)	2	1	0	3

- India could not win a medal at the event. 1 Indian Athlete participated in event - Siddhant Thingalaya (Track and field athlete).

3. 2018 Asian Wrestling Championships held at Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan).

- Medal Tally -

Rank	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	China	7	1	6	14
2	Iran	6	2	2	10
3	Uzbekistan	4	5	6	15
4	Kazakhstan	4	2	11	17
5	Japan	3	7	8	18
6	Kyrgyzstan	2	3	6	11
7	North Korea	2	1	0	3
8	Mongolia	1	5	6	12
9	India	1	1	6	8
10	South Korea	0	2	6	8
11	Qatar	0	1	0	1
12	Turkmenistan	0	0	1	1
Total		30	30	58	118

- India at the Event -

- India secured 9th Rank, with 8 Medals (1 Gold, 1 Silver and 6 Bronze).

- Navjot Kaur won 1st ever gold medal for India in Asian Wrestling championships, after She defeated Imai Miyu of Japan in 65 kg freestyle. Vinesh Phogat claimed silver medal. She also became World No. 2 in 65 kg category as per the latest rankings by United World Wrestling.

- Bronze - Bajrang Punia, Vinod Kumar Omprakash, Rajender Kumar, Harpreet Singh, Sangeeta Phogat AND Sakshi Malik.

4. 99-year-old Australian swimmer smashed world record for his age group during Commonwealth Games trials in Queensland (Australia). He clocked 50 metres in 56.12 seconds.

5. Afghan Cricketer Rashid Khan (19 years age) became youngest captain in history of international cricket, after he was chosen to lead the T20I side.

6. All India Football Federation (AIFF) launched *Scout-Me* application to discover future players. AIFF became first National Sports Federation to launch a mobile based scouting application to discover future players.

7. Archery Asia Cup 2018 (Bangkok (Thailand))-

- India's Muskan Kirar and Promila Daimary clinched gold medals in the women's compound and recurve events respectively.

8. Australia won 27th Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey cup 2018 for record 10th time, defeating England in Malaysia.

9. Australian Cricket team captain Steve Smith has been suspended and fined 100 percent of his match fee by International Cricket Council (ICC), amid a ball-tampering controversy in South Africa. Another Player Cameron Bancroft has been involved in same and was fined 75% match fee, along with 3 demerit points. Australia Cricket Team's head coach Darren Lehmann also announced his resignation.

10. Chennaiyin FC won Indian Super League Football's 4th Session after defeating Bengaluru FC by 3-2.

11. Cricket Australia banned Steve Smith and David Warner from playing for Australia for 1 year, after recent ball-tampering scandal during Cape Town Test against South Africa. Cameron Bancroft has been given a nine month ban for executing the plan.

- Additionally, David Warner will never be considered for any leadership position in future.

12. FIFA lifted 30 year old ban on Iraq for hosting international football matches. FIFA allowed games to be staged in Arbil, Basra and Karbala.

13. Ferrari's German Racer Sebastian Vettel won Australian Grand Prix title.

- 2018 Formula 1 (F1) Calendar-

Serial	Grand Prix	Date	Winner
1	Australian Grand Prix	25 March	Sebastian Vettel (Germany)
2	Bahrain Grand Prix	8 April	
3	Chinese Grand Prix	15 April	
4	Azerbaijan Grand Prix	29 April	
5	Spanish Grand Prix	13 May	
6	Monaco Grand Prix	27 May	
7	Canadian Grand Prix	10 June	
8	French Grand Prix	24 June	
9	Austrian Grand Prix	1 July	
10	British Grand Prix	8 July	
11	German Grand Prix	22 July	
12	Hungarian Grand Prix	29 July	
13	Belgian Grand Prix	26 August	
14	Italian Grand Prix	2 September	
15	Singapore Grand Prix	16 September	
16	Russian Grand Prix	30 September	
17	Japanese Grand Prix	7 October	
18	USA Grand Prix	21 October	
19	Mexican Grand Prix	28 October	
20	Brazilian Grand Prix	11 November	
21	Abu Dhabi Grand Prix	25 November	

14. ISSF Junior World Cup 2018 (Sydney (Australia)) -

- India won total 22 Medals in the event, with 4 Individual and 5 team Gold Medals.

- Medal Table –

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	China	9	8	8	25
2	India	9	5	8	22
3	Italy	3	1	2	6
4	Australia	1	2	0	3
5	Chinese Taipei	0	2	0	2

- Gold Medals for India -

- Individual - Anish Anish (25m Rapid Fire Pistol Men Junior), Manu Bhaker (10m Air Pistol Women Junior), Muskan (25m Pistol Women Junior), Elavenil Valarivan (10m Air Rifle Women Junior).

- Team - 10m Air Pistol Men Junior, 10m Air Rifle Women Junior, 10m Air Pistol Women Junior, 25m Pistol Women Junior and 10m Air Pistol Mixed.

15. India B won 45th Deodhar Cricket Trophy 2018 by defeating Karnataka in Dharamsala (Himachal Pradesh).

16. India Under-16 Football team won Jockey Cup International Youth Invitational Football Tournament in Hong Kong, defeating Hong Kong.

17. India won First ever IBSF Snooker Team World Cup title by defeating Pakistan in Doha (Qatar). Indian team comprised of Pankaj Advani and Manan Chandra.

18. India won Hero Nidhaas Cricket Tri Series by defeating Bangladesh, in Sri Lanka.

- Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) also released a book titled *A Tribute to Jagu*, On occasion of 70th independence of Sri Lanka. It was a tribute to former BCCI President Jagmohan Dalmiya.

19. Indian chess player Viswanathan Anand won Tal Memorial rapid chess title in Moscow (Russia), defeating Boris Gelfand of Israel.

20. International Olympic Committee (IOC) restored Russia's Olympic membership following its suspension from 2018 Winter Olympics at Pyeongchang in South Korea.
21. International Shooting Sport Federation ISSF World Cup 2018 Leg 1 (Guadalajara Mexico) -
- India topped medal tally, with 4 Gold, 1 Silver and 4 bronze medals (Total 9).
 - Gold - Shahzar Rizvi (Men's 10m air pistol), Manu Bhaker (Women's 10m air pistol), Manu Bhaker And Om Prakash Mitharval (10m air pistol mixed team). Akhil Sheoran (men's 50m rifle 3 position).
 - Silver - Anjum Moudgil (Women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions).
22. Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA) appointed Cricketer Irfan Pathan as coach-cum-mentor for 2018-19 season.
23. KL Rahul has been named *Cricketer of the Year* in 6th edition of Wisden India Almanack. Shantha Rangaswamy has been inducted into the Wisden India Hall of Fame.
24. Minerva Punjab FC beat Churchill Brothers FC to win their I-League Football title in Panchkula (Haryana).
25. Misc. Sports Events (Mar 2018) -
- Ayyasamy Dharun broke men's 400m hurdles national record and qualified for Commonwealth Games Gold Coast 2018 (Australia). He timed 49.94 Secs for this record.
 - Tejaswin Shankar broke his own national record to claim high jump gold at 22nd Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships. Shankar jumped 2.28m to beat his own previous national mark of 2.26m.
 - Maharashtra women's team won interstate national tennis championship 2018 in Chhattisgarh, organised by Chhattisgarh State Tennis Association (CSTA).
 - Indian para-athlete Deepa Malik won gold medal in F-53/54 category javelin event at World Para Athletics Grand Prix in Dubai. She became Asian rank one in F-53 category.
 - Bishworjit Singh and Samira Abraham won gold medals in the men's and women's categories of the senior National triathlon championship held in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
 - India's Purva Barve won women's singles (Under-19) title at Israel Junior badminton tournament 2018.
 - India's Sanjivani Jadhav won bronze in women's 8km cross country race in 14th Asian Cross Country Championship at Guiyang in China.
26. Nepal gained one-day international status for first time, after winning over Papua New Guinea during World Cup Qualifiers in Zimbabwe. Nepal will now join three other teams - Scotland, Netherlands and UAE with temporary ODI status until 2022.
27. Odisha will host Senior National Table Tennis Championships after 12 years, as 80th Championship will be held in Cuttack.
28. Pankaj Advani won Asian Billiards Championships title by defeating B Bhaskar, in Yangon, Myanmar. India's Ameet Kamani won Asian Women's Snooker title by defeating her Thai opponent Siripaporn Nuanthakhamjan.
29. Para-swimmer Prasanta Karmakar has been suspended for 3 years by Paralympic Committee of India (PCI) due to code of conduct violations.
30. Punjab won 8th men's National hockey championships, defeating Petroleum Sports Promotion Board, in Lucknow (UP).
31. Reigning Ranji Trophy champions Vidarbha won Irani Cricket Cup beating Rest of India.
32. Winter Paralympics 2018 (Pyeongchang, South Korea) -
- 569 Athletes from 49 Nations participated in 80 Events in 6 sports. No Indian para-athlete participated in these games.
 - Medal Table -

Rank	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	United States	13	15	8	36
2	Neutral Paralympic Athletes	8	10	6	24
3	Canada	8	4	16	28
4	France	7	8	5	20
5	Germany	7	8	4	19
6	Ukraine	7	7	8	22
7	Slovakia	6	4	4	14
8	Belarus	4	4	4	12
9	Japan	3	4	3	10
10	Netherlands	3	3	1	7

33. Zimbabwe Cricket sacked its entire coaching staff and removed Graeme Cremer as captain after their failure to qualify for the 2019 World Cup. Note that ICC Cricket World Cup 2019 Qualifier was recently held in Zimbabwe. 10 teams participated in it and it was won by Afghanistan. West Indies (WINDIES) was other finalist team. AFG and WIN qualified for ICC Cricket World cup 2019 to be held in England and Wales.

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