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NATIONAL NEWS

1. The NITI Aayog launched the first Delta ranking (incremental progress) for the Aspirational Districts, based on self-reported data of districts between March 31, 2018 to May 31, 2018.
   - This was computed across five developmental areas of Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion and Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure.
   - 108 districts out of total 112, participated in this ranking.
   - Transformation of Aspirational Districts programme - The programme launched in January 2018 aims to quickly and effectively transform some of most underdeveloped districts of the country.
   - It focuses closely on improving people’s ability to participate fully in burgeoning economy.

   **DELTA RANKINGS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Delta score</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dahod</td>
<td>Gujarat</td>
<td>19.8</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>West Sikkim</td>
<td>Sikkim</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramanathapuram</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vizianagaram</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YSR</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bijapur</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washim</td>
<td>Maharashtra</td>
<td>13.8</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Udhampur Singh Nagar</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korba</td>
<td>Chhattisgarh</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virudhunagar</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu</td>
<td>13.1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. The Maharashtra government in the weekly cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis announced a new scheme called ‘Kanya Van Samruddhi Yojana’, wherein farmers families where girl children are born, will be given saplings for plantation.
   - It is aimed at empowering women and promoting tree plantation.
3. As per Future Development blog of the World Bank’s Brookings Institute titled as ‘The start of a new poverty narrative’ India is no longer a nation having world’s largest poor population.

- **Nigeria** has overtaken India with the largest number of extremely poor people at **87 million** in early **2018**.
- The study has cited data from World Poverty Clock and new projections on country economic growth from the International Monetary Funds’ World Economic Outlook.
- This has been computed for **188** countries and territories, developed and developing, across the world.
- From **125** million poor people in **2016**, India had just **73** million people in the poorest of the poor index as of **May 2018**.
- The World Bank report indicates that if the pace of positive growth remains the same, India would be able to lift up to around **50 million more people out of poverty by 2022**.

![](image)

4. A Liquid Based Cytology (LBC) technique — Direct to Slide — for screening **Cervical Cancer** was launched.

- Approximately **1.32 lakh** new cases of cervical cancer are diagnosed and **74,000 deaths** occur annually in **India** which accounts **1/3rd** of the global cervical cancer deaths.
5. **Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu** launched a mobile application called **ReUnite** which helps to track and trace missing and abandoned children in India.
   - The app has been developed by the **NGO, BachpanBachaoAndolan & Capgemini**.
   - BBA was founded by Nobel **Laureate Kailash Satyarthi**.
   - It is India’s largest movement for the protection of children and works along with law enforcement agencies and policymakers.

6. **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik** said that the health assurance cover for all-women families per year will be increased from **Rs 5 lakh** to **Rs 7 lakh** under the **Biju Swasthya Kalyana Yojana (BSKY)**.

7. **Monti Rajkhowa** has become the **first Assamese** to scale Mount Kanchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world.

8. India has moved up to **73rd** place in terms of money parked by its citizens and companies with **Swiss banks in 2017**.
   - The list has been topped by **UK**.
   - The latest data from the **Swiss National Bank (SNB)** shows an increase of over 50 per cent during 2017 to CHF 1.01 billion (about Rs 7,000 crore).
   - **Pakistan** is at 72nd position.
   - While others in the top-ten included **West Indies, France, Hong Kong, Bahamas, Germany, Guernsey, Luxembourg and Cayman Islands**.
   - **China** at 20th place, **Russia** at 23d, **Brazil** 61st, **South Africa** 67th.
   - Those ranked below India were Mauritius (**77th place**), **Bangladesh** (**95th**), **Sri Lanka** (**108th**), **Nepal** (**112th**).

9. The government will "very soon" come out with a definition for **Shell companies**,
   - Generally, shell companies exist only on paper and are often used by **fraudsters** for carrying out their illegal activities.
• A **shell corporation** is a corporation without active business operations or significant assets.

10. **National Financial Reporting Authority**-

• India approved the draft rules for establishing a new body to oversee auditing and accounting standards.

• It will render the **Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI)** ineffective as the new watchdog will require auditors to register with it before taking up auditing work.

• **NFRA** will have powers to cancel registration of the auditors in case of violations.

• **NFRA** will have power to **review, inspect, investigate, oversee** the quality of service of professionals and will also cooperate with the **National and International Organizations** to ensure compliance with accounting standards.

• **NFRA** can recommend penal against auditors if they are found non-compliant or there are lapses in their duties.

11. **Interest Subvention scheme for small drug makers** who wish to upgrade their infrastructure and technology.

• Under this scheme, government will bear burden of **6% interest** on loans up to **Rs 4 Crore** for a period of **three years**.

• The scheme is aimed at small and medium pharmaceuticals companies for procurement of new machinery.

• The financial institution extending the loan must ensure that the beneficiary SME obtains **WHO-GMP certification** within **Two years** from the disbursement of the loan.

12. **Facts about GST**

• **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** is an indirect tax which has been implemented in India on **1 July 2017**.

• The main objective behind the implementation of this tax is to make a uniform tax system in the country.
• The Goods and Services Tax (GST) was first implemented in France.
• India's GST is based on the Canadian model.
• GST in India was made on the recommendation of Vijay Kelkar Committee.
• There are total of four rates excluding 0% rate- 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%.
• Only four countries other than India—Italy, Luxembourg, Pakistan and Ghana—have four rates.
• The latest “India Development Update” of the World Bank, for example, noted that the 28% rate, applicable on a set of goods, is the second highest among the 115 countries sampled: 49 countries have a single rate and 28 have two rates.

13. The government has set up a 13-member Committee to upgrade the norms for computation of economic data at states and districts level.
• It has been formed in the backdrop of plans to revise the base year for National Accounts or GDP calculation.
• The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) will change the base year to 2017-18 for the calculation of GDP and IIP numbers from the current 2011-12 with an aim to capture changes in the economy.
• The Committee for Sub-National Accounts will be headed by Ravindra H Dholakia.
14. **Bolivia**, known to have the largest reserves of **Lithium**, has offered the metal to **India**.
   - It is used in making **batteries of electric vehicles, laptops and smart phones**.

15. The **216-Foot tall** statue of the **Bhakti saint** will be the **world's second tallest** when unveiled.
   - It is known as the **Statue of Equality** in Telangana.
   - It is the status of **Vaishnavite saint Sri Ramanujacharya**.
   - The **Statue of Unity** is a monument under construction dedicated to Indian independence movement leader **Vallabhbhai Patel**.
     - After completion it will be **597 feet** and would be the world's **tallest** statue when completed.

16. More than **19,500 languages or dialects** are spoken in India as mother tongues, according to the latest analysis of a **2011 Census** released.
   - There are **121 languages** which are spoken by **10,000 or more people in India**, which has a population of 121 crore.
   - The **121 languages** are presented in two parts — languages included in the **Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution**, comprising **22 languages** and languages not included in the Eighth Schedule, comprising of **99 languages** plus the category **“total of other languages”**.
   - The **Eighth Schedule of the Constitution** consists of the following **22 languages** — Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Konkani, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Nepali, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Sindhi, Tamil, Telugu, Urdu, Bodo, Santali, Maithili and Dogri.
   - Of these languages, **14** were initially included in the Constitution. **Sindhi language was added in 1967**.
   - **Konkani, Manipuri and Nepali** were included in **1992**.
   - **Bodo, Dogri, Maithili and Santali** were added in **2004**.

17. The **Income Tax Department** has launched an ‘**instant’ Aadhaar-based PAN allotment** service for individuals seeking the unique identity for the **first time**.
• This facility is free of cost and instant allotment of e-PAN is available for a limited period on a first-come, first-served basis for valid Aadhaar holders.

18. Pakistan handed over a list of 471 Indian prisoners lodged in Pakistani jails to the Indian High Commission.
   • The list was consistent with the provisions of the Consular Access Agreement between Pakistan and India signed on May 21, 2008.
   • Under the agreement, both countries are required to exchange lists of their nationals in each other’s custody twice a year, on January 1 and July 1, respectively.
   • The list included 418 fishermen and 53 other prisoners arrested for illegally entering Pakistani waters.

19. At the 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO at Manama in Bahrain, India’s nomination of the “Victorian and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai” was inscribed on UNESCO’s World Heritage list.
   • India now has overall 37 World Heritage Inscriptions with 29 Cultural, 07 Natural and 01 Mixed sites.

20. The Odisha government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for effective management of disasters.

   • The helpline number is: 94499.
   • This is the first one of a kind helpline and mainly focuses to serve and protect children and women of the region from any harassment or assault being faced by them.

22. Bhitarkanika National Park in Odisha has become the largest habitat of the endangered estuarine crocodiles in India with a record number of 101 nesting sites.
23. **Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in Mumbai**, the second busiest in India, has been ranked as the **fifth least punctual airport** securing **509th position** in the world, among the **surveyed 513 airports**, as per a study conducted by **OAG**, a global leader in providing flight information.

- The **Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi**, the 16th busiest in the world, ranked poorly in flight punctuality, securing the **451st position**.
- **Port Blair airport in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands** got the worldwide rank of **65**, thanks to its punctuality rate of 84.6%.
- The Hyderabad airport ranked **246**, Bengaluru airport **262** and Kolkata **270**.
- **Nagoya Komaki Airport** in **Japan** has topped the global ranking list being most punctual.

24. **Tata Steel** agreed to a **50-50 joint venture** with **Germany’s Thyssenkrupp** to create Europe’s second-largest steel company after **Lakshmi Mittal’s ArcelorMittal**.

25. The government has further deferred the **Reverse Charge Mechanism** under **Goods and Services Tax** to **September 30**.

- Under the reverse charge mechanism, entities (registered under GST) that purchase goods from small unregistered dealers have to pay a **tax on behalf of the latter**.
This is expected to add to the compliance burden of all involved and discourage purchases from unregistered dealers.

According to government estimates, around 1% of the 11.2 million taxpayers under GST pay around 80% of the taxes.

This is an anti-tax-evasion measure to ensure that transactions by unregistered people don’t escape tax.

In a normal transaction, the supplier of goods or service charges the tax and pays to the government, but in this case, the responsibility reverses and falls on the buyer.

26. The Government agreed to a five-pronged strategy to resolve toxic loans, with the larger ones among them going to an Asset Management Company (AMC) or an Alternative Investment Fund (AIF).

- The strategy is known as Project Sashakt.
- It will help retain the value of the asset through Operational Turnaround.
- It is often used to re-engineer the balance sheet of a business, usually to the detriment of a mixture of creditors, shareholders and customers.
- A committee has been set up headed by Sunil Mehta.
- Project Sashakt outlines the resolution of bad loans depending on their size.
• Bad loans of up to ₹50 crore will be managed by a focused vertical to be set up at the bank level itself, which will ensure the loan is resolved within 90 days.

• For bad loans of ₹50-500 crore, banks will enter into an Inter-Creditor Agreement, authorizing the lead bank to implement a resolution plan within 180 days, which includes appointing turnaround specialists.

• If the lead bank does not complete the process in time, the asset would be referred to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

• For loans above ₹500 crore, the Committee has recommended setting up an independent AMC supported by institutional funding in stressed assets or an AIF.

• The idea is to help consolidate stressed assets under the AMC model for better and faster decision making.

• Bigger loans which cannot be resolved through any of the above methods will be transferred to the NCLT for resolution under the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

27. Monthly transactions through the Unified Payments Interface (UPI) crossed the 200-million mark for the first time in June, show data released by the National Payments Corporation of India.

• Under the UPI, 246.37 million transactions amounting to ₹40,834.03 crore was carried out during the month, which is an increase of 30% in transaction volume compared with the 189.4 million transactions worth ₹33,289 crore in May.

• Of the total UPI transactions recorded in June, 16.3 million transactions amounting to ₹6,261.3 crore took place through the Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) platform.

• UPI is a payments system launched by the NPCI, which facilitates instant fund transfer between two bank accounts on a mobile platform, without requiring any detail of the Beneficiary’s bank account.
28. **India** has agreed to provide **tariff concessions on 3,142 products** to Asia-Pacific Trade Agreement members, including **Bangladesh and Sri Lanka**, from 1 July.

- The member countries are **Bangladesh, China, India, Laos, Korea and Sri Lanka and Mongolia**.

29. The **government** has proposed to set up an **Authority for Advance Ruling (AAR)** on a **National** basis so that there is uniformity in the interpretation of law and passing the rulings.

- The **objective** of an advance ruling is to make a taxpayer aware of the treatment of a transaction in advance, so that there is full clarity at the outset itself.
- Currently, there have been certain divergent rulings by the Authority for Advance Rulings, **constituted in each state**, which has **fuelled confusion** on the classification and application of tax rate.

30. India’s **Carnival Cinemas** and a partner in the **Emirates National Holdings - United Arab Emirates (UAE)** are in talks to buy **Qatar-based Novo Cinemas’ theatres** in the **UAE** and **Bahrain**.
31. Nestlé India Ltd, the maker of Maggi instant noodles, entered the packaged breakfast market in India with the launch of Nesplus.
   - Nesplus is a brand owned by Nestlé Breakfast Cereals from Cereal Partners Worldwide (CPW), a joint venture between Nestle SA and US firm General Mills.
   - India’s breakfast cereal market is projected to touch ₹2,610 crore by 2020.

32. The Union government has granted another extension to the K. Kasturirangan Committee tasked with drafting a New Education Policy.
   - The Kasturirangan Committee was established after the HRD ministry disagreed with the T.S.R. Subramanian Committee’s education policy report two years ago.
   - The proposed National Education Policy will be the first in over three decades, addressing the needs of the entire education system from elementary and tertiary education, to technology-enabled education, besides embedding the vocational stream with the formal system.

33. The Karnataka government will roll out the Arogya Karnataka Health Scheme that promises better healthcare for millions of households in full this year.

34. The Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) directed Karnataka to release water to Tamil Nadu and other States.

35. Vedanta Resources is set to delist from the London Stock Exchange after the family trust of Anil Agarwal agreed to buy the remaining 33.47% minority stake in the company, valuing the firm at £2.325 billion.

36. The data collected during the 2021 Census will be stored electronically, the first time since the Decennial Exercise was conducted in 1951 in Independent India.
   - According to an amended rule notified by the Registrar General of India (RGI) on June 19, “The schedules and other connected papers shall be disposed of totally
or in part by the Director of Census Operations, after creating an electronic record of such documents.”

- Earlier, data used to be stored for 10 years and then destroyed. But, now it can be stored forever in electronic format.
- Enumerators will start “house listing” in 2020 and the headcount will begin from February 2021 onwards.

37. A special laddu made of ragi, ghee, jaggery, dry fruits and nuts would be distributed among girls in government schools of Hyderabad.

- This will make Hyderabad the first city to implement the mandate of providing additional nutritional support under the Centre’s Beti Bachao Beti Padao scheme.
- The decision came after a health check-up of girl students in June this year found that 24% of them suffered from severe anaemia, with a haemoglobin count of less than 8 g/dL.
- Moreover, 72% of the approximately 26,000 girls in government schools were found to have a haemoglobin count of less than 10 g/dL, indicating mild anaemia.

38. The Union Ministry of Finance has amended Intellectual Property rules to withdraw the power vested with Customs authorities to seize hold of the imported products based on complaints of patent infringement.

  ii. Another amendment incorporates further conditions that oblige the right-holder to notify the Commissioner of Customs of any amendment, cancellation, suspension or reaction that concern Intellectual Property rights, and require the Customs authorities to accordingly amend, suspend or cancel the corresponding protection provided by them.
39. **Bharti Infratel** has received the clearance from the **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** for its merger with **Indus Towers**.
   - It will create a **$14.6 billion company** that will be among the **largest mobile tower entities worldwide**.

40. The government has set up a **13-member committee** for Sub-National Accounts will be headed by **Ravindra H Dholakia** to change the base year to **2017-18** for the calculation of **GDP and IIP numbers** from the **current 2011-12** with an aim to capture changes in the economy.

41. **Numaligarh Refinery Ltd (NRL)** in **Assam** has become the first oil public sector undertaking (PSU) to adopt an online legal compliance system by introducing ‘**Legatrix**’. 

42. The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** will approve the support price for **kharif crops** and is likely to raise the **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** for paddy by **₹200 to ₹1,750 a quintal**.
   - It will be done to honour the budget announcement to ensure farmers get at least **1.5 times** the production cost.

43. The government will change the base year for calculation of **GDP and retail inflation** to **2017-18 and 2018 respectively**.
   - Which is likely to come into effect by **2019-20**.
   - The last base year for **GDP, Index of Industrial Production and Consumer Price Index** was revised to **2011-12 and 2012** (for inflation).

44. An upgraded version of the **Unified Payments Interface, UPI 2.0**, is expected to be launched.
   - The **National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, which manages the UPI platform, presented a demonstration of UPI 2.0.
   - **NPCI** is the umbrella organization for all retail payments in the country.
• UPI is a payments system that facilitates instant fund transfer between two bank accounts on a mobile platform, without requiring any detail of the beneficiary’s bank account.

• UPI 2.0 will have additional features such as generating collect payment requests along with invoice/bill attachment, one-time mandate with block functionality, signed intent/quick response code, adding of overdraft account type in UPI and foreign inward remittance.

45. The centre is considering a proposal to introduce pulses under the subsidized Public Distribution System (PDS) in 200 districts faring the worst on nutrition parameters.

• The idea behind the scheme is driven by the fact that central agencies are stocked with **5.5 million tonnes of pulses** following a record production last year.

• The plan is to provide about **70 million households** in selected districts with **2kg of pulses every month** at prices which are at **least 50% cheaper** than the market.

• Government data on nutritional indicators show that in India **38.4% of all children under five are stunted, or have lower height for their age**.

• According to the **United Nation's Food and Agriculture Organization**, pulses are nutritional powerhouses loaded with protein and dietary fibre which can help address malnutrition problems in developing countries.

46. The government will release the **Quarterly Employment Survey Data**, based on the new **Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFS)** conducted by the **Statistics Department**, in December.

• PLFS will measure **quarterly changes in urban employment** and **annual changes in employment** in both rural and urban areas.

• It was launched in **April 2017**.

• The nodal agency, the **National Sample Survey Office**, is for the **first time** using the **computer-assisted personal interviewing method** to capture data on tablets.
47. **Niti Aayog** will prepare a blueprint for the transportation sector jointly with state governments to help achieve goals of electric mobility, wider renewable energy use and job creation.

48. The authenticity of **Thanjavur paintings** can be checked through **Raman Spectroscopy**.
   - Thanjavur paintings have **Geographical Indication** tags.
   - Thanjavur painting is a classical South Indian painting style spread across Tamil Nadu.
   - **Raman spectroscopy** is one of the vibrational spectroscopic techniques used to provide information on molecular vibrations and crystal structures.

49. The **Rajasthan government** will provide milk **thrice a week to 62 lakh children** studying in government schools and madrasas under its **Annapurna Milk Scheme**.
   - Students till **Class 5 will get 150 ml of hot milk** thrice a week while those in Class 6 to 8 will get **200 ml milk**.

50. The Chief Justice of Madras High Court, **Indira Banerjee**, has been selected by the Supreme Court for the second time to head an **In-House Inquiry Committee** to probe allegations of impropriety against sitting **High Court judges** in other States.
   - High Court Judges - Justices **Indrajit Mahanty** and **Sangam Kumar Sahoo** of the Odisha High Court since 2016.

51. The **Election Commission** launched an Android-based mobile application named “**cVigil**” for citizens to share proof of malpractices by political parties, their candidates and activists when the **Model Code of Conduct** is in force.
   - The mobile application also facilitates sharing of geo-tagged photographic and video evidence without disclosing the identity of the sender.

52. Delhi Chief Minister **Arvind Kejriwal** launched the “**Happiness Curriculum**” for students of **nursery to Class 8 in government schools**.
   - The curriculum was launched in the presence of the **Dalai Lama**.
• According to the curriculum, Students across schools can expect a ‘happiness’ period of 45 minutes.
• Each class will begin with a five-minute meditation.

53. Jharkhand Chief Minister Raghubar Das announced that Jharkhand will have the first ‘Khadi Mall’ of the country.
   • It will be developed by Khadi Board.

54. The Chhattisgarh government set up a tribal museum in the state’s upcoming new capital Naya Raipur.

55. The Centre has announced a State-of-The-Art E-Waste Recycling Unit for Bengaluru, India’s technology capital.
   • It will be India’s first such unit in the government sector.

56. The Delhi Government launched an initiative “Connect Delhi” to increase the reach of transportation facilities and provide last-mile connectivity to citizens.
   • The Transport Department has also formed a High-Level Steering Committee headed by Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot, to ensure timely decision-making and speedy implementation of projects and schemes under the initiative.

57. The Supreme Court said the Delhi Lieutenant Governor cannot act independently and must take the aid and advise of the Council of Ministers.
   • In case of difference of opinion, the L-G should straightaway refer the dispute to the President for a final decision without sitting over it or stultifying the governance in the National Capital.
58. According to Tecxipio, a Germany-based data analytics firm, Tanzania and Ireland are the fastest growing piracy markets for Hindi films.
   - Its analysis of worldwide file-sharing data for the top 100 Hindi films has revealed that in the four years spanning 2013 to 2017, the number of Hindi film downloads grew by 250% in Tanzania, while Ireland led the European markets with a 100% growth.
   - India continued to be the largest market even for pirated downloads, recording a 30% growth over the last four years, thanks to rising Internet penetration.

59. More than 30,000 people belonging to the Bru community will be given voting rights.
   - Bru Community is of those people who fled from Mizoram to Tripura in 1997 in the wake of Inter-Community violence.
   - As many as 32,876 people of the Reang Tribe (known in Mizoram as Brus) are set to be repatriated to Mizoram after a tripartite agreement was signed between the Centre, Tripura and Mizoram.
   - Reang are one of the 21 Scheduled Tribes of the Indian state of Tripura.

60. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has scheduled a ‘Pad Abort Test’ of an experimental space crew capsule as an important cog of its plan to send Indians to space one day.
• The launch **Pad Abort Test, or PAT**, involves aborting a space capsule at launch to save the inmates.

• **ISRO** describes **PAT** as the **first milestone** in qualifying its crew escape system in an emergency.

61. The **Election Commission** launched **voter identity cards** with **Braille label** to ensure greater participation of persons with visual impairment in the electoral process.

• A new **Accessible Division** in the India **International Institute of Democracy and Electoral Management** will also be set up.

62. **DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2018**

• The Union Cabinet has cleared a bill that allows law enforcement agencies to collect DNA samples, create **“DNA profiles”** and special databanks for forensic-criminal investigations.

• The aim of that draft legislation was to set in place an institutional mechanism to collect and **deploy DNA technologies** to identify persons based on samples collected from crime scenes or for identifying missing persons.

• In 2017, the **Law Commission of India**, in its 271st report, had prepared the draft Bill called **The DNA Based Technology (Use and Regulation) Bill, 2017**, stressing on its usage for disaster victim identification, criminal investigation and identification of missing persons.

63. **Oil prices, pace of banks’ balance sheet** clean-up and investment remain the key credit risks in **India**, according to an investor survey by **Moody’s Investors Service**.

64. The Union Cabinet approved to rename the **Agartala Airport in Tripura** as ‘**Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore Airport, Agartala.**’

65. The think tank **NITI Aayog** announced that it is organising ‘**MOVE: Global Mobility Summit**’ in New Delhi on 7th and 8th September, 2018 in association with various ministries and industry partners.
66. Union Minister Nitin Gadkari flagged off Wagon Cab’s taxi ambulance services in New Delhi.
   - Wagon Cab claims to be India’s first road emergency cab services provider.
   - Wagon Cab provides medically-trained drivers in its ambulance-taxis.

67. The Rajasthan government approved 1 per cent reservation for five communities, including the Gujjar community, against their demand of 5%.
   - This is under the Most Backward Classes (MBC) category.
   - The five communities who benefit from the order of the Rajasthan government are – Godia Lohar, Banjara, Gujjar, Raika and Gadaria.

68. Dr. Jitendra Singh attended the 4-day Meghalaya Annual Cultural Festival, “Behdienkhlam”, held every year at the small peripheral town of Jowai, Meghalaya.

69. The Madhya Pradesh government announced Mukhyamantri Jan Kalyan (Sambal) Yojana 2018 (a scheme to provide subsidized power).
   - Power connection under the Mukhyamantri Jan Kalyan (Sambal) Yojana would be provided free of cost to the beneficiaries.

70. India’s gold imports fell more than 25% to 54 metric tonnes in June from a year ago, says Bloomberg.
   - Overseas purchases of the yellow metal plunged 40% to 343 tonnes in the first half from a year earlier.
71. The government is preparing a policy framework to regulate foreign investments more closely in internet and smartphone businesses, especially in view of the increasing Chinese presence in these sectors.

- The aim is not to stop or restrict foreign investments but to install safeguards that will ensure India’s security is not compromised.
- Over the past 18 months, after Japan’s SoftBank Group, Chinese companies led by Alibaba Group, Tencent Holdings and Xiaomi Inc. have become the most influential investors in the start-up eco system.
- Xiaomi is also currently the highest-selling smartphone brand in India.

72. The Nikkei India Composite Purchasing Managers’ Index (PMI) for June 2018 came in at 53.3, its highest level since October 2016.
• The Composite PMI is a snapshot of private sector activity in the economy, a seasonally adjusted index that includes both manufacturing and services.

• A reading **above 50** indicates **expansion** from the preceding month, while one **below 50** denotes **contraction**.

73. The **Union cabinet** allowed the **Human Resource Development (HRD) ministry** to raise **₹1 trillion** from the market for **funding education research and infrastructure**.

  • The funds will be raised from a clutch of sources, including **education bonds**, **commercial borrowings** and **corporate houses**.

  • The money shall be given as loans to government-controlled Higher Educational Institutions, including medical colleges, as well as Central Government run school chains such as Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) and Navodaya Vidyalayas (NVs).

  • The funds will be raised through the **Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)**, a recently minted **Non-Banking Financial Company** under the HRD ministry.

74. The government extended its **Capital Infusion Scheme for Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)** to **2019-20** with the aim of strengthening their lending capacity.

  • The scheme, which was started in **FY11** was extended **twice** earlier, with the second one being up to **March 2017**.

  • RRBs, which are jointly owned by the **Union and state governments** and **sponsor** banks, were set up to provide **credit** mainly to **small and marginal farmers**, agricultural labourers, artisans and small entrepreneurs in rural areas.

75. The economic centre of the country is shifting to the **South**, according to newly released **Census 2011 Data Tracking The Movement of Languages**.

  • Since liberalization, there has been a steep drop in the **movement of Tamils and Malayalis** toward the **hubs of Mumbai or Delhi**.

  • But the flow of people to the **South from Northern and Eastern India** has been on the rise according to the linguistic trail left by migrants.
• The number of people who claimed Sanskrit as their mother tongue in 1991 rose steeply with speakers in Uttar Pradesh alone rising from a few hundred to over 40,000.

• The proportion of Urdu speakers in the population has fallen with every census since then, including the most recent in 2011.

• India’s rank in the Language Diversity Index has fallen from 9 in 2009 to 14 in 2017.
76. The Indian Ocean Research Vessel (IORV), Sagar Nidhi, will set out from Chennai as part of an Indo-US expedition seeking to find answers to the vagaries of the Bay of Bengal-fed south-west monsoon, which accounts for 70% of India’s annual rainfall.

- Sagar Nidhi will sail through the Bay of Bengal for a month collecting data on ocean conditions at different depths and locations and study the underlying principles of interaction of the uppermost layer of the ocean with the atmosphere.
- The project seeks to cast light on the complex mechanics of the monsoon.
- The biggest challenge is the unpredictability of the weather phenomenon, including, crucially, why there are breaks in the June-September rainy season.

77. There’s been a 186% spurt in Indians looking for employment in robotics, with Maharashtra offering most of the jobs in the sector, according to a new study by the job site, Indeed.

- Maharashtra is followed by Karnataka and Telangana.
- The reason: While Maharashtra is home to large technology centres such as Pune and Mumbai, Karnataka has India’s own Silicon Valley, Bengaluru, and Telangana will soon have a technology hub in Hyderabad.
- The number of people looking for jobs in robotics soared 186% between May 2015 and May 2018.
- Surgery is one area where robotics is making a breakthrough, with the sector expected to grow at a much higher rate of 20% between 2017 and 2025 compared to the global rate of 12%.
- Construction is another sector that is seeing an increasing reliance on robots because of government initiatives such as Make in India and Digital India.
78. Gujarat Gas Ltd (GGL), India’s largest city gas distribution (CGD) company, is looking to pick up the entire 50% stake of GAIL Gas in Vadodara Gas Ltd (VGL).
   - The deal size is expected to be about ₹200-250 crore for an enterprise valuation of about ₹500 crore of VGL.

79. The legal global market in cannabis is currently worth $7.7 billion, and is expected to hit $31.4 billion by 2021, the Brightfield Group, a US-based cannabis market research firm estimates.

80. India is likely to face greater scrutiny at the World Trade Organization (WTO) after the centre hiked the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy by 13%.
   - While India has maintained that its food subsidy for paddy is below 6%, against the permissible 10%, till 2015-16, and has notified WTO, the US has raised doubts about India’s calculations.
   - WTO rules cap government procurement for subsidized food programmes by developing countries at 10% of the total value of Agricultural Production based on the 1986-88 prices, and are always reported in dollar terms.
81. **Union Minister of Coal, Railways, Finance & Corporate Affairs, Shri Piyush Goyal** launched the **Coal Mine Surveillance & Management System (CMSMS)** and Mobile Application ‘**Khan Prahari’**.

- **Objective** – to curb illegal mining.
- The ‘**Coal Mine Surveillance & Management System (CMSMS)** aims to report, monitor and take suitable action on unauthorised coal mining activities.
- **Khan Prahari** is a tool for reporting any activity taking place related to illegal coal mining like rat hole mining, pilferage etc.

82. **IRCTC** said that, the **National Security Guard (NSG)** will be the **first central paramilitary force** to opt for e-ticketing instead of the railway warrant as per a MoU signed with the **IRCTC**.

- With this system the NSG personnel don’t have to carry **railway warrants**.

83. **The UP Government** announced a new **Defence Manufacturing policy** named ‘**UP Defence Aerospace Unit and Employment Generating Policy, 2018**’.

84. **Karnataka Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy** presented the Congress-JD(S) coalition government’s first budget, announcing farm loan waiver worth **Rs 34,000 crore**.

85. **China, UAE, Cyprus and Mauritius**, along with 21 other countries have been named as **“High-Risk Jurisdictions”** by global banks acting as custodians for foreign funds.

- Participation in Indian markets will get more difficult for these foreign institutions.
- Currently, the KYC requirements of FPIs are based on the category they fall under **Category I and II, FPIs**, who are considered low-risk investors, need to provide minimum documentation.
- While **Category III FPIs** who are unregulated entities are subject to additional disclosures.
86. The Law Commission of India submitted a report to the government, saying that since it is impossible to stop illegal gambling, the only viable option left is to “regulate” gambling in sports.

- The commission, headed by former Supreme Court judge, Justice B.S. Chauhan, recommended “cashless” gambling in sports as a means to increase revenue and deal a blow to unlawful gambling.
- For that the revenue from gambling should be taxable under laws like the Income Tax Act and the Goods and Services Tax Act.

- Such activities, if properly regulated would ensure transparency in the market, as also strike at the underworld’s control over the illegal and unregulated gambling industry.

87. Eastern Rajasthan Canal Project (ERCP) - The Bharatiya Janata Party government in Rajasthan is lobbying hard for the Centre’s approval for the ambitious ERCP.

- It is a proposed budget of Rs. 37,000 crore as a river interlinking project, which will transfer excess waters from the Chambal river basin to 13 districts in the State facing water scarcity.
- The project, which would link Parvati, Kalisindh and Chambal rivers, would benefit 40% of the State’s population with the supply of drinking and irrigation waters.
• The Eastern Rajasthan Canal, as an intra-basin water transfer scheme, will ensure availability of water in Jhalawar, Baran, Kota, Bundi, Sawai Madhopur, Ajmer, Tonk, Jaipur, Dausa, Karauli, Alwar, Bharatpur and Dholpur districts till 2051.

88. Cities like Gwalior, Bhopal and Jabalpur will also issue Municipal Bonds just like Indore.
• Incidentally, it was the first such municipal bond listing on the National Stock Exchange.
• The issue size was ₹100 crore, with an additional green-shoe option of ₹70 crore.

89. Railways have now said that they will accept soft copies of Aadhar and driving licence provided they are in your Digilocker, a digital storage service operated by the government that enables Indian citizens to store certain official documents on the cloud.
• It has, however, clarified that the documents uploaded by the passenger himself that is the documents in the 'uploaded documents' section will not be considered as a valid proof of identity.
• If a passenger shows Aadhaar or driving licence from the 'issued documents' section by logging into his Digilocker account, the same should be considered as valid proof of identity.

90. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has told WhatsApp to take remedial measures to prevent proliferation of these fake and at times motivated/sensational messages.
• WhatsApp is the Facebook-owned encrypted messaging platform.

91. All 97 people who contracted rabies in 2017 died, making it the deadliest communicable disease last year in India.
• However, swine flu infected and killed the most number of people in absolute numbers.

92. The ongoing negotiations between India and the U.S. on multiple trade tussles is likely to involve bringing down the duty on high-end Harley-Davidson motorcycles to zero.
93. Archaeologists in Peru have uncovered an extensive **Incan burial site** inside an adobe pyramid in a Coastal Desert Valley far from the Andean heart of the empire.

94. Two dozen cave-like tombs with human remains and pottery from the **Incan culture** have been unearthed so far at the **Tucume Archaeological Site**.

95. The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)** entered into an agreement with **Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB)** for setting up a ‘Design University for Gaming’ in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

- This MoU will help in developing the city as ‘**International Gaming and Digital Learning Hub**’.

96. The **Haryana Health Department** announced the launch of an intensive Diarrhoea control campaign from **July 15 to 30**.
• Under this scheme, ORS and zinc packets would be distributed to about 26.5 lakh children below five years of age across the state.

97. The Centre will provide 500 crore rupees to Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) under Sagarmala Project to lease out cruises to promote cruise tourism.

• Cruise Tourism-
  
i. No GST may be applied for first 5 years in order to give a boost to cruise tourism business.

ii. The Government is promoting use of methanol and ethanol fuels to be used in cruise to bring down fuel cost.

98. The Airport authority of India has allocated Rs.1200 crores, spread over 12 years for the establishment of Civil Aviation Research Organization (CARO) at Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad.

• CARO will cater to Air Navigation Systems (ANS) and Airport Engineering research to keep in pace with the exponential growth in Air Traffic in India.

99. The Telangana government allotted 200 acres to 3 women entrepreneurs’ associations in Telangana.

• 50 acres has been allotted to FLO at Sultanpur.

• 30 acres has been allotted to Confederation of Women Entrepreneurs (COWE) at Toopran.

• 120 acres has been allotted to the Association of Lady Entrepreneurs of India (ALEAP).

100. India has received a joint submarine design and construction proposal from Russia to build on the technology transfer acquired while building the nuclear fleet.

• It is said to reduce the cost of Indian Navy’s Next-Generation Vessel Plan.

101. India goes on a joint venture to operate the loss-making Mattala international airport in southern Sri Lanka with the Sri Lankan government.
- **Mattala airport**, named after former president **Mahinda Rajapaksa**, was a China-supported infrastructure project in his home district of Hambantota.
- It is a **USD 210 million facility** and is named the ‘**World’s Emptiest Airport**’ due to a lack of flights.
- The only international flight operating from there was halted in May due to recurrent losses and flight safety issues.

102. **Integral Coach Factory (ICF) of Chennai** announced the launch of indigenously manufactured semi high-speed train, code-named **Train 18** in **September, 2018**.
   - The train has been built in record time of **16 months** which usually takes about 2 to 3 years.
   - Train 18 doesn’t require an engine to run as it will be **self-propelled** on electric traction like the **metro trains**. It will replace existing intercity express trains including **Shatabdis**.

103. **Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL)** is setting up a joint venture (JV) in India with the manufacturer, **Zorya Mashproekt, Russia**, to overhaul turbines in India.

104. The **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** has developed a mobile app ‘**GST Verify**’ to protect interest of consumers.
   - Through this app the person collecting GST from consumers can be verified.

105. India’s first **Biofortified Sorghum (jowar)** named **Parbhani Shakti** containing higher iron and zinc than regular sorghum was formally launched.
   - Parbhani Shakti is cost-effective.
   - It has been introduced as a sustainable solution to rectify micronutrient deficiency.

106. The **Minister of State for Home Affairs Shri Hansraj Gangaram Ahir** launched the **first Cyber Forensic van** of **Delhi Police** and an **Online Cyber-Crime Portal** where people can file complaint online regarding such crimes.
• Objective - To make citizens are more aware and responsible while making digital transactions especially senior citizens.

107. The Uttarakhand high court declared the entire animal kingdom, including birds and aquatic animals, as a legal entity having rights of a “living person”.

• This comes a year after the court accorded the status of “living entity” to the Ganga and Yamuna rivers (in March 2017) which was stayed by Supreme Court.

• Invoking Article 21 of the Constitution, the court said that the animals can no longer be treated as properties and will be conferred with the status of “legal entity/legal person”.

• The court also declared all citizens of Uttarakhand “Persons in Loco Parentis” (in the place of a parent) giving them the responsibility to protect animals and ensure their welfare.

108. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamta Banerjee set a “One Person One Car” policy for ministers and bureaucrats.

• According to the policy, in case of domestic travels, ministers and bureaucrats must avail low-cost airline and travel economy class.

• Additionally, a Committee headed by Chief Secretary Malay Kumar De was formed to supervise progress of government projects.

• The committee will have to ensure that projects are completed within deadline so that additional expenditure is not incurred.

109. There has been a steep hike of 28% and 26% in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) on Medium-Staple and Long-Staple fibre cotton.

• The hike comes after five consecutive years of only single-digit MSP increases. The last such hefty one was 29% and 22% respectively in 2013.

• The cotton prices currently are higher than the proposed MSP, because of the deficit in global and domestic supply.
110. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) is planning for light-touch licensing for the proposed ‘Public Data Offices’ (PDO) to sell internet services.
   - It may even allow unlicensed entities to sell internet services.
   - Unlicensed entities will have to follow all terms and conditions that licensees follow, except the licence fee and revenue share part.
   - This has been opposed by the Licensed entities as they claim that it violates the Indian Telegraph Act and Trai Act.
   - Licensed telcos and internet providers need to share revenue.

111. One year later, the evidence on GST is mixed.
   - While prices have not gone up, the expected convergence has not materialized fully, as per the analysis of price data collated from online grocer BigBasket.com.
   - The analysis is based on 71 items representative of a middle-class shopping cart and drawn from 18 categories of the Consumer Price Index (CPI), the yardstick used to measure retail inflation.
   - The fall in prices has been sharpest in Bengaluru followed by Chennai.

   - Among product categories, the increase in mark-up is the highest in spices (5% to 21%), followed by non-alcoholic beverages (7% to 15%) and personal care (8% to 12%).
   - Cereals (9% to 6%) and household goods (7% to 4%) saw a decrease in mark-up.
112. The central government is expected to launch seven greenfield projects to construct 3,000 km of expressways under the ₹5.35 trillion Bharatmala scheme.
   - In the first phase, the road network is set to connect Delhi-Vadodara, Chennai-Salem in Tamil Nadu, Kharagpur-Siliguri in West Bengal, Delhi-Bilaspur, Durg-Aurang in Chhattisgarh, Mangaluru-Chitradurga in Karnataka and Ambala-Kathputli in Haryana.
   - The longest stretch of 1,000km will be built between Delhi and Vadodara.
   - Bharatmala Pariyojana is an umbrella programme for the highways sector under the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, which focuses on optimizing efficiency of freight and passenger movement across the country.

113. Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar launched a state-wide plantation campaign from the Narwana sub-division of the district.
   - It would be carried out from July to August this year.

114. The Gorakhpur administration in Uttar Pradesh launched an android based smart phone application named ‘Stop JE/AES’ to combat encephalitis.
   - Encephalitis claims the lives of hundreds of children every year in eastern parts of Uttar Pradesh.
   - The ‘Stop JE/AES’ app enables users to avail immediate medical help by just pressing a button.

115. The 17th World Sanskrit Conference will be inaugurated by Human Resource Development Minister Shri Prakash Javadekar at Vancouver, Canada from 9th July to 13th July, 2018.
   - Purpose - to promote, preserve and practice the Sanskrit language all over the world by the people.

In 2013, cybersecurity, which was the sole preserve of the Home Ministry, was moved to the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) under the Prime Minister’s Office.

The critical infrastructure was moved to the National Technical Research Organisation and the non-critical part to the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

The new policy would cover issues pertaining to the Official Secrets Act.

117. The Uttar Pradesh government is mulling compulsory retirement for employees aged 50 years and above, if they are found negligent in conducting their duty.

- The order also read that any government employee aged 50 years and above can themselves also apply for retirement.

118. All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), the highest decision-making body on Muslim affairs, plans to open Darul-Qaza (Shariat courts) in all districts of the country to resolves issues in line with Islamic laws.

- At present there are 40 such courts in Uttar Pradesh.

119. Kerala state government will roll out a mobile app for transgenders in the State since very few have registered for the transgender ID card scheme.

- The department has no clear data on the number of transgenders in the State.
- This is perceived to be a hurdle to the various benefits meant for transgenders.
- Once the verification is complete, the data will be registered on the app and is expected to be named Mazhavillu.

120. Indian automobile makers want the government to decide the subsidies on Electric Vehicles (EVs) based on the number of kilometres they can run on a single charge and their top speed.

- As per the draft of the second stage of the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles in India (FAME) scheme in India, the department of heavy industries has offered subsidies based on the size of the lithium-ion batteries fitted in the vehicles.
121. The government announced a new Cities Investment To Innovate, Integrate and Sustain (CITIIS) challenge to identify top projects in 15 of the 100 selected smart cities, which will then receive an additional funding of approximately ₹80 crore each.

- The new funding will be financed by a €100 million loan from the French government’s international development agency L’Agence Française de Développement (AFD).
- The Smart Cities Mission, which was launched in June 2015, covers 100 Indian cities, with Shillong being added as the final city to the list recently.
- After the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission, Smart Cities is one of the biggest central government financed urban development schemes.

122. Draft of the Amendments in GST-

- Introduction of new tax return forms approved by the GST council.
- To allow firms to get multiple registration in the same state for different business verticals.
- Taxpayers will not have to pay interest in case of delayed payments to suppliers.
- To lessen the compliance burden, consolidated credit/debit notes can now be issued by firms instead of a note for every invoice.
- Only e-commerce operators who need to collect tax at source now need to register under GST.
- The amendments also propose to allow input tax credit for food and beverages, health services, and travel benefits to employees that have to be mandatorily provided by employees under existing laws.
123. **India Smart Cities Fellowship (ISCF) Program and India Smart Cities Internship (ISCI) Program** launched.

   - The India Smart Cities Fellowship Program is designed to provide valuable experience to the youth interested in smart cities.
   - ISCI Program for students pursuing Under Graduate/Graduate/Post Graduate degree as Interns to help implementation of Smart City Projects in various States/Cities.

124. The Centre announced the names of six “**Institutes of Eminence**”, three each from the public and private sectors, as part of its plans to create world-class universities to enhance research and improve global rankings of **Indian Educational Institutions**.

   - Indian Institute of Science (IISc), **Bengaluru**, and the Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) in **Delhi** and **Mumbai**
• Privately-held BITS Pilani, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, and a yet-to-be launched Jio Institute in Maharashtra - greenfield university project of the Reliance Foundation.

• The Institutes of Eminence will have three key benefits—
  i. Complete freedom from regulatory interference in terms of academic and administrative requirements
  ii. Added funds for the state-run institutions
  iii. More collaboration opportunities with top global universities.

• An Empowered Committee, under N. Gopalaswami, recommended these institutions.

125. South Korean President Moon Jae on a four day visit to India.

126. World’s largest mobile manufacturing factory of Samsung will be inaugurated in Noida.

127. NITI Aayog released the ‘Strategy and Approach paper on the National Health Stack (NHS)’, terming it as ‘the blueprint for India’s futuristic digital health system’.
  • Objective - To implement the Centre’s flagship scheme Ayushman Bharat and other public healthcare programmes in the country.
• The NHS is proposed to be the country’s first futuristic Nationally Shared Digital Healthcare Infrastructure usable by both the Centre and states across public and private sectors.

128. **Global Housing Construction Technology Challenge** has been proposed to use the opportunity of large scale construction under **PMAY-U** to attract the best available global construction technologies.
   - **PMAY – U** – Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)
   - It will give a boost to building affordable houses in India in a cost effective and sustainable manner.

129. **Himachal Pradesh** Government announced that it is banning the use of plastic and thermocol cutlery in the state.
   - This will come under **Non-Biodegradable Garbage (Control) Act, 1995**.
   - **Himachal Pradesh** was the first state in the country to ban plastic and polythene carry bags in 2009.
   - Breach of the law shall be liable for the penalty ranging from Rs 500 to Rs 25,000.

130. The Commerce ministry has approved a proposal of **HCL Technologies** to establish a new IT **Special Economic Zone (SEZ)** in **Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh**.

131. **Indian Railways** introduced **Double Stack Dwarf Container Services** from **Western Railway’s Rajkot** railway station on its first commercial run.
   - The Double Stacked Container, which is 6 ft 4 inches in height and can run on electrified tracks, can hold a capacity of 30,500 kgs.

132. The **Supreme Court** is ready to go live on camera to be a part of “**Open Court System**”, where the public can walk in and watch court proceedings.
   - While the government mooted a separate **TV channel** for live-streaming court proceedings.
This writ petition is filed as *pro bono* for enforcement of public interest, to advance the rule of law and to bring accessibility and transparency in the administration of justice.

133. The demand for a separate Kamtapur state was revived with a 24-hour Assam bandh.
   
   - The Koch-Rajbongshi, a community demanding Schedule Tribe status, want Kamtapur state to be carved out of western Assam and the northern half of West Bengal.
   
   - Kamtapur is a proposed state of India in the Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri districts in the existing Indian state of West Bengal and parts of Assam and the Kishanganj district in Bihar.

134. The Tamil Nadu government proposed the Land Pooling Area Development Scheme, as a way of consolidating land for development projects, co-opting land owners as partners in development.

   - Under the scheme, lands owned by an individual or a group of individuals are pooled together by transfer of ownership rights to the appropriate planning authority.
• Later, part of the developed land is transferred to the original owner and remaining part of the land is used for establishing common facilities and amenities.

135. Sadmridangam - The improvised 5-kg instrument designed by percussion maestro Kuzhalmannam Ramakrishnan gets patent under the “drum” category.
   • It weighs lesser than the traditional wooden mridangam.
   • He is the winner of Layaratna title and holds the world record for the longest performance on a hand drum for his 301-hour non-stop mridangam playing.

136. The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) ruling has provided validation for the removal of Cyrus Mistry from Tata Sons as well as other Tata group companies.
   • The development also empowers the group to convert Tata Sons from an unlisted public company to a privately held company.
   • The biggest victory for the company is that it no longer faces the threat of being taken over by any entity in a ‘hostile manner’.
   • Investors of a privately-held Tata Sons will have to seek permission from its board before selling the stake to another entity, including one with a hostile intent.
   • Mistry now have the option of challenging the ruling at National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) and later at the Supreme Court.

137. Andhra Pradesh topped the ranking of states in the central government’s Ease of Doing Business survey.
   • Andhra Pradesh scored 98.42 percent in the the third edition of the annual ranking of all states and UTs under the Business Reform Action Plan 2017 (BRAP) conducted by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) and the World Bank.
   • This is the second time in a row that A.P. achieved the first rank. It was given second rank in 2015.
   • Followed closely by Telangana with a score of 98.33 percent.
138. Official crime data from the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shows that the reported rate of child abductions has more than doubled to reach 119 per million child population (population under 18 years of age).

- The share of child kidnapping in overall kidnappings rose from 23% in 2006 to 40% in 2012, and then climbed further to 60% in 2016, NCRB data shows.
- The states that face the worst in terms of the rate of child abductions include Maharashtra and Assam— which has witnessed lynching related to child-lifting rumours—as well as Delhi and Goa.
• Bihar, Assam, Karnataka and West Bengal saw the highest average annual increase in the rate of child kidnappings between 2006 and 2016.

• However, from 2012-16, the share of reported abductions of older children (those aged 16-18) dropped even as the share of reported abductions of younger children (those below 16 years of age) rose sharply to 53% of all child abductions in 2016.

139. India has become the world’s sixth-biggest economy, pushing France into seventh place, according to updated World Bank figures for 2017.

• India’s gross domestic product (GDP) amounted to $2.597 trillion at the end of last year, against $2.582 trillion for France.

• India, with around 1.34 billion inhabitants, is poised to become the world’s most populous nation, whereas the French population stands at 67 million.

140. WHO Deputy Director general Soumya Swaminathan asked India to reconsider the clause made by Health Ministry in the Pharmaceuticals sector.

• The Union health ministry’s proposals made in February included a provision for the deceased party in a trial to be paid 60% of the compensation within 15 days if the patient dies or suffers a permanent disability in the course of a trial.
• Additionally, if it is proved after an investigation that the death or disability did not occur because of the trial, the interim compensation will not be returned.

• According to the proposed rules, if the injury is related to a clinical trial in addition to the medical management, the participant would also be provided financial compensation by the sponsor as determined by a proposed Ethics Committee.

• The Ethics Committee is a proposed government body that will ensure medical experiments and research on humans are carried out in an ethical manner and provide feedback on the ethical appropriateness of the trial.

141. Nagaland is the most linguistically diverse state in India, with Kerala being the least diverse, as per the release of linguistic data from the 2011 census.

• The analysis is done from industrial economics known as the Herfindahl-Hirschmann Index (HHI).

• Himachal Pradesh has only 1.3 effective languages with 86% of the population identifying Hindi as their mother tongue.

142. The Maharashtra government ordered a Special Investigation Team (SIT) under the additional Director General of the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) to investigate all cases of bitcoin fraud reported from across the state.

143. Maharashtra will launch a scheme for farmers “One Farmer, One Transformer” to reduce electricity losses.
144. The **Gujarat** government has given religious minority status to its **Jewish Community**.
   - It was issued by the state’s **Department of Social Justice and Empowerment**.

145. It was announced that the next **Pravasi Bharatiya Divas** will be held in the holy city of **Varanasi** in **January 2019**.
   - The theme of the three-day event will be the ‘**Role of Indian Diaspora in building a New India**’.

146. **Microsoft** has signed an **MoU** with the **Rajasthan government** to provide **free digital training** to **9,500 college students** for **one year**.

147. **Satyarup Siddhanta** has become the **second Indian mountaineer** after **Malli Mastan Babu** to climb **Mt Ojos del Salado**, the **highest volcano** in the world.
   - **Satyarup Siddhanta** is also set to be the **first Indian** to climb **Mt Sidley** which is the **highest volcano of Antarctica**.

148. The book **“Winning Like Sourav: Think & Succeed Like Ganguly”** has been written by **Abhirup Bhattacharya**.
   - This book speaks about Sourav Ganguly’s trust on talented youngsters that gained India one of its greatest cricketers of all times – Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

149. The **Western Ghats**, one of India’s Hottest Biodiversity Hotspots and UNESCO World Heritage site, has been marked **fourth** in the **Lonely Planet’s top five ‘2018 Best in Asia’** list.

150. **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik** announced a **ban** on the use of **plastic** in the state from **October 2**, on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti.
   - In the first phase, plastic will be banned in **six places** — the pilgrim city of **Puri**, **Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Berhampur, Sambalpur and Rourkela**.
151. **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** unveiled ‘The Eat Right Movement’, built on two broad pillars of ‘Eat Healthy’ and ‘Eat Safe’.
   - The programme aims to engage and enable citizens to improve their health and well-being by making the right food choices.
   - The aim is to cut down **salt/sugar** and **oil consumption by 30% in three years**.
   - As part of the initiative, **Nestle**, which sells popular instant noodles brand Maggi, aims to reduce salt by **10%**, sugar by **6% and fat by 2.5%** on an average by 2022.
   - Meanwhile, biscuits manufacturer **Britannia** aims to cut salt and sugar content by **5%** each in the **next three years**.
   - Baba Ramdev’s **Patanjali** now plans to develop sugar-free Chyawanprash for **diabetics** and cut sugar content by **3-5%** in existing Chyawanprash.

152. Starting **November**, the **Indian Railways** will start a special train, ‘Shri Ramayana Express’, which will cover important destinations related to the epic in a **16-day journey**.
   - The train will be flagged off on **November 14** from Delhi’s Safdarjung railway station.
   - The tour will be spread across **India as well as Sri Lanka**.
   - It will be priced at **₹15,120 per person**, which will cover all meals, accommodation, wash and change facilities in dharmashalas, all transfers, sight-seeing arrangements and a dedicated tour manager.
   - After leaving Delhi, the train will make its first stop in **Ayodhya** followed by **Hanuman Garhi Ramkot** and **Kanak Bhawan temple**.
   - It will then cover the important destinations of Ramayana circuit such as **Nandigram, Sitamarhi, Janakpur, Varanasi, Prayag, Shringverpur, Chitrakoot, Nasik, Hampi and Rameswaram**.
153. **Vistara** would place orders for **19 Airbus and Boeing planes** worth **USD 3.1 billion** (over **Rs 21,300 crore**) and induct **37 more aircraft** from **A320 Neo family on lease**.

- Vistara is a JV between **Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines**.
- Vistara, one of the three full-service carriers in India, is the only local airline to have a premium economy class.
- The airline which started flying in **January 2015** currently has about **4%** of the local market share.

154. India’s **Department of Telecommunications** has approved **Net Neutrality** rules that ban blocking, throttling, and zero-ranking internet data, with some exceptions.

- **Net neutrality** requires service providers to treat all internet traffic equally and prohibits discrimination in the treatment of content, including practices such as degrading, slowing down or granting preferential speeds.
• 'Critical IoT services' and 'specialised services' are exempt from the new rules, according to TRAI.
• DoT will also frame a policy on traffic management practices for service providers and separately set up a body of industry representatives and civil society to monitor and enforce net neutrality norms.

155. Amendments to make Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code gender-neutral “is under consideration”.
• Centre’s Plea - Challenging the constitutional validity of the law governing adultery, which only criminalises a man.
  i. It also objected to decriminalisation of adultery, as it would result in weakening the “sanctity of a marital bond”.
• Section 497 of the IPC says a woman cannot be punished for the offence of adultery. Only a man who has consensual sexual intercourse with the wife of another man without his consent can be punished under this offense in India. If someone "lives in adultery", the partner can file for divorce.
• Adultery is punishable with imprisonment for a maximum term of five years, with fine, or with both. The woman, or wife, is exempted from the purview of this section.

156. State-run telecom firm Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) unveiled first internet telephony service in the country that will allow users to dial any telephone number in India through its mobile app.
• Now BSNL customers will be able to make calls using the company’s mobile app ‘Wings’ to any phone number in the country.
• Before this, phone calls on mobile apps was possible within users of a particular app and not on telephone numbers.

157. Delhi’s Connaught Place is the ninth most expensive office markets in the world according to property consultant CBRE.
• While Mumbai’s Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) slipped ten places to the 26th spot.
• The Central Business District (CBD) of Nariman Point moved down to 37th.
• BKC and Nariman Point were at 16th and 30th positions, respectively, last year.
• Hong Kong (Central) is at the first position, followed by London (West End), Beijing (Finance Street) in China, Hong Kong (Kowloon) and Beijing (CBD) in China.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Market</th>
<th>Rent (In $ per sq. ft per annum)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Hong Kong (Central)</td>
<td>306.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>London (West End)</td>
<td>235.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Beijing (Finance Street)</td>
<td>200.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hong Kong (Kowloon)</td>
<td>189.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Beijing (CBD)</td>
<td>189.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>New York (Midtown Manhattan)</td>
<td>183.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>New York (Midtown South Manhattan)</td>
<td>171.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Tokyo (Marunouchi/Otemachi)</td>
<td>171.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>New Delhi (Connaught Place)</td>
<td>153.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>London (City)</td>
<td>144.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Mumbai (Bandra Kurla Complex)</td>
<td>96.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Mumbai (Nariman Point)</td>
<td>72.80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

158. The government plans to launch the ₹1.4 trillion solar power pumps scheme named Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM) to improve farmers’ income and reduce dependence on diesel pumps in July.
• A central financial assistance of ₹48,000 crore will be given for the scheme with the balance to be raised by the states, through loans and farmers themselves to generate 28,250MW.

• Surplus electricity generated by farmers will be bought by state electricity distribution companies and will help boost the country’s emerging green economy.

159. The government sharply increased the monetary threshold for filing appeals in tax disputes in various courts and decided to withdraw many pending appeals to cut down litigation and improve ease of doing business.

• The monetary threshold for filing appeals in tribunals handling income tax as well as customs, excise and service tax disputes has been doubled from ₹10 lakh to ₹20 lakh.

• In high courts, the monetary threshold will now be ₹50 lakh instead of ₹20 lakh earlier.

• In the Supreme Court, the threshold has been increased from ₹25 lakh to ₹1 crore.

• Also, 34% of the cases, out of the total number of direct tax appeals filed by the department in the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), will be withdrawn (The ministry did not specify the exact number of cases).

160. The Digital Indian Language Report (second edition) analysed online language usage patterns of 89,000 Android users who have installed Reverie’s app, Indic Keyboard Swalekh Flip.

• While Hindi is the most widely used Indian language online, users of Marathi, Bengali and Telugu show more engagement, as per report by Reverie Language Technologies.

• The engagement level corresponds to the average number of words typed per user in a language.

• Apart from major languages in India, minority languages, such as Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Sindhi and Santali, are also widely used online.
• According to the findings, four of the top 25 apps used by the user base are shopping apps such as Amazon, Flipkart, Paytm and OLX.
• Out of the top 25 apps used seven are messaging and social media apps, while only one gaming app was featured.

![Active users chart]

161. The Andhra Pradesh government launched the ‘Anna Canteens Scheme’ in various parts of the state.
- These will be run by Akshaya Patra Foundation.
- Breakfast, lunch and dinner would be offered at Rs 5 each.
- In March 2016, the first ‘Anna Canteen’ named after N T Rama Rao, was opened on a pilot basis at Velgapudi in Amaravati and only three more canteens were opened at other places in the last two years.

162. According to a ‘Twiplomacy’ study on ‘world leaders on social media’ conducted by communications firm Burson Cohn & Wolfe (BCW), Prime Minister Narendra Modi is the third most followed world leader on Twitter with 42 million followers on his personal account @NarendraModi.
- Sushma Swaraj, India’s External Affairs Minister also made it to the top 10 list of the most followed world leaders.
163. Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje’s pre-poll yatra ‘Suraj Gaurav Yatra’ will be done across the State next month to seek public mandate for the BJP in the Rajasthan Assembly elections due later this year.

164. The military camouflage painted Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) 'Dhruv' made an emergency landing in Aurangabad district of Bihar.
   - They were en route to a camp of the 205th battalion camp of the CoBRA in Barachatti in Gaya district.
   - The CoBRA (Commando Battalion for Resolute Action) is an elite jungle warfare unit of the CRPF.

165. For the first time, all law books required by visually impaired administrative officials in Odisha are being printed in Braille format.
   - The law books are being transcribed into Braille and then printed at the Red Cross Computerised Braille Press in Berhampur, the only Braille press in the State.

166. Aanayottu, one of the largest festivals in Kerala, involves a large number of unadorned elephants being worshipped and fed.
167. An all-women motorbike squad of the Kolkata Police rolled out to patrol the streets of Kolkata.

168. Aadhaar will be mandatory for getting medical treatment under the ‘Ayushman Bharat’ National Health Insurance Scheme, which will offer cashless hospitalisation up to Rs 5 lakh per family per year to beneficiaries belonging to financially vulnerable households.

- Indu Bhushan is the CEO of Ayushman Bharat.

169. Maruti Suzuki India Pvt Ltd. will soon go for lithium-ion batteries.

- Almost all electric vehicles in the country run on imported batteries, mostly from China.
- Reportedly, Maruti Suzuki will be the first manufacturer to provide lithium-ion battery in cars in India in mass models.
170. In a taxpayer-friendly move, the government said the distance between two PIN codes for a shipment will be calculated automatically at the time of generation of an e-way bill under the Goods and Services Tax.

- An e-way bill, an electronic documentation of movement of goods, was rolled out primarily as an anti-tax evasion measure to prevent non-reporting or under-reporting of transactions.
- It has to be generated for all movement of goods within or outside a state through online registration of a consignment. The supplier and the transporter can upload the details about the shipment and get a unique e-way bill number.
- While an e-way bill has to be generated for movement of all goods between states valued at over ₹50,000, the threshold varies from state to state.
- At present, taxpayers are asked to enter the two PIN codes, the starting point and the end point of the shipment, and then asked to fill the distance.
171. **Indian Railways** has sought operational autonomy from the cabinet to undertake the **ambitious ₹1 trillion Station Redevelopment Plan**.

- This includes selling railway land to pay loans, leasing it out for more than 99 years for commercial development, including real-estate development, and forming joint ventures with urban development agencies such as the Delhi Development Authority to undertake station redevelopment projects.
- The **Indian Railway Station Development Corporation (IRSDC)**, the nodal agency to undertake station redevelopment, will not seek any money from the Indian Railways to undertake the projects and funds would be raised from the market.

172. **Disturbed Areas Act, Gujarat**-

- The **Disturbed Areas Act, 1991**, was first introduced in the mid-eighties as an ordinance by the Congress-led government after the communal riots of 1985.
- **Chimanbhai Patel**, who led a coalition government in the state, firmed it up as an Act in 1991.
• It was later amended in 2010 and came to be known as the **Prohibition of Transfer of Immovable Property** and **Provision for Protection of Tenants from Eviction from Premises in Disturbed Areas Act, Gujarat**.

• The Act prohibits a Muslim from selling, leasing or transferring his property to a Hindu, or a Hindu to a Muslim, in a disturbed area unless it gets a clearance from the district collector.

• The Disturbed Areas Act is currently implemented in many parts of Ahmedabad, Vadodara and Surat city.

• Gujarat government included **74 additional localities** in Ahmedabad under the Disturbed Areas Act, taking the total number to **770**.

173. **Niti Aayog** has proposed **15-point action plan** named “**Breathe India**” for combating air pollution in ten most polluted cities in the country.

• According to a recent WHO database (2018), **Kanpur, Faridabad, Gaya, Varanasi, Agra, Gurgaon, Muzaffarpur, Lucknow and Patna** are the top ten most polluted cities in India.

• The plan includes encouraging electric vehicles, phasing out private diesel vehicle and development of crop residue utilisation policy.

174. The Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has launched a video contest titled “**Jal Bachao, Video Banao, Puruskar Pao**”

• It is a fortnightly contest that will run till 4th November 2018.

• To engage with the people of India on the important issues of water conservation and water management.

• The duration of the videos should be **minimum 2 minutes and up to 10 minutes** in Hindi, English or any other regional language and must not violate any provision of the Indian Copyright Act, 1957 or the Intellectual Property Rights of any third party.

• The prize amount is **Rs 25,000/-, Rs 15,000/- and Rs 10,000/-** for first, second and third positions respectively.
175. The Bihar cabinet approved amendments to the state’s stringent **Prohibition & Excise Act 2016**.
   - Earlier, both the owner and the occupant of a property or vehicle, from which liquor was seized, were liable to be punished.
   - Under the Act, the minimum provision of punishment is jail term of **10 years up to life imprisonment**; if liquor is found in a house, all members of the family above 18 years of age are deemed as guilty.
   - According to the amendments, there would be a reduction in the quantum of punishment for those involved in sale and manufacture of liquor as well as for those consuming alcohol, including the first-time offenders.

176. **India** has ranked **57th** in the **Global Innovation Index (GII)** developed by **Cornell University**, the Paris-based business school **Insead** and the **World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)** in Geneva.
   - India has improved its rank from **60th position in 2017**.
   - Since **2011**, **Switzerland** has been ranked on **top** every year.
   - In 2018, it is followed by **Netherlands at second spot and Sweden at third**.
   - The **US** has dropped to **sixth rank from fourth in 2017**.

177. **India** has become the **69th shareholder** of the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)**.
   - This would enable more joint investment with Indian companies across EBRD’s regions of operation.

178. **India’s** first private sector unit for **manufacturing Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAV) and Light Bullet Proof Vehicles (LBPV)** will be set up by **DCM Shriram Industries Group** on the campus of **Shriram Rayons in Kota**.

179. Scientists have developed a computer named “**SpiNNaker**” that mimics human brain’s neural networks, and would overcome the speed and power consumption problems of conventional supercomputers.
• **SpiNNaker is a custom-built computer.** It generated similar results similar to that of the best brain-simulation supercomputer software used at present for neural-signalling research.

180. Haryana Chief Minister **Manohar Lal Khattar** launched the android-based **Durga Shakti** app of the Haryana Police.

  - The app will enable women to seek immediate help of the police through **Women Helpline Number 1091** in case of an emergency.
  - The mobile app was launched at the ‘Ek Aur Sudhar Programme’.
  - The Chief Minister also flagged off **50 new vehicles for women** police stations in the state.
  - These vehicles have been allotted to ‘**Durga Shakti Rapid Action Force**’ to check incidents of eve teasing and other crime related to women and girls in the state.

181. **Swachh Survekshan Grameen’ 2018**, a survey of rural cleanliness programme, to rank all districts and states on the basis of qualitative and quantitative evaluation was launched.

  - Top performing states and districts will be awarded on **October 2**.
  - As part of Swachh Survekshan Grameen 6,980 villages in 698 districts across India will be covered.
  - The objective of **SSG 2018** is to undertake ranking of states and districts on basis of their performance attained on key **quantitative and qualitative Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G)** parameters.

  - **Swachh Survekshan Gramin 2017**-
    i. Northeastern States of **Sikkim, Nagaland and Manipur** with 95% rural households covered by toilets were top performers.
    ii. Himalayan States of **Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand** were also top performers with over **90% toilet coverage** of the rural houses.
    iii. **Bihar (30% coverage)** and **Uttar Pradesh (37%), Jharkhand (37%)** were among the worst performers in terms of rural sanitation.
182. Every year in June or July the Ratha Yatra, the Festival of Chariot: Chariots of Lord Jagannath is celebrated every year at Puri in Odisha.
   - It is considered as India and world oldest Ratha Yatra.

183. Industry body Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India (OPPI) launched a digital campaign, ThinkForHealth, calling for ideas to improve access to healthcare in India.
   - The initiative launched in partnership with the Telangana government will provide a platform for young minds and social and health-tech entrepreneurs to share their ideas on the mentioned topics and the three winning ideas will be given a platform to be heard.

184. The Airport Authority of India (AAI) is likely to partner with the government of Gujarat to build the Rs 2,000 crore Dholera airport project.
   - Equity participation between AAI and government of Gujarat will be 51% and 49%, respectively.

185. Kochi Metro Rail Limited (KMRL) opened India’s first exquisite air-conditioned dormitory at MG Road Metro station.
   - The property will be managed and operated by Peters Inn.

186. Two Indian-origin technology executives Jayshree Ullal (18th) and Neerja Sethi (21st) have made it to the Forbes’ list of America’s 60 richest self-made women.

187. On a special request from Election Commission of Bhutan, India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) organized a 5 – day Capacity Development programme for Media Officials from Bhutan.
   - A course on media in elections is the first such course being organized by IIIDEM.
188. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), an organisation under the Ministry of Culture, issued an order allowing photography within the premises of all centrally protected monuments/sites except at Ajanta Caves, Leh Palace and Taj Mahal.

189. The Odisha government announced the constitution of a ‘Heritage Cabinet,’ headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.
   - It aims at protection of ancient monuments, temples and archaeological sites and preservation of culture in Odisha.

190. Haryana has topped other states in per capita revenue collection under GST, and is also the 4th highest generator of e-way bills in India.

191. INS Tarangini arrived at her seventh port, Sunderland in the UK, during her #Lokayan-18 voyage and also to participate in the prestigious ‘tall ship races – 2018’.
   - Lokayan is a combination of two Sanskrit words: ‘Lokya’ meaning worldwide and ‘Yana’ meaning travel, thus literally meaning, ‘travel around the world’.

192. Railway Minister Piyush Goyal launched its first consolidated Bridge Management System (IR-BMS), a web-enabled IT application to store data on 1.5 lakh bridges.
   - The web-based platform will show the bridge master data, works data, information regarding inspection/monitoring and maintenance of the bridges and other essentials.

193. The Mycological Laboratory of Goa university announced the discovery of a new pigment from local wild mushrooms that may help fight cancer.
   - The pigment has been declared as world’s first sulphur-rich edible melanin.
   - It has been found in Roen alamis (wild variety of Goan mushrooms that grows on termite hills) or Termitomyces species.

194. The Maharashtra government announced that moviegoers will be free to carry outside food inside the multiplex from August 1.
• The government further directed the multiplex owners that there should be no difference in the **MRP of food products sold outside** and **inside multiplexes in the state.**

### Something to chew on

F&B revenues form a reasonable chunk of revenues for PVR and Inox. Plus, the gross margins of the segment are high.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>F&amp;B revenues (in ₹ crore)</th>
<th>Total operating revenues</th>
<th>F&amp;B as a % of total revenues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PVR</td>
<td>607.7</td>
<td>2,265.43</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inox Leisure</td>
<td>306</td>
<td>1,348.1</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Figures for financial year 2018  Source: Company presentations*

195. **India and the US** are likely to hold their **first Tri-services military drill** later this year.

• The three wings of the armed forces of India and the US hold separate military exercises, but **this will be the first time that the two countries will have a joint drill of their army, air force and the navy.**

• While the US has held tri-services military drills with many of its allies, **India** has held **such an exercise only with Russia.**

196. **The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA)** constituted a **10 Member Committee,** headed by the **Secretary of Ministry of Corporate Affairs - Injeti Srinivas** to review **Companies Act 2013.**

• The corporate affairs ministry is set to decriminalize offences of a less serious nature under the company law.

197. **The Finance Ministry** released **India** will head the **Asia Pacific Region of World Customs Organisation (WCO)** for **two years** as its **Vice Chair** from **July, 2018 to June, 2020.**
198. The first of world’s cheapest drinking water project was launched in Darbhanga district, Bihar.
   • This was launched by Sulabh International, an organisation that introduced the concept of ‘Sulabh Sauchalya’ in the country.
   • The ‘Sulabh Jal’ project converts contaminated pond and river water into safe drinking water.
   • The water purification process has a capacity to purify 8,000 litres of water per day at nominal cost.
   • With this people will get pure and clean water only in 50 paisa/litre.

199. The Haryana Education Department launched ‘I am not afraid of English’ initiative from Class 1 in the state’s primary schools.
   • The initiative is aimed at capacity building of teachers to enable them to help the students to learn, read, write and speak English.
   • A booklet containing 1,000 sentences/phrases (200 sentences per grade for all the five grades) has been prepared at the primary level of schooling.

200. Militaries of India and Pakistan will be part of a mega Anti-Terror Drill in Russia in August which is being organized by the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).
   • It will be for the first time since Independence that India and Pakistan will both be part of a military exercise.
   • The name of the drill is: “Peace Mission”.
   • Other SCO member countries joining the exercise are: Russia, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

201. The government has asked to remove Saltie, saltwater crocodiles from Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act, which could potentially lead to culling of adult saltwater crocodiles.
   • The current Saltie population in Andaman and Nicobar Islands is estimated at 1,700.
• Under the **Wildlife Protection Act**, the **schedule 1** status is given to the most endangered species of plants and animals and carry the highest penalty for poachers.

• However, permission may be given for selective culling if any species is declared vermin by local authorities or is perceived to be a severe threat to human lives.

• Once poached extensively for their **skin and meat**, the saltwater crocodile population in the islands have grown from double digits in the **mid 60s to about 1,700** under the government’s **Project Crocodile programme**, which was launched in **1975**.

202. The government is mulling over a proposal to impose a **surcharge** on airlines for operating flights **during peak hours** to enhance airport capacity and to avoid flight delays, according to the **Airports Authority of India (AAI) Chairman Guruprasad Mohapatra**.

• Currently, landing fees paid by airlines are determined by the weight of an aircraft and do not vary according to the time of the day.

203. Destruction of mangrove cover in the **Bandar Reserve Forest (BRF)** is forcing the **Golden Jackal (Canis aureus)** out of its habitat, triggering a conflict with the local communities.

• **Bandar Reserve Forest** is in **Andhra Pradesh**.

204. **Haryana** Chief Minister **Manohar Lal Khattar** launched the ‘**Paudhagiri**’ campaign, aimed at increasing the green cover in the State.

• Under the campaign, **22 lakh students** from **Classes VI to XII** of all government and private schools in Haryana will plant a sapling each during three months of the monsoon -- July, August and September.

205. The **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** joined hands with **Jammu and Kashmir’s Directorate of Health Services-Kashmir (DHS-K)** to set up a **Telemedicine**
Centre at an altitude of **12,700 feet**, roping in the country’s top hospitals, to cater to pilgrims **en-route** to the Amarnath shrine.

- The **Panjtrani Base Camp Hospital** on the Pahalgam cave shrine route will provide real-time treatment for high-altitude and other ailments that pilgrims frequently face in the region.

206. **Kerala** is in a spot over the decision of Kannur International Airport Limited (KIAL) to pull out from the Central government’s **Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN)** scheme after inking the agreement.

- **UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik)** is a scheme under the Regional Connectivity Scheme of the government aimed at making air travel affordable.
- **Shirdi airport** in Maharashtra was the first to withdraw from UDAN.

207. **Heavy rainfall** in the catchment area has resulted in high inflow, and all the reservoirs in the Cauvery basin — Harangi, Kabini, Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) and Hemavathi — have reached the **Full Reservoir Level (FRL)** in record time.

208. An unknown epidemic caused mass death of turtles in areas like **Kanjikuzhi, Mararikulam South, Cherthala, Mannancherry, Thakazhi, Edathua, and Mararikulam, Kerala**.

- The **Indian Black Turtle** also known as **Indian Pond Terrapin** is classified as Near Threatened by the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)**.
- The disease outbreaks were not new to Alappuzha. In **2016**, **Bird Flu** (**avian influenza**), caused by **H5N8 virus**, was detected among ducks in Kuttanad.
- Prior to that, **H5N1** was reported in the district in **2014**.

209. **Harrier birds**, a migratory raptor species that regularly visits vast swathes of India, are declining.

- At least **five species** of harriers were recorded in India over the years.
- The drastic changes were observed in the **Rollapadu Bustard Sanctuary** in Andhra Pradesh’s Kurnool district.
• India has **one of the largest roosting sites** in the world for Pallid Harriers and Montagu’s Harriers.

210. RBI has asked Puducherry, Chandigarh and urban areas of the Dadra and Nagar Haveli to be cautious in shifting to **Cash Transfer**.

- At present, three UTs are implementing the mode of cash transfer, under which **9.31 lakh beneficiaries** receive **₹12.82 crore** every month through their bank accounts, according to a publication of the **Department of Food and Public Distribution** in the Union government.
- The beneficiaries have the choice of buying food grains from the open market.

211. A protest is going on against the government’s **Minimum Support Prices** for kharif crops as recommended by the **Swaminathan Commission**.

212. Fertiliser major **IFFCO** has partnered with Singapore-based technology firm **iMandi** to start an e-commerce platform for farmers.

- An e-commerce app, ‘**IFFCO iMandi**’, has been introduced and would cater to 5.5 crore farmers already associated with the cooperative.
- A web portal has also been developed.
- This app is an ‘**one stop shop**’ for agri inputs and produce, FMCG, electronics, loans, insurance etc.

213. A recent initiative called ‘**The Jute Foundation**’ (TJF) is trying to address many issues pertaining to the environment-friendly product.

- It is trying to engage all stakeholders – farmers, workers, mills, research organisations and consumers.
- It is an initiative is being introduced for the industry to work jointly with research and development agencies like **IJIRA** (Indian Jute Industries’ Research Association) and others to develop thin and slim jute shopping bags “**that can be rolled into a ladies handbag**.”
214. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) will start getting green power from the Madhya Pradesh-based Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Ltd (RUMSL) in the next two months, the first project in the country to supply power to an inter-state open access customer. 

- Green power is a subset of renewable energy and represents those renewable energy resources and technologies that provide the highest environmental benefit.
- Delhi was ranked as the sixth most polluted city in the world as per the air quality data compiled by the World Health Organisation (WHO) for mega cities.

215. Life Insurance Corporation of India’s (LIC’s) Board has approved acquiring up to 51% stake in IDBI Bank.

216. According to PRS Legislative Research, 25 bills have been listed for consideration and passage, and three for withdrawal during the session.

- 18 new bills, including the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) bill, 2018, are expected to be introduced.
- Important bills listed for consideration and passage include Fugitive Economic Offenders bill, 2018, Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) bill, 2017, and Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) bill, 2016.

217. Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2018

- Insolvency is a situation where individuals or companies are unable to repay their outstanding debt.
- Homebuyers will get due representation in the Committee of Creditors (CoC) that takes a call on resolution proposals, making them an integral part of the decision making process.
- The Ordinance provides significant relief to home buyers by recognizing their status as financial creditors.
- Another major beneficiary would be Micro, Small and Medium Sector Enterprises (MSME), which form the backbone of the Indian economy as the biggest employer, next only to the agriculture sector.
Now, the promoters of MSMEs are allowed to bid for their companies undergoing Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) as long as they are not wilful defaulters and don’t attract any other related disqualification.

With a view to encouraging resolution as opposed to liquidation, the voting threshold has been brought down to **66 percent from 75 percent** for all major decisions such as approval of resolution plan, extension of CIRP period, etc.

218. **The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2017**

- The Bill makes all declaration of talaq, including in written or electronic form, to be void (i.e. not enforceable in law) and illegal.
- It defines talaq as *talaq-e-biddat*.
- *Talaq-e-biddat* refers to the practice under Muslim personal laws where pronunciation of the word ‘talaq’ thrice in one sitting by a Muslim man to his wife results in an instant and irrevocable divorce.
- The Bill makes declaration of *talaq* a cognizable and non-bailable offence.
- A husband declaring talaq can be imprisoned for **up to three years** along with a fine.
- A Muslim woman against whom such talaq has been declared, is entitled to seek custody of her minor children.
- This act is applicable in entire **India except Jammu & Kashmir**.

219. **The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018**

- The Bill allows for a person to be declared as a Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO) if:
  
  - i. an arrest warrant has been issued against him for any specified offences where the value involved is over **Rs 100 crore**.
  
  - ii. he has left the country and refuses to return to face prosecution.
- It will empower authorities to attach and confiscate properties and assets of economic offenders like loan defaulters who flee the country.
• **Section 11 of the Act disqualifies** those declared as offenders from either filing or defending a civil claim in court.

220. **Maruti Suzuki India Ltd**, the seller of every second car in the country, plans to introduce its first entry-level car in India - **code-named Y1K**.
  
  • It is in the development stage at the company’s newly built research and development facility in **Rohtak**.

221. The average time spent by an Indian watching videos online has grown to **52 minutes per day in 2018** from a mere **two minutes per day in 2012**.
  
  • It is expected to increase further to **67 minutes per day by 2019**, according to a report **Online Video Forecasts 2018** by media agency **Zenith**.
  
  • The time spent watching videos online is expected to go up to **84 minutes a day** for the average person by **2020**.
  
  • More time is spent watching online videos on mobiles (**40 minutes in 2018**) compared with non-mobile devices (**26 minutes in 2018**).
  
  • **By 2020, China** will have the keenest viewers, with the average person spending **105 minutes a day** watching online video, followed by **Russia (102 minutes)** and the **UK (101 minutes)**.
  
  • **Online video** refers to all video content viewed over an internet connection, including broadcaster-owned platforms, over-the-top subscription services, video-sharing sites and videos viewed on social media.
222. As per the OECD International Migration Outlook 2018, India ranked fourth globally among people who migrated to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development countries in 2016.

- **China** topped the list with more than **half a million migrants**, followed by **Romania and Syria**.
- **India** occupied fourth place with **271,503** migrants to OECD countries in 2016 compared with **113,082** in 2000.
- The **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** was established in **1961**.
- Today, the OECD is a forum of 34 industrialised countries that develops and promotes economic and social policies.
- The 34 OECD member countries are: **Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, the United Kingdom, and the United States.**
223. The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) recommended imposing a safeguard duty for two years on solar cells and modules imported from China and Malaysia.

- DGTR, which functions under the commerce ministry, has recommended a safeguard duty of **25% for the first year**, followed by a **5% reduction** for the first six months of the second year to **20%**.
- A duty of **15% has been recommended for the last six months** of the second year.
- India plans to add **100 gigawatts (GW) of solar power capacity by 2022**.
- **Safeguard duty** is duty payable on import of goods which is already being manufactured in India but cost of which is high compared to import price. It is imposed by Central Government on goods so that the Indian manufacturers do not suffer due to import of cheaper goods from outside. It helps in creating a level playing field for Indian manufacturers and importers.

224. **Indian Accounting Standard 115**-

- India’s new accounting standard, **Ind AS 115**, is in effect from **April 1, 2018**, which is the start of the country’s new financial year.
• Once it is in force, the other two standards Ind AS 18 (revenue) and 11 (construction), which are related to revenue and construction contracts, would be withdrawn.

• Realty firms have to follow the Indian Accounting Standard (Ind AS) 115 that aims to align them with global accounting standards.

• Ind AS 115 requires that realty firms switch from the present Percentage completion method to Project completion method.

• Currently, the revenue and profit accrues in proportion to the percentage of the project that has been completed.

• However, under the new system, revenue can be booked only after the project is completed and the customer has taken possession of the unit (house/flat).

225. The government is facing serious challenges in its efforts to adopt an Electronic Health Records (EHR) system—a sweeping digital database of every Indian’s medical record that can be accessed by doctors and hospitals—that is aimed at transforming healthcare in the country.

• These challenges range from infrastructure creation, policy and regulations, standards and interoperability to research and development.

226. In a bid to strengthen the Anti-Drug Campaign, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh directed officials to hire retired government psychiatrists to handle the increased inflow of patients at de-addiction centres.

• Monitoring the district authorities to crackdown on centres selling ‘Buprenophine - Naloxone’ in large quantities in violation of prescribed protocols.

227. The Uttar Pradesh government told the Supreme Court that it was coming up with a law to restore the Anticipatory Bail Provision in the State which was scrapped during the Emergency in 1976.

• At present, UP and Uttarakhand are the only states that do not have the remedy of pre-arrest bail.
So, in most criminal cases, the accused are first arrested and then they have to seek either regular bail or quashing of charges before the high court, thereby overcrowding jails.

During the Emergency, the UP government had amended the CrPC in 1976 and withdrawn the provision of anticipatory bail in the state.

228. The Supreme Court pulled up the Kerala government for not complying with the apex court-appointed Justice S S Jagan Committee’s orders for payment of compensation to dog-bite victims, mostly belonging to economically backward families, women and schoolchildren.

229. The Punjab government has decided to construct 32 new Railway Over Bridges (ROBs) and Railway Under Bridges (RUBs) across the State to ease traffic snarls.

230. Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is going to create National Database of Arms Licenses system from April 2019.

The move is aimed at keeping a tab on authorised private gun holders, many of whom are often found involved in crimes and celebratory firing leading to loss of lives.

231. ISRO has successfully conducted ground test of its high thrust version of Vikas Engine at ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC) in Mahendragiri, Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu for duration of 195 seconds.

Vikas belongs to family of liquid fuelled rocket engines conceptualized and designed by ISRO’s Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre in the 1970s.

The recently tested high thrust version of Vikas engine will improve payload capability of PSLV, GSLV and GSLV Mk-III launch vehicles.
232. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Madras has commissioned remotely operable Local Electrod e Atom Probe (LEAP) microscope.
   - It is claimed to be world’s first remotely operable LEAP microscope, as it can be remotely operated through special terminal by researchers divided geographically.
   - LEAP is high-performance microscope that can provide a precise atom-by-atom view of materials.

233. Indian Army is going to resume trials of US-made M777 ultralight howitzer in the Pokhran firing range, Rajasthan.
   - M777 is 155-mm, 39-calibre towed artillery gun. It is manufactured by US based BAE Systems’ Global Combat Systems division.

234. President Ram Nath Kovind has approved the Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2015, converting it to an Act.
   - The bill has been converted into an Act after almost three years it was passed by Assam’s state assembly.
   - The Assam Assembly on August 13, 2015, had unanimously passed a Bill, which imposes imprisonment of up to seven years, along with a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh, for branding someone as witch. This Bill has now become an Act.
• The punishment for leading a person to commit suicide after intimidating, stigmatising, defaming and accusing her as witch, may be extended to life imprisonment, along with Rs 5 lakh fine.
• President's assent is required when an act passed by a state Assembly contravenes central law. In this case, the act contravenes sections of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) which deal with such crimes.

235. The Supreme Court refused to grant interim stay on Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Second Amendment Rules, 2018 of the Union Health Ministry directing the manufacturers to have graphic warning images on packets of cigarettes and other tobacco products and helpline numbers for those who wanted to quit the habit.
• It would come into effect from September 1.
• The notification mandates packets to carry a ‘Quit Today Call’ number to help those quit tobacco products.
• It mandated replacement of current image of a person’s throat with a hole with more “gruesome pictures of a person’s lips with diseased and purulent growth.”
• The statutory warning line, “Smoking causes throat cancer”, too is to be replaced with “Smoking causes painful death” and “Tobacco causes cancer.”

236. Justice B N Srikrishna, will head a Committee of experts which has been formed to deliberate on a data protection framework for the country.
• This is the first time that India has started work on a specific data protection law.
• The recommendations, when accepted by the government, will mean that entities like browsers, mobile applications, devices, operating systems and service providers, among others, will not be able to share personal data with third parties without getting the consent of customers.

237. Flipkart-owned digital payments start-up PhonePe has acquired Zopper Retail, a hyper local point-of-sale platform for small and medium businesses.
238. 84 of the 161 companies that held their Annual General Meetings (AGMs) between 1 May and 15 July did not seek auditor ratification, according to data compiled by Glass Lewis & Co. Llc, a US-based proxy advisory firm.

- This includes 20 state-run banks.
- Under the Companies (Amendment) Act, 2017, effective May 2018, the annual auditor ratification was removed, unless a company appoints a new auditor or is re-appointing an existing one.

239. The government will infuse more than ₹11,300 crore into five state-run banks- Allahabad Bank, Corporation Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Andhra Bank.

- Allahabad Bank, Corporation Bank and Indian Overseas Bank have been placed under Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI’s) Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework.

240. The largest Indian visa centre in the world is inaugurated in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

- Bangladeshis constitute one of the largest numbers of visitors from a single country to India.
- Last year the country issued 1.4 million visas to Bangladeshi nationals.
- India has 12 visa centres in Bangladesh, which is the highest number the former has in any country in the world.

241. Average sea levels may rise by up to 30 feet around the world if humans continue to burn fossil and fuels causing temperatures to breach the threshold of 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels in the next few thousand years as per the study of Nature Climate Change.

- The Paris Agreement requires countries to limit their carbon emissions to keep the overall warming of Earth to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.
- The sea-level is rising at an average rate of 1.6-1.7 mm per year along the Indian coast, but it is not uniform.
• According to oceanographers, among South-Asian countries, Bangladesh is most-vulnerable, but India with its vast coastline of nearly 7,516 km on the east and west also needs to be proactive.

Coastal cities in India at risk

- Annual temperatures increased significantly from 1950 to 2010
- The average annual temperatures are expected to rise by 1°C to 2°C by 2050
- Current sea-level rise is 1.06-1.75 mm per year
- India has nearly 7,516 km coastline divided along its east and west coasts
- Concerns over coastal flooding, especially in cities like Mumbai
- Climate change also induces storminess in seas
- Warming seas also affect variability in monsoon

242. The Narendra Modi government is winding up a flagship eBiz portal launched by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government.

• Which was supposed to act as a one-stop facility for businesses to obtain government licences and clearances as well as reduce red tape and improve transparency.
• It was developed by Infosys Ltd for the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) under the National e-Governance Plan in a public-private partnership model for 10 years.

243. The government increased the axle load of trucks and trailers, which will allow the goods vehicles to carry extra load of about 20-25%.

• For the rigid trucks the gross vehicle weight, which includes the self-weight, has been capped at 49 tonnes and for tractor trailers at 55 tonnes.
• Only up to 5 per cent of more load than the fixed norm won’t attract any penalty.
• The move will help reduce transportation cost and consequently, commodity prices.

244. According to a Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) report, Reliance Jio has topped the chart of fastest 4G telecom operators with an average peak download speed of 22.3 mbps on its network in May.

• Idea Cellular registered highest upload speed in May.
• Jio’s national average of 4G download speed was more than double compared to its closest rival Bharti Airtel, which recorded download speed of 9.7 mbps.
• Vodafone and Idea Cellular registered slight dip in download speeds in May at 6.7 and 6.1 megabit per second (mbps), respectively.

245. The **Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2018** - proposes to give the Centre the power to set the tenure and salaries of State and Central Information Commissioners.

- The Bill is being opposed by several Opposition political parties and RTI activists.
- The current law gives Information Commissioners a tenure of five years and salaries which match those of Election Commissioners.

### What's being changed

**SECTION 13: TERM OF OFFICE AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AS IT IS NOW</th>
<th>AMENDMENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>(1) CIC shall hold office for 5 years</td>
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<tr>
<td>(2) Info Commissioner (IC) shall hold office for 5 years</td>
<td>(2) IC shall hold office for such term as may be prescribed by Centre</td>
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<td>(5) (a) CIC status shall be the same as that of CEC</td>
<td>(5) Pay &amp; perks and other service conditions of CIC, ICs shall be such as may be prescribed by Centre</td>
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<td>(b) IC's status shall be the same as that of EC</td>
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246. As per the **Cigna 360° Well-Being Survey — Future Assured**, conducted by Cigna TTK Health Insurance, Indians suffered **greater levels of stress** than people in the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, France, China, Brazil and Indonesia.

- About 89% of the population in India say they are suffering from stress compared to the global average of 86%, said the study.
- It also revealed that **every eighth person** has trouble dealing with stress, with millennials suffering more than other groups.
- Nearly 75% of the respondents in India do not feel comfortable talking to a medical professional about their stress, said the study.
- Work and finance are key reasons for high stress levels.
247. The Bihar Cabinet increased the compensation for *rape survivors* and *acid victims* from ₹3 lakh to ₹7 lakh under Victim Compensation (Amendment) Scheme, 2018.
   - Last month, *National Legal Services Authority* and the Centre had drawn up a relief policy for *rape and acid attack victims* offering minimum compensation amount of ₹5 lakh and ₹7 lakh respectively.
   - The amount can be increased by 50% over and above ₹7 lakh if the victim is below the age of 14.

248. Aviation security watchdog *Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS)* has finalised a strategy to neutralise drones near airports.
   - The counter-drone plan prepared by a committee headed by *Kumar Rajesh Chandra* has proposed neutralising drones through a “soft kill” approach which will include entrapping or jamming drones instead of destroying them.
   - The strategy deals with drones operating near aerodromes as the body is mandated to ensure aviation security.

249. The government has doubled import duty on more than 50 textile products — such as jackets, suits and carpets — to 20%, a move that is aimed at promoting domestic manufacturing.
   - The *Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs* has also raised the ad-valorem rate of duty for certain items.
   - Imported products that face the new duty include woven fabrics, dresses, trousers, suits and baby garments.

250. Bengaluru and Delhi are among the world’s top 50 cities for women entrepreneurs for the second consecutive year, according to the *Dell Women Entrepreneur Cities Index*.
   - It measures a city’s ability to attract and retain high-potential women entrepreneurs.
   - **Bengaluru is at No. 40** and Delhi at 49 in the list, which is topped by New York.
251. The government has decided to **withdraw** the contentious **Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill 2017**, or **FRDI Bill** allowing bankers to breathe easy.

- This means the **present system of insurance deposits** will **continue** and customers will not have to worry about the ‘bail-in’ provision in the proposed Bill.
- There were two controversial clauses in the Bill: a **bail-in provision** and an **insurance on deposits**.
- The **bail-in provision** stipulated that **if a bank fails**, **depositors** will have to bear part of the **liability**.
- Currently, deposits are insured up to ₹1 lakh. The Bill proposed to delete the legal provision for the present insurance system and defined this protection in a new way.

252. **HT Media Ltd** and **Next Mediaworks Ltd** announced the signing of the binding term sheet for the **proposed merger of their radio arms**.

- **HT Media Ltd** owns the popular Hindi radio channels **Fever FM** and **Radio Nasha**.
- **Next Mediaworks**, through its subsidiary **Next Radio Ltd** operates successful segmented radio stations across the **Radio One** brand.
253. The Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018, which seeks to protect small investors from **ponzi schemes** and prevent unregulated entities from collecting deposits from individuals was introduced.

- The bill plugs the loopholes in existing laws and gives powers to the government to stop companies from soliciting such funds.
- Once the bill is passed by the legislature, people running **ponzi schemes** could face a jail term of **up to 10 years** and a penalty of up to **Rs50 crore**.
- In a **ponzi scheme**, companies or individuals typically seek public funds promising high rates of interest.
- The bill also proposes to set up a **competent authority** at the **state government level** with powers to attach properties and recover dues to depositors in case entities do manage to raise funds illegally.

254. **Indian Railways** commissioned **30% fewer tracks** in the last financial year.

- The state-run railway company commissioned 1,861km of tracks during 2017-18, a decline from 2,855km in the previous year, according to railways data submitted in the Lok Sabha.
- The railways commissioned 2,828km of tracks in 2015-16.
- Railway line **commissioning** means a train can be pressed into service on the line after completion of all trials on the new track. It comprises new lines, gauge conversion and doubling of tracks.

255. The **US** has offered **India** the **armed version of Guardian drones** that were originally authorized for sale as unarmed for surveillance purposes.

- If the deal comes to fruition, it would be the **first time Washington** has sold a large armed drone to a country outside the **NATO alliance**.
256. The centre raised the **Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP)** for sugarcane to `275 per quintal, a hike of `20 over last year’s FRP of `255 per quintal.
   - FRP is the price sugar mills pay farmers while procuring cane.

257. The **Telangana government** will complete the Mission Bhagiratha project by October.
   - The project aims to supply piped drinking water across the state, including 5.5 million rural households sourced from River Godavari and Krishna.

258. The bill **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Second Amendment) Bill, 2017** was passed which seeks to reinstate detention for students of Class V to Class VIII if they fail to pass examinations.
   - The bill also allow the reintroduction of examinations for primarily schools.
   - According to the RTE amendment bill, **students will get two chances** to pass the examination and they will be detained if they fail in both attempts.
   - The bill, however, has the provision to allow states to continue with the no-detention policy if they choose to, or conduct examinations at the school, district or state levels.
   - According to the **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER)** for rural India published by non-profit organisation Pratham, the proportion of all children in Class V who could read a Class II level textbook declined to 47.8% in 2016 from 48.1% in 2014.

259. The first all-women branch of **Jammu & Kashmir Bank** was inaugurated by the first lady **Usha Vohra in Srinagar**.
   - Chairman of the J&K Bank - **Mr. Parvez Ahmad**

260. **Bollywood actors Akshay Kumar and Salman Khan** have ranked in the **Forbes list of top 100** highest-paid entertainers 2018.
   - Akshay Kumar ranked 76th with earnings of **$40.5M**
• Salman Khan ranked **82nd** with earnings of **$37.7M**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Profession</th>
<th>Earning (in USD)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Floyd Mayweather</td>
<td>Professional boxer</td>
<td>275 m</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>George Clooney</td>
<td>Actor</td>
<td>239 m</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kylie Jenner</td>
<td>Social Media star and business woman</td>
<td>166.5 m</td>
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261. Cabinet approves **Special Remission to Prisoners** on the occasion of **150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi**

- This will be done in three phases-
  - **In Phase-I**, the prisoners will be released on **2nd October, 2018 (Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi)**.
  - **In Phase-II** prisoners will be released on **10th April, 2019 (Anniversary of Champaran Satyagrah)**.
  - **In Phase-III**, prisoners will be released on **2nd October 2019 (Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi)**
- **Eligibility of the prisoners for the special remission**:
  i. Women convicts of 55 years of age and above, who have completed 50% of their actual sentence period.
  ii. Transgender convicts of 55 years of age and above, who have completed 50% of their actual sentence period.
  iii. Male convicts of 60 years of age and above, who have completed 50% of their actual sentence period.
  iv. Physically challenged/disabled convicts with 70% disability and more who have completed 50% of their actual sentence period.
  v. Terminally ill convicts.
vi. Convicted prisoners who have completed two-third (66%) of their actual sentence period.

262. Cabinet cuts tax burden on ONGC and Oil India-
- The revised norms will be applicable on blocks awarded under the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP) and pre-NELP regime.
- In six pre-NELP exploration blocks, ONGC and Oil had traditionally borne the full burden of royalty and cess, including share of JV partners.
- But the Cabinet has now allowed the two state firms to bring down their liability to the extent of their respective participating interests in these blocks, leaving partners such as Hindustan Oil, GSPC, and Essar Oil to bear their respective share of royalty and cess.

263. The first 2+2 dialogue between Defence and Foreign Ministers of India and the U.S. will take place in September first week in New Delhi.

264. The Bill on awarding the death penalty for those convicted of rape of girls below the age of 12 will be introduced in the monsoon session of Parliament.
- The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018, once approved by Parliament, will replace the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance.
- The minimum punishment in the case of rape of women has been increased from rigorous imprisonment of seven years to 10.
- Under the Bill, in case of the rape of a girl aged under 16 and above 12, the minimum punishment has been increased from 10 years to 20.

265. The punishment for gang rape of a girl aged below 16 and above 12 will be imprisonment for the rest of life of the convict.

266. TRAI has asked operators to adopt block-chain technology to ensure only registered telemarketers have access to phone databases and that user consent to receive such communication is explicitly recorded.
- The regulator has asked telecom service providers to use the distributed ledger technology to control the flow of commercial communication on their
networks in its **Telecom Commercial Communication Customer Preference Regulations, 2018.**

- The companies that want to communicate with interested users have to confirm their identity through a header registered in their name.
- In case the access provider fails to curb unsolicited commercial communication, there would be a penalty of as much as **₹50 lakh per month.**

267. The **Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018** has been passed in the Lok Sabha, which will empower authorities to attach and confiscate properties and assets of economic offenders.

- The Bill allows for a person to be declared as a **Fugitive Economic Offender (FEO)** if:
  i. an arrest warrant has been issued against him for any specified offences where the value involved is over **Rs 100 crore.**
  ii. he has left the country and refuses to return to face prosecution.
- It will empower authorities to attach and confiscate properties and assets of economic offenders like loan defaulters who flee the country.
- **Section 11 of the Act disqualifies** those declared as offenders from either filing or defending a civil claim in court.
- The **Enforcement Directorate (ED)** will be the apex agency to implement the law.

268. **Dairy owners** in Maharashtra have agreed to pay **farmers Rs 25 per litre for milk.**

269. The **10th edition** of the **Delhi Dialogue** is underway in **New Delhi.**

- The theme of the two-day DD -10 is **“Strengthening India-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation”.**
- The Delhi Dialogue is a premier annual track 1.5 event to discuss politico-security, economic and socio-cultural engagement between India and ASEAN.
- This is the **first major event** to be organized after the **ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit,** that was held in New Delhi in January 2018.
- The **Association of Southeast Asian Nations** is a regional intergovernmental organization comprising ten Southeast Asian countries that promotes intergovernmental cooperation.
• DD X is being organised in partnership with the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).

270. The Rajya Sabha passed the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2013 by a voice vote, which seeks to make giving bribes to a public servant an offense and there is a provision of punishment in such act.
• However, a person who is compelled to give a bribe will not be charged with the offense if he reports the matter to law enforcement authorities within seven days.
• The bill is pending in Lok Sabha.

• It is also known as Shubharambh Saptah.

272. Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh launched an online portal and mobile app called ‘Aabhaar-Aapki sevaka’ for the online pensioners of the state.
• This would be implemented by Online Pension Management System.
• 80,000 pensioners would get information related to pension through the app and portal.

273. According to Travel + Leisure’s World’s Best Cities report, the city of Udaipur has ranked 3rd among the 15 of the world’s best cities.
• The top 2 cities are both in Mexico: San Miguel de Allende and
• Nicknames of Udaipur: City of Lakes, Venice of the East.
  i. San Miguel de Allende, Mexico
  ii. Oaxaca, Mexico
  iii. Udaipur, India
  iv. Ubud, Indonesia
  v. Kyoto, Japan

274. Western Railways renamed Elphistone Road station to Prabhadevi on Mumbai’s suburban section.

275. India is expanding its Polar research to Arctic
• Three decades after its first mission to Antarctica, the government is refocusing priorities to the other pole — the Arctic — because of opportunities and challenges posed by climate change.

• The National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR) has been renamed to National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research.

276. Uttar Pradesh police have decided to recruit “digital volunteers” at every police station in the State to curb rumours and bust illegal activities.

• This is in the wake of mob lynching incidents triggered by rumours spread through social media.

277. 2018 BRICS Media Forum was held at in South Africa.

• BRICS Media Academy and BRICS news portal would be launched.

278. Government has announced the launch of a new MicroDot Technology that would help check on vehicle thefts.

• Under this thousands of small dots laser etched will be sprayed with a vehicle identification number on all over the vehicle’s body including its engine.

• This technology is yet to be finalized by the highest automobile technical standard making body CMVR-TSC.

• 2.14 lakh vehicles are stolen across India annually.

• Delhi tops the list with 38,644 in 2016 which is 100 on a daily basis.

• The state of Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra follows the list with 34,480 and 22,435 number of vehicles, respectively.

• 41,000 vehicles were stolen in 2017 that is 30 vehicles a month.

279. Punjab tourism and cultural affairs minister Navjot Singh Sidhu finalized a blue print to further develop Virasat-e-Khalsa, a museum of the Sikhs, at Anandpur Sahib, Punjab.

• Navjot Singh Sidhu said that, as Virasat-e-Khalsa attracts large number of tourist from all over the world, we need to develop tented accommodation, budget hotels, food courts and souvenir shops on that area.
280. **Andhra Pradesh** Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu launched ‘e-Pragati core platform’ at Undavalli, **Andhra Pradesh**.

- e-Pragati is a forward-looking digital initiative.
- It aims to connect citizens to 34 departments, 336 autonomous organisations and 745-plus services.
- Andhra Pradesh aims to realise the vision of ‘Sunrise AP 2022’ through this project.
- The e-Pragati authority will achieve the goals of the project by supporting the 7 development missions launched in the areas of e-Governance, Social Empowerment, Skill Development, Urban Development, Infrastructure, Industrial Development and the Services sector.

281. The Ministry of Defence announced that the Indian Air Force for the first time is participating with fighter aircraft in **Exercise Pitch Black 2018 (PB-18)**, which is to be held in **Australia**.

- The mega exercise will involve over **100** aircraft from around the globe.

282. According to **The Australian Census and Migrants Integrated Dataset (ACMID)**, India tops list of skilled visa immigrants according to official figures with nearly **3 lakh** Indians who migrated from **1 January 2000 to 9th August 2016**.

- As many as **291,916 Indians** migrated to Australia, out of which, **154,012** individuals Australian citizenship.
- This data was released by the **Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS)**.

283. The Union Home Minister, **Shri Rajnath Singh** launched **The Student Police Cadet (SPC) Programme** nationally.

- To instill values and ethics to students through classes in schools and outside.
- Total cost of the programme is **Rs.67 crore** where each school will be handed **Rs.50,000** for educational aids, training and contingency.
- The programme focuses on students of class **8 & 9**.
• It covers two kinds of topic: Crime prevention and control and Values and ethics.
• Under Crime prevention and control key areas are: Community Policing, Road Safety, Fight against Social Evils, Safety of Women & Children, Fight against Corruption and Disaster Management.
• Under Values and ethics the key areas are: Values & Ethics, Respect for Elders, Empathy & Sympathy, Tolerance, Patience, Attitude, Team Spirit and Discipline.

284. The Tamil Nadu government has set a 24-hour helpline to assist and protect inter-caste couples.

• A special cell has been formed in all districts and cities in the state, comprising district-level officers to receive complaints of harassment.
• This has been done to eradicate honour killing.

285. Himachal Pradesh government has approved implementation of Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) for procurement of apple.

• The MIS will be executed for procurement of 2,29,136 metric tonnes apple. The price for this has been fixed at Rs 7.50 per kg.

286. Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb inaugurated the 7 day long “Kharchi Puja” at Puran Habeli, in Tripura.

• Kharchi Puja is an annual festival to cleanse the sins of mortal souls. It was originally a Hindu tribal festival. Now it is observed by all communities and religion.

287. The GST Council pruned the number of items in the highest tax slab of 28% and cut the rate on several others.

• It also eased rules for small businesses.
• Firms with less than ₹5 crore in sales may now file tax returns quarterly.
• The threshold for GST registration has been raised to ₹20 lakh in some states.
288. The Government has decided to deploy technological solutions in the form of Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS), on a pilot basis in different terrains on Indo-Pakistan Border and Indo-Bangladesh Border.

- The technological solutions are based on integration of sensors and surveillance equipment like radars, day and night vision cameras, in a network architecture with command and control system.

289. Based on a Supreme Court order, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai), through its circular dated 6 July, has directed insurers to not renew insurance of vehicles without a Pollution Under Certificate (PUC) certificate.

- A PUC certificate is mandatory as per the Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989. The rules state that after the expiry of a year from the date on which the vehicle was first registered, it will need to carry a valid PUC certificate issued by an agency authorised for this purpose by the respective state government.

- The validity of the certificate is for six months.
290. The Kolkata’s State Forest Department’s decision to carry out trimming of trees in a sprawling area of about 55,000 square metres in Darjeeling district in alleged violation of the guidelines and Supreme Court order has generated concern within the Department.

- “Silviculture thinning” is “being undertaken by the Research Division.
- Silviculture is the practice of controlling the establishment, growth, composition, health, and quality of forests to meet diverse needs and values.
- Thinning is a term used in agricultural sciences to mean the removal of some plants, or parts of plants, to make room for the growth of others.

291. To curb incidents of lynching and violence due to fake news on social media, the Uttar Pradesh police will set up ‘Digital Armies’.

- As part of the initiative, all the 1,469 police stations in the State will have a WhatsApp group consisting 250 members including ex-servicemen, teachers, doctors, advocates and journalists.
- These ‘digital volunteers’ will inform their local police station if they come across fake news on the social media and at the same time, disseminate correct information among the locals to curb the spread of rumours.

292. After Amma canteen in Tamil Nadu and Indira canteen in Karnataka, it’s now Maharashtra’s turn to have one Tai’s (sister) canteen, giving away subji at ₹4 and roti at ₹2.
293. Kerala topped the Public Affairs Index 2018, for the third time, for being the best governed large State in the country.

- Karnataka retained its fourth spot.
- Tamil Nadu and Telangana stood second and third respectively.
- The index on the quality of governance, released by Bengaluru-based think tank Public Affairs Centre was based on 10 themes, 30 focus subjects and 100 indicators.
- Karnataka was ranked third in 2016.
- Large States: Kerala has topped the list, followed by Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka and Gujarat.
- Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar ranked the lowest, indicating higher social and economic inequalities in the states.
- Smaller states (with population less than two crore): Himachal Pradesh topped the list followed by Goa, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura.
- Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya were ranked at bottom of the index among small states.

294. The National Library is all set to hold a permanent exhibition on the lives of Syama Prasad Mookerjee, the founder of Bharatiya Jan Sangh, Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and iconic Bengali author Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay.

295. The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has initiated the process of introducing QR code in their textbooks.

- This move is aimed at helping students understand chapters better by watching a film or reading additional content on laptops and digital boards.

296. From September, the Army will be inducting two types of artillery guns into its arsenal.
• The Army will start taking delivery of the **K9 Vajra-T** tracked self-propelled artillery guns from **South Korea**.
• At the same time, it will also receive **four M777 ultra-light howitzers** from the **U.S.**

297. **The Environment Ministry** re-introduced the ‘**Medini Puraskar Yojna**’— a scheme that awards **Indian authors** for their original work in **Hindi** on environment, pollution and climate change subjects.
• It aims to encourage Hindi authors to write on environmental topics.
• **Rs one lakh** will be given as first prize, **Rs 75,000** as second prize and **Rs 50,000** as third prize.

298. The first of its kind **Air Quality and Weather Forecast System**— **SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting)** has been inaugurated.
• It is a giant true **color LED display** that gives out real-time air quality index on a daily basis.
• It will be implemented in **four cities of India**— **Delhi, Pune, Mumbai and Ahmedabad** as an operational service.

299. **India’s** consumer internet market is set to expand rapidly over the next three years, according to **Redseer Consulting**, market research and consulting firm.
• The expansion will be driven by sharp increase in the number of internet users as well as rise in spending.
• By **2020**, the e-commerce market will **touch $50 billion**, comprising nearly half the consumer internet market which will be **approx $107 billion**.
• Roughly half of **470 million people** who have internet access use the internet for messaging.
300. In a bid to reduce the number of cheque dishonour cases pending in courts, the Lok Sabha passed the Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

- The bill aims to counter the delaying tactics employed by people who want to avoid paying cheques issued by them.
- If it gets Parliament’s nod, it will preserve the sanctity of cheque transactions by stopping the practice of people trying to deliberately delay cases through filing of appeals and obtaining stay on proceedings.
- The bill proposes to insert a new provision wherein a court can order the drawer of the dishonoured cheque to pay interim compensation to the complainant, in a summary trial or a summons case upon framing of charges.
- The interim compensation will be up to 20% of the amount of the cheque.
- The compensation will not exceed 20 per cent of the cheque amount and will have to be paid by the drawer within 60 days of the trial court’s order to pay such a compensation.

301. Two High-Level Committees have been constituted by the Central government to suggest ways and legal framework to effectively deal with incidents of mob violence and lynching.

- One of the committees is being headed by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and the other by Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba.
- The Group of Ministers Committees headed by Rajnath Singh will consider the recommendations of the high-level committee of the Secretaries, headed by Rajiv Gauba.
302. For the first time in five years, the Stanley reservoir at Mettur in Tamil Nadu also reached its full reservoir level (FRL) of 120 ft.
   - Kallanai Dam is also known as the Grand Anicut, is the first dam across Kaveri River in Tamil Nadu.
   - Other Dams in Tamil Nadu - Aliyar Dam, Amaravathi Dam, Mettur Dam.

303. The first meeting of the India-Bangladesh Joint Committee on Border Haats was held in Agartala, Tripura.

304. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik released the first tribal atlas of Odisha consisting of a set of maps and statistics highlighting the tribal demography of Odisha.
   - The atlas has been developed using the data of Census 2011 and other relevant statistics.
   - This atlas is said to be the first of its kind in India.

305. A special unit of the Odisha Police has launched a drive to curb an international syndicate that smuggles endangered Pangolin, which is one of the world's most illegally traded mammals.

306. Under the Sukanya Samriddhi Yojana, the government has cut the minimum annual deposit requirement for accounts to Rs 250 from Rs 1,000 earlier.
   - It will enable more number of people to take advantage of the girl child savings scheme.
   - Sukanya Samriddhi scheme was launched in 2015.
   - Till November 2017, more than 1.26 crore accounts were opened across the country securing an amount of Rs 19,183 crore.
• Under the scheme, a parent or legal guardian can open an account in the name of the girl child until she attains the age of 10 years.

307. The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur has created an online tool named TreadWill, to help people overcome issues related to mental health.
  • TreadWill is based on cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) which helps people with depressive symptoms.

308. The Union government’s decision to scrap the Goods and Services Tax (GST) on sanitary napkins is unlikely to result in a proportionate reduction in costs.
  • While imports would benefit from zero GST on the product, domestic manufacturers would suffer a huge disadvantage vis-à-vis imports as it would result in the complete denial of input tax credit, leading to an increase in the procurement cost.

309. Iran was the second-biggest oil supplier to Indian state refiners between April and June, replacing Saudi Arabia as companies took advantage of steeper discounts offered by Tehran.
  • India, Iran’s top oil client after China, shipped in 5.67 million tonnes or about 4,57,000 barrels per day (bpd), of oil, from the country in the first three months of this fiscal year.

310. India in 2018 has fallen out of the top 10 destinations for FDI in terms of its attractiveness, and ranks 11 in 2018, down from 8 in 2017 and 9 in 2016, according to an AT Kearney FDI Confidence Index by AT Kearney report.

311. According to the “World Investment Report for 2018”, issued by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Indian FDI in Africa in 2016-17 at $14 billion was even lower than it was in 2011-12 at $16 billion.
312. Karnataka registered the biggest increase in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) last year, as inflows from overseas jumped 300% in the 12 months ended March 2018, while Gujarat, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh all saw a drop in FDI inflows, data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) presented in Parliament show.

- While Karnataka received $8.58 billion in 2017/18, a sharp increase from the $2.13 billion in the previous fiscal, Tamil Nadu netted $3.47 billion, a 56% increase from the $2.22 billion in the prior period.

- FDI inflows into Gujarat fell almost 38% to $2.09 billion in 2017-18, from $3.37 billion.

- Andhra Pradesh saw FDI inflows drop 43% to $1.25 billion in 2017/18.
313. **National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill passed**

- Lok Sabha has passed National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2017 to provide post-facto approval to those approved institutions which are funded by Centre or states, but do not have recognition.
- The Bill amends **National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) Act, 1993**.
- The Bill seeks to grant retrospective recognition to institutions that have been notified by central government, funded by Central Government or State/UT government and but do not have recognition under the parent Act.
- The Bill grants retrospective permission these institutions to start new course or training in teacher education to institutions.

314. **10th BRICS Summit** will be held in **Johannesburg** from 25 to 27 July.

- The theme of the summit this year is 'BRICS in Africa: collaboration for inclusive growth and shared prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution'.

315. **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0**

- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan is flagship programme of Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) that aims to enrich Rural India.
• The second edition (Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0) was launched in April, 2018.
• The scheme aims to link higher education institutions with set of at least five villages, so that they can contribute to economic and social betterment of these village communities using their knowledge base.
• Under this scheme, higher education institutions will participate in development activities, particularly in rural areas.

316. Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018 passed

• It proposes a 'shield' for government staff, including those retired, from prosecution by making it mandatory for investigating agencies like the CBI to take prior approval from competent authority before conducting any enquiry against them.
• The bill also has a provision to punish bribe-givers, who are not covered in any of the domestic anti-corruption legislation.
• The updated Section 7 defines a corrupt public official as any public servant who tries to obtain or accept from any person an “undue advantage with the intention to perform or cause performance of public duty improperly or dishonestly.”
• This also includes receiving an undue advantage as a “reward” for improper or dishonest work.
317. India’s ministries of finance and power are discussing a plan to sell government’s stake in hydro-power producer National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC) Ltd. to its state-run peer National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) Ltd., the nation’s biggest electricity generator by capacity.

- The government’s 73.67 per cent stake in NHPC is worth about Rs 182 billion ($2.6 billion) as per current prices.
- The sale will boost NTPC’s green portfolio as it makes a gradual shift away from fossil fuels.

318. To mark World Day against Trafficking in Persons on July 30, The Ministry of Women and Child Development launched a contest named – “#Childline1098”.

- To invite people to share images of the Childline 1098 logo that they can spot and send it with a tagline.
- This is a part of the steps taken to address trafficking and sexual abuse of children.
- CHILDLINE is India’s first 24-hour, free, emergency phone service for children in need of aid and assistance. The number is ‘1098’.  

319. Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik set up ministerial committee headed by Finance Minister Sashi Bhusan Behera to draft policies for development of Odia film industry, known as Ollywood.

- It would suggest the steps to be taken to revive the film industry and also for renovation of the Kalinga Studio, located on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar.

320. A Scheme named ‘Safeguarding the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Diverse Cultural Traditions of India’ is implemented by the Ministry of Culture.

- The Scheme is implemented through: Sangeet Natak Akademi
- Objective of the scheme: reinvigorating and revitalizing several institutions, groups, individuals, identified non-MoC institutions, non-government organisations, researchers and scholars in order to help them involve in activities
or projects for strengthening, protecting, preserving and promoting the rich intangible cultural heritage of India.

321. **Golden-hued tea** became Assam’s most expensive tea variety when it fetched ₹39,001 per kg at the Guwahati Tea Auction Centre (GTAC).

322. **Byju’s**, India’s largest educational technology company, has acquired **Math Adventures** for an undisclosed sum.

323. **Azim Premji**, chairman of India’s third-largest software services exporter Wipro, said developed nations, including the U.S., were responding to the **Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS)** project with barriers to free trade triggering a trade war that is detrimental to India.
   - The BEPS refers to corporate tax planning strategies used by multinational companies that artificially shift profits from higher tax locations to lower ones, eroding the tax base of the higher tax locations.

324. **Insurance regulator IRDAI** has constituted a 16-member committee to examine motor third party insurance pricing aspects and make recommendations on the premium rates for 2019-20.
   - This is for the first time the **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India** has formed such a committee.
   - **P.J. Joseph** has been appointed as the **Chairman** of this committee.

325. Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** presented **200 cows** to poor villagers in **Rwanda** to support President **Paul Kagame’s** ambitious initiative for poverty reduction and tackling childhood malnutrition.
   - The **Girinka** (meaning ‘May you have a cow’) programme started in 2006 to provide one cow to every poor family for their nutritional and financial security.
   - Mr. Modi gifted the cows to poor families at **Rweru Model Village**.
326. **Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik launches Green Mahanadi Mission**

- A total of *two crore saplings* will be planted on the banks of the Mahanadi, Tel and Ib rivers under the Green Mahanadi Mission.

327. As Punjab struggles to check the *menace of drugs*, the State government has asked the Centre to grant it special category status under the Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Mission.

328. **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) are the most widely chosen domains for reskilling**, followed by Big Data and Data Science, said Simplilearn Career Impact Survey 2018.

329. **Lokpal Selection Committee**, headed by the Prime Minister, was scheduled to meet to set up a search panel for recommending a *panel of names* for the *appointment* of the anti-graft ombudsman and its members.

330. **Andhra Pradesh launched ‘e-Pragati core platform’ at Undavalli.**

- e-Pragati, a forward-looking digital initiative, is aimed at connecting the citizen to 34 departments, 336 autonomous organisations and 745-plus services.
- Through this project, the State government intends to realise the vision of ‘Sunrise AP 2022’.

331. The e-Pragati authority will achieve the goals of the project by supporting the seven development missions launched in the areas of e-Governance, Social Empowerment, Skill Development, Urban Development, Infrastructure, Industrial Development and the Services sector.

332. **Jyoti Structures Ltd**, being the first among the *12 large corporate defaulters* identified for insolvency resolution under a new law, *head for liquidation* after a bankruptcy court rejected the resolution plan submitted by a group of wealthy investors.

- *Jyoti Structures* is the first firm on RBI list of 12 NPAs referred to NCLT that has been directed to go for liquidation.
• On 4 July 2017, NCLT admitted the insolvency petition filed by SBI.
• The deadline of 270 days got over on 31 March 2018.
• Only one bid was received from a group of investors led by Sharad Sanghi of Netmagic.
• The company owes around ₹7,625 crore to its lender.
• The National Company Law Tribunal or NCLT is a quasi-judiciary body established in India, that makes a formal judgment on a disputed matter, relating to the companies issues in India. It was set up to govern the companies registered in India. It is a successor to the Company Law Board.

Deaths from heart-related disease among rural Indians have surpassed those among urban Indians, according to a forthcoming study in The Lancet.

• The study, which provides the first-of-its-kind nationally representative estimates of cardiovascular mortality in India, shows that heart ailments caused more than 2.1 million deaths in India in 2015 at all ages, or more than a quarter of all deaths.
• At ages 30-69 years, of 1.3 million cardiovascular deaths, 0.9 million (68.4%) were caused by coronary heart disease and 0.4 million (28.0%) by stroke.
• The study is part of the Million Death Study project set up by the Registrar General of India (RGI) in collaboration with global health experts to investigate the causes of deaths in India using nationally representative survey data.
• Between 2000 and 2015, the age-standardized rate of mortality (per 100,000 person years) due to coronary heart diseases increased among rural men by over 40% even as it declined among urban men.
• For females, the increase was over 56% in rural India.
• While coronary heart disease-related deaths have increased in relatively prosperous states such as Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Punjab and Haryana, stroke-related deaths have increased in the relatively poorer states of the Northeast, West Bengal, and Chhattisgarh.
• A comparison with 2015-16 data on obesity sourced from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) shows that there is an inverse relation between obesity and stroke-related deaths across states among both men and women.

• A 2016 WHO report showed that 58% of doctors in urban areas had a medical degree, while only 19% of those in rural areas had such a qualification.

334. Digital thermometers and Blood Pressure (BP) monitoring equipment, will soon come with quality assurance certificates from the government.

• India’s highest drug advisory body, the Drug Technical Advisory Body (DTAB) approved the proposal to include mercury-free thermometers and BP monitoring equipment under the purview of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

335. Chief Minister of Delhi Mr. Arvind Kejriwal launched the ‘Mukhyantri Mantri Kisan Aaye Badhotri Solar Yojna’.
• It aims to increase the income of farmers by **three to five times** in the national capital.
• Without affecting the agricultural activity maximum one-third of the land would be used for installation of solar panels.

336. **Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje** said that, ‘**Bijli Mitra**’ Mobile app is launched on a pilot basis from Jhalawara, Rajasthan, to help farmers to get their **defunct transformers** replaced within **6 hours of registering** a complaint through the app.

337. The **Tamil Nadu government** has rolled out the draft state **Forest Policy** aimed at preserving forests and wildlife, conservation of ecosystems, and climate change mitigation among others in the state.
   • According to the **Vision Tamil Nadu 2023** document released by former **Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa in 2014**, preserving the ecology was one of the themes of the document which aims at increasing forest cover, protection of wetlands and other waterbodies in the state.
   • **Tamil Nadu** has about **30.92 per cent** of the forest declared as '**protected areas**' and has **15 wildlife sanctuaries, five National parks, 15 bird sanctuaries, three biosphere reserves, four project tiger areas**.

338. **Formal employment**, as measured by the number of subscribers in the **Employees’ Provident Fund (EPFO), Employees’ State Insurance Scheme (ESIC), and the National Pension Scheme (NPS)**, witnessed **double-digit growth** in **May 2018**, according to official payroll data released by the **Ministry of Statistics**.
   • **EPFO** – The Employees’ Provident Fund (EPF) is a savings tool for the workforce. It is a scheme managed under the Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, by the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO).
     i. Under the EPF scheme, an **employee** has to pay a certain percentage from his pay and an **equal amount is contributed by the employer**
ii. The employee gets a lump sum amount (which includes his own and employer's contributions) with interest upon retirement or two months after switching jobs.

- **ESIC** – is a self-financing social security and health insurance scheme for Indian workers.
  i. This fund is managed by the **Employees' State Insurance Corporation** (ESIC) according to rules and regulations stipulated there in the ESI Act 1948.

- **NPS - National Pension Scheme (NPS)**, a government-sponsored pension scheme, was launched in January 2004 for government employees.
  i. A subscriber can contribute regularly in a pension account during her working life, withdraw a part of the corpus in a lumpsum and use the remaining corpus to buy an annuity to secure a regular income after retirement.

339. The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** has proposed allowing investors to use the **Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** while **bidding for shares** in an **Initial Public Offer** (IPO) to reduce the public issue timeline from the current **T+6 to T+3**.

- **T+3** refers to a system wherein the equity shares would be listed on the **bourses** on the **third day** from the **day the IPO closes** for **subscription**.

340. Sumitra Mahajan received **five privilege notices against the Prime Minister** and **five against the Defence Minister** from members of Opposition parties for allegedly misleading the House on the **Rafale deal** during the debate on the motion of no-confidence against the Modi government.

- **Parliamentary privileges** are certain rights and immunities enjoyed by members of Parliament, individually and collectively, so that they can “effectively discharge their functions”.

- **When any of these rights and immunities are disregarded, the offence is called a breach of privilege and is punishable under law of Parliament.**
• The rules however mandate that any notice should be relating to an incident of recent occurrence and should need the intervention of the House.
• The Speaker/RS chairperson is the first level of scrutiny of a privilege motion. The Speaker/Chair can decide on the privilege motion himself or herself or refer it to the privileges committee of Parliament.

341. The West Bengal government proposed to build crematoria for animals to prevent disposal of dead bodies in Ganga and other waterbodies.
• Disposal of dead bodies of animals is one of the reasons for pollution in Ganga.
• The work on 15 ghats and four crematoria are under progress and officials were instructed to complete it by December 2018.

342. VVPAT (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trial) machines
• The machines will be used during the elections to ensure that the vote polled by a voter goes to the intended candidate.

343. The machines print a slip containing the name of the candidate and the election symbol so that voters can verify their votes.

344. “#InnovateIndia Platform”, a collaboration between the Atal Innovation Mission and MyGov was launched by NITI Aayog.
• The purpose is to create and encourage a structured ecosystem for innovation in India.
• It is a citizen centric platform of the Government of India to access the innovation in the country.
• In this platform, registration of both grassroots and deep-tech innovators at a national level will happen.

345. The National Green Tribunal formed a Monitoring Committee for Yamuna Rejuvenation Project.
• A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the committee, comprising former Delhi Chief Secretary Shailaja Chandra and
retired NGT expert member Bikram Singh Sajwan, to submit a report by December.

- The green panel also directed the Haryana and Uttar Pradesh governments to assist the committee on the project.

346. Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik inaugurated the Rs 300 crore Rukura Medium Irrigation Dam project in Sundargarh district.

347. Karnataka has become the leading State for renewable energy in India, surpassing Tamil Nadu, according to the report “Karnataka’s Electricity Sector Transformation” released by the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis (IEEFA).

- Karnataka reached 12.3 gigawatts (GW) of total installed capacity in March 2018.


- The long-term athletic development programme launched in 2018-19 aims to achieve medals in Olympic games in a span of ten years.
- The projection is simple - “Andhra Pradesh to become No.1 in the country in athletics by 2021, bag medals in Asian and Commonwealth games in 2022, compete in the Olympics in 2024 and secure medals in the year 2028.
- This is a part of the government’s new sports policy for the period 2017-22, drafted with an aim to groom talented sportspersons who can compete at national and International levels and bring laurels to the nation and State in particular.

349. Billionaire Kumar Mangalam Birla’s Hindalco Industries Ltd has agreed to buy US aluminium sheet maker Aleris Corp. at an enterprise value of $2.58 billion to create the world’s second-largest aluminium maker.
350. Infrastructure company **Cube Highways** has initiated talks with **IL&FS Transportation Networks Ltd (ITNL)** to acquire the their **9.2km Chenani-Nashri road tunnel** project in Jammu & Kashmir.

- The tunnel on the Jammu-Srinagar highway links **Chenani in Udhampur district** with **Nashri in Ramban district**, reducing travel distance from **41km to 10.9km**.
- It is the longest road tunnel in India, **which was opened in April 2017**.

351. The **Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC)** is all set to launch **India’s first public sector hotel** run entirely by **women for women** in the state’s capital city, **Thiruvananthapuram**.

- The hotel, named ‘**Hostess’**, will come up at the KTDC complex.
- The all-woman hotel is **the first such initiative from a government institution in the country**.
- The hotel will mainly target women officials, researchers, sportspersons, teenage girls, business women and pilgrim groups, who arrive in the city for a short stay.
- The **staff at the hotel will also be all women** starting right from the bottom rung to the managerial position.

352. The focus of the **GST council’s** meet to be held on **August 4** would discuss both the **direct and indirect tax issues facing MSMEs**.

- According to the data available with the **MSME ministry**, there are over **63 million MSMEs** in the country engaged in manufacturing, services and trade, more than half of which are in rural areas.
- These enterprises account for about **110 million jobs** and contribute about **29% of the country’s economic output**.

353. **Department of Telecommunications (DoT)** gave its **final approval** to a proposed merger of **Vodafone India and Idea Cellular**.

- The new merged entity **“Vodafone Idea Ltd”** will overtake Bharti Airtel as **India’s largest mobile phone operator**.
354. Automakers in India are bracing for policy uncertainties over when to stop the manufacturing and sales of vehicles that meet **Bharat Stage VI** emission norms.

- India has followed the **Bharat Stage IV** norms since April 2017, and is scheduled to switch to **Bharat Stage VI in April 2020**.
- Automakers would receive **three months** beyond **April 2020**, to clear their vehicle inventory.
- **Bharat Stage VI (BS VI)** is an emission standard that will bring much-needed changes in the Indian automobile industry in terms of pollutant emissions.
- With this emission norm coming into effect, India will come at par with the US, European countries and other advanced automotive markets across the globe.
- **Delhi** became the **first city** in the country to implement the highest emission standards **Bharat Stage VI** for its vehicles.

355. In what is set to be the **longest total lunar eclipse of the century**, the full moon is all set to pass through the earth’s shadow on **July 27, 2018** will last for **1 hour 43 minutes**.

- The earlier long duration total lunar eclipse had occurred on **15 June 2011**, which lasted for **1 hour 40 minutes**.

356. Companies in India are side-stepping the **anti-dumping measures** imposed by the government by deliberately misclassifying items imported from China, according to a report tabled by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce.

- The **anti-dumping framework** also suffers with **lax implementation**.
- This **mis-declaration** while importing the goods which otherwise have been put under **anti-dumping measures** nullify the whole effort to protect the domestic industry from unfair trade practices.
- The Standing Committee named the **steel industry** as one of the **major offenders** in this regard.
- There have been complaints from the domestic steel industry that Chinese **non-alloy steel** is being imported by being **declared as alloy steel**.
The committee noted that though nearly 75-80% of Chinese steel imports are covered under the anti-dumping duty, the import of such steel products have increased 8%.

357. **India** has been designated as a **nodal centre** for preparing flash-flood forecasts by the **World Meteorological Organization** (WMO).

- India will have to develop a customised model that can issue advance warning of floods in **Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand**.
- Using a combination of satellite mapping and ground-based observation, this system — called the **Flash Flood Guidance System** — aims to provide forecasts six hours in advance.
- The **Central Water Commission**, which monitors India’s dams, warns of rising water levels in the reservoirs, which are usually taken to be signs of imminent floods.

358. **Union Minister of Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar** said on that the **Turnitin software** to detect **plagiarism** in research, would be provided to all universities free of cost.

- **Plagiarism** - the practice of taking someone else’s work or ideas and passing them off as one’s own.

359. **Minister of State for Communications** announced that all villages adopted by the **Member of Parliament under ‘Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana’** would get free Wi-Fi services.

- Setting up of **25000 WiFi** hotspots at existing rural exchanges of BSNL will be done.
- **Under Bharat Net Project**, government has targeted to link each of the **2.5 lakh** gram panchayats of India through optical fibre network.

360. The **West Bengal** legislative assembly passed amendments to the state’s **Lokayukta Act** to **exempt the Chief Minister** from being answerable to the **anti-corruption ombudsman** for any “public order”.
• All departments come under the Act, so it applies to the Chief Minister as well, except for “public orders” such as appointments of police officers and bureaucrats.
• Earlier this month, Tamil Nadu passed its own Lokayukta Act.
• In Maharashtra, only the chief minister has immunity under the local Lokayukta Act.
• Maharashtra was the first state to introduce the institution of Lokayukta through The Lokayukta and Upa-Lokayuktas Act in 1971.
• The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi government in 2015 passed the Janlokpal Bill which provides for an ombudsman with powers to act against any government functionary including the chief minister. However, the bill is still pending for approval.

361. Haryana’s Department of Social Justice and Empowerment announced that a special campaign to control the menace of drugs will be launched.
• This will be targeted especially in the districts bordering Punjab.

362. Uttar Pradesh government has constituted a committee to listen to the demands of ‘shiksha mitras’ and suggest a suitable action plan.
• This move has been made after continuous protests by ‘shiksha mitras’ throughout Uttar Pradesh.
• The committee head is: Deputy Chief Minister Dinesh Sharma.

363. The Lok Sabha passed the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill 2018.
• An initial corpus of 10 crore rupees will be created for the first time.
• Under this bill, a National Anti-Trafficking Bureau would be established to investigate trafficking cases.
• 10 years to lifetime imprisonment for buying and selling of humans for forced labour, child bearing and if the victim acquires life threatening diseases like AIDS.
• It would provide setting up of Anti-Trafficking Units (ATUs) at the district level.

364. Government of India has approved a new scheme to empower rural women through community participation – called ‘Mahila Shakti Kendra’ for 2017-18 up to 2019-20.

• The objective is to bring transparency and ethics in the work culture and among all railway employees.
• It would train every employee to understand the need and value of ethics in Personal and Public life.

366. Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced a first-of-its-kind legislation- the Assam Employees PRANAM Act would be implemented in the state from October 02, the day of Gandhi Jayanti celebration in 2018.
• Making it mandatory for state government employees to look after their aged and dependent parents and physically challenged siblings who do not have a source of income.
• Assam Employees Parents Responsibility and Norms for Accountability and Monitoring (PRANAM) Bill, 2017.
• The Act will deduct 10% of an employee’s pay and transfer it to the account of the relatives concerned.
• Another 5% would be deductible if the employee has a differently abled sibling.


368. Personal Data Protection Bill 2018
• The report focuses on 3 aspects: citizens, the state and the industry.
• The draft Personal Data Protection Bill 2018 was submitted by the Justice B.N. Srikrishna-headed expert panel.
• The draft bill submitted by the committee notes that “the right to privacy is a fundamental right and it is necessary to protect personal data as an essential facet of informational privacy.

• The bill notes that that ‘data principal’ which means the individual or the person providing their data, has a right to “right to restrict or prevent continuing disclosure.” But the bill does not allow for a right of total erasure like the European Union does.

• Only that data which is necessary for processing is to be collected from anyone.

• Personal data may be processed by the government if this is considered necessary for any function of Parliament or State Legislature. This includes provision of services, issuing of licenses, etc.

• Personal data will need to be stored on servers located within India, and transfers outside the country will need to be subject to safeguards. Critical personal data, however, will only be processed in India.

369. In an attempt to resolve the issue of stressed power projects, the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has set up an empowered committee headed by cabinet secretary P.K. Sinha, who was earlier India’s power secretary.

• This comes in the backdrop of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) in power generation accounting for around 5.9% of the banking sector’s total outstanding advances of ₹ 4.73 trillion, according to the second volume of the Economic Survey 2016-17.

• The government’s plan to warehouse stressed power projects totalling 25,000MW under an Asset Management Firm to protect the value of the assets
and prevent their distress sale under the insolvency and bankruptcy code till
demand for power picks up.

- State-run Rural Electrification Corp. Ltd has identified projects with a total debt
  of around ₹1.8 trillion as part of the scheme, named Power Asset Revival
  through Warehousing and Rehabilitation, or ‘Pariwartan’.

370. A FASTag is a reloadable tag that automatically deducts toll charges and allows a
vehicle to pass through a toll gate without stopping for the payment.

- It uses Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) technology to make cashless
  payments through a prepaid account linked to it.
- The tag is fixed to the windscreen of a vehicle and an RFID antenna in the
  canopy of the toll gate scans the QR code and the tag identification number,
  following which the boom barrier lifts to allow a vehicle to pass through.
- The tag is valid for five years, comes in seven different colours — violet, orange,
  yellow, green, pink, blue, black.
- Each colour is assigned to a particular category of vehicles.
- It is mandatory for cars and trucks sold after December 1, 2017 to be fitted with
  a FASTag.
- The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has tied up with 20 banks to
  allow people to recharge their cards as well as for owners of old vehicles to
  purchase a FASTag.
- On an average a buyer pays ₹600 for the device out of which ₹200 can be used
  for transactions at toll booth while the balance goes towards the cost of the
  device and the bank’s fee.
- Users are refunded 5% of the total toll paid by them in a given month.
- However, the RFID antennae deployed have a range of six metres, which means
  a vehicle needs to slow down for it to scan the tag.

371. The Centre has decided to set up a Domestic Council for Gold to aid exports of
jewellery and to create an ecosystem to harness the true potential for jewellery-making
in the country.
The council would work towards industry development, job creation, building of regional clusters and strengthening of value chains

India is in talks with the U.S. to procure an advanced air defence system - National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System-II (NASAMS-II), estimated at $1 billion, to defend the National Capital Region (NCR) from aerial attacks.

- This system will help in preventing 9/11-type attacks [when terrorists flew hijacked planes into New York’s World Trade Center] on Delhi.
- Apart from these imports, India is also developing an indigenous Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system.
- The NASAMS was developed by Raytheon in partnership with KONGSBERG Defence and Aerospace of Norway.
- NASAMS-II is an upgraded version of the NASAMS and features new 3D mobile surveillance radars and 12 missile launchers for quicker reaction.
- It is highly adaptable mid-range solution for any operational air defence requirement.

Having worked on the DigiYatra project for over a year, the Ministry of Civil Aviation is close to rolling out this service at airports in a few months.

- Under this the moment you enter the airport, your images will be captured and then you will be able to go through the full lifecycle of your travel in a seamless manner.
• The **basic objective** is to reduce queues at airports and bring efficiency to the boarding process.

• **DigiYatra** is an industry-led initiative coordinated by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, in line with the Digital India programme.

• In addition, the ministry is also in the process of coming up with an approach to have a **no-fly list based on safety**.

374. The Kerala Police will soon have an **all-woman battalion**.

375. The district administration is making preparations to open the **Idukki dam** following an unprecedented rise in the water level.

  • The Idukki Dam is a double curvature arch dam constructed across the **Periyar River** in Kerala.

376. The **Union Earth Sciences Ministry** — tasked with coordinating the exercise — unveiled a blueprint of the ‘**Deep Ocean Mission (DOM)’** to spur research activities in ocean science and develop technology to harness ocean resources.

  • Offshore desalination plant that will work with **tidal energy**, and developing a submersible vehicle that can go to a depth of at least 6,000 metres with three people on board.

  • The mission proposes to explore the deep ocean similar to the space exploration started by **ISRO** about 35 years ago.

  • India has been allotted a site of 75,000 square kilometres in the **Central Indian Ocean Basin (CIOB)** by the **UN International Sea Bed Authority** for exploitation of **Polymetallic Nodules (PMN)**.

377. The Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship **Shri Dharmendra Pradhan**, laid the foundation stone of **National Skill Training Institute (NSTI)** for Women at Mohali, Punjab.

  • This is the first NSTI Institute for Punjab and is exclusively for women.
• The Minister also launched a unique Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra (PMKK) which would admit differently abled persons as well, also a first of its kind in India at Mohali.
• The Institute is presently operating out of temporary campus at Rajpura.
• India’s first in-phone guide and mobile application “Go what’s That” was also launched.

378. The Union Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) launched a mobile application named Mumbai Weather Live that will provide information on extreme weather events in Mumbai.
  • It also launched forecasts for Char Dham and Amarnath pilgrims that can be accessed by registered users of through website of IMD or MapmyIndia.

379. Odisha government approved a proposal for setting up a riverine port on river Mahanadi in Kendrapara district, Odisha.

380. India’s Ashok Leyland will deliver 81 high mobility 10x10 vehicles for the Indian Army’s Russian-built Smerch Multi-Barrel Rocket launchers (MBRL) as well to carry strategic missiles developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).

381. The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is considering a new policy to revamp the entire toll system to improve commuter experience.
  • It has hired Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to prepare a blueprint and suggest the best electronic toll systems for the country and the required infrastructure.
  • NHAI is experimenting with several toll techniques, including closed toll, a GPS-based system, wherein a commuter pays toll based on the distance travelled, and FASTag, an electronic system, which deducts toll fees automatically from a user account.
382. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has decided to restrict use of toluene, titanium acetylacetonate and phthalates in printing of packaging materials used for food products.
   - The above mentioned materials will be included in the existing exclusion list in the current standard (IS 15495).
   - Toluene, which is a chemical that is used in paint thinners, is known to migrate between layers of packaging and potentially cause damage to liver and kidneys in humans.
   - Phthalates are binding agents frequently used in food packaging as well as a number of other products including flooring, adhesives soaps and shampoos.

383. The Tax department put up in public domain draft GST returns forms -- Sahaj and Sugam -- for seeking comments from stakeholders.
   - The new tax return forms are likely to be notified for use starting 1 January 2019, though there may be a trial period in December.
   - Taxpayers will have to file a single return form monthly, which will be due for every month on the 20th of the next month.
   - Invoices uploaded by the supplier by 10th of the next month will be auto-populated in the return of the supplier. This can also be viewed by the buyer.
   - However, in case an invoice has been uploaded but the return has not been filed, it will be treated as self-admitted liability by the supplier and proceedings will be initiated against him.
   - Sahaj - for salaried people and Sugam - for small businessmen and professionals,
Draft e-Commerce Policy

- To regulate e-commerce industry in India, the government is planning to set up a single regulator to look after issues related to the sector.
- The draft mentions that bulk purchases of branded goods like mobile phones, white goods, fashion items "by related party sellers which lead to price distortions in a marketplace" will be prohibited.
- The policy also suggests Indian-owned and Indian-controlled online marketplaces be allowed to hold inventory as long as products are 100% domestically produced.
- It defines an Indian ecommerce firm as that where foreign investment doesn’t exceed 49%, where the founder/promoter is a resident Indian, and the platform company is controlled by Indian management.
- However, the government has so far not permitted any FDI in inventory-based models.
- Both the draft e-commerce policy and the Srikrishna panel have suggested that the government would have access to data stored in India for national security and public policy objectives subject to rules related to privacy, and consent.
- To encourage micro, small and medium enterprises, the draft e-commerce policy recommends allowing them to follow inventory-based models for selling locally produced goods through an online platform.
385. The Prime Minister laid the foundation of India’s **first Mobile Open Exchange Zone (MOX)** at World Trade Centre, Noida.
   - This is a part of an MoU with World Trade Center, Noida, to develop a ‘tech zone’.

386. Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Radha Mohan Singh launched the **Rs. 215 crore Meghalaya Milk Mission** in Shillong through National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).
   - In assisting to achieve Centre’s goal of doubling farmer’s income by 2022 through promotion of milk business.

387. **Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF)** has been taken away from the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways** and brought under the domain of the **Finance Ministry**.
   - It will now be under the **Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)**, Finance Ministry.

388. **Prabhat Koli** became the first Asian to swim the choppy water from **Jersey** (an Island in the UK) to **France** in cold weather.

389. **Swelect Energy Systems Ltd.** has partnered with **U.S.-based Zero Mass Water** to unveil **‘Source,’ a hydro (solar) panel** to provide pure drinking water using sunlight and air.
   - Water vapour from air is drawn into Source through fans, following which special materials absorb the water.
   - The vapour is collected as the air flow passes through a condenser, then flows into a reservoir where it is mineralised with calcium and magnesium.
   - Water is pumped through a polishing cartridge before being delivered to a dispenser.
390. The Lok Sabha passed the **Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018**, to provide the death sentence for rape of girls **aged under 12** and enhance the **minimum punishment for rape** of a woman from **seven years to 10**.

- The Bill, once passed by the Rajya Sabha, will replace the **Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance** promulgated in April 2018.
- The minimum punishment for the rape of a **girl under 12** will be **20 years of rigorous imprisonment**, the maximum being the death sentence or life imprisonment.
- Earlier, the punishment was rigorous imprisonment ranging from **10 years to life imprisonment**.
- The minimum punishment under the Bill for the rape of a girl over **16 is 10 years, extendable to life (under Section 376, IPC)**.
- The minimum punishment **earlier was seven years and the maximum, life imprisonment**.
- The Bill also provides for investigation of **rape cases within two months from the registration of an FIR**.

391. The Supreme Court is seeking to scrap **None Of The Above (NOTA)** from Rajya Sabha Elections.

392. The **Defence Ministry** approved key guidelines for implementation of **Strategic Partnership Policy** under which select private firms will be roped in to build military platforms like submarines and fighter jets in India in partnership with foreign entities.

- The model has been approved by **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**, the ministry's highest decision making body.
- According to the guidelines, all procurements under the SP Model would be executed by specially constituted **Empowered Project Committees (EPC)** to provide focussed attention and ensure timely execution.
• The SP model has four segments — submarines, single engine fighter aircraft, helicopters and armoured carriers/main battle tanks.

• In another decision, the DAC gave approval for the acquisition of eight Fast Patrol Vessels (FPV) for the Coast Guard at an approximate cost of ₹800 crore.

393. Eight women farmers have been selected to visit the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in the Philippines to learn about new rice farming techniques, as part of an initiative by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), a Science Ministry body, to raise the profile of women farmers.

• According to the Census 2011, 55% of women workers were agricultural labourers and 24% were cultivators.

• However, only 12.8% of the operational holdings were owned by women, and 25% this land belonged to the “marginal and small holdings categories.

394. Brindavan Gardens - The Brindavan Gardens is a garden located in the Mandya District of the state of Karnataka, India.

• It lies adjoining the Krishnarajasagara dam which is built across the river Kaveri.

395. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) raised the issue of reservation for the Kapu community in Andhra Pradesh.

• Kapu refers to a social grouping of agriculturists found primarily in the southern Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

396. With the water level in the Idukki reservoir touching 2,395 feet, just nine feet short of the full level, an orange alert was issued by the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority.

• Red alert’ will be issued if the water level inches closer to 2,400 ft.

397. The Goa government is lobbying with Centre to accord special status to Goa on lines of Mizoram, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh under Article 371 or any other provision of the Constitution of India.
• **Article 371**: Special provision with respect to the States of **Maharashtra** and **Gujarat**

• **Article 371A**: Special provision with respect to the State of **Nagaland**

• **Article 371B**: Special provision with respect to the State of **Assam**

• **Article 371C**: Special provision with respect to the State of **Manipur**

• **Article 371D**: Special provision with respect to the State of **Andhra Pradesh**

• **Article 371E**: Establishment of central university in **Andhra Pradesh**

• **Article 371F**: Special provision with respect to the State of **Sikkim**

• **Article 371G**: Special provision with respect to the State of **Mizoram**

• **Article 371H**: Special provision with respect to the State of **Arunachal Pradesh**

• **Article 371I**: Special provision with respect to the State of **Goa**

• **Article 371J**: Special provision with respect to the State of **Karnataka**

398. The *pink bollworm* has again attacked cotton plants in **Maharashtra** this year, causing concern among farmers and the government.

• *Pink bollworm* is an insect which chews through the cotton lint to feed on the seeds. Since cotton is used for both fibre and seed oil, the damage is two-fold.
INTERNATIONAL NEWS

1. **International Arbitration Centre in Tokyo (IACT)**, Asia’s first arbitration centre specialised in intellectual property, would be opened in Tokyo in **September 2018**, to resolve the increasing number of disputes in the region.
   - Technological progress and diversification of applications have increased the number of patent infringement disputes.

2. Indian actress **Sonakshi Sinha** has joined hands with **UNESCO** to promote a safe and secure cyber environment for youngsters.

3. The **US State Department** categorised **North Korea** as one of the “**worst human trafficking nation**” for the **16th** straight year, citing the use of forced labour in its ‘**2018 Trafficking in Persons Report**’.
   - North Korea has been included in the Tier 3 category, which is the lowest ranking, along with **China, Russia and Iran**.
   - **South Korea** has been ranked at the **highest category**, that is, in the list of **Tier 1** countries for the 16th consecutive year, along with **US, UK, France and Canada**.
   - **India** was placed in **Tier 2** category for making significant effort to comply with the US standards.
   - The tiers are mandated by **The Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000** of the **US**.
     - **Tier 1**: for countries that meet minimum US standards.
     - **Tier 2**: for those making significant efforts to meet minimum US standards.
     - **Tier 2 Watch-list**: for those requiring special scrutiny.
     - **Tier 3**: for countries that fail to fully comply with the minimum US standards.

4. **China**’s internet giant **Baidu** announced that it had begun mass producing the country’s first **Autonomous Mini-Bus**.

5. **US President Donald Trump** is preparing to **slap tariffs** on **$34 billion of Chinese goods**, the *first* shot in a trade war between the world’s two biggest economies.
• If China’s exports drop **10%**, Taiwan, Malaysia and South Korea would suffer a larger blow to growth than China.

• **$20 bn of the $34 bn in goods** to be hit with US tariffs are produced by foreign firms, including from the US.

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6. **MORI Building Digital Art Museum** in Tokyo, Japan, has become the world’s first All-Digital museum.
   - In this museum light and space is the art.
   - There are no guide maps, no descriptions, and no signs warning viewers to not touch the art work.
   - Visitors walk through darkness and empty rooms. There are nearly 50 kaleidoscopic installations that are triggered by motion sensors and projected across every surface of the museum.

7. The **UN member states** approved a **USD 6.69 billion** dollar budget for 13 peacekeeping operations from **July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019** and implementation of other reforms for the first time in more than **40 years**.
   - This decision was taken on the recommendation of the 5th Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) of the General Assembly.
   - The missions include MINUJUSTH (United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti), MINURSO (Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara), MINUSCA (Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African...
Republic), MONUSCO (Stabilisation Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) and UNIFIL (Interim Force in Lebanon).

8. The Trump administration is freezing payments under an "Obamacare" program that protects insurers with sicker patients from financial losses, a move expected to add to premium increases next year.
   - Obamacare is the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act of 2010.

9. China successfully launched two remote sensing satellites for Pakistan, marking the first international commercial launch for the Long March-2C rocket in about 19 years.
   - The satellites—PRSS-1 and PakTES-1A—were launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China.
   - The PRSS-1 is China’s first optical remote sensing satellite sold to Pakistan.

10. The PRSS-1 will be used for land and resources surveying, monitoring of natural disasters, agriculture research, urban construction and providing remote sensing information for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) of the Chinese government.

11. Facebook Inc.’s WhatsApp messaging service rolled out a new feature that would clearly mark forwarded messages in a move aimed at curbing the spread of rumours on its platform.
   - Two lakh farmers will be given electricity connection for high voltage distribution line which will ensure uninterrupted power supply.

12. Google announced Launchpad Accelerator India, a new mentorship program that has been developed exclusively for start-ups based in India, utilising Machine Learning/Al to develop solutions for India’s local needs.
   - This is a 3 month accelerator. It will offer mentorship and access to Google’s people, network and technologies, to a group of 8-10 Indian startups.

13. An Israeli non-profit group plans to land an unmanned spacecraft on the moon in February in the first landing of its kind since 2013.
   - Three countries have landed missions on the moon: the US, Russia and China.
• **Israel** hopes to be the *fourth* when it launches a spacecraft this December with an assist from a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

14. The *15 member UN Security Council* adopted **Resolution 2427** aimed at formulating a framework for protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle at the UN Headquarters in New York City.

  - The resolution strongly condemns:
    - Recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts
    - Killing and rape
    - Maiming and other forms of sexual violence and abductions.
    - Attacks against schools and hospitals
    - Denial of humanitarian access by parties to armed conflict
    - All other violations of international law committed against children in situations of armed conflict.

15. US President Donald Trump’s administration announced a package of *10% tariffs* targeting *Chinese exports worth USD 200 billion*.

16. As per World Bank report- ‘**Missed Opportunities: The High Cost of Not Educating Girls**’, not educating girls or creating barriers in their school education globally costs between $15 trillion to $30 trillion.

  - As per the report, *less than two-thirds* of girls in *low-income countries* complete primary school and only *one in three girls* completes *lower secondary school*.

  - **Statistics of India**-
    - Female labour force participation in the market is at *31.2 percent* and more than *50 million young women* in India *neither study nor work*.
    - According to the statistics released by the latest **census of 2011**, India’s female literacy rate is 65.46 percent, significantly lower than the world average of 79.7 percent.
    - While states like **Kerala** paint a rosy picture of women’s education in India with *92.07 percent female literacy*, relatively backward states such as **Bihar** with *51.5%* percent female literacy rate.
17. The European Commission cut its forecasts for the Eurozone’s economic growth this year slow to **2.1% from 2.4% last year**.
   - The top cause is the revision of trade tensions with the United States and rising oil prices which push the bloc’s inflation higher.
   - In 2019 the bloc’s growth should further slow to **2.0%**, unchanged from the previous forecast.

18. South Africa has unveiled a powerful **radio telescope**, part of an international project that scientists say will provide new details on the Milky Way and other galaxies.
   - It is known as the **64-antenna MeerKAT**, which was completed after a decade of design and construction.

19. The **first-ever 3-D, colour X-ray** on a human was done by **2 New Zealand scientists** named Phil and Anthony Butler.

20. The International journal **Ecological Engineering** published that climate change is threatening the **Nilgiri tahr**.
   - According to the study, **60%** of the population of the goat could be lost from **2030**.

21. The members of the “Wild Boars” football team (12 boys and coach) were rescued from the Tham Luang cave after entering on June 23 and getting trapped by monsoon floodwaters.

22. Pakistan Prime Minister Nasirul Mulk inaugurated the **Pakistan-China Optical Fibre Cable (OFC)** project that will be the first land-based communication link between Pakistan and China.
   - It will help in developing the telecom sector in Gilgit-Baltistan region.

23. China has planned to launch **300 low-orbit satellites** named the **Hongyan constellation** to offer worldwide communication services and the **first in the series** will be launched in 2018.

24. Google received a **record €4.3 billion ($5 billion)** antitrust fine from the **European Union**.
• It was ordered to change the way it puts search and web browser apps on Android mobile devices.

• As per EU, **Google** has used Android as a vehicle to cement the dominance of its search engine.

• EU said Google ensures that **Google Search and Chrome** are pre-installed on “practically all Android devices” sold in Europe.

• Users who find these apps on their phones are likely to stick with them and “do not download competing apps in numbers that can offset the significant commercial advantage derived on pre-installation”.

25. **Mayor of London Sadiq Khan** has said that, he has planned to make London, the world’s most walkable city in the world by launching ‘**Walking Action Plan**’.

• London’s Walking Action Plan aims to enhance health and reduce air pollution in London which houses 8.8 million people by making streets more pedestrian friendly.

• It is part of a wider “**Healthy Streets**” initiative.

27. **NASA** launched an online toolkit “**Remote Sensing Toolkit**” to help users analyse satellite data.

• It provides a simple system that quickly identifies relevant sources based on user input.

28. **Facebook** announced that it is aiming to launch, ‘**Athena**’, its own internet satellite, early in 2019.
• It would provide broadband access to unserved and underserved areas throughout the world.

29. General elections are scheduled to be held in Pakistan on 25 July 2018 to elect the members of the National Assembly and the four Provincial Assemblies of Pakistan.
• Polls have opened in Pakistan for the country's parliamentary elections that will see the second civilian-to-civilian handover of power in its history.
• Four military governments had ruled Pakistan for almost half of its existence and in its young democracy, no civilian Prime Minister has ever completed a full, five-year term in office without some sort of crisis.

30. Researchers from Harvard University’s Wyss Institute have developed an origami-inspired sampler – Rotary Actuated Dodecahedron, using folding polyhedral sides that can trap deep sea soft creatures without causing them any harm.

31. US President Donald Trump’s decision to impose sanctions on Iran and trade tariffs on imports from China and other nations has unleashed a Currency War.
• A currency war, also known as competitive devaluation, is a situation wherein countries deliberately depreciate the value of their local currencies to gain a trade advantage over others.
• This helps them make their exports attractive and spur economic growth.
• Impact on India - So far this year, the rupee has seen a depreciation of 7.2%
• A currency war is not considered to be healthy.
• It can impact weak nations as a weak currency implies higher import costs.
• It also hampers a nation’s debt repayment capabilities.
• Analysts believe in the near term, rupee may go on to depreciate and remain in the range of 68-72 a dollar.
• This could be largely led by three factors:
  ▪ rising current account deficit
  ▪ debt outflow ($6.4 billion in June 2018 quarter)
  ▪ pre-election uncertainty.
32. **China’s Toutiao**, one of the world’s most valuable start-ups, has launched a social networking app called **Helo** to take on the country’s hottest digital media start-ups such as Dailyhunt, ShareChat and Clip as well as Facebook.

33. **Helo**, which aggregates content on parenting, **showbiz, daily soaps and even farming**, has already racked up **more than 1 million downloads** since its launch last month.

34. The ministry of health of **Sierra Leone**, has confirmed that a new strain of Ebola virus named **Bombali Virus (BOMV)** has been discovered in bats in the **Bombali district of Sierra Leone**.

35. Google launched two new products ‘**Edge TPU**’ and ‘**Cloud IoT Edge**’ with an aim to help customers develop and deploy intelligent connected devices, at the Google Cloud Next ‘18 conference in San Francisco, United States.
   - ‘**Edge TPU**’: is a new hardware chip. It is very small such that four of them can fit on a U.S penny.
   - **Cloud IoT Edge** software extends Google Cloud’s data processing and machine learning capabilities to cameras, end devices, and gateways, thus making IoT applications more secure, more reliable.

36. The **3rd BRICS Film Festival** was held in **Durban, South Africa**, along with the International Durban Film Festival (DIFF).
   - The last day of the festival was celebrated as **India Country Day**.

37. **Japanese scientists** announced that the **first human trial** to treat **Parkinson’s disease** by injecting stem cells into brain.
   - The research team at Kyoto University plans to inject five million **induced Pluripotent Stem** (iPS) cells, which have the potential to develop into any cell in the body, into a patient’s brain.
   - **Parkinson’s disease** is a chronic, degenerative neurological disorder that affects the body’s motor system, often causing shaking and other difficulties in movement.
   - In 2014, **Riken**, a Japanese government-backed research institution, carried out the **world’s first surgery to implant iPS cells** to treat a patient with **Age-related**
Macular Degeneration (AMD), a common medical condition that can lead to blindness in older people.

38. In a major boost to India, the U.S. eased export controls on high-technology product sales to it by designating it as a Strategic Trade Authorisation-1 country.

- This comes after the U.S. recognised India as a “Major Defence Partner” in 2016, a designation that allows India to buy more advanced and sensitive technologies from the U.S.
- STA Tier 1 treatment will expand the scope of exports subject to the Export Administration Regulations (EAR) that can be made to India without individual licenses.
- This regulatory change will enhance the bilateral defence trade relationship and result in a greater volume of US exports to India.
- Currently, 36 countries, mostly all North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations, have this status.
BANKING AND ECONOMY

1. In April this year, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), through a circular, gave a window of three months to banks and other RBI-regulated entities to wind up existing relationships with firms or individuals dealing in cryptocurrencies.
   - The three-month window will come to an end on 5 July.
   - The government does not consider cryptocurrencies as legal tender.
   - However, cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin have not been banned altogether.
   - A committee headed by Subhash Chndra Garg was set up in December to make recommendations to regulate them.

2. The National Stock Exchange and NASDAQ have signed an agreement wherein the global bourse will deliver a customised real-time clearing, risk management and settlement technology to NSE.
   - This technology would enable all asset classes to be cleared and settled in one system.
   - Earlier, NSE’s current clearing and settlement system operated by National Securities Clearing Corporation Limited (NSCCL).

3. The Government notified the Electoral Bond Scheme 2018 via Gazette Notification.
   - An electoral bond is designed to be a bearer instrument like a Promissory Note — in effect, it will be similar to a bank note that is payable to the bearer on demand and free of interest.
   - It can be purchased by any citizen of India or a body incorporated in India.

4. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) approved Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India’s proposal to hike its stake to 51 per cent in IDBI Bank from 10.8 per cent.
   - LIC is expected to infuse Rs 13,000 crore into IDBI Bank.
   - LIC would be exempted from the provisions in the Insurance Laws (Amendment) Act, 2015, and the Life Insurance Corporation Act, 1956, that bar insurers from holding more than 15% in any company.
5. Indian public and private banks have started using **AI improve efficiency**, detect human behaviour and reduce operational costs.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Bank</th>
<th>New AI/Technology deployed</th>
<th>Uses</th>
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<td>SBI</td>
<td>SBI Intelligent Assistant (SIA).</td>
<td>A smart chat assistant that efficiently resolves queries of NRI customers.</td>
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<td>Bank of Baroda</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Baroda Brainy</td>
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<td>Allahabad Bank</td>
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6. The **Supreme Court** refused to stay a **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** circular prohibiting banks and financial institutions from dealing in **virtual currencies** such as **Bitcoin**.
   - With no interim stay on the circular, all virtual currency transactions through banks would be **blocked from 6 July**, effectively resulting in a ban.

7. The **Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX)**, the country’s **largest commodity bourse** in terms of market share, plans to enter the **currency derivatives segment**.
8. Yes Bank has received the final regulatory approval from the Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to commence its mutual fund business - Yes Asset Management (India) Limited (YAMIL).

9. The RBI has issued licence to Bank of China to launch operations in India.
   - This is the second Chinese lender to secure a licence to open a branch in India.
   - In 2011, RBI gave approval to Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) to open a branch in India. It currently has a branch in Mumbai.

10. RBI in its recent Bimonthly Monetary Policy Report, has identified six key factors that are likely to affect domestic inflation going forward:
   i. Crude prices
   ii. Global financial developments
   iii. Household inflationary expectations
   iv. House rent allowance (HRA) revisions
   v. Revisions in the minimum support price (MSP)
   vi. Good monsoons
   - However, as per recent Bank for International Settlements paper-
   - There is a positive correlation between the share of dependent population and inflation, while working-age population share is negatively correlated with inflation.
   - An increase in the proportion of dependants—by increasing consumption rates and lowering the savings rate—can be expected to increase inflation.
   - While the reverse is expected to happen when the working-age population increases.

11. With a view to fast track NPA (Non-Performing Asset) resolution, bankers finalized the Inter-Creditor Agreement (ICA) framework.
   - Inter-creditor agreement is a framework under which consortium of lenders would take up NPA cases.
   - The framework will authorise the lead bank to implement a resolution plan in 180 days and the leader would then prepare a resolution plan including
empanelling turnaround specialists and other industry experts for operation turnaround of the assets within **RBI's stipulated time-frame of 180 days**.

12. **SBI Card**, the country’s second largest credit card issuer, announced the launch of **ELA**’ (Electronic Live Assistant), a virtual assistant for customer support and services.
   - It is designed to enhance customer experience by providing relevant and instant responses to customer queries.

13. **ICICI Bank** announced that its mortgage loan portfolio crossed the **Rs 1.5-trillion** milestone, making it the **largest private player** in the segment.

14. According to **RBI data** in the fortnight ending in **June 22**, the **bank credit** grew by **12.84 per cent** to **Rs 86,16,408 crore** and **bank deposits** had risen by **7.59 per cent** to **Rs 113,53,525 crore**.

15. Reliance is India’s **largest payer of Goods and Services Tax (GST), Excise and Customs Duty, and Income Tax** in the **private sector** paying **Rs.9844 crore** in FY18.

16. The Centre is planning to set up an **Information Technology (IT)**-based mechanism to keep a tab on all **non-cash, financial transactions** in the country.
   - Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had been asked to develop the IT infrastructure for this purpose.
   - Currently, the idea is to make the **RBI** the sole repository of such information, which will not be made available to other agencies such as the **Income Tax Department** and the **Enforcement Directorate** as a default.
   - Such agencies may be required to make specific requests to the central bank if they want information on a particular set of entities.
   - All **suspicious transactions** need to reported to the unit within **seven days** after it is concluded that those are suspicious in nature.
   - The move to track all financial transactions is the latest in a series to **curb black money** and identify **shell companies**.
• Following the 2016 demonetisation exercise that rendered more than 86% of the currency in circulation invalid, it was found there had been a significant spurt in the operations of shell firms that typically have no assets or active businesses.

17. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is considering the implementation of foreign fund or investor segregation based on the risk profile of the countries where the funds come from.

• This segregation would be for monitoring and scrutiny purposes rather than entry barriers.

• The countries in high risk jurisdiction will face more due diligence, more scrutiny on Ultimate Beneficiary Ownership (UBO), frequent Know Your Customer (KYC) documentation by custodians.

• Higher scrutiny would include a six-monthly KYC and a monthly or three monthly UBO reporting.

• Lower scrutiny would involve KYC every three to five years and yearly UBO reporting.

• Currently, for registration purposes, Foreign Portfolio Investors or FPIs are divided into three categories.
  i. Category I FPIs typically include foreign central banks, sovereign wealth funds and government agencies and abide by a limited number of compliance requirements.
  ii. Category II FPIs are broad-based funds such as mutual funds.
  iii. Category III FPIs are typically hedge funds.

• High-risk countries as recognised by custodians include Mauritius, Cayman Islands, British Virgin Islands, UAE, Cyprus, Russia and Turkey.

• Low-risk jurisdictions include US, UK, Hong Kong and Singapore.

18. HDFC Securities announced launch of Mutual Funds transactional capabilities on Facebook Messenger through their virtual assistant, Arya.

• Through conversational style of investing, customers will invest in a language they understand and not get caught up in stock market jargons.
19. The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** will soon come out with a consultation paper on making it **mandatory** for **large corporates** to meet **one-fourth of their financing needs through the bond market** as envisioned by the FY19 Union Budget.

20. **Airtel Payments Bank Ltd** has received requisite approvals from the **Reserve Bank of India** (RBI) and the **Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI)** to start on-boarding customers using **Aadhaar based e-KYC** (know your customer).
   - In **December** last year, the **UIDAI** had **temporarily suspended** Airtel and its payments bank from conducting **Aadhaar-based verification** of its mobile customers as well as those of the bank using the **e-KYC process** after receiving complaints that it was opening payments bank accounts without the explicit consent of users.
   - It was also alleged that government subsidies were being credited in these accounts without the knowledge of users.
   - Airtel Payments Bank was the first payments bank to start operations on 12 January last year with an investment of **₹3,000 crore**.

21. **Pay revisions, interest payments and farm loan waivers** are stressing state government finances yet again, as per the report- **State Finances: A Study of Budgets** of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
   - States have budgeted a **Gross Fiscal Deficit (GFD)** of **2.6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** during FY19, with 11 states budgeting above 3%.
   - For FY19, states have projected a **revenue surplus of 0.2%** of GDP against a deficit of **0.4%** as per the revised estimates of FY18.
   - Total debt waivers were budgeted at **0.2% of GDP** during FY19 compared with **0.32% of GDP** in FY18 as per revised estimates.

22. The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)** made it mandatory for stock brokers to accept client funds only by way of **bank or electronic transfers** such as cheques and mobile banking.
   - Investors can **no longer deposit cash** in their broker’s account to trade in stocks.
• The move is in line with SEBI’s plans to encourage paperless and cashless stock market trading.

23. **Andhra Pradesh** Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu released the **State Credit Plan (Banking) 2018-19**, with an aim to improve banking services in **Andhra Pradesh**.
   - The **Priority Sector** that includes agriculture and allied activities, micro and small enterprises, poor people for housing, students for education has been allocated **Rs 1,44,220 crores**.
   - The **non-priority sector**, under which financial institutions lend credit to bank customers, has been allocated **Rs 50,000 crores**.

24. **State Bank of India** and **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development** have joined hands to provide collateral-free credit in **Telangana**.
   - Under the agreement, Nabard will provide assistance to NGOs for formation, nurturing and hand-holding of JLGs of oral lessees, sharecroppers and tenant farmers and SBI will provide collateral free credit support to the activity groups promoted by the NGOs.

25. A report from the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**, India’s economic growth will rise to **7.4% in 2018 and 7.5% in 2019**.
   - China’s GDP growth is projected to moderate to **6.7% in 2018 and to 6.4% in 2019**.

26. Debt advisory services firm **A. K. Capital Services** is likely to manage **India’s first debt Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)** proposed to be set up for PSUs and public sector banks to raise long terms funds from the market.

27. In an update to its **World Economic Outlook (WEO)**, **International Monetary Fund** trimmed India’s growth projection for **2018-19** by 10 basis points to **7.3%**.
   - Due to negative effects of higher crude oil prices on domestic demand and faster-than anticipated monetary policy tightening due to higher-than expected inflation.
   - For **2019-20**, **IMF** cut its projection by a sharper 30 basis points to **7.5%**.
IMF said India’s growth is expected to rise from 6.7% in 2017-18 to 7.3% in 2018-19 and 7.5% in 2019-20, as the effects of demonetisation and the introduction of Goods and Service Tax fade.

   - It has partnered with 12 global leaders like Microsoft, Cisco, IBM and Adobe for the collaboration.
   - The theme is ‘Tech for Urban Development’.
   - It will focus on Collaborative Innovation – Collaboration as a Service (CaaS) for harnessing innovative solution from young professionals for issues of national importance.

   - It is the last microfinance company to convert itself into a Small Finance Bank (SFB).
   - Jana was the worst affected during demonetization when it saw its asset quality slip, leading to capital erosion.
   - The Micro Finance institution (MFI) had reported losses to the tune of ₹3,400 crore at the end of March 2018.
   - NBFC-MFIs are required to have minimum paid up capital of Rs.5 Cr and they are allowed to provide unsecured loans to Self Help Groups (SHGs) or Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) as per the guidelines of RBI.
   - Small Finance Banks are a new category of Banks with Rs 100 Cr paid up capital.
• SFB can take deposits and MFIs cannot. Only Banks are allowed to take demand deposits.

30. The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has raised its **inflation** projection for India to **5% from 4.6%**, for **this fiscal year**.
   • Reason – Higher crude oil price, depreciation in the rupee value, hike in Minimum Support Price.
   • However, ADB said **India** is expected to achieve its earlier growth **forecasts of 7.3% in 2018-19 and 7.6% in 2019-20** as bank strengthening bolsters private investment and benefits kick in from the goods and services tax, while maintaining that increases in oil prices pose a downside risk to growth.

31. The Reserve Bank would issue new **Rs 100 note** with the motif of ‘**Rani Ki Vav’**.
   • This note will have **Gujarat’s ‘Rani Ki Vav’ (queen’s stepwell)** along with the Swachh Bharat logo and slogan on its reverse. Gandhi ji’s placement will be the same.
   • The base colour of the note is **lavender**.

32. **BSE building Phiroze Jeejeebhoy Towers** located on Dalal Street, in Mumbai gets trademark under **Trade Marks Act, 1999** by the government.

33. With Rajya Sabha clearing the bill of **State Banks (Repeal and Amendment) Bill, 2017**, Parliament officially approved of the bill to merge SBI with its subsidiaries.
   • The bill repealed the **State Bank of India (Subsidiary Banks) Act, 1959**, and **State Bank of Hyderabad Act, 1956** and amended the **State Bank of India (SBI) Act, 1955**.
   • This was done for rationalisation of resources, reduction of costs, better profitability, lower cost of funds leading to better rate of interest for public at large, improved productivity and customer service.

34. **FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry)** said that, India’s economic growth remains intact and India’s GDP is expected to grow at **7.5 %** in the current financial year.
35. The **Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi)** is keen to mandate companies that have more than **₹100 crore** as long-term borrowings compulsorily raise at **least 25%** of their funding needs by **selling bonds**.

- The efficient risk pricing in bonds and the distribution of risk across different classes of investors is what makes the bond market a perfect antidote to the current bad loan problem in banks.
- The **ultimate objective** is to give a measure of **protection to banks** in the event of these companies finding themselves in trouble.

36. **The GDP deflator**, also called **implicit price deflator**, is a measure of inflation.

- It is the ratio of the value of goods and services an economy produces in a particular year at **current prices** to that of prices that prevailed during the **base year**.
- This ratio helps show the extent to which the increase in gross domestic product has happened on account of higher prices rather than increase in output.
- **GDP price deflator** measures the difference between **real GDP and nominal GDP**.
- **GDP price deflator** = \( \frac{\text{nominal GDP}}{\text{real GDP}} \times 100 \)
• A Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures changes over time in the general level of prices of goods and services that households acquire for the purpose of consumption.

• However, since CPI is based only a basket of select goods and is calculated on prices included in it, it does not capture inflation across the economy as a whole.

37. The Wholesale Price Index basket has no representation of the services sector and all the constituents are only goods whose prices are captured at the wholesale/producer level.

38. India’s currency weakened around 22% against the dollar between 2012 and 2017 and the compound annual growth rate in exports during the same period was a meagre 0.2%.

• A historical analysis of India’s trade performance suggests that the biggest factor driving India’s export performance has been world demand.

• As the domestic value added of India’s manufacturing sector declines and it becomes more reliant on foreign inputs, currency depreciation will lead to higher costs of production.

• This will eventually lead to higher inflation in prices of domestically produced goods and will prevent them from becoming more competitive in the world market.

• Thus, higher inflation—due to imported prices—might offset any gains from depreciation in terms of export competitiveness.

• Between 2012 and 2018, India’s share of US imports rose marginally from 6.5% to 7.5%.
39. According to the agreement, part of Project Sashakt, lenders with exposure to stressed accounts will appoint a lead bank as their agent to formulate a resolution plan.

- **Twenty-four banks** led by the State Bank of India signed the Inter-Creditor Agreement that aims to fast-track the resolution of bad loans.
- In a stock exchange filing, SBI said that its board has approved the signing of the inter-creditor pact.
- **Seventeen public sector banks, five private sector banks and two other financial institutions** have signed the agreement.
- The Mehta committee has also proposed the setting up of a National Asset Management company, which will raise multiple sector-specific investment funds to invest in stressed assets.
- Under the Inter-Creditor Agreement, lenders will look at resolving accounts with exposure **between ₹50 crore and ₹2,000 crore**.

**What is ICA and how will it work?**

**The pact:** ICA is an agreement among banks that have dues from a borrower in stress. The pact mandates the lead bank to formulate a resolution plan that will be executed in a time-bound manner.

**Applicability:** All corporate loans above ₹50 crore

**Binding condition:** if 66%, or two-thirds, of the lenders in terms of aggregate exposure approve, then the pact is binding on all the lenders

**Exit option:** Dissenting lenders will have an exit route, either selling their exposure at a discount or buying exposure of the other lenders at a premium.

**Who is in?** 24 banks, including SBI, Bank of India and Corporation Bank have already signed up. A majority of the lenders are expected to follow suit by the end of the week. Some NBFCs may also come on board.

**Target date:** The framework is expected to be operational by the end of this month.

40. The stock market regulator, SEBI, is planning to cap mutual fund distributor commissions in an attempt to check mis-selling.
• It plans to cap lifetime distributor commissions for fixed-income schemes at 1.5-2% and equity-oriented mutual fund schemes at 4-5% so that upfront commissions too come down automatically.

41. Currently, commissions paid upfront alone are as high as 6.5% at several fund houses, which are followed by trail commissions later.

42. State Bank of India (SBI) expects to recover half of the assets that turned sour in the initial 12 large bad loan accounts that were identified for bankruptcy resolution.
   • “The recoveries will be around 50% and most banks are holding provisions in excess of 50%.

43. India needs to allow its rupee to be driven by market forces to minimize external risks and should intervene only to address “disorderly market concerns” as per International Monetary Fund.
   • The average Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER) for rupee in 2017 appreciated by about 4.1% over its 2016 average.
   • As of May 2018, the REER depreciated 3.6% relative to its 2017 average.
   • REER is the nominal effective exchange rate divided by an index of costs.

44. The Real Effective Exchange Rate (REER)
   • REER is an indicator of the competitiveness of a country’s currency with respect to a basket of currencies, adjusted for inflation effects.
India’s REER is measured as a weighted average of India’s bilateral real exchange rates with all the countries in the basket.

Thus, REER has two components: (i) real exchange rates and (ii) weights assigned to each currency.

The real exchange rate calculates the purchasing power of a currency by adjusting the nominal exchange rate for inflation effects.

If the dollar/rupee nominal rate is 69, it means that you have to pay ₹69 to buy one dollar in the money market.

However, while nominal exchange rate focuses on the exchange of money, real exchange rate focuses on the exchange of goods and services (US goods vs Indian goods).

It measures the number of units of a domestic good you have to pay to buy one unit of the equivalent foreign good.

The second component, weights, depends on the importance of the countries in the currency basket as India’s trading partners.

i. In April 2014, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) released a circular which mentioned that its 36-currency trade-weighted REER index assigns a weight of 8.8% for the dollar.

45. The government’s decision to infuse ₹11,336 crore in five public sector banks will help meet the regulatory capital requirements as per rating agency Moody’s.

These banks Common Equity Tier 1 (CET1) ratios were the weakest among all public-sector banks as of fiscal 2018, and were at the risk of breaching the minimum regulatory capital requirement of 5.5% under the Basel III norms.

Capital is classified in terms of its degree of contribution from the owners (shareholders).

The Bank capital structure consists of Core Tier 1, Tier 2 and Common Equity Tier 1.

Core Tier 1 Capital is more equity capital or it is provided by the most responsible people of the bank – its share holders. It includes CET 1 and along with non-redeemable non-cumulative preference equity (or ‘Preferred stock’).
• On the other hand, **tier 2 capital is more in the form of reserves, debts etc.**
• if you are **managing huge money** in the **form of loans given**, you should put more money into your bank.
• Such a deployment of money will make you more responsible while you give loans (because loans are financed out of deposits, if loans are not coming back, the depositors should not suffer).

46. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** is moving to shut down the **Corporate Debt Restructuring (CDR)** system.
• The regulator has directed the CDR cell to transfer all pending cases to respective lead banks to complete the resolution process.
• According to the **latest available data**, the CDR cell has approved restructuring of stressed loans worth **₹4 trillion** since its inception in **2001**.
• Of this, **₹84,677 crore** worth of loans exited the CDR cell successfully and **₹1.84 trillion** exited **without success**.
• **Nearly ₹1.32 trillion** worth of bad loans are presently undergoing restructuring in the cell.
• The CDR system was framed **17 years ago in 2001** to restructure corporate debt outside the purview of **Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRT)** and the **Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction**.
• Its three-tiered structure consisted of CDR Standing Forum, CDR Empowered Group and CDR Cell.

47. State-run lender **Bank of Baroda** posted a **160%** increase in net profit to **₹528.26 crore** for the quarter ended June 30 as compared with **₹203.26 crore** in the year-earlier period.
• **Net interest margin (NIM)** improved to 2.7% from 2.5%.
• **Net interest margin (NIM)** is a measure of the difference between the interest income generated by banks or other financial institutions and the amount of interest paid out to their lenders (for example, deposits), relative to the amount of their (interest-earning) assets.

48. **SoftBank** announced partnership with **Paytm** to launch a payments service in **Japan**.
49. **ICICI Bank** is reviewing all loans disbursed over the past five years to prepare reports to address regulatory inquiries as well as plug loopholes and overhaul processes.

- The newly appointed **Chief Operating Officer** of **ICICI Bank**, **Sandeep Bakhshi**, is trying to review and overhaul the credit disbursal processes.

50. Five reasons why the **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** needs to raise its policy rate at its meeting as per Mint.

- **First** - **Core inflation**—which excludes **food and fuel**—is edging up every month. It is now far above 5%, and considering the stickiness of it, a threat to RBI’s 4% target.
  
  i. As the Indian economy recovers and demand firms up, producers will be able to pass on increases in costs.
- **Second** - The hike in Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for agriculture this time is steep. The language of RBI leaves no doubt that higher MSPs are a danger to inflation.
- **Third** - **Global crude oil prices** are a big swing factor in the behaviour of domestic inflation.
- **Fourth** - the output gap—the gap between the level of economic activity and its potential—is closing.
- **Fifth** - The **Lok Sabha elections in 2019** make it hard for any government to ignore populist measures.

51. **Chatbots** - is a computer program or an artificial intelligence which conducts a conversation via auditory or textual methods.

- **HDFC Bank Ltd**, for instance, has an AI chatbot called **Eva built**.
- AI banking platform **Payjo** launched an AI-powered chat assistant for **State Bank of India (SBI)** called **SBI Intelligent Assistant (SIA)**.
- **Axis Bank Ltd** has its **Axis Aha chatbot**.
- **ICICI Bank** - **iPal**
• Al-enabled enterprise chatbots may also find it difficult to scale up especially when compared to Apple Inc.’s Siri, Amazon Inc.’s Alexa, Google Inc.’s Allo and Duo, or Samsung Electronic Co.’s Bixby due to relatively limited learning data sets.

52. Moody’s Investor Service estimates revenue loss from the most recent tax cuts to be about 0.04 per cent-0.08 per cent of GDP annually.

• The exchequer incurred a total revenue loss of Rs.70,000 crore from all the rate cuts since the roll-out of GST on 1 July 2017.
APPOINTMENTS
1. **Dedar Singh Gill**, an Indian-origin intellectual property litigator in Singapore has been appointed **Judicial Commissioner of Singapore’s Supreme Court**.
2. **ICICI Bank** has appointed **Girish Chandra Chaturvedi** as the company’s **Non-Executive Chairman**.
3. **Alka Tiwari** has been appointed as **Secretary** in Anti-Corruption watchdog Central Vigilance Commissioner (CVC).
4. The Democratic National Committee (DNC) of United States has appointed Indian American **Seema Nanda** as its new **CEO**.
5. **Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador** has been elected as the **President** of Mexico.
6. **Saraswati Prasad** has been appointed as the **Chairman and Managing Director** of Steel Authority of India Ltd. (SAIL).
7. The country’s largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI) has selected **Arijit Basu** as **Managing Director** of the bank.
8. **Mohit Gupta** has been named as the **Chief Executive Officer** (CEO) of Food-tech start-up Zomato Media Pvt. Ltd.
9. **Wipro**, India’s third largest software services exporter, has promoted its head of digital business **Rajan Kohli** as a **President**.
10. The Payments Council of India announced that it has appointed **Vishwas Patel** as its new **Chairman**.
11. **Bandhan Bank**, the newest private sector lender has received Reserve Bank of India (RBI) approval for the re-appointment of current **Managing Director** (MD) and Chief Executive Officer (CEO), **Chandra Shekhar Ghosh**, for three years.
12. United India Insurance Company announced the appointment of **K B Vijay Srinivas** as its **Director and General Manager**.
13. Journalist **Rajat Sharma** was elected the **President** of Delhi & District Cricket Association (DDCA).
14. The Muthoot Pappachan Group has named actress **Vidya Balan** as its **brand ambassador**.
15. Justice **Adarsh Kumar Goel** has been appointed the chairperson of National Green Tribunal.
16. **Uday Kumar Varma** has been appointed a member of the **Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC)**.

17. **Sun Pharma Consumer Healthcare** has named actor **Akshay Kumar** as the brand ambassador of health supplement **Revital H**.

18. The **Tripura state** committee proposed the government to appoint gold medal winner, **Dipa Karmakar**, as brand ambassador of **Tripura**.

19. **T.V. Narendran** has been appointed as **Chairman and Non-Executive additional Director** of **Bhushan Steel Ltd** which has been acquired by **Tata Steel** under corporate resolution process.

20. **Wrestling Federation of India President Brij Bhushan Saran Singh** would be named the **Chef de Mission** of the **Asian Games-bound Indian contingent**.

21. **Tata Capital** has appointed **Anil Kaul** as the **Managing Director** of **Tata Capital Housing Finance**.

22. **Justice Tahira Safdar** was made the **Chief Justice** of the **Balochistan high court**, Pakistan.
   
   • This makes her the **first woman Chief Justice of any court in Pakistan**.

23. The former **Pakistani cricketer Imran Khan** has claimed victory in **Pakistan’s Election of 2018**.

24. **Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation (HSBC)** announced that, **Surendra Rosha** has been appointed as **Chief Executive Officer** for **HSBC India**.

25. **Seema Nanda** became the **first Indian-American woman** appointed as the **CEO of the Democratic National Committee** in recent history.
IMPORTANT DAYS

1. On 30th June 2018, International Asteroid Day was celebrated all over the world.
2. On 30th June 2018, the first International Day of Parliamentarism was observed all over the world.
   - This day celebrates parliaments and the ways in which parliamentary systems of government enhance the day-to-day lives of people.
   - It is also the date, in 1889, on which the Inter-Parliamentary Union — the global organization of parliaments — was established.
3. On 1st July 2018, National Doctors’ Day was celebrated throughout India.
   - The Indian Medical Association (IMA) has declared the theme for Doctors’ Day 2018 as: ‘zero tolerance to violence against doctors and clinical establishment’.
4. On 1st July 2018, International Joke Day was celebrated all over the world.
5. Indian Government celebrated the 1st Anniversary of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) as GST day – July 1.
6. July 2, 2018, World UFO (Unidentified Flying Objects) day was observed all over the world.
   - World UFO day is celebrated on 2nd July every year. The first World UFO Day was celebrated in 2001.
   - This day is dedicated to the existence of Unidentified Flying Objects (UFO). This day is celebrated to create awareness about the existence of UFO’s.
7. On 4th July 2018, the 242nd America Independence Day was celebrated in the United States.
   - Independence Day in America marks the date back in 1776 when Americans broke away from being ruled by the British, who had been on the continent since the 16th Century.
8. On 6th July 2018, World Zoonoses Day was observed all over the world.
   - It commemorates 6th July 1885, the day on which Louis Pasteur successfully administered the first vaccine against, a zoonotic disease, to Joseph Meister after he was attacked by a rabid dog.
   - Zoonotic diseases can be spread from animals to humans.
• Most common Zoonotic diseases are – Rabies (Dogs, Bats), Toxoplasmosis (Cats), Leptospirosis (Dogs), Roundworms (Parasitic Worms).

9. On 7th July 2018, World Chocolate Day was celebrated all over the world.

10. July 11 – World Population Day
• 2018 theme: “Family Planning is a Human Right”
• World Population Day is celebrated worldwide to spread awareness and discuss issues related to population growth.
• Out of the 7.4 billion (approximately) people in the world, India amounts 1.327 billion which equals to 17.5 percent of the World’s population.
• Despite correcting the employment problem, India is expected to become the World’s youngest country with 64 percent of its population in the working age by 2020.

11. July 12 is celebrated as International Malala Day as on July 12, 2013, Malala Yousafzai’s 16th birthday, she spoke at the UN to call for worldwide access to education.
• Malala Yousafzai is a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate.

12. On 15th July 2018, World Youth Skills Day was celebrated all over the world.

13. The United Nations General Assembly declared 15 July as World Youth Skills Day to create awareness on the importance of investing in youth skills development.

• Nelson Mandela International Day 2018 marks 100 years since the birth of Nelson Mandela (18 July 1918).
• Also known as Mandela Day
• The day remembers Mandela’s achievements in working towards conflict resolution, democracy, human rights, peace, and reconciliation.

15. On July 26th 1999, the Kargil war between India and Pakistan came to an end.
• The Kargil war was an armed conflict that took place between India and Pakistan between May and July 1999.
• The war took place in the Kargil district of Kashmir and other places along the Line of Control (LOC).
16. **2018 Earth Overshoot Day** will fall on **August 1**, the earliest date since ecological overshoot began in early 1970s.

- Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity’s demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year.
- To determine the date of **Earth Overshoot Day** for each year, **Global Footprint Network** calculates the number of days of that year that Earth’s biocapacity suffices to provide for humanity’s Ecological Footprint.
- The remainder of the year corresponds to global overshoot.

17. On **28th July 2018**, **World Hepatitis Day 2018** was observed all over the world.

- WHO (World Health Organisation) has declared **theme** for World Hepatitis Day 2018 as: “**Test. Treat. Hepatitis**”.
- **National Viral Hepatitis Control Program** was launched in New Delhi on the occasion of World Hepatitis Day.

18. **Global Tiger Day**, often called **International Tiger Day**, is an annual celebration to raise awareness for tiger conservation, held **annually on 29 July**.

- **India Post** joined hands in promoting tiger conservation by releasing a **special cover**.
- **Bandipur (Karnataka), Nagarahole (Karnataka), Wayanad (Kerala), Mudumalai (Tamil Nadu), Satyamangalam (Tamil Nadu)**, and **BRT forests** account for nearly 585 tigers across 10,925 sq km.

19. The **United Nations (UN) World Day against Trafficking in Persons** is observed every year on **July 30** to raise awareness of the plight of human trafficking victims, and promote and protect their rights.

- Theme - ‘**responding to the trafficking of children and young people**’
AWARDS

1. **Madhya Pradesh** will be awarded for reducing **Maternal Mortality** under Prime Minister’s **Safe Motherhood Campaign**.
   - The maternal mortality rate was **221 in 2011-13**. Now it has reduced to **173**. A decline of **22% in the last 3 years** has been witnessed in Madhya Pradesh.

2. The **Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)** announced that India has won **Global Restructuring Review’s “most improved jurisdiction”** award.
   - This award is to honour the jurisdiction which improved its restructuring and insolvency regime the most over the last year.
   - In 2017, India lost the title to **Singapore**.

3. **Milan Shankar Tare**, a resident of **Satapati village** has been nominated to receive the prestigious **National Maritime Search and Rescue award** for saving the lives of dozen fishermen.

4. **Himachal Pradesh** has been named **first** among states for its performance under the **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritav Abhiyan (PMSMA)** in India.

5. **Himachal Pradesh** has been given this award for bringing maximum number of **women for ante-natal check-up to the PMSMA clinics**.

6. Professor **Ravinder Dahiya**, an Indian-origin scientist working on a project to create a robotic hand covered in so-called **Brainy Skin** that mimics the human sense of touch has won **1.5 million pound** as funding for the project.

7. **Brainy Skin** is critical for the autonomy of robots and for a safe human-robot interaction to meet emerging societal needs such as helping the elderly.

8. The **Smart Cities Digital Payments Awards (SCDPA) 2018 ‘100 days Challenge in 100 Smart Cities’** is part of the initiatives of **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** to promote ease of living for India’s urban residents.
   - The objective of these awards is to guide, motivate, recognize and reward the Smart Cities for promoting digital payments.

10. India’s Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) project has bagged World Bank’s Internal Award for Exceptional Performance in achieving many development goals.
   - Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project is a World Bank supported project that aims to build national capacity for implementation of comprehensive coastal management approach in the country.

11. Station Beautification competition Awards-
   - **First Prize:** Balharshah & Chandrapur Railway Stations of Central Railway – Rs.10 Lakhs.
   - **Second Prize:** Madhubani station of East Central Railway & Madurai station of Southern Railway – Rs. 5 Lakhs.
   - **Third Prize:** Gandhidham station of Western Railway, Kota station of West Central Railway & Secunderabad station of South Central Railway – Rs. 3 Lakhs.
   - The station beautification initiative was launched by Indian Railways.

12. Ishwar Sharma (8 years old) has been named the “British Indian of the Year” for his achievements in Yoga.

13. Renowned Carnatic vocalist Aruna Sairam has been selected for 2018 Sangita Kalanidhi award of Music Academy for her contribution to Carnatic music.

14. Aizya Naaz Joshi has become the first Indian transsexual to win the title of Ms. World Diversity 2018 that was held in Dubai.

15. Fortune released its The Ledger ‘40 Under 40’ list and 4 persons of India-origin, including three women have been named on it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Position in company</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Dhivya Suryadevara</td>
<td>CFO of General Motors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
16. Two Indians **Bharat Vatwani** and **Sonam Wangchuk** were named winners of the **2018 Ramon Magsaysay Award**.

- A total of **6 persons** were declared winners of 2018 Ramon Magsaysay Award.
- **Bharat Vatwani** is awarded for leading the rescue of thousands of mentally ill destitute people and reuniting them with their families.
- **Sonam Wangchuk** is awarded for his contribution in the field of education, culture and progress of communities in remote northern India.

17. Eminent **Poet Ramakanta Rath** was conferred with **Odisha’s highest literary award Atibadi Jagannath Das Samman** for **2018**.

- The award carries a citation and cash prize of **Rs 1 lakh**
- He was given the award for his life time contribution to **Odia literature**.

18. **The Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL)** has been selected for the **Champion of Earth Prize-2018**.

- It is the highest environmental honour instituted by the United Nations.
- Cochin Airport a first in the world to be fully powered by solar energy.
19. Assamese film “Xhoihobote Dhemalite” (“Rainbow Fields”) won 3 top awards at the 3rd Love International Film Festival in United States.

20. Mortgage financier HDFC has received the award for being the ‘best performing primary lending institution’ under the credit-linked subsidy scheme for the EWS (Economically Weaker Sections) and LIG (Low Income Group) category under the ‘Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY).

21. Mohun Bagan ‘Ratna’, the highest honour of Mohun Bagan club was awarded to former India international Pradip Chowdhury at its foundation day programme.
   - Pradip Chowdhury is a former Mohun Bagan captain.
SPORTS

1. Indian para-athlete Yogesh Kathuniya broke the world record in the men's discus F36, while winning gold in the Para-athletics Grand Prix in Berlin.
2. Former captains Rahul Dravid of India and Australia’s Ricky Ponting have been inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame for their stupendous achievements in International Cricket.
   - Dravid has become the fifth Indian to be listed in Hall of Fame.
   - Other four are – Anil Kumble, Kapil Dev, Sunil Gavaskar and Bishan Singh Bedi.
3. India won the six-nation Kabaddi Masters Dubai title in Dubai.
4. SoundLogic has roped in India’s most successful captain, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, as a Partner-Evangelist.
   - Evangelism marketing is an advanced form of word-of-mouth marketing in which companies develop customers who believe so strongly in a particular product or service that they freely try to convince others to buy and use it.
5. Australia won the Champions Trophy hockey 2018 in Breda, the Netherlands.
6. Ajai Raj Singh won the boys javelin gold in Youth Olympic Games’ Asian area Qualification Athletics meet to be held in Buenos Aires in October.
7. Major General VD Dogra became the first serving Indian Army officer and the only General in the world to have completed ‘Ironman’ competition held in Austria.
8. Rani Rampal will lead the Indian Women’s Hockey Team at the Asian Games that will be held in Indonesia.
   - Mahendra Singh Dhoni has become the 3rd Indian after Sachin Tendulkar (664) and Rahul Dravid (509) to reach this milestone of playing 500 international cricket matches.
10. Dipa Karmakar created history by becoming the first Indian gymnast to clinch a gold at a global vault event of FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup at Mersin, Turkey.
11. Indian squash player Dipika Pallikal was appointed Asia’s representative in the Athletes Advisory Commission of the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF).
12. Manu Bhaker and Anish Bhanwala won gold in Junior Women’s 10m Air Pistol and Junior Men’s 25m Rapid Fire Pistol at the tournament being held at the Military Shooting Range in Pilsen, Czech Republic.

13. Hima Das won first ever track gold at the 400 metre final at the IAAF World U20 Championships in Tampere, Finland.


15. Mahendra Singh Dhoni became the fourth Indian to achieve the mark of 10,000 runs in ODIs, during the second match of the three-game series against England, at Lord’s cricket ground in London.
   - He has reached the milestone of scoring 10,000 runs in ODIs after three other Indian batsmen: Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and Rahul Dravid.
   - Mahendra Singh Dhoni is now placed 12th in the list of all-time highest run-scorers in ODIs.

16. France won the World Cup in its country’s history for the second time.
   - France won the world cup first time in 1998.

17. The 36th Golden Glove of Vojvodina Youth Men & Women Boxing Tournament, was held in Vojvodina, Serbia.
   - India won a total of 17 medals with 7 gold medals, 6 silver medals and 4 bronze medals and obtained the first position at the 36th Golden Glove of Vojvodina youth tournament.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Medal</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>Aman</td>
<td>+91kg</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Akash Kumar</td>
<td>56kg</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S Barun Singh</td>
<td>49kg</td>
<td>Gold</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
18. Angelique Kerber took home the Venus Rosewater Dish trophy as the 2018 Wimbledon women's singles champion.

19. Sajan won India’s first gold on the opening day of the junior Asian wrestling championships in the 77kg category.

20. Mysuru’s Sagar S. Kashyap, an AITA official, became the first-ever Indian and Asian to officiate as a chair umpire in Wimbledon — during the junior boys’ singles final.

21. Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra won gold medal at the Sotteville Athletics Meet in France.
   - Neeraj Chopra had won gold medal in the 2016 World Junior Championship.

22. Pakistan clinched the series after strolling to a nine-wicket victory over Zimbabwe in the third ODI.

23. Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has named Indian Athlete Hima Das as the first sports ambassador of Assam.

24. The National Olympic Committee (IOC) in its Tokyo 2020 Olympics schedule announced that it had added 7 medal event to its 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics.
   - These events include: women’s monobob, Big Air freestyle skiing for men and women, plus mixed team events in short track speed skating, ski jumping, ski aerials and snowboard-cross.
25. **28th Meeting of Shooting Hopes junior International Championship** was held between July 11 – 15, 2018 in Pilsen, Czech Republic.
   - Manu Bhaker won her 9th **International Gold medal** in the span of one year.
   - She also became the **youngest Indian** ever to win Gold in a senior World stage, achieving the feat in Guadalajara, Mexico in March 2018.

26. Archer **Gahela Boro** diagnosed with **Systemic Lupus Erythematosus** (SLE) and **Antineutrophil Cytoplasm Antibodies** (ANCA) two years ago.
   - These are **two autoimmune diseases**.
   - An **autoimmune disease** is a condition in which your immune system attacks your body.

27. **Lakshya Sen** became **only the third Indian shutter** to secure a **gold medal** at the Badminton Asia junior championships held in Jakarta.
   - Late Gautam Thakkar (1965) and Olympic silver medallist P.V. Sindhu (2012) had won the prestigious title earlier.

28. **Indian wrestlers Sachin Rathi and Deepak Punia** bagged **gold medals** at the **junior Asian Championships**.

29. The mascot for the **Tokyo 2020 Olympics** and **Paralympic Games** were named during a ceremony.
   - The **blue-checked pointy-eared figure Olympic mascot** was named **Miraitowa**, while its **Paralympic counterpart**, who is **pink-checked and wears a cape**, was named **Someity**.

30. **Sunil Chhetri** has been declared the **2017 Player of the Year** by the **All India Football Federation (AIFF)**.
   - **Woman Footballer of the Year**: Kamala Devi.

31. The **Sports Authority of India** under **Khelo India Talent Identification Development scheme**, cleared **734 players** for a scholarship programme.
• An annual stipend of Rs. 1.2 lakhs will be given to the players on a quarterly basis.

• **Khelo India School Games (KISG),** meaning **Play India School Games,** held annually beginning from 31 January 2018, are the national level multidisciplinary grass root games in India for the under-17 years school kids.

**32.** India’s **Muhammad Anas Yahiya** broke his own national record to win the **400 metres race** at the **Cena Noveho Mesta nad Metuji meet in Czech Republic.**

• He became the **second Indian sprinter** to reach the finals of the one-lap event at the Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast after **Milkha Singh.**

**33.** **Pakistan** batsman **Fakhar Zaman** became the **quickest player to reach the 1000 runs in One-Day Internationals (ODI).**

**34.** He achieved this mark during the 5th and final ODI of the ongoing five-match series against **Zimbabwe.**

**35.** **Lewis Hamilton** won the **German Grand Prix 2018** held at **Hockenheimring track** in **Germany.**

**36.** **Punjab shot-putter Dhanvir Singh** and **Kerala 400m hurdler Vishnu Priya** set new meet records on the final day of the **15th National Youth Athletics Championships** en route to gold medals in their respective events in Vadodra.

**37.** India’s **Mannu Attri and Sumeeth Reddy** won the **men’s doubles title** at **Lagos International Badminton** in Lagos, **Nigeria.**

**38.** The **Indian Blind Cricket Team** defeated **Sri Lanka** 4-1 in the **T20 bilateral series** held at **Colombo.**

• India’s **Sunil Ramesh** won the ‘**Man of the Series in B3 category**,’ while India’s **Ajay Reddy** and Sri Lanka’s **Ajith Silva** were awarded the same in the **B2 and B1 categories.**

**39.** The **Junior Asian Wrestling Championship** was held in **New Delhi.**

• **Iran** topped the team championships with 189 points.

• **India** ranked second with 173 points and **Uzbekistan** ranked third with 128 points.
40. The newly-elected Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) President Rajat Sharma announced a three-member Cricket Committee to deal with the State’s cricket affairs.
   - The Cricket Committee is, “authorised to form various selection committees as per the recommendations made by the Lodha Committee and the BCCI guidelines for State associations and to give valuable guidance to the Association for improvement of cricket in Delhi.

41. The Indian Women’s Compound Archery team has secured number one position in the world rankings as per World Archery Association (WAA).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Chinese Taipei</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>United States of America</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Republic of Korea</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

42. Kapil Dev the cricketer will now also be known as Kapil Dev the golfer.
   - He will represent India at the Asia Pacific Senior 2018 to be held at the Tom Watson Golf Club in Miyazaki, Japan.

43. Star Indian javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra won a gold in the Savo Games in Finland.

44. Kathleen Baker set a world record of 58.00sec to win the 100m backstroke at the US swimming championships.

45. The 2018 Russian Open, was a badminton tournament which took place at Sport Hall Olympic in Vladivostok, Russia from 24 to 29 July 2018.
• **Sourabh Verma** beat Koki Watanabe to lift the Russian Open Badminton trophy 2018.

46. **World No.1 Dustin Johnson** won **Canadian Open title**.
MISCELLANEOUS

1. The International Space Station got its first robot with artificial intelligence, along with some berries, ice cream and identical brown mice.
   - There are genetically identical mice for a study of gut bacteria, and super-caffeinated coffee aboard the Dragon to go with the fresh blueberries and ice cream.

2. US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the first time approved the use of Epidiolex, an oral solution made from marijuana, for the treatment of seizures related to 2 rare and severe forms of epilepsy.

3. Former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral JG Nadkarni died.

4. Scientific studies have shown an epidemiological shift in dengue viruses, which means changes in the virus's geographical incidence and distribution, and have indicated that climate change might be a reason for increase in dengue cases.
   - The Aedes aegypti mosquito is the main vector that transmits viruses causing dengue and chikungunya.
   - Malaria is spread by anopheles mosquitoes.
   - The study stated that India’s mean temperature rose by more than 0.5 degree Celsius between 1960 and 2009 due to several environmental factors, including climate change.
   - The researchers studied the temperatures in different seasons and found that an increase in temperature led to a shorter incubation period for the dengue virus.

5. The National Board for Wildlife (NBWL) has approved to include 4 species: Northern River Terrapin (riverine turtle), Red Panda, Clouded Leopard and Arabian Sea Humpback Whale in the recovery programme for critically endangered species.

6. Scientists of the University of Warwick have produced a new method – FerriTag, that enables to view proteins under human cells.
   - FerriTag utilizes a protein shell used to contain iron cells in human bodies.
7. **NASA’s Parker Solar Probe**, the mission that aims to get the closest to the Sun than ever by any human-made object has got its revolutionary heat shield “**Thermal Protection System or TPS**” permanently attached to the spacecraft.
   - The spacecraft’s orbit will carry it to within **4 million miles of the Sun’s surface** with the help of its heat shield.
   - There the spacecraft will collect data about the inner workings of the **corona**.

8. A scientist from the **Botanical Survey of India (BSI)** in the **Andaman and Nicobar Islands**, has come out with a green alternative – “**straw bamboos**” to use-and-throw plastic drinking straws, by tapping bamboo.

9. Scientists have discovered **seven new wasp species** belonging to the genus **Clistopyga** from **Peru, Venezuela and Colombia** in the Amazon rain forests.

10. **Anju Khosla** has become the **oldest Indian woman** to complete an **Ironman Triathlon** which is one of the **toughest one-day sporting events**.
    - She is 52 years old.

11. Fossils of **200 million old species** of **Giant Dinosaur** about **three times** the size of the **largest Triassic dinosaurs** found in Argentina.
    - The specie is baptised **Ingentia prima**.

12. Scientists have discovered **12 new moons orbiting Jupiter**, making the total number of natural satellites circling around Jupiter to **79**.
    - The discovery includes **11 “normal” outer moons**, and **one “oddball.”**

13. Former and **first finance minister** of **Chhattisgarh**, **Ramchandra Singhdeo**, had passed away.

14. A book titled “**Gandhi: The years that changed the world (1914-1948)**” has been written by **Ramachandra Guha**.
    - This book will be released in September 2018.
    - The book tells about the Biography of Gandhi ji.

15. Former **Fiat Chrysler Chief Executive Sergio Marchionne** has died.
   - The author tracks down the cricketer’s closest friends in Ranchi and artfully presents the different shades of Dhoni-the Ranchi boy, the fauji, the diplomat, Chennai’s beloved ‘Thala’, the wicketkeeping Pythagoras-and lays bare the man underneath.

17. According to a report on US journal Science, a massive underground lake has been detected for the first time on Mars.
   - The tool that detected this is called Mars Advanced Radar for Subsurface and Ionosphere Sounding (MARSIS).

18. The book “When Coal Turned Gold: The Making of a Maharatna Company” has been written by Coal India Ltd’s (CIL)’s former Chairman Partha Sarathi Bhattacharyya.
   - This book talks about the transformation of Coal India Ltd’s (CIL) from a loss-making enterprise into a profitable Maharatna PSU.

19. Chiyo Miyako, the world’s oldest person, passed away in Tokyo, Japan at the age of 117.