

Important Monthly Current Affairs – March 2018

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IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Day	Themes
3 March	National Defence Day.	Civil defence and the national institutions for more efficient disaster management
	World Wildlife Day.	Big cats - predators under threat.
4 March	National Security or Safety Day.	
8 th March	International Women"s Day and Mother"s day.	Press for Progress
9 th March	CISF Rising Day.	
15 th March	World Consumer Rights Day	Making digital marketplaces fairer
18 th March	Ordnance factories day	
20 th March	World Sparrow Day	I Love Sparrow
	International Day of Happiness	Share Happiness
21 st March	International Day of Forests (IDF)	Forests and Sustainable Cities.
	World Puppetry Day	
	World Poetry Day	
	International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination	Promoting tolerance, inclusion, unity and respect for diversity in the context of combating racial discrimination.
22 nd March	World Water Day	Nature for Water.

23 rd March	World Meteorological Day	Weather-Ready, Climate-Smart
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YASHSHREE COMPETITION ZONE

24 th March	World Tuberculosis Day	Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free world
25 th March	International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade	Remember Slavery: Triumphs and Struggles for Freedom and Equality
27 th March	World Theater Day	
31 st March	Financial year Ending	
2 nd Wednesday	No Smoking Day	

IMPORTANT BANKING NEWS

RBI

RBI Increases Currency Derivative Trade Limit to USD 100 Million:

- The Reserve Bank of India raised the exposure limit under Exchange Traded Currency Derivatives (ETCD) trading for residents and foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) to USD 100 million across all currency pairs involving the Indian rupee.
- The RBI's decision to raise the limit will help entities engaged in Forex transactions to maintain their currency risks in a better manner.
- Earlier, the RBI had imposed a limit of USD 15 million for USD-INR and USD 5 million for other currency pairs of Indian rupee with Euro, Japanese Yen and British Pound.

Separate limit of Interest Rate Futures (IRFs) for Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs):

The Reserve Bank of India has eased position limit in interest rate futures (IRFs) for foreign portfolio investors (FPIs). The banking regulator has allowed a limit of Rs. 5,000 crore for FPIs to go long in IRFs

- .
- An Interest Rate Futures contract is an agreement to buy or sell a debt instrument at a specified future date at a price that is fixed. The underlying security for Interest Rate Futures is either a Government Bond or a Treasury Bill.

RBI'S review on Currency Distribution & Exchange Scheme (CDES):

- The RBI has been providing several incentives to banks, from time to time for installation of various machines by them to encourage technology absorption in their currency operations for improved customer service.
- Therefore, on a review, it has been decided to withdraw the incentives which was being given to the banks for installation of Cash Recyclers and ATMs dispensing only lower denomination notes as contained in the Master Direction DCM.

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RBI Lifts Per-Borrower Loan Capitalization for MSMEs:

- In view of the increasing importance of the services sector and to encourage banks to lend more to this sector, the Reserve Bank of India has decided to do away with the per borrower loan limits to Micro/Small and Medium Enterprises (Services) for classification under priority sector lending.
- So far, loans to Micro/Small and Medium Enterprises (Services) up to Rs5 crore and Rs10 crore, respectively, were classified as priority sector lending (PSL).

RBI To Conduct Additional Repo Operations to Provide Liquidity Support To Banks:

- According to the Reserve Bank of India it will conduct additional variable rate repo operations for longer tenors upto 31 days every Tuesday in the month of March 2018 for Rs 25,000 crore each to provide additional liquidity support to banks.
- What this means is that the central bank is ready to provide liquidity aggregating Rs 1 lakh crore to the banking system in the current month.
- This move comes in the backdrop of a gradual tightening of liquidity in the banking system, which is facing a scenario whereby credit growth is outpacing deposit growth, and the approaching mid-March deadline for Indian Inc to make advance tax payments.

RBI Cancels Letters of Undertaking (LoUs) and Letters of Comfort (LoCs) for Trade Credits:

- The Reserve Bank of India has scrapped quasi bank guarantee instruments such as the Letter of Undertaking and Letter of Comfort that blew a Rs. 14,000 crore hole in the books of Punjab National Bank as the regulator attempts to plug a loophole and improve banks' due diligence in trade credit.
- Banks can continue to issue guarantees and letter of credit for trade purposes which are the international norm, and also have features that makes the claim on the issuer strong.

RBI asks its offices & all designated branches to keep their counters open up to 8 PM tomorrow for people's convenience:

- The RBI has decided that its offices and all designated branches of agency banks conducting government banking will keep their counters open up to 8.00 p.m. tomorrow for greater convenience to taxpayers.
- Electronic transactions can be also done till midnight tomorrow.
- In order to facilitate Government receipts and payments, necessary arrangements have been made to conduct special clearing operations across the country.
- Centralised payment systems, such as the RTGS and NEFT, will also be operational with the extended business hours.

SBI

RBI slaps Rs 40 lakh penalty on SBI for flouting fake note norms:

- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 40 lakh on State Bank of India for non-compliance of its directions on detection and impounding of counterfeit notes.
- An RBI notification issued from Mumbai today informs that the action is based on deficiencies in regulatory compliance found at two of the bank's currency chests.

SBI Reduces Charges On Non-Maintenance Of Minimum Balance:

- The country's largest lender, SBI has slashed charges for non-maintenance of Average Monthly Balance (AMB) in savings accounts by nearly 75 percent.
- The revised charges will be effective from April 01, 2018 and will benefit over 25 crore customers.
- The charges for non-maintenance of AMB for customers in Metro and Urban centers have been reduced from a maximum of Rs 50 per month to Rs 15 per month.
- Similarly, for Semi-Urban and Rural centers, the charges have been reduced from Rs 40 every month to Rs 12 and Rs 10 GST charges will be applicable over and above the rates specified above.

Slab	Existing Charge	New Charge
Urban Branch		
Shortfall of $\leq 50\%$	Rs.30 + GST	Rs. 10 + GST
Shortfall of > 50 to 75%	Rs. 40 + GST	Rs. 12 + GST
Shortfall of $> 75\%$	Rs. 50 + GST	Rs. 15 + GST
Semi Urban Branch		
Shortfall of $\leq 50\%$	Rs.20 + GST	Rs. 7.50 + GST
Shortfall of > 50 to 75%	Rs. 30 + GST	Rs. 10 + GST
Shortfall of $> 75\%$	Rs. 40 + GST	Rs. 12 + GST
Rural Branch		
Shortfall of $\leq 50\%$	Rs.20 + GST	Rs. 5 + GST
Shortfall of > 50 to 75%	Rs. 30 + GST	Rs. 7.5 + GST

SBI Tie-up with IMGIC to offer mortgage guarantee for non-salaried and self-employed home loan customers:

- India's largest lender SBI and India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation (IMGIC) signed a pact to offer mortgage guarantee scheme for prospective non-salaried and self-employed home loan customers.
- The offering will help increase home loan eligibility up to 15% within the regulatory norms. The MoU between SBI and IMGIC is a strategic initiative which will enable to improve housing loan volumes in the non-salaried segment.

Cheque books of six banks that merged with SBI to be invalid

- India's largest lender SBI has reminded its customers that cheque books of six banks that merged with it will become invalid after March 31.
- Customers of erstwhile associate banks and Bharatiya Mahila Bank have been asked to apply for new cheque books to avoid inconvenience.
- Customers can apply through Internet banking, mobile banking, ATM or by visiting their home branch.

State Bank of India to soon set up blockchain-based exchange for bad debts:

- State Bank of India will soon have a blockchain-based exchange for bad debts along with other banks, asset reconstruction companies and investors on the same infrastructure.
- India's largest public sector bank, which is also among the top 40 globally, will implement four or five blockchain-ready business solutions.
- With Indian banks saddled with an estimated \$210 billion of non-performing assets (NPAs), of which over \$30 billion are with SBI alone, a blockchain-based exchange will provide a common platform that will enable data-driven price discovery.

HDFC

HDFC Bank hikes lending rates:

- After State Bank of India and ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank has increased its marginal cost of fund based lending rate — the benchmark rate to which all the loans are linked.
- The second largest private sector lender has increased the one year MCLR by 10 bps to 8.30%, according to its website. The new rate came into effect from March 7, 2018.

HDFC Bank Signs MoU with Government E-Marketplace:

- Private sector lender HDFC Bank signed an agreement with the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) under which the bank will facilitate a host of services to the public procurement portal for Central and state government organizations.
- The MoU is significant as Government e-marketplace will bring transparency and efficiency in the procurement process with assured and timely payment to the sellers, HDFC Bank said in a statement.

INDUSIND BANK

IndusInd Bank And Ripple Tie-Up For Cross-Border Remittances:

- IndusInd Bank announced its partnership with Ripple (the enterprise blockchain solution for Global Payments) to facilitate payments into and out of India.

- With this affiliation, Ripple Net can now provide instant access in emerging markets such as India, Brazil and China.
- In 2017, India saw a total of \$65 billion move into the country and IndusInd Bank which has significant interests in cross-border remittances, plans to harness the power of Blockchain technology for facilitating global payments.

OTHER BANKING NEWS

Catholic Syrian Bank Ltd and Celebrus Capital Ltd signs For Online Trading Services:

- Catholic Syrian Bank Ltd and Celebrus Capital Ltd have announced a new partnership to offer CSB's customers online trading and Demat services.
- With this partnership, CSB's customers can open a Celebrus trading account free of cost and also enjoy preferred rates on brokerage charges/ AMC fees on the Demat account.
- The partnership will enable all CSB clients to open free Demat accounts through the Celebrus platform with in-depth research, allowing them to take wise investment decisions.

AIIB approves \$1.5 billion in loans to India for infrastructure projects:

- China-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved \$1.5 billion in loans to India for infrastructure-related projects in 2018.
- The funds will be used for investment in India's energy, roads and urban development projects.
- It also includes \$200 million commitment to India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) to spend on roads, housing and urban development. AIIB will let the Indian government decide how to use that money.

SBI hikes interest rates making home, auto loans costlier:

- India's largest lender SBI on Thursday increased marginal cost-based lending rates (MCLR) across most maturities, making home, education, and auto loans more expensive.
- The bank raised the key one-year MCLR rate to 8.15% from 7.95%, effective immediately.
- The move could lead to other banks increasing their benchmark lending rates, reports said.

PNB and ICICI Bank Increases MCLR Rates

- The Punjab National Bank (PNB) and ICICI Bank hiked the MCLR rates for loan borrowers.
- Taking a cue from SBI, country's second-largest private sector lender ICICI Bank also raised the one-year MCLR from 8.2% to 8.3%.
- The PNB, which is at the centre of Nirav Modi fraud, also increased one-year MCLR to 8.3% from 8.15%.

RBI slaps Rs.5 Cr fine on Airtel Payments Bank over KYC norms:

- The RBI has imposed a penalty of Rs.5 crore on Airtel Payments Bank for breaching Know Your Customer (KYC) norms.
- The fine was imposed after the RBI found it guilty of opening payments bank accounts of subscribers without their consent.
- More than 23 lakh customers reportedly received over Rs.47 crore in their payments accounts, which they didn't know were opened.

DCB Unveils „DCB Remits“:

- DCB Bank said it has introduced a remittance service „DCB Remit“ that will allow a resident Indian having a bank account in India to remit or send money online, globally.

ICICI Bank Launches Online Overdraft Facility „InstaOD“ For MSME Customers:

- ICICI Bank has launched instant overdraft ‘InstaOD’ facility for MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) customers in a completely online and paperless manner.
- Customers can get overdraft facility up to Rs 15 lakh for a year anytime, anywhere using the bank’s Internet and mobile banking app.
 - The new facility will enable a few lakh of pre-qualified current account customers of the bank to instantly avail of the facility without visiting a branch and submitting physical documents.
 - ICICI Bank will also offer the facility for instant online sanction of the overdraft facility to MSME customers of other banks shortly.

KVGB rolls out loan scheme ‘Vikas She Plus’ for women entrepreneurs

- Karnataka Vikas Grameena Bank (KVGB) has launched ‘Vikas She Plus’, a loan scheme for women to take up new ventures or for expanding/modifying the existing enterprises.
 - This scheme provides loan up to a maximum of Rs 2 lakh with a repayment period of 60 months.
 - The bank has disbursed loans amounting to Rs 22 crore to about 2,500 women beneficiaries on the day of launch itself.

IBBI Signs MoU With Reserve Bank Of India

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) signed an MoU with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The MoU was signed by Sudarshan Sen, Executive Director of the RBI and Dr. Mamta Suri, Executive Director of the IBBI during the 4th meeting of the Insolvency Law Committee (ILC) at New Delhi.
- Under the MoU, the RBI and the IBBI will work in partnership for the effective implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 and its allied rules and regulations.
- The MoU provides for sharing of information between the RBI and the IBBI, subject to the limitations imposed by the applicable laws.

Muthoot Finance Ties Up With Global IME Bank

- Muthoot Finance, the flagship company of Muthoot Group has tied up with Global IME Bank to expand its money remittance services between Indo Nepal Corridor.
- Muthoot Finance is the only NBFC to extend the money transfer services from India to Nepal.
- In FY16, Muthoot Finance had collaborated with Nepal based Prabhu Bank for money transfer business wherein the company completed 2.2 lakh transactions worth Rs 4.69 billion. With Global IME Bank, this is the company's second tie-up in the region.

Axis Bank announces new representative office in Sharjah

- Axis Bank on Sunday opened a representative office in Sharjah, to better serve its customers in the emirate and to expand its retail offerings to customers in the neighboring northern emirates.
- Shri Vipul, consul general of India in Dubai, inaugurated the representative office, which is the third such Axis Bank office in the UAE after Dubai and Abu Dhabi.
- The new office will not only service the non-resident Indian (NRI) community in the emirate, but will also help effectively service customers in the other emirates of Ajman, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah, and Fujairah.

Swiggy Partners with ICICI Bank

- Online Food ordering and delivery platform Swiggy has partnered with the country's largest private sector lender ICICI Bank to roll out two digital solutions to facilitate the transfer of funds for its delivery partners.

- This includes a Unified Payment Interface (UPI)-based solution for instant fund transfers and an option for facilitating cash deposits at automated Cash Deposit Machine (CDM) available at ICICI Bank branches and ATM locations across the country.

Allahabad Bank gets nod to amalgamate subsidiary with itself:

- Allahabad Bank has received approval from the Ministry of Corporate Affairs for merger of its fully-owned subsidiary All Bank Finance with itself.
- —The Scheme of Amalgamation for amalgamation of bank's wholly owned subsidiary namely All Bank Finance with the bank has been confirmed by the regional office (eastern region), Ministry of Corporate Affairs, vide their confirmation order dated March 14, 2018.
- Earlier in September last year, the bank had announced merging AllBank Finance with itself.
- All Bank Finance is engaged in fee-based services like debenture trusteeship, investment advisory and portfolio management, distribution of mutual fund schemes and security valuation, among others.

Equitas Bank ties up with CSK. Launches Yellow Army Savings Account:

- Equitas Small Finance Bank has launched a new 'Yellow Army Savings Account' to increase its customer base through its association with the Chennai Super Kings (CSK), a franchise of the Indian Premier League (IPL).
- The Chennai-based new entrant into the banking sector has joined the list of the companies that use IPL boom and their association with franchises to promote products.
- The yellow army savings account will offer an interest rate of six per cent per annum for balance below Rs10lakh and 6.5 per cent per annum for balance above Rs.10 lakh.

Lakshmi Vilas Bank, Fisdom team up for digital NPS:

- Bengaluru-based start-up Fisdom and Lakshmi Vilas Bank have entered into a partnership to enable investments in the National Pension Scheme (NPS) in a completely digital and paperless manner.
- Fisdom provides the NPS digitally through its mobile app with which any registered user can invest in the NPS within a couple of minutes.
- Under the partnership, the customers of LVB will be able to plan their investments under the pension scheme in accordance with their goals.
- The Fisdom app provides services such as getting KYC done, investing money in various instruments like mutual funds and pension funds, viewing account summary, and withdrawing invested money.

SWIFT expands GPI Tracker System to help Banks:

- The over Rs 13,000 crore fraud which has been unearthed at Punjab National Bank (PNB) was a case of misuse of non-linkage of bank's core-banking system (CBS) with SWIFT messaging system as a few PNB officials, in connivance with diamond jeweller Nirav Modi and his uncle Mehul Choksi of Gitanjali Gems, bypassed the reporting of global transactions to bank's CBS.
- SWIFT said GPI accounts for 10 percent of cross border payment traffic and is enabling more than a hundred billion dollars to be transferred across the world rapidly and securely every day.

Bandhan Bank becomes India's 8th most valued bank:

- Bandhan Bank, the new entrant on Dalal Street, which registered 27 per cent gain on the very first day of its market debut has become the 8th most valued bank in India leaving behind Bank of Baroda and Punjab National Bank.
- Meanwhile, HDFC Bank continues to be the most valued bank in India with a market capitalisation of nearly Rs 4.8

lakh crore followed by SBI and Kotak Mahindra Bank, which have a market value of Rs 2.02 lakh crore and Rs 1.98 lakh crore respectively.

USEFUL INFO	
Bandhan Bank Headquarters	Kolkata
CEO	Chandra Shekhar Ghosh

Exim Bank Extends \$500 Million Loan Facility To 15-Nation Group In South Africa:

- The Export-Import Bank, Exim Bank announced that it will provide a USD 500 million credit facility to Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to fund various development projects in western-south Africa.
- According to the Bank, with the signing of line of credit (LoC) agreement, the Bank till date has extended four LoCs to the Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) of West African States, taking the total value of LOCs to USD 1,000 million.
- The LoC of USD 500 million is an umbrella limit for financing developmental projects in 15-member countries.

RBI imposes Rs.59 crore penalty on ICICI Bank:

- The RBI has penalised India's third-largest lender ICICI Bank with Rs.58.9 crore for failing to comply with held-to-maturity (HTM) guidelines.
- The penalty is for non-compliance with directions issued on direct sale of securities from its HTM portfolio and specified disclosure in this regard.
- This is the highest penalty imposed by the RBI on a bank for a single incident.

USEFUL INFO	
ICICI Headquarters	Mumbai
CEO	Chanda Koacher

SEBI Allows Physical Settlement Of Stock Derivatives

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

Jana Small Finance Bank started its operations:

- Jana Small Finance Bank (formerly Janalakshmi Financial Services, India's leading micro-finance company), announced the commencement of its banking operations.
- To cover its extensive customer base, Jana Bank will initially open 19 branches across 18 states and expand to 200 banking outlets including the 25% unbanked rural branches by June 2018.

USEFUL INFO	
Jana Small Finance Bank Headquarters	Bangalore
MD & CEO	V S Radhakrishnan
Tagline	Likho Apni Kahaani

UCO Bank to merge branches in Hong Kong as it realigns overseas operations:

- Following the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s ban on letters of undertaking (LoU), Kolkata-based UCO Bank is planning to merge its two branches in Hong Kong.

- The country has the second highest number of foreign branches by Indian banks after the UK.
- The ban on LoUs has impacted the business of foreign branches, and they definitely think one branch in Hong Kong is enough to cater the needs of the region.
- Financing through LoUs and buyers credit has been a mainstay for most Indian banks in Hong Kong, accounting for close to 50 per cent of their business.
- But now, they are now being forced to realign operations involving trade financing the Indian diaspora.

Long Term Capital Gains Tax To Come Into Effect From 01st April:

- Several Budget proposals, including the reintroduction of the tax on long-term capital gains (LTCG) exceeding Rs 1 lakh from the sale of shares, will kick in from 01st April 2018, the beginning of the 2018-19 financial year.
- Besides, other tax proposals like the reduced corporate tax of 25 percent on businesses on a turnover of up to Rs 250 crore and a standard deduction of Rs 40,000 in lieu of transport allowance and medical reimbursement will come into effect from 01st April 2018.

Fino Payments Bank to deploy MPoS devices across 10,000 banking points:

- Fino Payments Bank has said it plans to deploy multi-utility Android-based mPoS (mobile point-of-sale) devices across 10,000 banking points in the country in a phased manner.
- The mPoS is a portable device with an in-built fingerprint scanner, card reader, camera, printer and a tablet, the payments bank said.
- The device will gradually replace the combination of devices currently used to facilitate fingerprint authentication and digital transactions.

Rivigo ties up with IDFC, YES Bank, for truck loans:

- Rivigo, a homegrown logistics start-up that owns as well as acts as an aggregator of trucks, is tying up with YES Bank, IDFC and 10 other financial institutions to make cheaper funds available to truck owners and operators on its platform.
- The funds will be available at an interest rate of 1-2 per cent per month, lower than the usual industry standard of 2-3 per cent.
- Instead of waiting for funds from their customers, they can get the money from the banks for duration of 30-60 days.

SEBI doubles investment limit of angel funds to Rs.10 crore

- Looking to provide an impetus to early-stage start-ups, markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Wednesday decided to double the investment limit by angel funds in venture capital undertakings to Rs.10 crore.
- In this fast changing ecosystem, where angels are investing much higher amounts, the increase is expected provide more opportunities to angel funds.
- The SEBI board has approved amendments to Alternative Investment Funds (AIF) regulations with respect to _Angel Funds.

IMPORTANT FINANCIAL & ECONOMY AFFAIRS

% Growth In Last year Foreign Exchange Earnings:

- Ministry of Tourism estimates monthly Foreign Exchange Earnings (FEEs) through Tourism in India, both in Rupee and Dollar terms based on the credit data of Travel Head from Balance of Payments of Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- FEEs during the month of January 2018 were Rs. 17,725 crore as compared to Rs. 16,135 crore in January 2017.
- The growth rate in FEEs in rupee terms in January 2018 over January 2017 was 9.9%, compared to the growth of

18.0% in January 2017 over January 2016.

India To Grow 7.6% In 2018: Moody's

- Moody's Investors Service estimated that India will grow 7.6% in the calendar year 2018 and 7.5% in 2019, amid signs of economic recovery from the impact of demonetisation and GST.
- In its global growth forecasts for 2018 and 2019, Moody's stated the Budget for fiscal year beginning April 1 (2018-19) includes some measures to stabilise rural economy that was disproportionately hit by the scrapping of high denomination 500 and 1000 rupee notes.

Centre Approves Rs 2900 Crore To Make Cities Safer For Women:

- Women and Child Development Ministry has approved projects worth over Rs 2,900 crore under the Nirbhaya fund for eight major cities to make them safer for women.
- These cities are Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmadabad and Lucknow.
- The decision was taken after a meeting of Empowered Committee, which is headed by Women and Child Development Secretary.

SanDisk unveils world's fastest 400 GB MicroSD card:

- SanDisk has unveiled the world's fastest MicroSD card called Extreme UHS-I MicroSDXC with 400 GB of storage.
- The company claims the card can achieve read speeds of up to 160 Mbps and write speeds of up to 90 Mbps.
- As per the internal tests, the card is shock-proof, temperature-proof, waterproof, x-ray-proof, and compatible with most devices.

Flipkart invests Rs.414 crore in fashion retailer Myntra:

- Flipkart's Singapore-based subsidiary FK Myntra Holdings has invested Rs.414 crore in fashion marketplace Myntra Design, according to filings.
- This comes after the e-commerce giant recently infused Rs.1,147.5 crore in its online fashion retailer Myntra Jabong Private Limited.
- Earlier, Flipkart's Singapore entity invested about Rs. 4,472 crore in its wholesale arm 'Flipkart India Private Limited'.

Govt sanctions Rs.1000 crore for research innovation programme:

- The government has sanctioned Rs.1,000 crore for the phase two of the Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT) India programme, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar said.
- Projects will cover domains like defence, information technology, and energy. A total of 142 projects at a cost of Rs.318.71 crore are already being implemented under the IMPRINT-I Programme.

Received SEBI nod as registered Investment Adviser: Paytm

- Financial services platform Paytm today said its wholly-owned subsidiary, Paytm Money, has received approval of market regulator SEBI to become a registered Investment Advisor.

TCS ranked as the fastest growing IT services brand in 2018:

- Leading global IT services organisation, Tata Consultancy Services was named as the fastest growing IT services brand in the world in an assessment done by leading brand valuation firm, Brand Finance.
- According to Brand Finance IT Services 15 annual report for 2018, TCS now has a total brand value of USD 10.391

billion; a growth of 14.4 percent from last year.

CSO projects the growth of GDP to be 6.6 per cent in 2017-18

- As per the Second Advance estimates released by Central Statistics Office (CSO) the growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to be 6.6 per cent in 2017-18, which is same as the annual average GDP growth rate during last 30 years, starting from 1987-88 to 2016-17.

Visra Announces Acquisition of Global Expandia in Indonesia

- Visra, one of the world's leading corporate service providers of international incorporations, trust, fiduciary, private office, international expansion and fund administration services, has acquired Global Expandia, a Jakarta based firm providing market entry and other related services to foreign-owned investors operating in Indonesia.
- This acquisition adds to Visra growing global footprint for International Expansion services by establishing a presence in Indonesia, the largest economy in Southeast Asia, which is an attractive market for local and foreign businesses.

Airtel to raise Rs.16,500 crore to refinance debt:

- India's largest telecom operator Bharti Airtel on Monday received board approval to raise up to Rs.16,500 crore for refinancing debt and for paying spectrum liabilities.
- Airtel had a consolidated net debt of Rs.91,714 crore as of December last year. The company will now approach shareholders for final approval of the proposed raising of debt.

Digital transactions in India may hit \$1 trillion annually by 2025:

- By 2025, digital transactions in India could be worth \$1 trillion annually, according to a report by ACI Worldwide and AGS Transact Technologies.
- The user base for digital transactions is currently about 90 million, but could triple to 300 million by 2020.
- The country's smartphone user base will also likely double to 500 million by 2020, the report added.

BHEL Secures Order worth Rs 736 Crore from NPCIL:

- The public sector Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has secured significant orders worth 736 crores Rs. after competitive bidding, for supplying Steam Generators for the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL).
- The generators will be manufactured at the Tiruchirapalli plant of BHEL and will be installed at the Pressurized Heavy Water Reactor (PHWR), Gorakhpur, Haryana.

World Bank Projects India's GDP Growth At 7.3% IN 2018-19:

- After falling below 7% in 2017-18, India's economic growth may rise to 7.3% in 2018-19.
- India's GDP growth is projected to reach 6.7% in 2017-18, 7.3% in 2018-19 and 7.5% in 2019-20, according to the report.

India's GDP will touch 7.3% in next fiscal: Fitch

- Rating agency Fitch has projected India's economic growth to rise to 7.3% next fiscal and further to 7.5% in 2019-20.
- The agency said the disruptions related to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) rollout in July 2017 has gradually diminished.
- It added the currency in circulation recovered to its pre-demonetisation level in mid-2017 and is now increasing steadily.

SEBI Raises Currency Derivative Trade Limit To \$100 Million:

- Capital markets regulator SEBI raised the exposure limit under exchange-traded currency derivatives trading for residents and FPIs to USD 100 million across all currency pairs involving the Indian rupee.
- The move will help entities engaged in Forex transactions to maintain their currency risks in a better manner.

UN Issues \$951 Million Appeal For Rohingya Refugees:

- The United Nations has issued an appeal for 951 million Dollars to meet the needs of nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh.
- Over the months since the most recent Rohingya influx began, it has become the world's fastest-growing refugee crisis with tens of thousands fleeing by land and sea daily from Myanmar's northern Rakhine state at the peak of the emergency.
- So far, the emergency response from September 2017 to February 2018 has received 321 million Dollars of the 434 million required.

GIC Re to Operate from Lloyd's in London:

- General Insurance Corporation is going to start operations at the Lloyd's London office in April 2018 thereby increasing its share of international business. This will also facilitate Indian becoming a regional reinsurance center.
- This will help GIC Re increase its share of international reinsurance business. The company had received approval to set up a syndicate at Lloyd's of London in December 2017. GIC Syndicate 1947 will be the first Lloyd's syndicate to be backed solely by capital from an Indian reinsurance group.

Agricultural credit target for FY 2018-19 up to Rs 11 lakh crore:

- The government has fixed the agriculture credit target of 11 lakh crore rupees for the year 2018-19 against last year's target of 10 lakh crore rupees.
- The government fixes agriculture credit disbursement targets for the banking sector every year and banks have consistently surpassed these targets.
- With a view to ensuring agriculture credit at a reduced interest rate of 7 per cent per annum to farmers, the government is implementing an interest subvention scheme for short-term crop loans up to three lakh rupees.
- The scheme provides interest subvention of two per cent per annum to banks on use of their own resources.
- Besides, additional three per cent incentive is being given to the farmers for prompt repayment of the loan thereby reducing the effective rate of interest to four per cent.

New India Assurance launched mediclaim policy named 'New India Global Mediclaim Policy':

- New India Assurance Company, India's largest non-life insurance company, on Tuesday launched a comprehensive worldwide mediclaim policy named 'New India Global Mediclaim Policy'.
- The policy will cover an insured's hospitalization expenses for treatments like cancer, neurosurgery, heart surgery, organ transplant and bone marrow transplant in hospitals outside India.
- There are two major plans, one covering hospitalisation at medical centres in Asian countries, and another which offers the same service, worldwide.
- The medical coverage plan in Asian countries offers a lifetime cover of \$1 million and the worldwide lifetime coverage insures an individual for \$2 million.

SEBI Allows Physical Settlement Of Stock Derivatives

- The stock market regulator Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has allowed physical settlement of both

stock options and stock futures. At present only cash settlement of derivatives is allowed.

- SEBI stated stock exchanges will also have the flexibility to offer a combination of cash settlement for stock options and physical settlement for stock or physical settlement for stock options and the cash settlement for stock futures.

Cabinet Approves Rs 4,500 Crore To Boost Development Projects In North-East:

- Cabinet has approved Schemes of North Eastern Council (NEC) including the continuation of existing Schemes. It will boost the development projects in North-East. Four thousand five crore rupees have been approved for the scheme for three years up to March 2020.
- The Scheme of NEC- Special Development Project will be changed to be a Central Sector Scheme with 100 percent grant.

IMPORTANT STATE WISE NATIONAL NEWS

Andhra Pradesh

Capital – Amravati; CM – Chandrababu Naidu; Governor - Ekkadu Srinivasan Lakshmi Narasimhan

V P Reddy files nomination for Rajya Sabha from AP

- Industrialist Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy today filed his nomination as the YSR Congress candidate for the biennial election to the Rajya Sabha from Andhra Pradesh.

Andhra Pradesh Stands At 51st Position In Global Multidimensional Poverty Index:

- Andhra Pradesh stands at equivalent to 51st rank globally in Multidimensional Poverty Index (2017) according to a recent household survey conducted in the state.
- Andhra Pradesh becomes the first Indian state to conduct an exclusive household survey at state and district level to estimate the multidimensional poverty of the state.
- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu launched the Andhra Pradesh Multidimensional Poverty (MPI) Index Report 2017. As per the report Andhra Pradesh has an index value of 0.0825 whereas India as at 66th position with an index value of 0.1911.

Andhra Pradesh Government launches NAIPUNYA RATHAM or World on Wheels:

- The Andhra Pradesh Government launched, NAIPUNYA RATHAM or World on Wheels, a multi-utility vehicle which aims to bring technology to the remote corners.
- It was launched at the Secretariat in Amaravathi. Chief Minister N.Chandrababu Naidu announces that the Government will roll out 12 more Naipunya Rathams by May this year.
- As part of the Smart village Smart Ward Programme, the Naipunya Rathaams will facilitate and look to improve digital literacy, digital skills and create an awareness on various government schemes that are underway in the new state of Andhra Pradesh.

Andhra CM inaugurates International Yachting Festival:

- Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu flagged off the International Yachting Festival in Visakhapatnam.
- The festival, which is being held from March 29 to April 1, was inaugurated in the presence of IT minister Nara Lokesh, HRD minister Ganta Srinivasarao and other local MLAs.
- This International Yachting Festival is the first step in developing sea tourism in Visakhapatnam.

Arunachal Pradesh

Capital – Itanagar; CM – PremaKhandu; Governor - B D Mishra

Itanagar Celebrates Silver Jubilee Of Losar Festival:

- The Buddhist Community of Itanagar celebrated the silver jubilee of the Losar Festival in Arunachal Pradesh. The three-day festival, organized by the Itanagar Buddhist Cultural Society (IBCS) was celebrated with a lot of enthusiasm and traditional zeal.
- For the Buddhist community, the festival is termed as the 'New Year' according to their Buddhist calendar.

Government Committed to giving Andhra Pradesh a special package

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said that Centre is committed to give Andhra Pradesh a special package equivalent to a special category state.
- Talking to a news agency, the union minister also said that govt. has been endlessly waiting for the state government to revert on mechanism of receiving it.

Gujarat

Capital: Gandhinagar; CM: Vijay Rupani; Governor: Om Prakash Kohli

Gujarat going to start India's first coastal policing academy by next month:

- The Union home ministry recently sanctioned the launch of the National Academy of Coastal Policing (NACP) from a campus of Gujarat's Fisheries Research Centre located in coastal Okha in the newly created Devbhoomi Dwarka district.
- An official order, accessed by PTI, said the first-of-its-kind institution of the country will be created and run by a multi-agency team of paramilitary and defence forces and sharpen the response and skills of the marine forces of multiple states which have sea lines.

Assam

Capital – Dispur; CM – Sarbananda Sonowal; Governor - Jagdish Mukhi

Assam govt starts construction of 1 lakh toilets under Swachh Bharat Mission

- The Assam government started construction of one lakh toilets today across the state under the Swachh Bharat Mission. The toilets will be completed in 10 days. Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and the PHE Minister, Rhino Daimary attended the central programme at Morigaon district.
- The Assam government has planned to make the state ODF within this year. Our Correspondent reports that 5 districts have already been declared free from open defecation.

Assam: Rhino census at world heritage site Kaziranga National Park begins:

- In Assam, the rhino census at the world heritage site Kaziranga National Park began this morning. Official sources said the census will conclude tomorrow.
- The result of the survey will be known on the 28th of this month. Nearly 350 enumerators, including senior Forest officials and wildlife experts, have been engaged in the exercise.

- The entire park has been divided into 74 compartments. As per the last census, 2401 rhinos were found at the Kaziranga National Park conducted in 2015.

Assam Government launches „181“ women helpline number:

- The Assam government on Thursday launched 181-Sakhi toll free women helpline‘ at Dispur for woman to lodge complaints related to domestic violence, sexual harassment, dowry cases, eve-teasing in public/work places etc.
- Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the helpline at a programme at Janata Bhawan here.
- Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Sonowal expressed serious concern over recent spurt of crimes against women in the state

Bihar

Capital – Patna; CM – Nitish Kumar; Governor – Satya Pal Malik

Bihar Governor Satya Pal Malik has given additional charge as Governor of Odisha:

- Bihar Governor Satya Pal Malik has been given additional charge as the Governor of Odisha. A communique issued by the President's Secretariat said Mr Malik will discharge the additional functions until regular arrangements are made.
- Dr SC Jamir, who is the present Odisha governor, is completing his tenure today.

Gujarat

Capital: Gandhinagar; CM: Vijay Rupani; Governor: Om Prakash Kohli

Free wifi unveiled in Gujarat's Udwada village

- To further push Digital India revolution in country's far flung villages, free wifi service unveiled in Udwada village in Gujarat's Valsad district; I&B Minister picked the village for development under the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana.
- Giving a boost to digital revolution in far flung areas across the country is one of the top priorities of the government.

Surat Becomes 1st District To Have 100% Solar Powered Health Centres:

- Gujarat's Surat district has become the first district in the country to have 100 percent solar powered Primary Health Centers (PHC).

- There are a total of 52 PHCs in the district and all of them are now powered by the solar system. This initiative will not only bring down the electricity bill by 40 percent but also help fight global warming.

Goa

Capital: Panaji; CM: Manohar Parrikar; Governor: Mridula Sinha

Shigmotsav 2018 Celebrated In Goa:

- Shigmotsav or Shigmo is one of the several cultural festivals of the coastal state and is celebrated through colours, costumes, music, dance and parades in Goa.
- Shigmo parades offer glimpses of Goan life depicted through folk dance and music performances by locals. It is marked by long processions and festivities on the streets and is a major draw for tourists and locals.

Nitin Gadkari inaugurates Inland Ferry Services in Goa:

- Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated the Inland ferry services in the port city of Vasco in Goa.
- The Minister said that while addressing the needs of the poor, environment and ecosystem must be given its due priority.
- To achieve this, all the stakeholders need to make a concerted decision and action.

Haryana

Capital – Chandigarh; CM Manohar Lal Khattar; Governor - Kaptan Singh Solanki

India's first Aviation Multi Skill Development Centre launched in Chandigarh

- India's first Aviation Multi Skill Development Centre (MSDC) was launched at Chandigarh Airport's old terminal.
- The Centre is a CSR initiative of Airports Authority of India (AAI) and will initially train 2,360 students free of cost in three years.

Gurugram's first cyber crime police station inaugurated

- Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority on Wednesday inaugurated the district's first cyber crime police station where cyber crime victims can lodge complaints.
- The station will have 35 trained personnel and equipment for forensics and call detail analysis to investigate the crimes, police said. It will act as a centralised monitoring system for all types of online and tech-related crimes.

Haryana's Mewat is India's most backward district:

- The NITI Aayog has released a preliminary ranking for the 101 most backward districts of India that have signed up for the Narendra Modi government's 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' programme.
- Haryana's Mewat is the lowest-ranked among these backwards districts, while Andhra Pradesh's Vizianagaram is the best-performing district of the 101.
- Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon and Maharashtra's Osmanabad lie second and third on the top of the table.

Jammu & Kashmir

Capital – Jammu (Winter) Srinagar (Summer); CM - Mehbooba Mufti Sayeed; Governor - Narinder Nath Vohra

BHEL Commissions 1st Unit Of Kishanganga Hydro Project In Jammu & Kashmir:

- BHEL has commissioned 1st unit of 110 MW of the Kishanganga hydroelectric project (HEP) of NHPC in Jammu and Kashmir. Located on the river Kishanganga, a tributary of the Jhelum in Bandipora district, all the three units of the 340 MW project will generate 1,350 million units (MU) of clean electricity annually.
- The other two units are also in advanced stages of commissioning. In J&K, Bhel has so far commissioned 31 Hydro sets with a cumulative capacity of 1,257 MW.

Asia's Largest Tulip Garden in Srinagar Opens for Visitors:

- Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden was opened for visitors in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir. It is recognized as the Asia's largest tulip garden.
- This year, 12.5 lakh tulip bulbs of 48 varieties were sown in the garden by the floriculture department. Apart from the tulips, 40,000 hyacinth bulbs have also been planted.

Sachin sanctions Rs.40 lakh for school construction in Kashmir:

- Former cricketer and MP Sachin Tendulkar has sanctioned Rs.40 lakh from his Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme fund for construction of a school building in Drugmulla area in Jammu and Kashmir.
- Sachin has requested for 10 classrooms, four laboratories, administrative block, six toilets and an assembly/prayer hall in the school.

Irfan Pathan becomes coach-cum-mentor of J&K cricket team:

- Indian all-rounder Irfan Pathan has been appointed as the coach-cum-mentor of Jammu and Kashmir senior state side for the 2018-2019 domestic season.
- Irfan Pathan, who has played 29 Tests, 120 ODIs and 24 T20Is for India, was unsold in the IPL auction in January.
- He was axed from Baroda captaincy and team after two rounds of Ranji Trophy last season.

Jharkhand

Capital – Ranchi; CM - Raghubar Das ; Governor - Draupadi Murmu

Centre approves to set up a plastic park in Deoghar district of Jharkhand:

- Centre has approved to set up a plastic park in Deoghar district of Jharkhand. The park is being set up at an estimated cost of 120 crore rupees and is spread over 150 acres of land.
- Briefing reporters in New Delhi, Chemical and Fertilisers Minister Ananth Kumar said, the park will provide six thousand direct employments and 30 thousand indirect employment for the people.
- He said Centre will also set up a plastic refining unit in the same area at the cost of 3.5 crore rupees.

Maharashtra

Capital – Mumbai; CM – Devendra Fadnavis; Governor – Vidyasagar Rao

1st Mega Food Park Inaugurated In Maharashtra:

- The first Mega Food Park in the state of Maharashtra Satara Mega Food Park Pvt. Ltd. at Village Degaon, District Satara was inaugurated by Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Union Minister of Food Processing Industries.

Maharashtra govt ties up with Wikipedia to promote Marathi:

- In a first, the Maharashtra government has announced collaboration with online encyclopedia Wikipedia to promote Marathi globally and increase its online usage.
- The move is aimed at providing Marathi-speaking people a single platform to interact and help reach Maharashtra people who have settled abroad.
- They will be encouraged to write about their profession in their native language.

Mumbai is now the 16th Most Expensive City in the World

- According to the Knight Frank Wealth Report 2018, Mumbai ranks 16th among the top 20 costliest cities in the world. Delhi, Chennai and Bengaluru feature among the top 100 cities in the list.

Mumbai gets 47th spot on global city wealth index says report:

- An independent global property consultancy, in a city wealth index report, ranked India's financial capital Mumbai at 47th spot out of 314 cities across the globe.
- As per the Knight Frank's Wealth Report 2018, the 'city wealth index' takes into consideration four major indicators for ranking - Wealth, investments, lifestyle and future.

Navi Mumbai junctions get buttons to change traffic signal:

- In a first, the Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation has installed pedestrian push buttons at certain junctions, allowing pedestrians to change the traffic signal.
- Traffic signals on all four sides of the junction will carry the push buttons. Once the pedestrians push the buttons, the signal will turn red for vehicles and will change to the green pedestrian sign.

PM Modi Lays Foundation Stone Of Navi Mumbai Airport

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the Navi Mumbai International Airport site in Panvel, nearly 21 years after it was mooted.
- The first phase the Rs 16,700-crore project is expected to be completed by 2019. This is the country's largest greenfield airport. Navi Mumbai airport will have capacity of handling 60 million passengers.

Piyush Goyal inaugurates Andheri-Goregaon Harbour Line section:

- The long wait of rail commuters to board a train on the harbor line from Andheri to Goregaon ended today with the inaugural run train service.
- Railway Minister Piyush Goyal inaugurated the Andheri-Goregaon harbor line at an event held at the Goregaon station last night.
- Inaugurating the line, Railway Minister said the harbor line will be further extended till Borivali. He added the Union government has undertaken Rs 54,777 crore-worth projects for improving the railway infrastructure in Mumbai.

Manipur

Capital – Imphal; CM – Biren Singh; Governor – Najma A Heptulla

Sajibu Nongma Panba Cheiraoba celebrated in Manipur

- The traditional festival of Sajibu Nongma Panba Cheiraoba was celebrated in Manipur on 18th March to mark the beginning of a new year.
- The festival is mainly observed on the first lunar day of the lunar month Sajibu (March/April) by the Meitei community, a majority ethnic group of Manipur.

Madhya Pradesh

Capital –Bhopal; CM - Shivraj Singh Chouhan; Governor – Anandiben Patel

Chief Minister Shivraj promises Pucca house for all laborers in Madhya Pradesh by 2022:

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan a state-wide campaign will be launched from April 1-14 for registration of unorganized laborers.
- Also, Pucca houses will be constructed for all laborers registered under Chief Minister's Unorganized Laborer Welfare Scheme by the year 2022.
- The landholder laborers with less than 2.5-acre land can also get registered under the Chief Minister's Unorganized Laborer Welfare Scheme on the condition that they are not income tax payers.

Madhya Pradesh Has The Highest Number Of Tribal Population In The Country:

- Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of 55770 fully covered tribal habitations with the safe drinking water in the country followed by Odisha and Jharkhand.
- The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has informed that under the Scheme _National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), 10% of the total allocation of funds is earmarked to be used for the supply of drinking water to Scheduled Tribe (ST) dominated habitations.

MP hikes retirement age for govt employees from 60 to 62 yrs:

- Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced the state has increased the retirement age for government employees from 60 to 62 years.
- Chouhan said the decision has been taken to ensure that all employees receive their due promotions.
- He added that several promotions are kept on hold as a case regarding reservations in promotion is pending with the SC.

Madhya Pradesh's Kadaknath chicken gets Geographical Indication tag:

- Kadaknath, a chicken breed whose black meat is in demand in Madhya Pradesh has got the coveted Geographical Indications (GI) tag label.
- The protein-rich meat of Kadaknath, chicks and eggs are sold at a much higher rate than other varieties of chicken.
- Chennai-based GI Registry accepted the application of Gramik Vikas Trust, Jhabua, which was filed in 2012.

Meghalaya

Capital –Shillong; CM - Conrad Sangma; Governor – Ganga Prasad

Conrad Sangma Elected As Next Meghalaya CM:

- National People's Party (NPP) President Conrad Sangma will be the new chief minister of Meghalaya. There would be no deputy chief minister for the state.
- He will replace Mukul Sangma.

Krem Puri: World's longest sandstone cave discovered in Meghalaya

- The world's longest sandstone cave named Krem Puri was discovered near Laitsohum village in Mawsynram area in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.
- The cave is 24,583 metres (24.5 km) in length and is known for its complex cave systems hidden under its undulating

hills.

- It was discovered in 2016 but its actual length was found during expedition to measure and map it by Meghalaya Adventurers' Association (MAA).

Nagaland

Capital – Kohima; CM - Neiphiu Rio; Governor – PB Acharya

Neiphiu Rio Appointed As Nagaland CM:

- Nagaland Governor PB Acharya has appointed Neiphiu Rio as the new Chief Minister of the state. Mr Rio will replace TR Zeliang.
- The Governor has received letters of support in favour of Rio from MLAs of BJP, JD (U) and an Independent besides NDPP legislators.

Ptilomera Nagalanda: New species of water strider found in Nagaland:

- Scientists from Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have discovered new species of water strider named Ptilomera nagalanda Jehamalar and Chandra in Nagaland. It was found in river Intanki in Peren district of Nagaland. This newly discovered species belongs to Ptilomera agriodes genus. It measures about 11.79 mm and has long slender legs. It has orange with black stripes on dorsal side and pale yellowish brown ventral part of body.

New Delhi

Capital – New Delhi; CM - Arvind Kejriwal; Governor – Anil Bijal

Delhi Police launches all-women patrolling squad:

- The South Delhi Police launched an all-women patrolling squad to ensure safety of women at public places on the eve of International Women's Day.
- Named 'Knightingales', the squad has 16 members aged 20-35 years in the ranks of constables and inspectors.
- The squad has been given training in unarmed combat, weapon handling, and driving, officials said.

Switch to e-vehicles: Govt to all departments, PSUs in Delhi:

- The Power Ministry has directed all central government departments and PSUs in the National Capital Region to switch to e-vehicles for local use.
- The move comes as the government plans to have 30% of the total vehicle fleet in the country running on batteries by 2030.
- Charging facilities for such vehicles are being installed at various locations.

Delhi to buy 350MW power from wind farms:

- In a first, Delhi's power distribution companies will procure 350 MW of power from wind farms to meet the city's energy demands.
- Following the procurement, wind energy will have the highest share among all the renewable sources used by Delhi.
- The city will reportedly procure the power from wind stations located in Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.

Delhi government announces new scheme to reduce dust:

- Announcing a slew of initiatives, including the launch of 'landscaping of PWD roads' to reduce dust and installation of LED street lights, the Delhi government allocated over Rs 846 crore to the PWD for 2018-19 fiscal.
- The allocation translates into an increase of 4.75 per cent compared to the previous budget estimate of Rs 800 crore.
- "The scheme 'landscaping of PWD roads' initiates edge-to-edge paving or greening and beautification of all PWD roads.

International Yoga Fest concludes on enthusiastic note:

- The International Yoga Festival ended on an enthusiastic note in New Delhi.
- The three-day fest was a Curtain Raiser for this year's International Day of Yoga celebrations.
- More than 5,700 delegates from across the country and abroad participated in the Fest.

Orissa

Capital – Bhubaneswar; CM – Naveen Patnaik; Governor – S C Jamir

Chilika Lake Is The Largest Habitat Of Irrawaddy Dolphins Globally:

- The Chilika Lake in Odisha has emerged as the single largest habitat of Irrawaddy dolphins in the world with the spotting of 155 such animals, according to the Chilika Development Authority (CDA).
- The first ever 'Annual Monitoring' was conducted by the CDA to count the number of the marine mammals and to study the hydrological impacts of removal of pen culture (locally known as gherries).

Odisha Launches 'KHUSHI' Scheme To Provide Free Sanitary Pads:

- The Odisha government launched KHUSHI scheme to provide free sanitary napkins to school girls across the state. The scheme will be implemented by the health and family welfare department of the state at a cost of 70 crore per year.
- Under the scheme, the state will provide free sanitary napkins to 17 lakh girls studying in Classes 6 to 12 in government and government-aided schools.

Odisha Govt Launches 'Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas' Programme:

- The Odisha government has launched a programme Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas (Our Village, our development) to reach out to the people in rural areas and involve themselves in the developmental activities.
- Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has flagged off mobile video vans for 'Ama Gaon Ama Vikas' programme that will move across the State to highlight various welfare schemes at villages in the state.

Rajasthan

Capital – Jaipur; CM – Vasundhara Raje Scindia; Governor - Kalyan Singh

Rajasthan going to introduce uniforms in colleges:

- The Rajasthan government has introduced uniform for college students in the state.
- The Rajasthan education minister further clarified that they have not issued any direction on the colour of the uniform that the colleges allow. —In the end, students have to decide.

Rajasthan Passes Bill To Award Death Penalty For Those Who Rape Girls Under 12 Years Of Age:

- Rajasthan assembly has passed an amendment bill awarding death penalty for convicts involved in the rape of girls below 12 years of age.
- State Home Minister Gulab Chand Kataria introduced 'The Criminal Laws (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill, 2018' in the assembly, which was passed in the House by a voice vote following a debate.
- The new amendment added sections 376-AA and 376-DD to the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

Rajasthan Government announces 2% hike in DA:

- The Rajasthan government announced a 2 per cent hike in dearness allowance and relief for the state's employees and pensioners, respectively.
- The increase of dearness allowance (DA) to employees and dearness relief to pensioners will come into effect from January 1, 2018.
- This is expected to benefit around 8 lakh employees and 3.5 lakh pensioners.

Harsimrat Kaur Badal to inaugurate Rajasthan's first mega food park in Ajmer:

- Union Food Processing Industries Minister Smt. Harsimrat Kaur Badal will inaugurate the first mega food park at Roopangarh Village in Ajmer, Rajasthan.
- The Food Park is being set up at a cost of Rs 113.57 crore and will benefit around 25,000 farmers in Ajmer as well as neighboring districts.

Tamilnadu

Capital – Chennai; CM – Edapadi Palanisamy; Governor – Banwarilal Prabhut.

Tamil Nadu launches 24 hour helpline for students:

- Chief Minister K Palaniswami formally launched the toll-free number 14417 through the 24-hour Education Guidance Centre set up at the Secretariat that would offer information relating to school education and offer guidance to students.
- Palaniswami launched the facility at a function, following the announcement in the Assembly that a toll-free helpline would be set up at Rs 2 crore.
- Earlier, the Education Minister K A Sengottaiyan had informed that a special student helpline shall be set up. This would serve as a platform where students and parents can get their grievances addressed, career guidance will also be provided for higher secondary students.

India's first Insect Museum Opened In Tamil Nadu:

- A Rs 5 crore insect museums with the state-of-the-art amenities was unveiled by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswamy at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.
- The museum, established at a 6,691 sqft area, is fully dedicated to insects and is first of its kind in the country.
- It would display insects preserved as specimens as also live ones depicting their different developmental stages, images, videos and models of their unique behavior, habits, and habitats.

Telangana

Capital – Hyderabad; CM – K. Chandrashekar Rao; Governor – Ekkadu Srinivasan Lakshmi Narasimhan

Telangana CM plans to launch 'federal front' on April 27:

- Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao plans to launch a "federal front" - a non-Congress, non-BJP

alternative at the national level - on the Telangana Rashtra Samiti's foundation day on April 27.

Telangana announces holiday for female staff on Women's Day:

- The Telangana government has announced a casual leave on March 8 for its female employees on the occasion of International Women's Day.
- Meanwhile, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has also announced that it will deploy an all-women staff on at least one of its toll booths in every state and Union Territory.

Telangana Launches India's 1st State-Led Incubator For Women

- The government of Telangana launched Women Entrepreneurship Hub (WE-Hub), India's first state-led incubator for women entrepreneurs.
- The incubator will help women entrepreneurs establish their own enterprises by providing services including seed funding, mentoring, and business guidance.
- Deepthi Ravula is heading the incubator as its Chief Executive Officer.

Telangana to make Telugu mandatory in schools till Class 10:

- The Telangana government has decided to make Telugu a mandatory subject till Class 10 in all public and private schools.
- "We decided to make Telugu a compulsory subject as it is our responsibility to respect our mother tongue and our culture," CM K Chandrashekar Rao said.
- The course should have content that inculcates ethical values among the children, he added.

Tripura

Capital – Agartala; CM – Biplab Kumar Deb; Governor – Tathagata Roy

Biplab Deb to Be Tripura's New Chief Minister:

- The Bharatiya Janata Party has named the party's State president Biplab Kumar Deb as the chief ministerial candidate for Tripura. He will replace Manik Sarkar. Jishnu Devvarma has been named for Deputy Chief Minister.
- The decision was announced after the meeting of BJP Legislature Party in Agartala. The swearing-in ceremony is likely to be held on March 8.

Uttar Pradesh

Capital – Lucknow; CM – Yogi Adityanath; Governor – Ram Naik

PM Modi, French President Macron Jointly Inaugurate Solar Power Plant At Mirzapur In UP:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and visiting French President Emmanuel Macron jointly inaugurated 101-megawatt solar power plant at Dadar Kala village in Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh.
- The largest solar project in the country has been set up by French company ENGIE.
- The company was awarded the project in 2016 with the cost of Rs. 680 crore. Solar Energy Corporation of India has signed Power purchase agreement for 25 years with the company.

PM Modi Launches Number Of Schemes For Poor In Varanasi:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched a number of schemes for the poor in Varanasi and emphasized on harnessing solar energy for cooking.

- PM Modi laid the foundation stone of various development projects worth over Rs. 800 crores in Varanasi.

UP saw most communal violence cases in 2017 with 195 cases:

- Uttar Pradesh witnessed the maximum incidents of communal violence across India in 2017 as 195 of the total 822 cases were reported from the state, MoS for Home Hansraj Gangaram Ahir has said.
- Karnataka witnessed 100 such cases, he told the Lok Sabha. In 2016, UP recorded the maximum of 162 communal incidents out of 703 cases reported across India.

UP Government has released 'Ek Saal-Naee Misal' for highlighting its achievements:

- To mark the completion of its first year in office, the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh would release a film and a booklet highlighting its achievements today.
- A programme will be held at the Lok Bhawan in Lucknow to mark the occasion and Chief Minister Adityanath will be attending it, an Uttar Pradesh government spokesperson said.
- The film 'Ek Saal-Naee Misal' will be screened and a booklet with the same title will be released at the programme.

Karnataka

Capital – Bengaluru; CM – Sidharamaya; Governor - Vajubai Rudubai Vala

World's largest solar park inaugurated in Karnataka:

- The world's largest solar park, Shakti Sthala, was inaugurated in Karnataka's Pavagada by Karnataka CM Sidharamaya and state Power Minister DK Shivakumar.
- The park has a 2000-MW capacity and was built at a cost of Rs.16, 500 crore, over 13,000 acres across five villages. Instead of a land acquisition deal, farmers will get Rs.21, 000 per acre as rental.

Karnataka Inaugurated 'Arogya Karnataka':

- Karnataka Chief Minister Sidharamaya unveiled a healthcare scheme named 'Arogya Karnataka' (Healthy Karnataka) aimed at benefitting about 1.43 crore households in the state.
- It will provide quality primary, secondary and tertiary treatment to both below-poverty-line (BPL) and above-poverty-line (APL) families in the state.
- Through the scheme, all households will get free treatment at government hospitals while for households the state will bear about 30% of the treatment cost.

India's first helicopter taxi service launched in Bengaluru:

- India's first helicopter taxi service was launched in Bengaluru on Monday to fly passengers from Campigowda International Airport to Electronic City.
- The service is expected to reduce the time taken to cover the distance from 2 hours to 15 minutes. The helicopter will seat up to six people apart from the pilot and the service will cost Rs.3,500 plus GST.

Micro tie up with Bangalore for its first renewable energy deal in India:

- Tech giant Microsoft has inked its first renewable energy deal in India for powering its new facility in Bengaluru.
- The facility, which will be operational starting June, is spread over 5.85 lakh square feet.

Karnataka to Become 2nd State In Country To Unveil Its Own Flag:

- The Karnataka government unveiled the State flag (nada dhwaja) for the state. If approved by the Centre, Karnataka

will be the second State to have a flag after Jammu and Kashmir.

- The yellow-white-red flag has the State emblem at the centre. The proposal will be now sent to the Union Home Ministry for approval, since a State has no powers to announce its own flag.

India's Tallest Tri- Colour flag hoisted in Belagavi, Karnataka:

- India's tallest national flag was on Monday unfurled in Belagavi (also known as Belgaum) in Karnataka.
- Belagavi District Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi unfurled the 120*80 sq ft wide flag on a 110-metre-tall flagpole.

Indo-French centre for engineers inaugurated in Bengaluru

- Coinciding with the visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to India, an Indo-French Centre of Excellence (CoE) was inaugurated in Bengaluru, Karnataka to impart vocational training to engineers in electricity, automation and energy management.
- For setting up the centre, the French government had deputed a full-time professor for three years to train the city-based college's professors on automation and energy management at Schneider Electric's labs and then designed the syllabus.

Nasscom, Facebook launch „Design4India Studio" in Bengaluru:

- In a bid to provide mentorship in design, innovation and entrepreneurship for software companies and startups, the National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom) in association with Facebook launched —Design4India Studio in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- The platform would provide interactions with design industry mentors and give an opportunity to aspiring designers and startups to explore innovate and build design as a tool for innovation.

Bengaluru to get 10,000 CCTV cameras to ensure women's safety:

- As many as 10,000 Artificial Intelligence-powered CCTV cameras will be installed at over 4,500 junctions and main roads across Bengaluru to ensure safety of women, officials said.
- Termed 'Smart Eyes', the security camera system will monitor areas on real-time basis.
- The Centre recently approved Rs.667 crore for Bengaluru under the Nirbhaya Fund to ensure safety of women in public places.

Karnataka government declares minority status to Lingayats community:

- The Karnataka Government declared minority status to the Lingayats community.
- This comes days after the Chief Minister Siddaramaiah-led government accepted the suggestions of Nagamohan Das committee to grant a separate religion status to the Lingayats community.
- The decision, taken ahead of the state Assembly election was criticised by the Veerashaiva Lingayat Samanvaya Samiti and termed as politically motivated move.

Kerala

Capital – Tiruvananthapuram; CM – Pinarayi Vijayan; Governor – P. Sathasivam

Delhi Metro withdraws from Kerala project due to govt delay:

- The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has said it was forced to withdraw from Kerala's Metro project in Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode after the state government failed to sign the project agreement that was

submitted 15 months ago.

- Stating that it had started preparatory work in 2016, the DMRC said it could not start working since the agreement was not signed.

Kerala government declares jackfruit official fruit of state:

- The Kerala government has declared jackfruit as the official fruit of the state.
- Announcing the decision in the state Assembly, Agriculture Minister VS Sunil Kumar said that Kerala produces 30 to 60 crore jackfruits every year, and revenue of around Rs30,000 crore could be generated through jackfruit products. The government could build a Kerala jackfruit brand, he added.

Kerala CM launches M-Keralam app for government services:

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan launched the M-Keralam app which will offer government services through a unified interface.
- According to reports, the users will be able to avail over 100 services initially, but the number of services offered will eventually increase to around 1,000.
- Public Wi-Fi will also be set up so that people can use the app.

Lakshadweep Island

Capital – Kavaratti; Governor - Shri Farooq Khan.

Lakshadweep joins hand to incorporate UDAY scheme providing electricity to people:

- Lakshadweep, the Union Territory joined hands with the UDAY scheme, which is meant for the revival of debt-stressed power distribution companies (discoms) in the country.
- The Memorandum of Understanding signed as an operational turnaround of the Union Territory's Electricity Department.

Daman and Diu

Capital – Daman; Governor - Praful Khoda Patel.

Diu Becomes First UT To Be 100% Powered By Solar Energy

- Diu has become the first Union Territory in India to run 100 percent on solar power generated energy.
- Diu has managed to generate surplus solar power for its residents, reducing their electricity costs, in a span of just three years.

Other National News

Cabinet doubles guarantee to banks for market intervention in purchase of pulses, oilseeds

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved extension of Government Guarantee provided to lender Banks for providing credit limit to the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) to Rs 19,000 crore from Rs 9,500 crore for undertaking procurement operation of pulses and oilseeds under Price Support Scheme (PSS).
- It has also cleared extension of Rs 45 crore credit limits to Small Farmers Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) for meeting their existing liability and settlement of claims.
- The Government Guarantees will be provided for a period of five years.

NHAI to deploy all women toll collecting staff on international Women's Day:

- The National Highways Authority of India has decided to deploy all women toll collecting staff in day shift on at least one toll plaza close to the city area, in every state and UT of the country on 8th March 2018, International Women's Day.
- If this initiative is successful, then it will be implemented across all toll plazas under operation by NHAI within the next 3 months.
- The Regional Officers have been instructed in this regard.

Air Asia India going to begin overseas operations by January 2019.

- Budget carrier Air Asia India has charted out expansion plans to connect more tier-II and III cities.
- They set a target to commence flights to overseas destinations by January 2019.
- The airliner last week inducted its 16th aircraft and announced the addition of Nagpur and Indore to its list of destinations.

Air India operates all-women crew flight from Kolkata.

- National carrier Air India has operated a flight on the Kolkata-Dimapur-Kolkata sector with an all-women cockpit and cabin crew.
- According to a release issued by the airlines, the flight AI709, an Airbus 319, was operated by Captain Akanksha Verma and Captain Satovisa Banerjee in the cockpit.
- Air India had operated the world's first all-women crew flight from Kolkata to Silchar way back in 1985.

Steering Committee has been constituted under Shri Subhash Chandra Garg for development of Fintech:

- A Steering Committee has been constituted by the Ministry of Finance under the Chairmanship of Secretary, Shri Subhash Chandra Garg, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) to consider various issues relating to the development of Fintech space in India.
- The constitution of the committee is in pursuance of the announcement made by the Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Arun Jaitley in his Budget Speech 2018-19.

Animal Welfare Board of India headquarters shifted from Chennai to Ballabgarh:

- Government has shifted headquarters of Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) to Ballabgarh in Faridabad District of Haryana from Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- It was shifted after consultation with AWBI for better coordination between the Environment Ministry and AWBI for carrying out the animal welfare activities.

Iraq overtakes Saudi Arabia as India's biggest Oil Supplier:

- Iraq has overtaken Saudi Arabia to become India's top crude oil supplier by supplying 38.9 million tonnes (MT) crude oil in the current financial year. It was fifth of the India's oil needs.
- India is 80% dependent on imports to meet its oil needs. India had imported 184.4 MT of crude oil during April-January period of 2017-18 period as compared to 213.9 MT in the entire 2016-17 fiscal, and 202.8 MT in 2015-16.

WTO to set up compliance panel in solar dispute case between India, US:

- The dispute settlement body (DSB) of World Trade Organization (WTO) has decided to set up panel to examine whether India has complied with its 2016 ruling in case against US regarding domestic content requirements (DCR) rules for solar cells and modules.

India Becomes Member of European Development Bank:

- India is all set to become the 69th member of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) after

shareholders of the international financial institution gave their nod to the country's candidature.

- The formal membership process will now get underway, which includes the purchase of shares by India at an estimated cost of around 1 million Euros.
- The EBRD's Board of Governors, which represents all the existing shareholders of the UK-based bank, voted in favour of India's membership application.

Girls' marriage age should be 21 in case of without parents concern:

- BJP MP Gopal Shetty has proposed a private member bill in the Lok Sabha demanding that the age bar for girls' marriage be extended to 21 from 18, if the marriage doesn't have parents' consent.
- Adding that by 21, girls attain maturity, Shetty said the age bar for girls could be 18 if the marriage has the consent of parents.

Prakriti To Be 1st ITBP Woman Combat Officer:

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

CISF to offer consultancy to 5-star hotels

- CISF has decided to offer security consultancy to 5-star hotels so that they can be prepared to deal with 26/11 type terror attacks.
- Central paramilitary force which is celebrating its 49th raising day has already prepared a blueprint in this regard.
- It soon plans to write to hotels proposing to render services of its special unit & experts and provide specific consultancy on security issues.

Passport mandatory for loans of Rs. 50 crore

- The government has made providing passport details mandatory for taking loans of Rs.50 crore and above.
- This has been done to ensure a swift action in case of fraud and prevent fraudsters from fleeing the country.
- The proposed law will also apply to defaulters who have an outstanding of Rs 100 crore or more and have escaped from the country.

Milk Production Raised Up to 20% In 2014-2017

- According to Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Radha Mohan Singh, Milk production in the country increased by 20 percent from 137.7 million tonnes to 165.4 million tonnes between 2014 and 2017.
- The per capita availability of milk has risen by 15.6 percent from 307 Gms a day to 355 Gms per day between 2013-14 and 2016-17.
- With a corpus of Rs 2,450 crore, the government has set up an AHIDF for financing infrastructure requirement of animal husbandry sector.

President, Prime Minister to get their own planes by 2020:

- The President, Prime Minister, and Vice President will get their own customized planes by early 2020.
- The planes will be purchased from Air India and configured to have VIP enclosures, press conference room, and anti-missile protection.
- Currently, for VVIPs, planes are borrowed from the Air India fleet, making it necessary to re-configure them accordingly.

India to eradicate Tuberculosis by 2025:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi today launched a campaign to eradicate tuberculosis (TB) from India by 2025, five years ahead of a globally-set deadline.

Centre Forms Tribunal To Solve Mahanadi Water Dispute Between Odisha & Chhattisgarh:

- The Centre has constituted a three-member Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal to adjudicate the dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over sharing the river's water.
- Supreme Court Judge AM Khanwilkar will be the Chairman of the tribunal, with Justice Ravi Ranjan of the Patna High Court and Justice Indermeet Kaur Kochhar of the Delhi High Court being the other two members.

SC extends Aadhaar linking deadline for mobile, bank account:

- The Supreme Court indefinitely extended the March 31 deadline for linking Aadhaar with bank accounts and mobile numbers till the 5-judge bench delivers a judgment on the matter.
- The court held that the government cannot insist on mandatory Aadhaar linkage. However, the court clarified that Aadhaar would remain mandatory for social schemes like subsidies or direct benefit transfers.

Tata Motors and IOC tested trials of India's first hydrogen bus:

- Tata Motors and Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) have begun the country's first demonstration trials for a hydrogen fuel cell bus.
- The demonstration event was held in the presence of Dr R Chidambaram, principal scientific adviser to the government of India and the chairman and board members of Indian Oil.
- The project is being executed under partial financial support from the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) and Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).

IMPORTANT MINISTRY AFFAIRS

Cabinet approves continuation of PMEGP beyond 12th Plan for 3 years:

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the continuation of Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) beyond 12th Plan for three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20 with a total outlay of Rs 5,500 crore.
- Scheme will create sustainable estimated employment opportunities for 15 lakh persons in three financial years.
- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is the nodal implementation agency at the national level.

Cabinet approves Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018:

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018 for introduction in the Parliament.
- Human Trafficking is third largest organized crime violating basic human rights. At present there is no specific law to deal with this crime.
- The bill addresses the issue of human trafficking from point of view of prevention, rescue and rehabilitation.

Finance Minister Inaugurates GPF and EPFO Modules on 42nd Civil Accounts Day:

- The Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs Shri Arun Jaitley said that there is a certain amount of sanctity which must remain attached to the Government Accounting System.
- Delivering the Inaugural Address at the 42nd Civil Accounts Day function in national capital, the Finance Minister said that while there are Government Departments that can function with a fairly high amount of accuracy, the Civil Accounts Department is one that cannot afford to err because a small error can lay a huge foot prints.

Cabinet Clears Setting Up of NERA To Oversee Auditors:

- Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA).
- NFRA will act as an independent regulator for the auditing profession which was one of the key changes brought in by the Companies Act 2013.
- The Cabinet also gave nod to the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill - 2018 to deal with those escaping overseas to avoid getting caught.

Cabinet approves Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018:

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Finance to introduce the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 in Parliament.
- The Bill would help in laying down measures to deter economic offenders from evading the process of Indian law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts.

Dr Jitendra Singh attended the social media launch of "Namaste Shalom":

- The Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh launched the social media of —Namaste Shalom, a magazine devoted to India-Israel relations.
- The magazine is edited by former MP Shri Tarun Vijay.

Centre launches biodegradable sanitary napkins costing Rs 2.5

- Union Minister Ananth Kumar launched 100% biodegradable sanitary napkins 'Suvidha', costing Rs.2.50 per pad, on the occasion of International Women's Day.
- The napkins will be available at Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana stores from May 28. Kumar said that the sanitary napkins will help women improve their personal hygiene without harming the nature.

I- Metros" -An Association of All Indian Metro Rail Companies Launched By Cabinet Secretary:

- The Union Housing Ministry has launched 'I-Metros', an association of all-India metro rail companies, which will act as a forum of exchange of ideas and innovations.
- The association was launched by Cabinet Secretary P.K. Sinha at an event "Indian Metros: Collaborating for Excellence" in the presence of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Managing Director Mangu Singh in New Delhi.

Home Minister Rajnath Singh Inaugurates Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of IACP:

- Home Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated the two-day Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in New Delhi.
- The theme of the conference is "Challenges to Policing in 2020 - How is Cyber Space shaping our approach to Cybercrime and Terrorism, how do we perform within it and take advantage of it".

CCEA Approves Continuation Of Ongoing Urea Subsidy Scheme:

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the proposal of Department of Fertilizers to continue Urea Subsidy Scheme up to 2019-20 at a total estimated cost of Rs. 1,64,935 crore and for disbursement of fertilizer subsidy. This decision implies that there will be no increase in price of urea, till 2020.

Cabinet Approves Agreement For Avoidance Of Double Taxation Between India, Iran.

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 14th March, 2018 approved an agreement for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income between India and Iran.
- The agreement will stimulate the flow of investment, technology and personnel from India to Iran and vice versa, and will prevent double taxation.
- It will provide for the exchange of information between the two countries as per latest international standards.

Reservation for disabled hiked to 5% in PG medical courses

- The Health Ministry has hiked the seats reserved for disabled students in postgraduate medical courses from 3% to 5%.
- The "historic decision" will ensure that disabled candidates offer an equal contribution towards India's progress, Union Health Minister JP Nadda said.
- The 21 disabilities listed under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 include dwarfism, autism, and Thalassemia.

Cabinet approves Opening of Missions in Africa to implement commitments of (IAFS-III)

- The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the opening of 18 new Indian Missions in Africa over a four year period from 2018-2021.

- The decision will enhance India's diplomatic outreach in the African continent and allow India to engage with Indian diaspora in African countries. Opening of new Missions is also a step towards implementing the vision of enhanced co-operation and engagement with Africa.

Cabinet approves North-East Industrial Development Scheme 2017:

- The Union Cabinet has approved North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS), 2017 to promote employment in North Eastern Region states including Sikkim.
- NEIDS is combination of the incentives covered under the earlier two government schemes with a much larger outlay. It will have financial outlay of Rs. 3000 crores upto March, 2020.

Cabinet approves inclusion of Parivara and Talawara communities into ST list in Karnataka:

- The Union Cabinet has given its in principle approval for inclusion of communities, namely _Parivara and Talawara' as synonym of Nayaka at in the list of Scheduled Tribes (STs) of Karnataka.
- This approval fulfils long term demand of these communities for granting ST status in Karnataka.

Cabinet approves revision of DTAA between India and Qatar

- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for revision existing Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) between India and Qatar.
- The purpose of revision is for avoidance of double taxation and for prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income. The existing DTAA between India and Qatar was signed in April 1999 and came into force in January, 2000.

Parliament passes bill to double tax-free gratuity to Rs.20 Lakhs:

- The Parliament has passed The Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill, raising the ceiling for maximum amount of gratuity to Rs20 lakh from the existing limit of Rs 10 lakh.
- Employees are paid gratuity if they have completed five years of continuous service at the time of leaving the company.
- Earlier the government increased the gratuity ceiling limit from Rs 10 lakhs to Rs 20 lakhs for government employees only.
- It is now that the private sector and public sector employees will also enjoy benefits of increased limit.

President Kovind lays foundation stone of several road projects of NHAI in Varanasi:

- President Ram Nath Kovind has stressed on modern development of Varanasi with its religious souls and traditional values.
- He was addressing a function after laying the foundation stone of five road projects of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and distributing appointment letters to the candidates selected under Skill Development department mission.

Ministry of Finance has approved Government guarantee of Rs. 5000 crore in the IRFC bonds:

- Ministry of Finance has approved Government guarantee of Rs. 5000 crore in the current Financial Year for Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) bonds to be subscribed by Life Insurance Corporation (LIC). The guarantee fee for the aforesaid amount has also been waived by Ministry of Finance (MOF).

Cabinet approves certain official amendments to the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill:

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved certain official amendments to the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill.

- The Amendment to the NMC Bill comes in the backdrop of its consideration in the Lok Sabha on 02.01.2018 and subsequently being referred to the Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee (DRPSC).
- The Government has considered the recommendations made by the Standing Committee in its report tabled in the House on 20.03.2018 and general feedback, particularly the views of medical students and practitioners regarding certain provisions of the Bill.

Cabinet approves re-structuring of NSDF and NSDC:

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has given its approval for restructuring of National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to strengthen governance, implementation and monitoring framework.
- The restructuring will also ensure better corporate governance, transparency and accountability in operations of NSDC besides strengthening the oversight role of NSDF.
- The approval would lead to restructuring of composition of Board of NSDF and the NSDC to strengthen governance, implementation and monitoring.

Cabinet Approves Rs 4,500 Crore To Boost Development Projects In North-East:

- Cabinet has approved Schemes of North Eastern Council (NEC) including the continuation of existing Schemes. It will boost the development projects in North-East. Four thousand five crore rupees have been approved for the scheme for three years up to March 2020.
- The Scheme of NEC- Special Development Project will be changed to be a Central Sector Scheme with 100 percent grant.

IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL NEWS

South American country Guyana issued Holi stamps:

- Guyana, a South American country, issued four postage stamps with the theme of Phagwah (Holi) in the year 1969. Interestingly, the stamps were printed in the denominations of 6, 25, 30 and 40 cents.
- They depicted Lord Krishna celebrating the festival of colours with Radha and the gopis.

USEFUL INFO	
Guyana Capital	Georgetown
Currency	Dollar
Prime Minister	Moses Nagamootoo

Hindu woman elected to Pakistan’s senate in historic first:

- Kirshna Kumari Kolhi from Pakistan’s Sindh province has become the first-ever Hindu Dalit woman Senator in Pakistan.
- Kolhi, 39, from Thar is a member of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari-led Pakistan People s Party (PPP).
- She was elected on a minority seat from Sindh.

Merkel rejects plea to make German anthem gender-neutral:

- German Chancellor Angela Merkel has rejected a plea demanding the country's national anthem 'Song of Germany' to be made gender-neutral.
- "The Chancellor is very happy with our nice national anthem as it is in its traditional form," her spokesperson said.

- The plea proposed replacing "fatherland" and "brotherly" in the anthem with "homeland" and "courageously" respectively.

USEFUL INFO	
Germany Capital	Berlin
Currency	Euro
Chancellor	Angela Merkel

World's largest military of China reduces troop size to 20 lakh:

- China, the world's largest military, has reduced its troop size to 20 lakh by decommissioning 3 lakh troops.
- The move came as part of China's goal to restructure its command system and refocus its spending on modernising the military.
- China announced a defence budget of \$175 billion for this year.

USEFUL INFO	
China Capital	Beijing
Currency	Renminbi
President	Xi Jinping

Marshall Islands is the 1st Country To Launch Own Cryptocurrency As Legal Tender:

- The Marshall Islands is creating its own digital currency in a bid to raise money. In doing so it becomes the first country in the world to recognize a Cryptocurrency as legal tender.
- The small Pacific Island nation passed the Sovereign Currency Act to create the 'sovereign', or SOV. The Cryptocurrency will have equal status with the US dollar and, unlike many cryptocurrencies; users will have to reveal their identity in order to use SOV.

USEFUL INFO	
Marshall Islands Capital	Majuro
Currency	Dollar
Chancellor	Hilda Heine

Sri Lanka imposes state of emergency over communal violence:

- Sri Lanka on Tuesday imposed a 10-day nation-wide state of emergency due to clashes between the Buddhist and Muslim communities in the Kandy district.
- The move is aimed at preventing the spread of violence to other parts of the country, a government spokesperson said. The government further warned to take stern action against those instigating violence through social media.

USEFUL INFO	
Srilanka Capital	Colombo, Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte
Currency	Rupee
Prime Minister	Ranil Wickremesinghe

Italy elects its first black senator Tony Iwobi:

- Nigerian-origin Tony Iwobi has been elected as Italy's first black senator.
- The 62-year-old, who belongs to the anti-immigration North League party, came to Italy on a student visa nearly 40 years ago.
- "It is with great excitement that I can tell you I have been elected senator...A new adventure is about to begin," Iwobi wrote on his Facebook page.

USEFUL INFO	
Italy Capital	Rome
Currency	Euro
senator	Tony Iwobi

Washington Becomes 1st State To Approve Net-Neutrality Rules:

- Washington has become the first state to enact its own net-neutrality requirements after U.S. regulators repealed Obama-era rules designed to keep the internet an even playing field.
- The new law also requires internet providers to disclose information about their management practices, performance and commercial terms.
- Violations would be enforceable under the state's Consumer Protection Act.

USEFUL INFO	
USA Capital	Washington DC
Currency	Dollar
President	Donald Trump.

UK College to teach Hinglish to students for jobs in India

- UK's Portsmouth College has offered to teach its students 'Hinglish', a mix of Hindi and English languages, becoming the country's first educational institution to do so.
- The course is being introduced partly due to India's growing economic importance and to prepare British students who may take up jobs in India or in Indian companies based in the UK.

Mauritius' first female President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim resigned:

- Mauritius' President Ameenah Gurib-Fakim will resign from her post next week amid allegations that she used a credit card provided by an NGO for personal shopping, the government has announced.
- Gurib-Fakim, who became Mauritius' first female President in 2015, allegedly bought duty-free clothes and jewellery worth tens of thousands of dollars using the credit card during her foreign trips.

USEFUL INFO	
Mauritius Capital	Port Louis
Currency	rupee
President	Ameenah Gurib.

US planned to give gun training to Teachers, school staff:

- The US government has announced it will pay states for "rigorous firearms training" for teachers and other school staff to "harden" schools against mass shooting attacks.
- Homeland security officials will also develop a public awareness campaign to encourage people to report potential signs of terrorism. This comes a month after Florida school shooting which killed 17 people.

USEFUL INFO	
US Capital	Washington DC
Currency	Dollar
President	Donald Trump

Chinese President Xi Jinping Becomes Lifetime President:

- China's Parliament has abolished the decades-old two-term limit for the President, allowing Xi Jinping to remain as the country's leader for life.
- The constitutional changes were passed in Beijing by the annual sitting of the National People's Congress - the country's legislature - with the two-thirds majority. Of the 2,964 delegates, only two voted against the change, while three abstained.
- Earlier, the seven-member Standing Committee - the topmost body of the ruling Communist Party of China - had unanimously approved the amendment. 64-year old Xi Jinping is currently in his second five-year term and due to retire in 2023 under the current two-term system.

USEFUL INFO	
China Capital	Beijing
Currency	Renminbi
President	Xi Jinping

Maldives' underwater restaurant to be converted into yoga studio:

- The 5.8 Undersea Restaurant in the Maldives is set to be converted into a yoga studio where yoga classes will be conducted, the Hurawalhi Island Resort has announced.
- The restaurant, which was launched in 2016, is the largest all-glass underwater eatery in the world. Interestingly, it is located 5.8 metres below the surface.

USEFUL INFO	
Maldives Capital	Male
Currency	Rufiyaa
President	Abdulla Yameen.

President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurates World Hindi Secretariat in Port Louis, Mauritius:

- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated World Hindi Secretariat building in Port Louis, Mauritius.
- He also launched secretariat's logo, an Early Digital Learning Programme as well unveiled foundation stones of a social housing project and large ENT hospital being built with Indian assistance.

USEFUL INFO	
Mauritius Capital	Port Louis

Currency	Rupee
President	Ameenah Gurib-Fakim.

Sebastian Pinera sworn in as Chile's president:

- Businessman-turned politician Sebastian Pinera was sworn in as Chile's president, beginning what will be his second term in office after a four-year absence.
- Pinera, 68, was re-elected in last November elections, promising to lower taxes and boost investment, and will serve until 2022.
- According to Forbes magazine, Pinera is the fourth wealthiest man in Chile.

USEFUL INFO	
Chile Capital	Santiago
Currency	Peso
President	Sebastian Pinera

Amazon Launches First Debit Card In Mexico E-Commerce:

- Amazon.com Inc launched its first-ever debit card in Mexico, part of a push to encourage shoppers without bank accounts to buy online.
- Part of the challenge is attracting consumers who are wary of online fraud and do not have access to credit and debit cards. Less than a third of adults in Mexico have credit cards, according to a 2017 government report.

Sri Lanka lifts FB ban after it agrees to curb hate speech

- Sri Lanka has lifted its ban on Facebook after the social media giant agreed to step up efforts to curb hate speech amid the ongoing emergency in the country.
- A 10-day nation-wide state of emergency was imposed following clashes between Buddhist and Muslim communities in the country's Kandy district. Sri Lanka lifted its ban on WhatsApp.

USEFUL INFO	
Sri Lanka Capital	Colombo, Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte
Currency	Rupee
President	Maithepala Sirisena.

Xi Jinping re-elected as China President. Wang Oishan Vice President:

- Xi Jinping was today re-elected as President for a second five-year tenure by China's rubber-stamp parliament, days after it scrapped the two-term rule for the Presidency and allowed him to have a life-long tenure.
- Xi was also elected as the head of the powerful Central Military Commission, the overall high command of the Chinese military.

USEFUL INFO	
China Capital	Beijing
Currency	Renminbi

President	Xi Jinping.
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Uber self-driving car kills woman in US, tests suspended

YASHSHREE COMPETITION ZONE

- ❑ Cab-hailing startup Uber has stopped all self-driving car tests after a car in autonomous mode killed a woman who was crossing a street in the US state of Arizona.
- ❑ This is reportedly the first known death of a pedestrian struck by a self-driving car on a public road. An Uber spokesperson said the company is fully cooperating with authorities.

USEFUL INFO	
US Capital	Washington
Currency	Dollar
President	Donald Trump

EU and UK agree to finish Brexit transition by Dec 2020:

- ❑ The UK has reached a legal agreement with the European Union (EU) to end the Brexit transition by December 31, 2020.
- ❑ The transitional period will begin from March 29, 2019. The agreement also gives EU citizens arriving in the UK during the transition the same rights and guarantees as those who arrive before Brexit.

USEFUL INFO	
UK Capital	London
Currency	Pound Sterling
Prime Minister	Theresa May

India hands over last diesel railway locomotive engine to Myanmar

- ❑ India today handed over the 18th and last diesel railway locomotive engine to Myanmar, thus executing a key project ahead of time as part of efforts to boost ties with the neighbor.
- ❑ These 18 locomotives are fitted with microprocessor control-based system, attaining a maximum speed of 100 km per hour and are customized for Myanmar Railways. The locos have been built by the Diesel Locomotive Works in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

USA Bans Use Of Venezuelan Cryptocurrency- Petro

- ❑ The Donald Trump administration banned all use by Americans of Venezuelan Cryptocurrency (Petro), saying that its introduction is intended to skirt U.S. sanctions.
- ❑ The prohibition applies to all people and companies subject to U.S. jurisdiction. In February 2018, cash-strapped Venezuela became the first country to launch its own version of Bitcoin, the petro.

USEFUL INFO	
US Capital	Washington
Currency	Dollar
President	Donald Trump

Myanmar President, Htin Kyaw Resigns:

- Myanmar's President and Aung San Suu Kyi's right-hand man Htin Kyaw stepped down after two years in the position.
- As per the official report, a new leader would be selected –within seven working days!

USEFUL INFO	
Myanmar Capital	Naypyidaw
Currency	Kyat
President	Htin Kyaw

Nanda Bahadur Pun Elected Nepal's Vice President:

- Nanda Bahadur Pun has been re-elected as the Vice-President of Nepal for the second term unopposed.
- Pun has filed candidacy for the post of the Vice President and his candidacy remained unopposed as no candidate came forward to contest with him for the post.

USEFUL INFO	
Nepal Capital	Katmandu
Currency	Rupee
President	Bidhya Devi Bhandari

Peru's president Pedro Pablo Kuczynski resigns:

- Peru's center-right President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski announced his resignation on Wednesday after vote-buying allegations ensnared him in a fresh scandal on the eve of an impeachment vote, capping months of political turmoil in one of Latin America's most stable economies.

USEFUL INFO	
Peru Capital	Lima
Currency	Sol
Prime Minister	Mercedes Aráoz

US Federal Reserve hikes interest rate by 25 bps:

- The US Federal Reserve raised interest rates and forecast at least two more hikes for 2018, highlighting its growing confidence that tax cuts and government spending will boost the economy and inflation and spur more aggressive future tightening.
- In its first policy meeting under new Fed chief Jerome Powell, the US central bank indicated that inflation should finally move higher after years below its 2 percent target and that the economy had recently gained momentum.
- The Fed also raised the estimated longer-term "neutral" rate, the level at which monetary policy neither boosts nor slows the economy, a touch, in a sign the current gradual rate hike cycle could go on longer than previously thought.

USEFUL INFO	
US Federal Reserve Headquarters	Washington, D.C., United States
US Federal Reserve Chairperson	Jerome Powell

US files trade complaint against China over licensing practices:

- The United States officially filed a trade complaint at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) against China over its alleged discriminatory technology licensing practices.
- The US trade representative (USTR) filed a request for consultations with China at the WTO to address Beijing's unfair technology practices, according to the Trump administration.
- The US complaint stated, "China appears to be breaking WTO rules by denying foreign patent holders, including US companies, basic patent rights to stop a Chinese entity from using the technology after a licensing contract ends."

USEFUL INFO	
USA Capital	Washington, D.C.
USA Currency	United States Dollar
USA President	Donald Trump
China Capital	Beijing
China Currency	Renminbi
China President	Xi Jinping

World's Largest Cruise Ship 'Symphony Of The Seas' Sets Sail In France:

- The world's biggest cruise-liner, Symphony of the Seas, has left the shipyard of Saint-Nazaire in France to embark on its maiden voyage in the Mediterranean. French shipbuilder STX handed over to U.S. giant Royal Caribbean International.
- The ship, which weighs 228,000 tonnes, is 362 metres long just 20 metres shy of the length of the Empire State Building. It is marginally bigger than its sister ship, the Harmony of the Seas, which STX France delivered to Royal Caribbean in 2016.

India And China Agree To A Roadmap For Addressing Trade Imbalance:

- The eleventh session of the China-India joint-group on Economic Relations, Trade, Science & Technology was held in New Delhi.
- The session was co-chaired by the Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu and the Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, Zhong Shan.
- The two Ministers agreed to continue to take forward the initiatives identified in the Five Year Development Programme for Economic and Trade Cooperation between China and India signed in September 2014.

USEFUL INFO	
China Capital	Beijing
Currency	Renminbi, Yuan
President	Xijiangping

Abiy Ahmed becomes new PM of Ethiopia:

- Ethiopia's ruling coalition has elected a new leader in the person of Dr. Abiy Ahmed. He will eventually become Prime Minister of the country.
- State-affiliated FANA Broadcasting Corporate (FBC) reported late Tuesday that the Ethiopian Peoples Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) had elected Abiy as its chairperson.
- His rise to become Prime Minister – head of government – is premised on approval by the Front's Council and subsequent approval by the parliament. Political watchers hold that that process is a mere formality.

USEFUL INFO	
Ethiopia Capital	Addis Ababa
Currency	Birr
PM	Abiy Ahmed

IMPORTANT APPOINTMENTS

National Appointments

Person	Designation
Vinay Kumar	India's ambassador to Afghanistan
Mahindra Singh Dhoni	Brand ambassador of gaming platform Dream11.
Neiphiu Rio	New Chief Minister of Nagaland
Conrad Sangma	New chief minister of Meghalaya.
Biplab Kumar Deb	New chief minister of Tripura
Vivek R Wadekar	New Special Director in the Enforcement Directorate (ED)
Virat Kohli	Uber's first Brand Ambassador in India.
Suresh Prabhu	Ministry of Civil Aviation
Suresh Bhaiyyaji Joshi	General secretary of RSS
Parag Agrawal	Twitter's CTO
Sitanshu Kar	Next head of the Press Information Bureau (PIB)
N Chandrasekaran	President of the court of the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) for three years.
J S Rajput	India's representative to the Executive Board (EXB) of UNESCO
Vijay Raghavan	Principal Scientific Advisor To Government
Rahul Dravid	Election icon for Karnataka Assembly polls
Indu Bhushan	CEO Of Ayushman Bharat Mission
Gen Harpal Singh	Director General Border Roads
Jawad Rahim	Chairperson of National Green Tribunal (NGT)
Kidambi Srikanth	Deputy Collector by the Andhra Pradesh government
Chandra Bhushan	Deputy Election Commissioner

International Appointments

Person	Designation
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Armen Sarkisian	New president of Armenia
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YASHSHREE COMPETITION ZONE

Angela Merkel	German Chancellor
Sanjeev Gupta	UK Skills Ambassador
Gina Haspel	Central Intelligence Agency first woman chief
Sangeeta Bahadur	Next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Belarus
Larry Kudlow	Head of the White House National Economic Council
Li Keqiang's	Premier of China
M. Gotsurve	Next Ambassador Of India To Republic Of Korea
Vladimir Putin	President Of Russia
Raj Kumar Singhal	Elan Group CEO
Martin Vizcarra	New president of Peru
Vladimir Putin	President Of Russia
Win Myint	New President of Myanmar
Abdel Fattah al-Sisi	President of Egypt

Important Resignations

Person	Designation
Civil Aviation Minister	Ashok Gajapathi Raju
Minister of State for Science and Technology	Y S Chowdary
Robert Fico	Slovak Prime Minister
Ameenah Gurib-Fakim	Mauritius President

YASHSHREE COMPETITION ZONE

AWARDS AND HONORS

Awards	Winners
Lifetime achievement award in the United Kingdom	Shatrughan Sinha
Pritzker Prize	Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi
Best Exhibitor Award At ITB- Berlin	India
„Godavari Gaurav“ award	Amol Palekar
Wax statue at Madame Tussauds wax museum of London	Sathyaraj
2017 Kochon Prize	The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for building a tradition of excellence in Tuberculosis (TB) research
G D Birla Award for Scientific Research for year 2017	Dr Rajan Sankaranarayanan.
Grand Prix de Montreal at the gala.	Halkaa
Best of India Short Film Festival in Los Angeles, US	Jackie Shroff's short film 'Shunyata'
India's Most Admired Brand 2017-18” Award by White Page International (WPI)	ARTH Ayurveda
World's 1st Trusted Digital Repository	National Cultural Audiovisual Archives (NCAA)
Pavilion at 105th Indian Science Congress	National Highways Authority of India
Abel Prize	Robert Langlands
'Most Improved Airport'	The Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmadabad .
The National 'Water Digest Award' for Water Conservation-Diversion	Chhattisgarh
G.K. Reddy Award	Journalist Karan Thapar
Frederick Pincott Award for 2017	South Asian Cinema Foundation (SACF)
Commonwealth Youth Awards	Mirnalini Dayal and Yogesh Kumar
Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia 2018 list	Anushka Sharma And P V Sindhu
J.C. Daniel Award	Sreekumaran Thampi

Shekhar Kapur	Head jury for 65th National Film Awards
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World's 1st hand-painted film nominated for Oscars 2018:

- 'Loving Vincent', the world's first hand-painted feature film, has been nominated in the 'Animated Feature Film' category at Oscars 2018.
- The paintings used to make the film, which has 65,000 frames, are in the distinct style of painter Vincent Van Gogh.

Oscars Awards 2018

S. No.	Category	Winner
1.	Best Picture	The Shape Of Water
2.	Best Director	Guillermo del Toro, The Shape Of Water
3.	Best Actress	Frances McDormand, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
4.	Best Actor	Gary Oldman, Darkest Hour
5.	Best Supporting Actress	Allison Janney, I, Tonya
6.	Best Supporting Actor	Sam Rockwell, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
7.	Best Original Screenplay	Get Out
8.	Best Adapted Screenplay	Call Me By Your Name
9.	Best Animated Feature Film	Coco
10.	Best Foreign Language Film	A Fantastic Woman, Chile
11.	Best Original Score	The Shape Of Water
12.	Best Original Song	Remember Me, Coco
13.	Best Documentary Feature	Icarus
14.	Best Documentary Short	Heaven Is A Traffic Jam On The 405
15.	Best Live Action Short	The Silent Child
16.	Best Animation Short	Dear Basketball
17.	Best Sound Editing	Dunkirk
18.	Best Sound Mixing	Dunkirk
19.	Best Production Design	The Shape Of Water

20.	Best Cinematography	Blade Runner
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YASHSHREE COMPETITION ZONE

21.	Best Makeup And Hair	Darkest Hour
22.	Best Costume Design	Phantom Thread
23.	Best Film Editing	Dunkirk
24.	Best Visual Effects	Blade Runner

IMPORTANT MOU AND AGREEMENTS

MoU between India and Fiji on co-operation in renewable energy:

- Narendra Modi has been apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on co-operation in renewable energy between India and Fiji.
- The MoU aimed to establish a cooperative institutional relationship to encourage and promote technical bilateral cooperation on new and renewable issues on the basis of mutual benefit equality and reciprocity.

Three MoU's Signed between India and Jordan:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the visiting King of Jordan Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein held bilateral talks and signed 3 MOU's in the field of Cooperation in the Field of Manpower, Health Sector and Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters.

Cabinet approves MoU between India and Vietnam on economic and trade co-operation

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Vietnam on Economic and Trade Cooperation.
- The MoU would expand more bilateral trade and economic cooperation between India and Vietnam.

12 agreements signed between India and Jordan:

- During bilateral talks between Jordan's King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, India and Jordan signed 12 agreements at Hyderabad House in New Delhi.
- Areas in which the agreements were signed include defence, health, culture, and medicine. An agreement between Prasar Bharathi and Jordan Media was also signed.

EESL to install energy-efficient LEDs across all airports in India:

- Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Airports Authority of India (AAI) for installing energy-efficient LED lights at airports, buildings and facilities owned by AAI across India.
- EESL will make the entire upfront investment of Rs. 24.41 crore on the project.
- The MoU is signed under the Buildings Energy Efficiency Programme (BEEP).

India, Bangladesh, Russia Sign Pact For Rooppur Atomic Plant In Bangladesh:

- Indian companies can now participate in construction and installation works in the —non-critical category for the

Rooppur nuclear power plant in Bangladesh, according to the Russian atomic energy agency Rosatom.

YASHASHREE COMPETITION ZONE

- The Rooppur project is the first initiative under an Indo-Russian deal to undertake atomic energy projects in third countries.
- This will also be the first time Indian companies will be able to participate in a nuclear power project abroad.
- India, Bangladesh and Russia signed an agreement in this regard in Moscow, Russia.

India, the US working together on regional, maritime security:

- The US is working with India on a range of issues including regional and maritime security.
- Chief Pentagon spokesperson Dana White said our goal is to ensure that we are working together on an array of issues with respect to regional security.
- Therefore the more we can have a conversation not only about Afghanistan and the future of Afghanistan.

India, Vietnam Inks Three MoUs:

- India and Vietnam inked three agreements in the areas of trade, agriculture and atomic energy. The countries signed an MoU on economic and trade cooperation to establish a framework for enhancing economic and trade promotion.
- Another MoU signed on Cooperation between the Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership, India (GCNEP) and the Vietnam Atomic Energy Institute (VINATOM) to strengthen the technical cooperation in the field of atomic energy for peaceful purposes.

India, Israel Inked MoU on Water Conservation

- The government of India has signed a MoU with Israel to enhance cooperation on 'National Campaign for Water Conservation in India'.
- It was announced by the Minister of State for Drinking Water and Sanitation S Ahluwalia.
- As per this MoU, both sides would work to enhance cooperation at the national, regional and international level to design, implement and monitor a professionally designed National Water Conservation Campaign in India to put water conservation on to the national agenda.

Cabinet approves MoU between UPSC and Public Service Commission of Mauritius

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and Public Service Commission of Mauritius.
- The MoU will strengthen the existing relationship between UPSC and Public Service Commission of Mauritius.

French President Emmanuel Macron In India On 4-Day Visit:

- French President Emmanuel Macron arrived in New Delhi on a four-day visit to India. The visit aims at strengthening the bilateral economic, political and strategic dimension of engagement between the two countries.
- During the visit, India and France will sign agreements in different fields tomorrow. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Emmanuel Macron will co-chair the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance.

ISA-ADB, NDB, GCF, AfDB And AIIB Joint Declarations Of Financial Partnership:

- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the African Development Bank (AfDB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), the Green climate funds (GCF), and the New Development Bank (NDB) signed Joint financial partnership Declarations in New Delhi.

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) also signed a Joint partnership Declaration with the ISA. The objective of the agreements is to deepen their cooperation in support of Renewable Energy.
- ISA is working for deployment of over 1000 GW of solar energy and mobilising more than US\$ 1000 billion into solar energy by the year 2030.

India, France pledge to build world's largest nuclear plant:

- PM Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday pledged to begin work on "the largest nuclear power plant in the world" in India by this year.
- Urging Electricite de France SA and India's Nuclear Power Corporation to accelerate discussions on a contract and start work at Maharashtra's Jaitapur, the leaders said the plant would have a 9.6-gigawatt capacity.

Asian Development Bank, International Solar Alliance Sign Pact To Promote Solar Energy:

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the International Solar Alliance (ISA) has signed a cooperation arrangement to promote solar energy deployment in Asia and the Pacific.
- The cooperation envisages solar power generation, solar based mini-grids, and transmission systems for integrating solar energy into grids, among others.

India, France inked 14 pacts

- India and France inked key pacts in the strategic areas of security, nuclear energy after extensive talks between PM Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron.
- Agreements in the field of education, environment, urban development and railways were also signed.
- The two countries also decided to step up cooperation in space technology and use it in the maritime domain.

India Announces USD 100 M LoC For Mauritius:

- India has announced a new Line of Credit of USD 100 million for defense procurement by Mauritius as the two sides signed many agreements on the second day of President Ram Nath Kovind's visit.
- The agreements were signed after President Kovind held delegation-level talks with Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth and members of his Cabinet.

India, Madagascar Sign Umbrella Agreement In Defence Sector:

- India and Madagascar have signed an umbrella agreement in the field of defence. Under the agreement, both the countries will explore various ways of co-operation in the field of defence.
- An amended air service agreement was also signed to support efforts towards improving connectivity between the two countries.
- Both the countries will have a co-sharing agreement with Air Seychelles through Air India and Air Madagascar. This was announced by President Ram Nath Kovind after delegation-level talks with his Madagascar counterpart in Antananarivo.

Health Ministry And WHO Signed Agreement For Enhanced Cooperation For Healthcare

- Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General of WHO met J.P. Nadda, Union Health and Family Welfare Minister in New Delhi.
- They discussed perspectives on national, regional and global public health program.

- To strengthen collaborative work between India and WHO in achieving improved health outcomes, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and World Health Organization (WHO) signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA).

IATA Partners With Civil Aviation Ministry In India:

- The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has signed an MoU with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the National Aviation University to enhance human resource availability in India's aviation industry.
- Under the agreement, the signatory institutions would also leverage "the existing infrastructure for training in India to expand the reach of vocational training in aviation disciplines".

India And ADB Signed \$120 Million Loan To Improve Rail Infrastructure:

- India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$120 million loan agreement for completion of works for double-tracking and electrification of railways tracks along high-density corridors to improve the operational efficiency of Indian railways.
- The tranche 3 loan is part of the \$500 million multi-tranche financing facility for Railway Sector Investment Program approved by the ADB Board in 2011.
- ADB loan has a 20-year term, including a grace period of 5 years, an annual interest rate determined in accordance with ADB's London interbank offered rate (LIBOR)-based lending facility.

IRCTC – Ola joins to provide service in IRCTC App:

- With an aim to providing first-and-last-mile connectivity, railway PSU IRCTC announced a partnership with cab aggregator Ola, giving commuters an option book taxi on its app.
- The tie-up, a six-month pilot project, will give customers access to Ola booking services when they visit the IRCTC Rail Connect App and on its website. The Ola cab facility will provide all the services offered.

India And EU Signed Agreement On Sharing Earth Observation Data:

- India and the European Union (EU) have signed an agreement that will enable them to share earth observation data from each other's satellites. The pact was inked in Bengaluru.
- The Copernicus programme provides a wide range of applications like climate change, land, ocean and atmosphere monitoring as well as support in forecasting, management and mitigation of natural disasters.
- Under this arrangement, Indian Space Research Organisation ISRO will share data from its earth observation satellites.

India Signs Double Taxation Avoidance Treaty with Hong Kong:

- India and Hong Kong signed a double taxation avoidance agreement (DTAA) that seeks to improve transparency in tax matters and help curb tax evasion and avoidance.
- The agreement between India and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China was signed by Indian Ambassador to China Gautam Bambawale and Hong Kong Finance Secretary Paul Chan Mo-po in Hong Kong.

NITI Aayog, Piramal Foundation ink SOI to improve health, education in Aspirational Districts

- NITI Aayog and Piramal Foundation have inked Statement of Intent (SoI) to work closely with District Collectors and key officers of 'Aspirational Districts' to support their transformation in terms of healthcare, education and nutrition.

- The collaboration is for four years with the option to continue, based on mutual agreement.

Airport Authority of India Signs MoU With Assam Government:

- The Airport Authority of India (AAI) signed an MoU with Assam government under its Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) initiative for the sustainable development of human settlements at villages in Kamrup district.
- AAI would provide financial assistance under its CSR initiative of 4.58 crore Rupees for the Kamrup district as per the estimates prepared by the UNDP to improve the resilience of communities around Guwahati Airport.

USEFUL INFO	
Assam Capital	Dispur
CM	Sarbananda Sonowal
Governor	Jagdish Mukhi.

ISA And India Sign Host Country Agreement

- The International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), signed the Host Country Agreement. The Agreement will give ISA a juridical personality and gives it power to contract, to acquire and dispose off movable and immovable properties, to institute and defend legal proceedings.
- Under this agreement, ISA shall enjoy such privileges, applicable tax concessions and immunities as are necessary for ISA's Headquarter to independently discharge its function and programmes.

Software major SAP partners with NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission:

- Software major SAP has partnered with NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission. Atal Innovation mission is a flagship programme of the Government to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.
- NITI Ayog's CEO Amitabh Kant said that in next 3 years, 30,000 Atal Tinkering labs will be opened all across the country.

USEFUL INFO	
NITI Aayog's Chairman	Narendra Modi
Vice Chairman	Rajiv Kumar
CEO	Amitabh Kant

India And ADB Sign \$80 Million Loan Agreement:

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed \$80 million loan agreement to help modernize technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions and improve the skills ecosystem in the State of Himachal Pradesh.
- The project will support the skill initiatives of Government of Himachal Pradesh and help the State step-up the reform and scale-up its skill development efforts.

GIFT, Deloitte Sign MoU To Promote IFSC Operations:

- GIFT City has signed an MoU with Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP (DTTILLP), which renders consultancy services, for mutual cooperation in areas related to international financial services.
- GIFT City is a global business district offering a platform for business opportunities in international and domestic business operations.

- The MoU was signed with an aim of assisting domestic and international clients set up operations at the GIFT-located International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).

MoU between India And Canada On IPR:

- The Union Cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi has given its ex-post approval for MoU between India and Canada.
- The MoU was signed to establish bilateral cooperation activities in the field of Intellectual Property (IP). The MoU is intended to promote innovation, creativity and economic growth in both countries.
- The MoU establishes a broad and flexible framework through which both countries can exchange best practices and work together on training programs and technical exchanges to raise awareness on IPRs and better protect intellectual property rights (IPRs).

IMPORTANT SUMMIT & CONFERENCE

Dr Bhamre inaugurates Annual Army Seminar 2017-18

- Raksha Rajya Mantri Dr Subhash Bhamre inaugurated one-day Annual Army Seminar for 2017-18 on ‘Contribution of the Army towards Nation Building’ at Manekshaw Centre New Delhi.
- Objective of the seminar is to highlight the contributions of the Indian Army towards Nation building and identify new spheres and areas for future participation.

World ATM Congress 2018 Held In Spain:

- The Airports Authority of India (AAI) is participating in World ATM Congress (WATMC) 2018 being held in Spain.
- Now entering its sixth year, World ATM Congress is the world's largest international air traffic management (ATM) exhibition and conference attracting thousands of delegates each year.
- The AAI is showcasing its achievements and initiatives, through a stall at the conference which was inaugurated by A.K. Dutta, Member (ANS), AAI.

'Vision For Future' Event Held In New Delhi:

- An event named 'Vision for Future' was held in New Delhi to commemorate 70 years of the Indo-Russia ties.
- The event sought to expose the youth to the dynamic opportunities of cooperation between the two countries.
- The program inaugurated at the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra was organised by the Ministry of External Affairs (Eurasia Division) and the International Federation of Indo-Russian Youth Clubs.

Swachh Shakti 2018 going to held in Lucknow:

- The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, in association with the Government of Uttar Pradesh, is organizing a Women's Convention – called Swachh Shakti 2018 – on International Women's Day, at Lucknow.
- 8000 women sarpanches, 3000 women Swachhagrah, 2000 mahilasamakhya from Uttar Pradesh and women sarpanches from across the country have been invited to recognize their outstanding contribution towards making Swachh Bharat a reality in rural India.
- Last year, 6000 women sarpanches from across the country had assembled in Gujarat on the occasion of International Women's Day under the banner Swachh Shakti 2017.

4th India-Europe 29 Business Forum Held In New Delhi:

- The fourth India-Europe 29 Business Forum (IE29BF) took place in New Delhi.
- The Forum was created for the first time in 2014 by Ministry of External Affairs and Federation of Indian Chambers and Commerce (FICCI) to provide an institutionalized platform for promoting business exchanges between India and the twenty-nine countries of Central Europe region.
- The theme of IE29BF 2018 was ‘_Synergizing Economic Vision for Expanded Relations’ . For IE29BF 2018, Czech Republic was the ‘_Focus Country’ .

USEFUL INFO	
Theme	Synergizing Economic Vision for Expanded Relations’

PM Inaugurates National Legislators Conference On The Theme of ‘_We For Development’:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated National Legislators Conference on the theme ‘_We for Development’ in New Delhi. The motive of the conference is to bring MPs and MLAs on a single platform where ideas and plans for development can be exchanged.
- The conference will hold discussions on how women help in the development work being done for the country where ideas on projects and plans can be debated. NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant will give a presentation on the first day and the plenary will be presided over by Lok Sabha Deputy Speaker M Thambidurai. Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu will address the concluding session.

‘Wings India 2018’ Event Inaugurated In Hyderabad:

- Telangana IT and Industries Minister K T Rama Rao inaugurated the biennial event on Civil Aviation and Aerospace titled ‘Wings India 2018’ at the Begumpet Airport.
- The four-day event was jointly organised by the Civil Aviation Ministry, Airports Authority of India and the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

World Ocean Summit 2018 concluded in Mexico:

- World Ocean Summit was held recently in Mexico's Riviera Maya.
- It's a chance for business, government and environmental leaders to talk about the problems facing the world's seas and to come up with solutions to protect the planet's vast ocean resources.
- UN's environmental director says governments need to take more responsibility for the world's oceans.

Home Minister to inaugurate International Police Conference on Cybercrime & Terrorism:

- The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh will inaugurate the two-day Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in New Delhi.
- The theme is "Challenges to Policing in 2020- How is Cyber Space shaping our approach to Cybercrime & Terrorism, how do we perform within it and take advantage of it".
- The regional conference is being organised by the Asia-Pacific World Regional Office (APWRO) of the IACP in partnership with the Intelligence Bureau.
- The Director, Intelligence Bureau, as the Chair of APWRO, is the host of the Conference.

- The phenomenal growth and influence of Cyber space and Cyber technology have opened new challenges in the field of policing in recent times.

USEFUL INFO	
Theme	Challenges to Policing in 2020- How is Cyber Space shaping our approach to Cybercrime & Terrorism, how do we perform within it and take advantage of it

PM To Inaugurate 105th Indian Science Congress In Imphal

- PM Modi inaugurated the 105th Indian Science Congress in Imphal, Manipur. The theme for ISC 2018 is 'reaching the unreached through science and technology'.
- This event is being held in Manipur for the first time and for the second time in the North-East. Earlier it was held at Shillong in 2009.
- The 5-day Congress will see the participation of over 5000 delegates comprising of scientists, scholars and corporate officials from different parts of the country and abroad.

USEFUL INFO	
Theme	'Reaching the unreached through science and technology'

WHO Member-Countries Commit To End TB By 2030:

- Member-countries of the World Health Organisation (WHO) South-East Asia Region, including India, committed to intensifying efforts to eradicate tuberculosis by 2030.
- The summit sets the stage for the September 2018 United Nations high-level meeting on TB, wherein the issue will be discussed at the Heads of State level.
- The UN meeting is likely to endorse a set of goals to put the world on course to ending TB.

India to host International Competition Network Annual Conference for the first time:

- India to host 17th Annual Conference of International Competition Network 2018 (ICN2018) from 21st to 23rd March 2018 in New Delhi.
- While addressing the press conference, Competition Commission of India's Chairperson Shri Devender Singh Sikri said that this is the first time India is hosting the ICN2018 Annual Conference since it joined International Competition Network (ICN) in 2009.
- CCI Chairperson Shri Sikri said that the ICN is an informal network comprising 138 competition authorities from 125 jurisdictions.

PM addresses Rising India Summit organized by Network 18

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the Rising India Summit, organized by Network 18.
- He said that when we speak of a rise, in terms of a nation, it has a very broad context.
- He said that beyond the rise of the economy, he feels that Rising India implies the rise of self-respect among the people of India.

Two-day ministerial meeting of World Trade Organisation begins in New Delhi today:

- Representatives from 50 countries will gather in New Delhi today for a two-day informal World Trade Organisation (WTO) ministerial meeting.
- The meeting will provide an opportunity to engage in free and frank discussions with the hope that it will lead to political guidance on some major issues.
- In the absence of Ministerial guidance at the Eleventh Ministerial Conference (MC 11) that took place in December last year in Buenos Aires, it is hoped that the meeting in New Delhi will provide an opportunity for ministers to explore in greater detail options on different issues for re-invigorating the WTO.

1st India-Japan Workshop On Disaster Risk Reduction Inaugurated

- The Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog, Dr Rajiv Kumar inaugurated the First India-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction in New Delhi.
- The two-day workshop is being jointly organised by the Ministry of Home Affairs, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Government of Japan.
- The workshop marks the beginning of the formal implementation of the initiatives agreed under the Memorandum of Cooperation signed between the two countries on Disaster Risk Reduction in September 2017.

7th Women's Science Congress Inaugurated In Manipur

- The Women Science Congress, 2018 was inaugurated in the backdrop of the ongoing 105th Indian Science Congress on its 3rd day being held at Manipur University, Imphal.
- Keshari Nath Tripathi, Governor of West Bengal inaugurated the 7th Edition of Science Congress for women.
- Prof. Vijay Laxmi Saxena, Former General Secretary, India Science Congress Association (ISCA) and Mrs. Namita Gupta, Scientist, Dept. of Science & Technology graced the function as guests of honours.

1st National Workshop on POSHAN Abhiyan Held in New Delhi:

- The first National workshop on POSHAN Abhiyan involving all the states and union territories was held at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra, New Delhi.
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development is organising the day-long workshop with participation from all the states/UTs.
- It is been organized to provide a complete orientation on the POSHAN Abhiyan, to explain the key components of the Abhiyaan and to provide handholding in using the software involved.
- The Ministry of WCD is also launching five e-ILA (e-Incremental Learning Approach) courses and two ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) software modules.

Third edition of National Conclave on Mines and Minerals to be held in Delhi:

- The third edition of National Conclave on Mines and Minerals will be held in New Delhi.
- Representatives of various state governments, mining industry, industry associations, financial and academic institutions will participate in the event.
- In a statement, the Ministry of Mines said, the conclave will provide an effective platform to showcase the recent policy initiatives of the government.

meeting in Argentina eclipsed by potential trade war

- Finance Ministers and central bankers from 20 leading industrial and developing countries are meeting in Argentina amid growing concerns over potential global trade war following US decision to slap import tariffs on steel and aluminum.

- G-20 officials are also discussing issues including infrastructure development and the technology behind cryptocurrencies during the two-day meeting that began in Buenos Aires yesterday.
- This is the first of five such meetings to be held before Argentina hosts the G20 Summit in November.

106th Indian Science Congress to Be Held In Bhopal:

- General President-elect Manoj Kumar Chakrabarti announced that the 106th edition of the Indian Science Congress will be held in January 2019 at Barkatullah University Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- The theme for 2019 ISC will be –Future India: Science & Technology.

USEFUL INFO	
Theme	Future India: Science & Technology

Union Agriculture Minister Addresses 5th India Maize Summit 2018:

- Union Agriculture Minister, Radha Mohan Singh had addressed the 5th India Maize Summit in New Delhi.
- The aim of the summit was to harness the potential of maize, technological innovations, promoting producer aggregation.

India & China Economic Group meeting started in New Delhi:

- The India and China Economic Group meeting is currently underway in New Delhi. Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu and his Chinese counterpart Zhong Shan and senior officials of both countries are deliberating upon ways to boost trade and reduce trade deficit.
- The meeting assumes significance as India has time and again raised the issue of heavy trade imbalance with China and sought steps to facilitate Indian exports in areas including pharmaceutical and agricultural products and information technology services. Investment related issues are also likely to come up for discussion besides market access matters and other non-trade barriers.

1st International exhibition of graphic prints „Print Biennale India 2018“ inaugurated In New Delhi:

- The country’s National Academy of Art, the Lalit Kala Akademi hosted the first-ever International Print Biennale in the country with a record number of 17 countries taking part in it.
- The first-ever International Exhibition of Graphic Prints _Print Biennale India 2018‘opened, at the Rabindra Bhavan Galleries of the Lalit Kala Akademi in New Delhi.
- The eminent Artist-Printmaker, Shakti Barman was the Chief Guest.

„National Conference on Down Syndrome“ held in New Delhi:

- A ‘ National Conference on Down Syndrome‘ was organised by the National Trust under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in New Delhi.
- Dr. Kamlesh Kumar Pandey, Chairman, National Trust inaugurated it in the presence of Shri Mukesh Jain, JS & CEO, National Trust, Dr. Surekha Ramachandran, Chairperson, Down Syndrome Federation of India and various stakeholders associated with Down Syndrome.
- A book entitled –Twilights Childrenl based on the lives of person suffering from Down Syndrome was released on the occasion.

National Conclave On Psychological Trauma, Child Protection, And Mental Illnesses In New Delhi:

- With an aim to provide a comprehensive synthesis of research, service provision, and clinical practice in addressing psychological trauma and subsequent mental illnesses in Indian children and adolescents, First, ever National conclave was held in New Delhi by the Ministry of Women & Child Development, in collaboration with the Dept. of Psychiatry.
- The Conclave was inaugurated by Hon'ble Minister of State for Women and Child Development, Dr. Virendra Kumar.

Cabinet Approves MoU Between India, UK And Northern Ireland

- The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of MoU between India and the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland regarding cooperation and Exchange of Information for the Purposes of Combating International Criminality and Tackling Serious Organised Crime.
- India and U.K. already have an agreement concerning the investigation and prosecution of crime and the tracing, restraint, and confiscation of the proceeds and instruments of crime (including crimes involving currency transfers) and terrorist funds, which was signed in 1995.

IMPORTANT MOBILE APP AND WEB PORTAL

NHAI Introduced Sukhad Yatra mobile application

- Sukhad Yatra mobile application has been prepared by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to empower Highway user. Its key feature includes provision for user to enter road quality-related information and to report any accident or pothole on highway.
- It also provides users with real-time data related to waiting time expected at plazas and various facilities like points of interest, highway nest and nest mini, etc. available across highway.
- It can also be used by users to purchase FASTag and further facilitate highway user experience.

NHAI Introduced Toll-free number 1033:

- It will enable users to report an emergency condition and highway-related feedback. Its service has been integrated with various ambulances, tow away services along highway to ensure rapid response time in case emergency.
- The service is supported by a multi-lingual support and user location tracking features to provide the user with accurate and responsive complaint resolution.

Street Lighting National Programme: 49 lakh LED street lights installed

- Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) has installed 49 lakh LED street lights in 28 states/UTs under the Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP).
- This information was given by Minister of State (IC) Power R K Singh in a written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha.

Saposhi: Threat of new malware looms over cyberspace:

- Cyber security agencies have detected a new malware called Saposhi that can take over electronic devices and use them for Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks.
- Saposhi Malware is capable of taking over electronic devices and turning them into bots (device taken over by malware) which can then be used for any purpose, including DDoS attacks which, with enough firepower, can cripple entire industries.

Udyam Sakhi Portal Launched For Women Entrepreneurs:

- On the occasion of International Women's Day the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) launched a portal for women entrepreneurs of India: www.udyamsakhi.org.
- The portal was unveiled by the Minister of State (I/C) of MSME, Giriraj Singh, in a program in New Delhi.
- The portal is a network for nurturing entrepreneurship and creating business models for low cost products and services in order to empower women and make them self-reliant and self-sufficient.

SIDBI, CSC Partner To Offer MSME Credit Portal Udyamimitra:

- The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) signed an MoU with CSC e-governance Services (CSCeGS) to take Udyami Mitra portal to the unserved and the underserved MSMEs.
- Udyamimitra is a portal to improve the accessibility of credit for the MSMEs. It allows entrepreneurs to apply for a loan without physically visiting bank branches.
- CSCeGS is a special purpose vehicle (SPV) set up by the ministry of electronics and IT (MeitY) which acts as connect point for various digitally aligned services to villages in the country. The MoU is aimed to facilitate financial support to the upcoming CSCs through bank financing.

IMPORTANT DEFENCE NEWS

Anti-Tank Guided Missile Nag tested successfully:

- The Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) Nag was successfully flight-tested in desert conditions against two tank targets at different ranges and timings, Defence Ministry officials said.
- As the developmental trials of the missile have been completed, it is now ready for induction in the Army, the officials added. It is the third-generation fire-and-forget ATGM developed by the DRDO.

India, Seychelles conduct Lamitve 2018 military exercise:

- The eighth edition Lamitve 2018, bilateral military exercise between Indian Army and Seychelles People's Defence Force was held at Mahe Island in Seychelles archipelago.
- The Seychelles archipelago falls on one of most significant and busiest sea transport routes of the world in Indian Ocean.

Exercise Paschim Leher (XPL-18) Concludes:

- The Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy concluded a large scale operational exercise in the Arabian Sea.
- The three week long exercise termed Exercise 'Paschim Leher' (XPL) tested the operational readiness of the Western Naval Command and the execution of its operational plans.
- Over 40 naval assets including the aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya, frontline ships of the Western Fleet and Eastern Fleet (including the newly inducted Kolkata class), submarines, potent missile vessels of the 22nd Killer Squadron, Patrol vessels and craft of the Local Flotilla and Indian Coast Guard participated in the exercise.

India-US team test-fires M777 ultra-light howitzers in Pokhran

- Joint investigation committee (JIC) comprising US and Indian officials has test-fired M777 ultra-light howitzers (ULH) at Pokhran firing range in Rajasthan.
- The team will review results of this test soon. The test was conducted in the wake of accident during its trial in September 2017.

Event named Vision for Future commemorate 70 yrs of Indo Russia ties:

- ❑ An event named 'Vision for Future' was inaugurated at the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi to commemorate 70 years of the Indo-Russia ties.
- ❑ This Program was organised by the Ministry of External Affairs (Eurasia Division) and the International Federation of Indo-Russian Youth Clubs.

Multilateral naval exercise Milan begins in Andaman:

- ❑ The Indian Navy began an eight-day-long mega naval exercise along with leading maritime powers of the region at the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The biennial exercise — Milan — is taking place in the backdrop of imposition of state of emergency in Maldives and Sri Lanka, two of India's maritime neighbors.
- ❑ 28 warships including 17 from India and 11 from Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand are participating in the 10th exercise.

Multilateral Air Force exercise „Samvedna“

- A Multilateral Air Force exercise, „Samvedna‘, will be held from March 12 to 17, 2018.
- ❑ The exercise is spearheaded by Indian Air Force and will be conducted by Southern Air Command.
- ❑ It is the first composite HADR Air exercise in the South Asian region.
- ❑ Air Forces of Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, UAE and Myanmar have already committed resources and personnel for the exercise.

'Wings India 2018' Event Inaugurated In Hyderabad:

- ❑ Telangana IT and Industries Minister K T Rama Rao inaugurated the biennial event on Civil Aviation and Aerospace titled 'Wings India 2018' at the Begumpet Airport.
- ❑ The four-day event was jointly organized by the Civil Aviation Ministry, Airports Authority of India and the Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

C-437: Indian Coast Guard commissions interceptor boat:

- ❑ The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has commissioned interceptor boat ICGS C-437 at Porbandar, Gujarat as part of its efforts to strengthen coastal security. ICGS C-437 shall be based at Jakhau under administrative and operational control of commander Coast Guard Region (North West).

Indo-French naval exercise 'Varuna-18' Concluded in the Arabian Sea off the Goa coast:

- ❑ The navies of India and France are currently engaged in a joint bilateral exercise, "Varuna-18", in the Arabian Sea off the Goa coast, which commenced days after the leaders of the two countries decided to further deepen their maritime cooperation.

India plans to set F-16 jet production unit:

- ❑ The plan to set up an F-16 jet production unit in India will be an "exclusive" proposition that will help the country in achieving its operational needs as well as the 'Make in India' initiative, according to American aerospace and defence major Lockheed Martin.
- ❑ As India continues to shop around to add new fighter jets into its air force, Lockheed Martin has offered to relocate its entire production line to India.

Naval ships exercise to boost UAE-India ties

- Naval ships of the UAE and India will hold a first-ever joint exercise - 'Gulf Star 1' - giving a further boost to bilateral ties.
- Two Indian Navy ships INS Gomati and INS Kolkata arrived at Port Zayed for the 'Harbour Phase' of the exercise and will participate with UAE Navy ships for the 'Sea Phase'.
- The joint exercise is part of the comprehensive strategic partnership and aims to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation.

Navy warship INS Ganga decommissioned in Mumbai:

- INS Ganga, an indigenously built frigate of the Indian Navy, was decommissioned in Mumbai after over three decades of service.
- Commissioned on December 30, 1985, the ship represented a big step forward in the nation's warship building capability.
- The ceremony was attended by several officers and men, now retired, who had served on board the ship. The impressive ceremony saw the naval ensign hauled down for the last time at sunset.
- The chief guest for the ceremony was Vice Admiral A K Bhal, himself a former crew member of the ship from 1989 to 1991.

BrahMos missile with indigenous seeker tested for 1st time:

- India successfully test-fired the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile with an indigenous seeker for the first time from Rajasthan's Pokhran test range.
- The seeker was developed by Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad, in collaboration with other DRDO labs.
- The seeker technology, which determines the accuracy of a missile, is a closely guarded secret. Mastering it is a significant milestone in missile technology and would reduce import dependence.
- BrahMos is a joint collaboration between India and Russia and the missile is capable of being launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air against surface and sea-based targets.

TESS: NASA, SpaceX collaborate to search for exoplanets:

- NASA has partnered with private space launching company SpaceX to launch Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) to search for exoplanets using the transit method.
- TESS is designed to carry out first space borne all-sky transiting exoplanet survey. It is equipped with four wide-angle telescopes and associated charge-coupled device (CCD) detectors. It is planned to be launched in April 2018 on board of SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.

ISRO to launch GSAT-6A communication satellite today:

- The 27-hour countdown began yesterday for the launch of ISRO's GSLV-F08 mission carrying the GSAT-6A communication satellite from the space port of Sriharikota, about 110 km from Chennai.
- The countdown for the mission to be launched on Thursday started at 13.56 hours following clearance from the Mission Readiness Review committee and Launch Authorisation Board, ISRO said.
- The Launch of GSLV-F08, planned from the Second Launch Pad in Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota at 16.56 hours on Thursday marks the 12th flight of Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLV-F08 and sixth flight with indigenous Cryogenic upper stage.
- GSAT-6A, is similar to GSAT-6, a high power S-band communication satellite built on I-2K satellite bus with a mission life of about ten years.

USEFUL INFO	
ISRO Headquarters	Bangalore
Chairman	Dr. K Sivan

NASA to send first mission to study 'heart' of Mars:

- NASA is all set to send the first-ever mission dedicated to exploring the deep interior of Mars.
- The US space agency said today that it will launch on 5th of May, a stationary lander - InSight, which will be first NASA mission since the Apollo moon landings to place a seismometer, a device that measures quakes, on the soil of another planet.

China launches 2 satellites to boost its BeiDou navigation system:

- China today successfully launched two satellites with a single rocket to strengthen its BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS), which will serve countries along the ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by the end of this year.
- Xinhua report said, the Long March-3B rocket, carrying the two satellites, today lifted off from Xichang Satellite Launch Center in southwest China's Sichuan Province.
- The two satellites are coded as the 30th and 31st members in the BDS. They entered orbit more than three hours after the launch and will work together with six previously launched BeiDou-3 satellites once they pass a series of tests.

IMPORTANT SCHEMES AND PROGRAMS

27th Technological Conference of Indian Jute Industries' Research Association (IJIRA) started in Kolkata:

- Union Textile Minister Smriti Irani attended the 27th Technological Conference of Indian Jute Industries' Research Association (IJIRA) on Shaping the Future of Jute in Kolkata.
- The function was focused on the promotion of geotextiles in the northeast region. Geotextiles are absorbent fabrics which, when used in association with soil, have the ability to separate, filter, reinforce, protect or drain.

NIFT to conduct National Sizing Survey:

- The National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Delhi will conduct a National Sizing Survey to develop a comprehensive size chart for ready-to-wear industry based on the body measurements of the Indian population.
- Under the survey, anthropometric data will be collected from a sample population in the age group 15 to 65 years to create a database of measurements that will result in a standardized size chart which is representative of the Indian population and can be adopted by the apparel industry, a Ministry of Textiles statement said.

'India by the Nile' festival to begin next week in Egypt:

- The mega annual cultural festival 'India by the Nile', organised to celebrate Indian culture and its diversity, will begin in Cairo next week with the main focus on classical culture this year.
- The 12-day event, the biggest foreign festival in Egypt, will host a wide range of events and starts on March 6.

Rs. 5600 Crore Sanctioned Under Swadesh Darshan Scheme:

YASHSHREE COMPETITION ZONE

- A total amount of Rs. 5638.87 crore was sanctioned with the release of Rs. 2148.17 crore since 2014-15 till date under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism.
- Under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, thirteen thematic circuits have been identified for development.

Center sanctioned Rs. 687.92 Crore Under PRASHAD Scheme:

- Meanwhile, under the PRASHAD scheme, 23 projects have been sanctioned to 15 States for a total amount of Rs.687.92 crore with the release of Rs.241.28 crore since 2015-16 till date.
- The objective of the _National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASHAD) is of holistic development of identified pilgrimage and heritage destination.

International Yoga Festival Held In Risikesh:

- Uthtrakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat inaugurated the week-long 29th annual, world-famous International Yoga Festival (IYF) in Rishikesh's Parmarth Niketan.
- The IYF offers daily classes from 4 a.m. until 9:30 p.m. with more than 80 revered saints, yogacharyas, presenters and experts from nearly 20 countries around the world.

Smriti Irani Inaugurated FICCI Frames 2018 In Mumbai:

- The Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting and Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani inaugurated the FICCI Frames 2018, in Mumbai. She has also released the FICCI-EY Media & Entertainment Report 2018 named 'Re-imagining India's M&E Sector'.
- As per the report, the Indian M&E sector hit Rs 1.5 trillion (\$22.7 billion) in 2017, growth of around 13% over 2016. With its current trajectory, it is expected to cross Rs 2 trillion (\$31 billion) by 2020, at a CAGR of 11.6%.

NITI Aayog Has Launched Women Entrepreneurship Platform:

- NITI Aayog launched the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), on the occasion of International Women's Day.
- The initiative is aimed at building an ecosystem for women across India to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations, scale-up innovative initiatives and chalk-out sustainable, long-term strategies for their businesses.
- CEO, NITI Aayog, Amitabh Kant, launched the WEP platform at NITI Aayog premises in New Delhi. The WEP theme song —Naari Shakti composed and sung by Shri Kailash Kher was released on this occasion.

RK Singh launches National E-Mobility Programme

- Shri R K Singh, Union Minister of State (IC) Power and New & Renewable Energy, launched the National E-Mobility Programme.
- The Programme aims to provide an impetus to the entire e-mobility ecosystem including vehicle manufacturers, charging infrastructure companies, fleet operators, service providers, etc.
- The Programme will be implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) which will aggregate demand by procuring electric vehicles in bulk to get economies of scale.

PM Launches National Nutrition Mission And Pan India Expansion Of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao

- On the occasion of International Women's Day, PM Narendra Modi launched the National Nutrition Mission (NNM) and Pan India Expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) covering all 640 districts of the Country at a mega event held at Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan.

- NNM has been set up with a three year budget of Rs.9046.17 crore commencing from 2017-18. The NNM is a comprehensive approach towards raising nutrition level in the country on a war footing.

PM Launches National Nutrition Mission:

- On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, launched the National Nutrition Mission, and expansion of the coverage of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme, at Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan.
- He also interacted with beneficiary mothers and girl children of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme.
- The Prime Minister awarded certificates to the best performing districts under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme.

Government announces launch of „SUIDHA“:

- Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri Ananth Kumar announced the launch of ‘_Suvidha’, the 100% Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin, under the Pradhan Mantri Bharatiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).
- The affordable sanitary napkin will be available for Rs. 2.50 per pad at over 3200 Janaushadhi Kendras across India and would ensure ‘_Swachhta, Swasthya and Suvidha’ for the underprivileged Women of India.
- This step taken by the Department of Pharmaceuticals will ensure the achievement of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s vision of Affordable and Quality Healthcare for All.

MP announces 'Mukhyamantri Mahila Kosh' scheme pension for single women aged over 50 years

- On the International Women's Day on Thursday, Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced the 'Mukhyamantri Mahila Kosh' scheme aimed at providing pension to unmarried women aged over 50 years.
- Women shouldn't be celebrated only on a designated day, Chouhan said. Earlier this week, Chouhan announced Rs.4,000 monthly assistance to pregnant laborers from the sixth month of pregnancy.

Annual Krishi Unnati Mela Begins In New Delhi

- The three-day annual Krishi Unnati Mela has begun in New Delhi with a focus on doubling farmers’ income.
- The objective of the event is to create awareness among farmers about the latest agriculture-related technological developments.
- Lakhs of farmers and agriculture scientists will participate in the mela. The main theme pavilion will be based on Doubling of farmer’s income by 2022.
- The theme area will display different kinds of organic farming techniques like natural farming and eco farming.

NITI Aayog Released SATH-E Roadmaps:

- NITI Aayog released comprehensive roadmaps and detailed timelines for its initiative ‘_Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E)’ project. Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog released the forward-looking blueprints.
- These roadmaps, which operate between 2018 to 2020, lay out detailed interventions which will be taken by the three participating States Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha which aiming to become ‘_Role Model States’ in school education.

LaOshya program launched to improve quality of Maternity care:

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched LaQshya program aimed at improving quality of maternity care in labor room and maternity Operation.
- It is being implemented to 'fast-track' interventions for achieving tangible results. Key Facts the program aims to improve quality of care for pregnant.
- It is implemented at all Medical College Hospitals, District Hospitals and First Referral Unit (FRU) and Community Health Center (CHCs).

More than 17 lakh beneficiaries enrolled under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana:

- Number of beneficiaries enrolled under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) has increased to 17,66,423.
- Every day on an average, around 50,000 new applications are received for enrolment.
- So far, Rs. 2048.21 Crores to all 36 States/UTs have been sanctioned under PMMVY out of which Rs. 2042.09 Crores have been released till date.
- The Government of India has approved Pan-India implementation of PMMVY in all districts of the country from 01.01.2017 under which the eligible beneficiaries get Rs. 5,000/- under PMMVY and the remaining cash incentive as per approved norms towards Maternity Benefit under Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) after institutional delivery so that on an average, a woman gets Rs. 6000/-.

President Inaugurates Festival Of Innovation And Entrepreneurship in New Delhi:

- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurates a Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship and present Gandhian Young Technological Innovation awards at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi.
- The five-day festival is an initiative to recognise, respect, showcase, reward innovations and to foster a supportive ecosystem for innovators.
- It is being organised by Rashtrapati Bhavan in association with the Department of Science and Technology and the National Innovation Foundation-India.

(KUSUM) scheme inaugurated to harness solar power for rural India:

- The Indian government is in process of formulating 'Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM) scheme' to harness solar power for rural India. The scheme will allow to setup grid-connected solar plants in rural areas.
- KUSUM will build 10,000 MW solar plant and provide 1.75 million off-grid agricultural solar pumps. The program aims to boost farmers' income as they can sell their additional power to the main grid produced by solar plants located on their lands.

Cabinet clears Ayushman Bharat scheme for Rs.5L health cover to 10cr families:

- The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission, which aims to provide an annual health cover of Rs5 lakh to 10 crore poor families.
- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had hailed the programme as the 'world's largest health protection scheme' in his Union Budget speech.
- The Centre will fund 60% expenditure incurred by the scheme.

Government launches Sand Mining Framework to check illegal extraction

- The Union Ministry of Mines has launched Sand Mining Framework to help states deal with the sand mining issues, including demand supply deficit and illegal extraction.
- It was launched at the third National Conclave on Mines & Minerals held in New Delhi.

- The main objective of framework is to assist states in arriving at best possible options before them. It also seeks to addresses issues of state objectives, demand-supply assessment and measures to sand availability, allocation model, transportation and monitoring mechanism.

Housing & Urban Ministry has approved the construction of 3,21,567 affordable houses under PMAY:

- Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has approved the construction of 3,21,567 more affordable houses for the benefit of urban poor under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) with an investment of Rs18,203 crore with central assistance of Rs4,752 crore.
- The approval was given in the 32nd meeting of the Central Sanctioning and Monitoring Committee (CSMC) held in New Delhi.

11th Rashtriya Rifles biennial conference at Nagrota on 26-27 March 2018:

- The eleventh Rashtriya Rifles Biennial Conference is being conducted at Nagrota from 26 to 27 March 18.
- The event chaired by Chief of the Army Staff has been attended by Army Commander Northern Command, Director General Rashtriya Rifles, Corps Commander 15 and 16 Corps and all General Officers Commanding Counter Insurgency Forces.
- The Rashtriya Rifles has assisted the locals from inaccessible and far flung areas of the state by providing assistance in diverse fields and has given an impetus to development, growth, education, women empowerment, skill development and communal harmony through its multifarious enabling civil action programs.

SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2018 Held In New Delhi:

- SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2018 has been organised in New Delhi under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM). It is one of the flagship programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development to alleviate rural poverty.
- The SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2018 in New Delhi is an endeavour of DAY-NRLM to provide to the rural women producers a national platform and an opportunity to showcase their products and seek buyers, either individuals or bulk buyers for sale nationally/internationally.

IMPORTANT RANKING AND INDEXES

Indian Military Ranked 4th Strongest In World:

- Out of 133 countries, India is ranked fourth on a global index for its military strength, only the United States, Russia and China are ranked above India on the list, according to the latest report of the Global Firepower index 2017.
- Neighboring Pakistan is ranked 13th. India maintained its position above France in the top five military powers in the world.

Jeff Bezos tops Forbes billionaires list for the first time:

- With a net worth of \$112 billion, Amazon Founder Jeff Bezos has topped the Forbes billionaires list for the first time, dethroning Bill Gates who topped the list 18 times in the past 24 years.
- Gates, with a net worth of \$90 billion, was followed by Warren Buffett with \$84 billion, while Mark Zuckerberg was ranked fifth with \$71 billion.

Delhi airport ranked number 1 in world in service quality:

- Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) has been ranked number one in the world on airport service quality ranking.
- Around 63.5 million passengers flying through the Delhi airport in 2017, it has surpassed Changi, Incheon and Bangkok airports in terms of passenger growth.
- It is now the seventh busiest airport in Asia and among the top 20 busiest airports across the world.

India ranks 52 in Mastercard women entrepreneurs index:

- India ranked 52 among 57 countries studied for the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE), showed the findings of its second edition.
- The latest ranking for India remains unchanged from the previous year.
- The MIWE focuses on female entrepreneurs' ability to capitalise on opportunities granted through various supporting conditions within their local environments.

World's Best Airport: Delhi And Mumbai Airports Tie At No. 1

- Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) and Mumbai's Chatrapathi Shivaji Maharaja International Airport have beaten 1,952 other airports from 176 countries to tie at number one for world's best airports, as per Airports Council International (ACI) ASQ 2017 rankings.
- The Airport Service Quality Awards 2017 was announced by the Airports Council International (ACI), which conferred the ranking on the basis of a worldwide programme in which passengers were surveyed across airports for their feedback on 34 key performance indicators.

India placed 33rd worldwide in web-borne threats: Kaspersky

- Global cyber security provider Kaspersky Lab in a summit stated that India ranks 33rd worldwide in the list of countries facing web-borne threats.
- The Summit had about 100 participants from all over India, and brought together the most important names from the world of information security.

Finland named world's happiest country, India ranks 133rd:

- Finland has been named the happiest country, according to the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network's 2018 World Happiness Report.
- Finland was followed by Norway, Denmark, Iceland and Switzerland, while India came in at 133rd, down from 122nd place last year.
- The report ranked 156 countries on the basis of GDP per capita, life expectancy, social freedom, and absence of corruption.

Navi Mumbai has fastest 4G. Allahabad has slowest:

- Navi Mumbai has the fastest 4G speed at an average of 8.72 Mbps, while Allahabad has the lowest at 3.5 Mbps, an Open Signal analysis of 20 Indian cities between December-February revealed.
- Chennai has the second fastest speed at 8.52 Mbps, nearly double its speed from last year.
- Mumbai stood fifth at 6.97 Mbps and Delhi stood seventh at 6.69 Mbps.

Pune Tops In Improved Quality Governance: Survey

- Pune came on top in the fifth edition of the Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS), edging out Thiruvananthapuram which had topped the previous two editions of the survey. Bengaluru was ranked at the bottom.
- Thiruvananthapuram dropped two ranks to be placed third out of 23 cities spread across 20 states in the survey done by urban governance watchdog Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy.
- The survey evaluated the quality of governance in India's cities by assessing laws, policies and institutional processes currently in place.

India's GST rate second highest in the world: World Bank

- The World Bank has said India's highest GST rate of 28% is the second highest among a sample of 115 countries which have a similar indirect tax system.
- It also said the different GST rates prevalent in the Indian system make it complex for compliance. Only five countries, including India, use four non-zero GST slabs, the World Bank added.

WEF Energy Transition Index 2018: India Ranks 78th, Sweden Tops:

- India has been ranked at 78th, lower than its emerging market peers like Brazil and China, among 114 countries on the World Economic Forum's (WEF) energy transition index. The list was topped by Sweden.
- The report titled 'Fostering Effective Energy Transition' ranks countries on how well they are able to balance energy security and access to environmental sustainability and affordability.

Worldwide Cost of Living Report 2018- Singapore Most Expensive, Damascus Least

- Singapore remains the most expensive city in the world, according to The Economist Intelligence Unit's Worldwide Cost of Living report 2018.
- The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) published the Worldwide Cost of Living index 2018 for 133 cities across the world, based on a survey that compared more than 400 individual prices across over 150 products and services.
- Damascus, the capital of war-ravaged Syria, is the cheapest city for living in the world, followed by Venezuela's capital Caracas.

World Happiness Report 2018: An India rank 133rd, Finland was happiest country, Burundi unhappiest:

- The World Happiness Report 2018 was also released recently that ranks 156 countries by their happiness levels, and 117 countries by the happiness of their immigrants.
- Finland was ranked as the happiest country in the list and Burundi in East Africa is the unhappiest place in the world.
- India ranks 133rd in the report after Pakistan (75th), China (86th) and Nepal (101st).

Vienna rated world's most liveable city for 9th year in row

- Austria's capital city Vienna has been rated the world's most liveable city for the ninth consecutive year by Mercer in its annual Quality of Living survey.
- It was followed by Switzerland's Zurich, while New Zealand's Auckland and Germany's Munich tied for third place.
- Meanwhile, Iraq's capital city Baghdad has been rated the least liveable city for the tenth consecutive year.

Lakshadweep has least number of beggars, WB most in India:

- Union Minister for Social Justice Thaawarchand Gehlot has said that there are at least 4,13,670 beggars and vagrants in India, with Lakshadweep having just two.
- West Bengal, with 81,000, has the maximum number of beggars, while Uttar Pradesh stood at second position with 65,835 beggars.

- Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu have 19 and 22 vagrants respectively.

India to be 3rd largest tourism economy in 10 years: Report

- India is expected to establish itself as the third largest travel and tourism economy by 2028 in terms of direct and total GDP, a 2018 economic impact report by World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC).
- The WTTC report, released globally, also stated that India will add nearly 10 million jobs in the tourism sector by 2028 and that the total number of jobs dependent directly or indirectly on the travel and tourism industry will increase from 42.9 million in 2018 to 52.3 million in 2028.

India Becomes 4th Largest Auto Market In The World:

- India has overtaken Germany to become the fourth largest automobile market in the world, According to the latest global data. Automobile sales, including passenger and commercial vehicles, in Asia's third-largest economy, grew 9.5%.
- It is the fastest among major global markets, last year to more than 4 million units, outpacing Germany's 3.8-million vehicle sales, which rose by a modest 2.8% in the same period.

India Becomes 3rd Largest Electricity Producer In The World:

- India has become the 3rd largest electricity producer in the world as its electricity production grew 34% over seven years to 2017.
- The country now produces more energy than Japan and Russia, which had 27% and 8.77% more electricity generation capacity installed, respectively, than India seven years ago.
- Electricity production stood at 1,003.525 Billion Unit between April 2017-January 2018, according to a February 2018 report by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF), a trust established by the commerce ministry.
- With a production of 1,423 BU in FY 2016, India was the third largest producer and the third largest consumer of electricity in the world, behind China (6,015 BU) and the United States (4,327 BU).

India ranks 109th globally in mobile download speeds:

- India, the largest consumer of mobile data in the world, ranks 109th when it comes to mobile Internet download speeds.
- The average download speed over the mobile increased to 9.01 mbps in February from the 8.80 mbps in November last year, but the country's rank continued to stay at 109th, Ookla's Speed test index said.
- Norway is positioned at the top with an average download speed of 62.07 mbps.
- India however, fared better on the fixed broadband front, according to Ookla, with its rank improving to 67.
- Singapore leads in the fixed broadband front, with a download speed of 161.53 mbps.

IMPORTANT BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Books	Author
Fulfilling Babu's Dreams – Prime Minister Modi's tribute to Gandhiji	Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev
Mahila Suraksha	Jai Ram Thakur
'A Tribute to Jagu'	Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) paid tribute to former BCCI president Jagmohan Dalmiya.
Dr Prabhakaran Jain	Paramveer Parwane

IMPORTANT SPORTS NEWS

CRICKET

IPL 2018 to feature DRS for 1st time in tournament's history:

- The Decision Review System (DRS) will be used in the Indian Premier League for the first time in the tournament's 2018 edition following BCCI's approval.
- The Indian Premier League will become the second major T20 league to adopt the system after Pakistan Super League.
- Ten Indian umpires were called up for a session on DRS last year.

Indian cricketer Harmanpreet Kaur joins Punjab Police as DSP:

- Indian woman cricketer Harmanpreet Kaur from her first day as Deputy Superintendent of Police.
- "This lady has done us proud and I'm confident she'll continue to do so. My best wishes," CM Singh wrote. Kaur was awarded the post for her performance in Women's World Cup.

Venkatesh Prasad quits as BCCI junior selection chairman:

- Former India pacer Venkatesh Prasad on Friday submitted his resignation from the post of chairman of the junior national selection committee.
- Prasad, who cited personal reasons for stepping down, has worked as the head of the committee for 30 months.
- Acting president CK Khanna said that he tried convincing Prasad to stay but he had made up his mind.

Rashid Khan became the youngest cricketer as International captain at 19 years:

- Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan became the youngest cricketer at 19 years, 165 days to captain a national side after leading the team as interim captain against Scotland.
- Rashid recently became the youngest player to hold the top spot for any form of ICC men's ranking, after being elevated to the top spot in ODI and T20I bowler's rankings.

Sunil Gavaskar named as Commissioner of T20 Mumbai League:

- Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar has been named as the Commissioner of the T20 Mumbai League, which will take place at Wankhede Stadium from March 11-21.
- This comes days after Sachin Tendulkar was made the brand ambassador for the six-team league.
- Rohit Sharma and Ajinkya Rahane are the icon players of teams Mumbai North West and Mumbai North respectively.

Vishwanathan Anand Wins Tal Memorial Rapid Chess Title:

- World rapid champion Vishwanathan Anand annexed the Tal Memorial rapid chess title in Moscow, Russia after an easy final round draw against Boris Gelfand of Israel.
- His solitary loss came at the hands of Shakhriyar Mamedyarov of Azerbaijan in the third round.

MS Dhoni Becomes Brand Ambassador Of Dream 11:

- Mahindra Singh Dhoni, has become a brand ambassador of gaming platform Dream11.
-

- The former India Test skipper had led the country to a famous triumph in the inaugural World T20 Championship in 2007.
- He would be the new face of the gaming platform's multi-channel marketing campaigns and brand engagement activities.
- Currently, the gaming platform has a user base of 2 crore sports fans playing "fantasy cricket, football, Kabaddi and NBA".

Lokesh Rahul first Indian to be out hit-wicket in a T20I:

- Lokesh Rahul has become the first Indian and overall tenth batsman to be dismissed hit-wicket in T20I cricket.
- Rahul dislodged the bails with his back foot on the bowling of Sri Lankan spinner Jeevan Mendis on Monday to be dismissed for 18(17).

Paytm to be official umpire partner for IPL

- The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced Paytm as the official umpire partner for the Indian Premier League (IPL) for the next five years.
- Paytm is also the title sponsor for Indian Cricket.

India B wins Deodhar Trophy 2018

- India B has won Deodhar Trophy 2018. India defeated Karnataka by six wickets in this tournament. This Championship was held at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamshala, Himachal Pradesh.
- Ravikumar Samarth of Karnataka was the Player of the Match.

Rohit pips Yuvaraj to record most sixes by an Indian in T20Is:

- Indian opener Rohit Sharma smashed five sixes against Bangladesh in the T20I tri-series on Wednesday to take his sixes tally to 75, the most by an Indian batsman in T20I cricket.
- Rohit overtook veteran all-rounder Yuvaraj Singh, who has slammed 74 sixes in 58 T20I matches.
- Chris Gayle and Martin Guptill jointly hold the record of most T20I sixes (103).

Jaffer 1st Indian 40+ aged to hit 250 in first-class innings

- Wasim Jaffer has become the first Indian over 40 years of age to slam a 250-plus score in a first-class innings.
- Vidarbha's 40-year-old Jaffer achieved the feat by hitting an unbeaten 285 in the first innings against Rest of India in the ongoing Irani Cup. Jaffer also surpassed 18,000 first-class runs, becoming the sixth Indian to achieve the feat.

Nepal earn ODI status for first time

- Nepal has gained ODI status for the first time in their history after defeating Papua New Guinea by six wickets in the Cricket World Cup Qualifier play-off in Harare.

Vidarbha win Irani Cup after posting 800 in 1st innings

- Vidarbha claimed the Irani Cup trophy after posting a total of 800/7d in the first innings of their drawn final against Rest of India.
- The match featured a 286-run innings from 40-year-old Wasim Jaffer.
- Notably, Vidarbha remained unbeaten throughout the domestic first-class season, winning seven and drawing three of the 10 first-class matches they played this season.

India clinches Nidahas Cricket Trophy by defeating Bangladesh in nail-biting final in Colombo

- India beat Bangladesh by four wickets to win the Nidahas Cricket Trophy final in Colombo last night. In a nail biting final, the visitors clinched the T20 Tri-series title with Dinesh Karthik's last-ball six.
- Washington Sundar is Man of the Series.
- Chahal is Emerging Player of the series.

English Cricketer Kevin Petersen Announces Retirement:

- Kevin Petersen, 37 years old, has officially announced his retirement from the International cricket.
- A prolific scorer in all forms of the game, Petersen has 8,181 runs in 104 tests, 4,440 runs in 136 ODIs and 1,176 runs in 37 Twenty20 Internationals. Petersen is England's fifth highest test run-scorer.

Steve Smith, David Warner banned to play for Australia for 12 months:

- STEVE Smith and David Warner have been slapped with historic 12-month suspensions, according to reports.
- It came as busted ball-tampered Cameron Bancroft was also reportedly whacked with a nine-month suspension as Australia's nightmare tour of South Africa reached a new low ahead of the Fourth Test in Johannesburg.

Smith's autobiography put in crime section of Aus bookstore:

- Taking a dig at Australia's ball-tampering scandal, a bookstore in Brisbane took to Facebook to share a picture of Steve Smith's autobiography displayed in the 'True Crime' section.
- The photo was captioned, "Signed copies of 'The Journey' by Steve Smith available in store!" Reacting to it, a user wrote, "Is it actually his signature or did he cheat that too?"

Williamson replaces Warner as captain of Sun Risers Hyderabad:

- New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson has been named the captain of IPL franchise Sun Risers Hyderabad, replacing Australian cricketer David Warner.
- The ex-Australian vice-captain had stepped down as SRH's captain on Wednesday before being banned from IPL over the ball-tampering scandal.
- Further, Cricket Australia handed Warner a one-year ban from playing in international and domestic cricket.

Wrestling

Navajot Kaur 1st Indian woman to win gold in Senior Asian C'ships:

- Navjot Kaur became the first Indian woman wrestler to win gold in the Senior Asian Championships after winning in the 65 kg freestyle category.
- Rio Olympics bronze medalist Sakshi Malik won a bronze in the 62 kg freestyle category, while Vinesh Phogat won a silver medal in the women's 50 kg freestyle category.

Vinesh Phogat bags silver at Asian Wrestling Championships

- Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat won a silver medal at the ongoing Asian Wrestling Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.
- Phogat lost to Chinese wrestler Chun Lei by a margin of 2-3 in the women's 50kg freestyle final.
- This is Phogat's second consecutive silver at the annual event, following her podium finish at the tournament in New Delhi in 2017.

Football

ISSF World Cup 2018- Shahzar Rizvi Sets World Record:

- ISSF World Cup which is held at Guadalajara in Mexico.
- India had won four medals which include two gold and two bronze.
- Shahzar Rizvi clinched the gold medal with a world record score in his maiden ISSF World Cup appearance.
- Rizvi shot a world record 242.3 in the 10 meter air pistol event's final to beat reigning Olympic champion Christian Reitz of Germany to win the top prize.
- Manu Bhaker won the gold medal in 10 meter Air Pistol Women.
- Pistol ace Jitu Rai won the bronze in the event, as three Indians made it to the finals of the season's first World Cup. Mehuli Ghosh shot a world junior record 228.4 to win bronze in the women's 10 meter air rifle event.

Italian football club captain Astori dies in his sleep at 31:

- Fiorentina captain and Italy international Davide Astori passed away at the age of 31 during his sleep on Sunday, his club has confirmed.
- The defender failed to wake up in his hotel room ahead of Fiorentina's away match against Udinese.
- Astori had been capped 14 times by Italy and had scored once at the international level.

India U-16 football team lifts Jockey Cup:

- India Under-16 team has won the Jockey Cup International Youth Invitational Football Tournament title.
- In the final in Hong Kong today, they defeated the hosts by 4-2.
- This was India's third consecutive victory in as many days. They had earlier defeated Chinese Taipei, 4-nil and Singapore by 3-1.

OTHERS

Tokyo Unveils Mascots For 2020 Olympics And Paralympics:

- Tokyo unveiled its long-awaited mascot for the 2020 Olympic Games: a futuristic blue-checked, doe-eyed character with pointy ears and –special powers! that was picked by schoolchildren across mascot-mad Japan.
- One has an athletic figure and a strong sense of justice. The other is a cherry blossom-inspired superhero.

IOC lifts doping ban on Russia:

- The International Olympic Committee has lifted a ban against Russia, Moscow officials said Wednesday, after the country was barred from the Pyeongchang games over state-sponsored doping.

Para-swimmer Prasanta Karmakar banned for 3 years for filming female swimmers:

- Kolkata-born Para-swimmer and Commonwealth Games bronze medalist Prasanta Karmakar has been suspended for three years for recording videos of female swimmers.
- Karmakar, who was bestowed with the Arjuna Award in 2011 and Major Dhyan Chand Award in 2015, has won a total of 37 international medals. Further, he was the coach of India's Paralympics swimming team for 2016 Rio Paralympics.

Azlan Shah Cup Hockey Tournament Begins In Malaysia:

- The 27th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Hockey tournament begins in the Malaysian city of Ipoh.
- Six nations – India, hosts Malaysia, defending champions England, Australia, Argentina and Ireland – are taking part in the tournament.
- India, currently the world number six side, will take on world number two Argentina in their opening round-robin match.

India Wins Snooker Team World Cup 2018:

- India won the inaugural IBSF Snooker Team World Cup in Doha, Qatar. India beat Pakistan by 3-2 in the best-of-five final.
- In the finals, Indian duo of Pankaj Advani and Manan Chandra staged a remarkable recovery after being 0-2 down.

RBI slaps Rs 3 Cr penalty on Axis Bank, 2 Cr on IOB:

- The Reserve Bank said it has imposed a penalty of Rs 3 crore on Axis Bank for violation of NPA classification norms, and Rs 2 crore on Indian Overseas Bank for not complying with the KYC regulations.
- The RBI has imposed, a monetary penalty of Rs 3 crore on Axis Bank Limited for non-compliance with the directions issued by RBI on Income Recognition and Asset Classification (IRAC) norms, it said.
- Regarding the state-owned Indian Overseas Bank, the regulator said in a separate release that a "fraud was detected" in one of the branches of the bank.

Tejaswin Shankar Smashes National Record In High Jump:

- Delhi youngster Tejaswin Shankar smashed his own national record to claim the high jump gold as three athletes booked their Commonwealth Games berths on the third and penultimate day of the 22nd Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships.
- The 19-year-old Shankar sailed over the bar at 2.28m to marginally improve his own national mark of 2.26m which he achieved in Coimbatore in 2016 during the Junior National Championships.

Australia Lift 27th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup:

- World champions Australia have lifted the coveted Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey title. In the final at Ipoh, Malaysia, they beat defending champions England by a narrow 2-1 margin.
- Australia has now won the prestigious tournament for the 10th time.
- Earlier, in the classification match for the 3rd place, Argentina finished third after beating Malaysia 3-2. The hosts ended at the 4th spot.

India top medal tally at ISSF Shooting World Cup

- India topped the medals tally in the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup with four gold, one silver and four bronze medals for a total of nine medals in Guadalajara, Mexico.

Gold and Silver Winners:

- Shahzar Rizvi won the gold medal in the 10m air pistol event (Men's).
 - Manu Bhaker won the gold medal in the 10m air pistol event (Women's).
 - Manu Bhaker partnered with Om Prakash Mitharval for the 10m air pistol mixed team gold.
 - Akhil Sheoran clinched the gold medal in men's 50m rifle 3 positions.
 - Anjum Moudgil won silver medal in the Women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions (3P) event.
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Deepa Malik Becomes Asian Rank 1 In Javelin F-53 Category:

- Indian Para-athlete Deepa Malik won a gold medal in the F-53/54 category javelin event at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix in Dubai.
- With this, she became the Asian rank one in the F-53 category. With the win, Deepa has also qualified for the 2018 Asian Para Games in Indonesia, scheduled to be held in October 2018.

Indian Wells 2018- Complete List of Winners

- The Indian Wells Masters, also known as BNP Paribas Open and the WTA Indian Wells Open, is an annual tennis tournament held in March at the Indian Wells Tennis Garden in Indian Wells, California, United States.

S.No.	Category	Winner	Runner Up
1.	Men's Singles	Juan Martin Del Potro (Argentina)	Roger Federer (Switzerland)
2.	Women's Singles	Naomi Osaka (Japan)	Daria Kasatkina (Russia)
3.	Men's Doubles	John Isner (United States) Jack Sock (United States)	Bob Bryan (United States) Mike Bryan (United States)
4.	Women's Doubles	Hsieh Su-wei (Chinese Taipei) Barbora Strycova (Czech Republic)	Ekaterina Makarova (Russia) Elena Vesnina (Russia)

Purva Barve Wins Women's Singles U-19 Title at Israel Junior 2018:

- India's Purva Barve has won the Women's Singles (Under-19) title at the Israel Junior 2018 Badminton tournament held in Rishon LeZion, Israel.
- She has defeated the third-seeded and top-ranked Russian Anastasiia Pustinskaia in three sets. The title is her first in 2018 and third overall. Earlier she won the Israel Junior 2017, Italian Junior International 2017 apart from a bronze at the Russian Junior White Nights 2017.

Elavenil Valarivan wins 10m Air Rifle gold in junior ISSF World Cup:

- Indian shooter Elavenil Valarivan shattered the qualification world record and claimed the gold medal in 10m women's air rifle event of the season's first junior ISSF World Cup in Sydney.
- Besides her individual podium finish, Elavenil also combined with Shreya Agrawal and Zeena Khitta to claim the team gold medal.

Pankaj Advani qualifies for knockouts at Asian Billiards Championship:

- All four Indian cueists, including multiple-time world champion Pankaj Advani, qualified for the knockout stage at the Asian Billiards Championship in Myanmar.
- In the event being held at Yangon, Advani will be up against home favorite Aung Htay, while Dhvaj Haria faces Singapore's Peter Gilchrist in the quarterfinals.
- In the other half of the draw, B Bhaskar meets another local Nay Thway Oo while Rupesh Shah will lock horns with Thawat Sujaritturakarn of Thailand in the final quarter.

Manu Bhaker wins gold in ISSF Junior World Cup shooting:

- Pistol sensation Manu Bhaker continued her terrific run of form, again claiming the individual as well as team gold medal, while Gaurav Rana bagged a silver, as Indian shooters set the stage ablaze in the ISSF Junior World Cup in Sydney.

- Coming off a double gold in her maiden senior World Cup in Mexico recently, the 16-year-old Manu clinched the individual gold medal after prevailing over Thailand's Kanyakorn Hirunphoem in a thrilling final of the women's 10m air pistol event.

Sebastian Vettel Wins Australian Grand Prix

- Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari) won a dramatic Australian Grand Prix after leapfrogging Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) during a safety car period.
- Kimi Raikkonen of Ferrari was in the third position. Sebastian Vettel was the first man to meet the chequered flag in 2018.

PV Sindhu To Be India's Flag-Bearer At 2018 CWG

- Indian Olympic Association (IOA) chooses PV Sindhu as the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent for the opening ceremony of the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games.
- The opening ceremony will be held on April 4.
- She won a silver medal at the Rio Olympics two years ago, the Hyderabad-based World No. 3 Sindhu is one of the favorites to win the badminton women's singles title in Gold Coast.

Pankaj Advani Wins Asian Billiards Championships Title:

- Pankaj Advani defended his Asian Billiards Championships title by demolishing his practice partner B Bhaskar 6-1 in the summit clash in Yangon, Myanmar. With this win, Advani remains the reigning Indian, Asian and world champion in billiards for 2017-18.
- This is Advani's 11th gold medal at the Asian level of cue sports. India's Ameer Kamani won the Asian Women's Snooker title by blanking her Thai opponent Siripaporn Nuanthakhamjan 3-0.

ISSF Junior World Cup- Anish Bhanwala Wins Gold

- India's 15-year-old shooter Anish Bhanwala won a gold medal at the ISSF Junior World Cup in the 25 meter rapid fire pistol event in Sydney, Australia. It was India's third gold at the event. Bhanwala was placed 7th in the same event at the ISSF Senior World Cup.
- India is now placed second in the overall standings with 15 medals, comprising six gold, three silver and six bronze, behind China and ahead of top shooting nations such as Italy and hosts Australia.

ISSF Junior World Cup- Manu Bhaker, Anmol Won Gold:

- The duo of Manu Bhaker and Anmol secured India's seventh gold medal in the ISSF Junior World Cup in Sydney, Australia.
- The pair won the mixed 10-meter air pistol event with a qualification world record.
- They finished 5.6 advantage over their closest rivals, China's Liu Jinyao and Li Xue.
- Overall, India occupied the second placed with 17 medals, including seven gold. China leads the tally with 21 podium finishes, including eight gold medals.

17th Sub-Junior National Wushu Championship Started in Jammu and Kashmir:

- The four-day 17th Sub-junior National Wushu Championship began in Jammu today.
- The national level sports event is being organised in the winter capital city of Jammu by the the Wushu Association of India in collaboration with J&K State Sports Council at MA Stadium.

HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurates Smart India Hackathon Grand Finale 2018-Software edition:

- Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the Smart India Hackathon Grand Finale 2018 -Software edition in New Delhi.
- He said that Hackathon aims to build Digital India and to engage the youth directly in nation-building. Mr Javadekar said it is intended to promote innovation, out-of-the-box thinking in young minds.
- Mr Javadekar said, one lakh students from 1,200 colleges are participating at the world's largest Hackathon. He said the 36-hour grand finale is being held at 28 centres across the country.

IMPORTANT OBITUARIES

PERSON	FIELD
Kanakalata Mohanty	Odia writer.
T Thomas	Businessman.
Khagendra Jamatia	Tripura minister.
Prafulla Das	Veteran Literateur.
Shammi	Veteran Bollywood actor.
Ustad Pyarelal Wadali	Singers.
Sir John Sulston	British genome pioneer.
Begum Hamida Habibullah	Former Rajya Sabha member.
Ken Dodd	Comedian.
Stephen Hawking	Scientist.
Narendra Jha	Film Actor.
Kedarnath Singh	Hindi poet and critic.
R K Dorendra Singh	Former Manipur Chief Minister

YASHSHREE COMPETITION ZONE