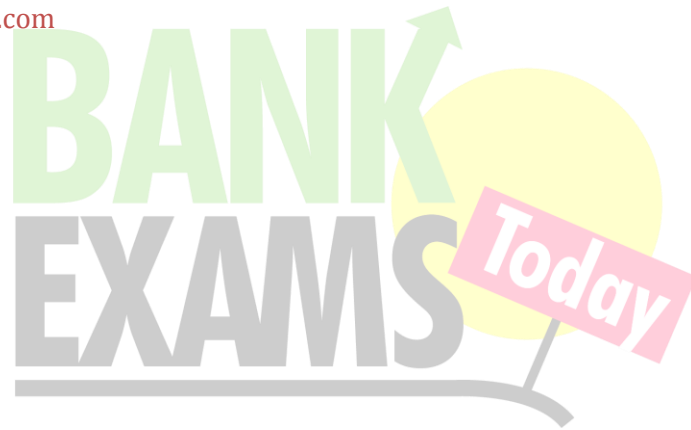


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By : RAMANDEEP SINGH

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MONTHLY GK DIGEST MAY 2018

INDIA, PAKISTAN TO PARTICIPATE TOGETHER IN SCO COUNTER-TERROR EXERCISE – “PEACE MISSION-2018”

For the first time, India and Pakistan will be part of a multi-nation counter-terror exercise. The counter-terror exercise is to be conducted in Russia in September 2018.

- It will be joined by China and several other countries.
- The military exercise is going to take place under the framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
- India's participation at exercise was confirmed by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during meeting of SCO Defence Ministers' meeting held in Beijing in April 2018.

KEY FACTS

- The military drill will be held in the Ural Mountains of Russia and almost all SCO member countries will be part of it.
- The main objective of this Peace Mission is to enhance counter-terror cooperation among the eight SCO member countries.
- Though armies of India and Pakistan have worked together in UN peacekeeping missions, but this would be the first time since Independence that both these countries would together be a part of some military exercise.

ABOUT SCO (SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION)

- The SCO was founded at a summit in Shanghai in 2001 by the Presidents of Russia, China, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- It is a political and security grouping headquartered in Beijing.
- Its full time members are- China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Pakistan.
- They represent over 40% of humanity and nearly 20% of the global GDP.
- Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia have observer status at present.
- India and Pakistan were also admitted as observers in 2005 but they finally became full members in 2017.
- India's membership was strongly pushed by Russia while Pakistan's entry into the grouping was backed by China.
- SCO is successor of grouping called Shanghai Five, founded by China in 1996.
- Summits of the Council of Heads of State are held annually at alternating venues.
- The basic objective of SCO is to enhance military cooperation among its members.
- It also works towards intelligence-sharing, counter-terrorism operations in Central Asia.

1ST MAY – INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY / LABOUR DAY

- 1st May is celebrated as the International Workers Day. It is also known as Labour's Day or Worker's Day or even May Day in some countries.

- Labour Day is a public holiday in many countries including India.
- In India, it is also known as the Antarrashtriya Shramik Diwas.

BACKGROUND

- In the 19th century, trade union and labour movements were growing in the US. It was decided that May 1 would be celebrated as International Workers' Day to commemorate the aftermath of a bombing at a labour protest.
- May 1 was chosen to be International Workers' Day to commemorate the 1886 Haymarket affair in Chicago. A rally took place in Chicago in support of the workers and during that protest, a dynamite bomb was thrown at the police. Gunfire was ensued and four civilians were killed. May Day was formally recognized as an annual event in 1891.

KEY FACTS

- This day celebrates labourers and the working class.
- Google marked International Labour Day with a doodle on its homepage to celebrate the working class in the organised sector.
- The doodle is an illustration that includes tools and equipment, including gloves, ladles and a torch, used in several trades to represent their work.
- In India, the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan was the first to mark the day in Chennai on May 1, 1923.
- The party had passed a resolution demanding a national holiday on May 1.

SWACHH BHARAT MISSION LAUNCHES GOBAR-DHAN

- GOBAR-DHAN scheme was launched the Union Minister for Drinking Water and Sanitation, Uma Bharti. GOBAR-DHAN stands for Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources (GOBAR) – DHAN.
- The scheme was launched at the National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) in Karnal, Haryana.

AIM

- This scheme aims to positively contribute to cleanliness and generate energy from solid waste. It has twin objectives- to make villages clean and generate energy from cattle and other waste.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE SCHEME

- This scheme was announced by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley while presenting Union Budget 2018.
- Under this scheme, bio-gas plants will be set up at individual or community level and also at the level of Self Help Groups and NGOs like Gaushalas.
- The funds required to setup bio-gas plants will be provided by central and state governments in the ratio of 60:40.
- A target has been set by the Government to setup nearly 700 bio-gas units in different states under the scheme during 2018-19.
- The scheme will create new rural livelihood opportunities and enhance income for farmers and other rural people.
- This scheme will be run by Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin).

- The Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) comprises two main components for creating clean villages-
 - creating open defecation free (ODF) villages
 - managing solid and liquid waste in villages
- Under Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), over 3.5 lakh villages, 374 districts and 16 States/UTs across India have already been declared open defecation free (ODF).
- The GOBAR-DHAN scheme is an important element of this ODF-plus strategy.

MOU SIGNED BETWEEN PHDCCI, INDIAN YOGA ASSOCIATION TO PROMOTE YOGA

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PHDCCI) and Indian Yoga Association (IYA) in the Krishna Circuit in Uttar Pradesh.
- This was done to promote yoga, health, wellness and spiritual tourism in Krishna Circuit.

KEY FACTS

- The two organisations have joined hands to provide a holistic tourism experience to domestic and international travellers looking for some spiritually invigorating and cultural experiences.
- PHDCCI has been frontrunner in the wellness, spiritual, knowledge and health sectors.
- It is committed to bringing about effective changes in management, innovation and proactive development of strategies and strengthening linkages for advancement through partnerships with like-minded organisations.
- The Government is trying to promote Krishna Circuit as a major tourist attraction under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
- It is named after Lord Krishna and is centered on him.
- Under it, 12 destinations in five states have been proposed which will be developed.
- The criteria to be focussed on while developing these destinations are- high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner.

SWADESH DARSHAN SCHEME

- Swadesh Darshan Scheme was launched by the Union Ministry of Tourism (MoT) in 2014-15 for integrated development of theme based tourist circuits in the country.
- This scheme is envisioned to synergise with other Government of India schemes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Skill India, Make in India etc. with the idea of positioning the tourism sector as a major engine for job creation, driving force for economic growth, building synergy with various sectors to enable tourism to realise its potential.
- It was launched as a 100% centrally funded scheme.
- The overall funding powers have been kept under National Steering Committee (NSC) under Tourism Minister of India.
- There is a great scope and need to develop tourist circuits on specific themes to attract the tourists. This can be achieved only through an integrated approach by providing engaging experiences for tourist.
- So far, 13 thematic circuits have been identified for development. These are: Buddhist Circuit, North-East India Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit and Heritage Circuit.

SURAT RAILWAY STATION TO BE 3RD IN COUNTRY TO HAVE 'AIRPORT LIKE' FACILITIES

- The Surat railway station will be the third in the country to be developed as a world-class facility under a Railway Ministry station redevelopment programme.
- The first two railway stations were Gandhi Nagar and Habibganj railway stations in Gujarat.
- Habibganj railway station will be redeveloped by December 2018 and Gandhi Nagar station by June 2019.

KEY FACTS

- Surat railway station will get "airport-like" facilities and will be developed in a world-class multi-modal transport hub by 2020.
- The project cost is estimated at Rs. 5000 crores.
- The station will be equipped for seamless transit, bus terminal and also other transport modes in the city and a parking space of about 900 vehicles.
- In this project the three levels of government (Centre, State and Urban Local body) will come together to redevelop the station.
- Railways will be working along with the Gujarat State Government to revamp the railway station area.
- The station would be a multi-modal transport hub with a bus terminal.
- SITCO has asked interested parties to send their proposals to build a transport hub at Surat railway station.
- SITCO is a joint venture between the Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Ltd (IRSDC), Surat Municipal Corporation, and Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation.
- With an aim to connect so many facilities together, the Surat multi-modal transport hub will be costliest till now.
- There will be an at least three lakh people commuting from this stretch once developed.
- It will be developed will also be developed following the norms of the green buildings.

WHO : 13 INDIAN CITIES IN WORLD'S 20 MOST POLLUTED CITIES

- According to Global Urban Air Pollution database released by World Health Organisation (WHO), 14 Indian cities have figured in list of world's 20 most polluted cities.
- In terms of PM10 levels, 13 cities in India figured among the 20 most-polluted cities of the world in 2016 whereas in terms of PM2.5 levels in 2016, 14 Indian cities were included.
- The 14 Indian cities in the list include-
 - Delhi
 - Varanasi
 - Kanpur
 - Faridabad
 - Gaya
 - Patna
 - Agra
 - Muzaffarpur
 - Srinagar
 - Gurgaon
 - Jaipur
 - Patiala
 - Jodhpur

- Gwalior
- WHO's global urban air pollution database measured the levels of fine particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) from more than 4,300 cities in 108 countries.
- According to the report, more than 90 percent of air pollution-related deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries.

HARENDRA SINGH APPOINTED AS THE CHIEF COACH FOR INDIAN MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM

- Hockey India has appointed Harendra Singh as the Chief Coach for the Indian Men's Hockey Team.
- Harendra Singh will take over Dutchman Sjoerd Marijne who is appointed as coach of the Indian Women's Hockey Team.
- Harendra Singh was appointed as the Chief Coach of the Women's Hockey team in September 2017.
- He had led the Indian Junior Men's Hockey team to the Junior World Cup title in 2016.
- He has also led the women's team to their ninth Asia Cup title in Japan last year

9TH INDIA-JAPAN ENERGY DIALOGUE

- 9th India Japan Energy Dialogue was held in New Delhi on May 1, 2018.
- The Indian side was represented by Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, R.K Singh and Japanese side was represented by Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) Mr Hiroshige Sekosigned.
- Both India and Japan aim to implement Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the aegis of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- Both countries agreed to initiate a discussion on electric vehicles (EVs) and work together in promoting well-functioning energy markets.
- They affirmed to promote transparent and diversified liquefied natural gas (LNG) market.
- They recognized the importance of development and deployment of next-generation technologies including hydrogen to realize de-carbonization.

SHAHZAR RIZVI : WORLD NO. 1 IN 10M AIR PISTOL

- Indian shooter Shahzar Rizvi grabbed World No. 1 rank in 10m air pistol rankings after achieving 1654 points.
- He won a silver medal in the recently held World Cup in Changwon, Korea.
- The other Indians in the top-10 are Jitu Rai, who is placed sixth on the chart, and Om Prakash Mitharval, at the 12th spot.
- Among the women, Manu Bhaker was the only Indian in the top-10 of the women's 10m air pistol rankings at the fourth spot.

NASA TO LAUNCH 'INSIGHT' TO STUDY DEEP INTERIORS OF MARS

- NASA will launch 'InSight' – the first-ever mission dedicated to exploring the deep interior of Mars.
- InSight stands for Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport.

- It will be launched on 5th May 2018 from Space Launch Complex-3 at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California aboard United Launch Alliance (ULA) Atlas V rocket.
- The rocket will also launch two mini-spacecraft called Mars Cube One (MarCO) which is NASA's technology experiment.
- InSight is a stationary lander that will be first NASA mission since Apollo moon landings to place seismometer to measure quakes on Mars.
- Information collected through this mission will help to know about the earliest stages of Mars' formation.
- MarCo is designed to test new communications and navigation capabilities for future missions.

15TH PRAVASI BHARATIYA DIWAS TO BE HELD IN VARANASI IN JANUARY 2019

- The 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will be held in holy city of Varanasi from 21-23 January 2019.
- The theme would be "Role of Indian Diaspora in building a New India".
- The event will be organized by the Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in association with Uttar Pradesh government.
- It will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the PM of Mauritius, Pravind Jugnauth.
- Indian Diaspora will get an option to first participate in the Kumbh Snan (in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh) and then travel to New Delhi to be part of the Republic Day Parade on January 26, 2019.

FORMER AIFF PRESIDENT P P LAKSHAMAN PASSES AWAY

- The former President of AIFF (All India Football Federation) P P Lakshaman died after suffering from a long term illness in Kannur, Kerala. He died at an age of 83 years.
- Lakshmanan served AIFF as the Secretary from 1988 to 1996.
- He went on to become senior Vice President of AIFF in 1996 and eventually, became Executive President in 2000.
- He has also served the Kerala Football Association as the Vice-President.
- He was the Executive Committee Member of the Indian Olympic Association for five years.

NEW DG OF PIB (PRESS INFORMATION BUREAU) – SITANSHU RANJAN KAR

- Indian Information Services (IIS) officer Sitanshu Ranjan Kar has taken over as the Director General of Press Information Bureau (PIB).
- He has replaced Frank Noronha as the DG of PIB. Frank Noronha superannuated on 30th April 2018.
- 1983-batch IIS officer, who has served at key positions in various media units of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting viz. All India Radio (AIR) and Doordarshan.
- Mr Kar joined the Press Information Bureau in 2003.
- He took over as the 27th Principal Spokesperson of the Government of India.
- He was the longest-serving spokesperson of the Ministry of Defence for over a decade at a stretch.

VIJAY PRAHAR MILITARY EXERCISE CONDUCTED IN RAJASTHAN

- South Western Command of Indian Army is conducting 'Vijay Prahar' exercise in Rajasthan in Mahajan area.
- The exercise will conclude on 9th May 2018.
- Around 20,000 troops are participating in the exercise.
- The aim of the exercise is to fine-tune the jointmanship with the Indian Air Force. Which recently conducted GAGAN SHAKTI exercise.
- The formations will refine their drills and procedures for fighting in nuclear environment during course of the exercise.

NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO COMMEMORATE 150TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF MAHATMA GANDHI

- President Ram Nath Kovind presided over the first meeting of the national committee set up for a commemoration of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi will be commemorated from 2nd October 2019 to 2nd October 2020.
- Rs 150 crore has been allocated for this purpose under the Union Budget 2018.
- The National Committee to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi comprises 125 members including 116 members from India and 9 international members.
- These 9 international members include two former Secretary Generals of the UN – Kofi Annan and Ban-Ki-Moon.
- The Committee includes PM Narendra Modi (as Head), Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, CMs, Union Ministers, former PM and Chief Justices of India.

NATIONAL DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY 2018 – DRAFT RELEASED BY DOT

- The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has released draft of new Telecom policy – National Digital Communications Policy, 2018.
- This policy aims to unlock transformative power of digital communications networks to achieve the goal of digital empowerment and well-being of the people of India.
- It aims to enhance contribution of digital communications sector to 8% of India's GDP from around 6% in 2017.
- It is an initiative by the Govt. to set up an effective institutional mechanism to protect consumers' interests. This includes a Telecom Ombudsman and a centralised web based complaint redressal system.
- Under the 'National Broadband Mission – Rashtriya Broadband Abhiyan' government has also set a goal to provide 1Gbps of internet speed to all gram panchayats in India by 2020.
- Use of renewable energy technologies in the communications sector will be encouraged.
- The Government will also prepare a roadmap to explore and utilise the opportunities presented by next generation-networks like 5G and emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, internet of things, robotics, cloud computing etc.

SUBHASH CHANDRA APPOINTED AS THE NEW CHAIRMAN OF IRDA

- Subhash Chandra Khuntia is appointed as the new Chairman of Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI).
- His appointment has been approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) for a period of three years.
- The post was vacant for more than two months after TS Vijayan's tenure came to an end on 21st February 2018.
- Subhash is a 1981-batch Indian Administrative Services (IAS) officer who was a former Chief Secretary of Karnataka.
- He has served as a Financial Advisor in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

VINEET JOSHI APPOINTED 1ST DG OF NTA (NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY)

- The government has appointed former chairman of Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Vineet Joshi as the first Director-General (DG) of the National Testing Agency (NTA).
- This has been initiated by the government to conduct entrance examinations for higher educational institutions organised by the CBSE, AICTE and other bodies.
- He will have tenure of five years.
- He is a 1992-batch IAS officer of the Manipur cadre.
- Prior to this appointment, he was resident commissioner of Manipur government.
- During his tenure as the Chairman of CBSE, he had introduced big changes such as Continuous Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) and making Class X board examination optional.

PAKISTAN SUCCESSFULLY TEST-FIRED BABUR III

- Pakistan successfully test-fired its indigenously designed and built nuclear-capable, submarine-launched cruise missile (SLCM) "Babur III".
Babur-III is the naval variant of the land-based Babur-II.
- The missile was fired from underwater dynamic platform.
- It is capable of delivering various types of payloads.
- It has strike range of 450 km.
- It incorporates state-of-the-art technologies including underwater controlled propulsion and advanced guidance and navigation features.
- This was the second test for Babur III, the first conducted in January 2017.

MAHARASHTRA : 1ST STATE TO PROVIDE DIGITALLY SIGNED DOCUMENTS

- Maharashtra has become the first state to issue a crucial land ownership document online and accept a digital signature on it.
- These digitally-signed land record receipts, also known as the 7/12 receipts would check irregularities and bring in transparency.

- Eight lakh 7/12 documents were generated with space for digital signatures.
- These receipts establishes the ownership of the land, and are primarily used by farmers while applying for loans.
- It is also used by the government during crop surveys and to extend various facilities.
- Now with the help of these digitally signed land records, farmers can avail of the land ownership document without going to any government office.
- To get the document digitally, one can log on to mahabhulekh.maharashtra.gov.in.

RADHAKRISHNAN NAIR APPOINTED AS INDEPENDENT DIRECTOR OF ICICI BANK

- Radhakrishnan Nair has been appointed to ICICI Bank's board as an Additional (Independent) Director.
- Radhakrishnan Nair is a former IRDAI (Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India) member.
- His appointment will be for a period of five years and is subject to shareholders' approval.
- He is also an independent Director of three subsidiaries of the ICICI Bank-
 - ICICI Prudential Life Insurance Company
 - ICICI Prudential Trust
 - ICICI Securities Primary Dealership
- Radhakrishnan Nair has around 40 years of experience in the banking industry and in the field of securities and insurance regulation.

FINAL PHASE OF VARUNA NAVAL EXERCISE CONDUCTED BETWEEN INDIA AND FRANCE

- Indian and French navies have conducted final and third phase of Varuna naval exercise 2018 near Reunion Island in Indian Ocean region (IOR) from 1-7 May 2018.
- It is a seven-day exercise which includes different scenarios, including air defence, firing, manoeuvres, asymmetric warfare and embarkation.
- 2018 Varuna naval exercise between Indian and French Navy was conducted in three phases and included anti-submarine, air defence and asymmetric engagement exercises.
- The current exercise includes the participation of two major vessels of the Indian Navy, the destroyer INS Mumbai and the frigate INS Trikand.
- The Varuna exercise is part of a long-term bilateral cooperation with India.
- It was recently reinforced by the document on the Joint Strategic Vision of India-France Cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region.
- The document was signed during the state visit of President Emmanuel Macron on March 10, 2018.
- The first phase was held in Arabian Sea, second phase was held off the Chennai coast in Bay of Bengal and third phase was held near France's Reunion Island in South.

NDMA CONDUCTS WORKSHOP ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION DATABASE

- The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) conducted a two-day national workshop on Data Requirements for Disaster Risk Reduction Database from 2-3 May 2018
- This workshop was conducted in collaboration with the following –

- UNICEF (UN International Children's Emergency Fund)
- UNDP (UN Development Programme)
- UNISDR (UN International strategy for Disaster Reduction).
- The basic objective behind conducting this workshop was to develop consensus on disasters, thresholds and develop standardised templates for data collection, and validation to ensure accuracy and quality.
- It was attended by officials from NDMA and representatives of concerned Central Ministries and Departments, state governments, UN agencies, administrative training institutes (ATIs), disaster management institutes etc.
- India is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world.
- These disasters result in loss of lives and livelihoods, besides causing significant damage to infrastructure and disruption of critical services.
- India often refers to global databases for reporting disaster losses. However, these databases work under various limitations and are not able to produce accurate analyses.
- Therefore a Disaster Risk Reduction database is necessary to access and track the risks.

WORLD PRESS FREEDOM DAY – 3RD MAY

- May 3 is observed annually as World Press Freedom Day. World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1993 following the recommendations of UNESCO at its 26th General Conference.
- This day is celebrated to mark the fundamental principles of press freedom.
- The theme for the World Press Day 2018 is "Keeping Power in Check: Media, Justice and the Rule of Law".
- This year, UNESCO will lead the 25th celebration of World Press Freedom Day.
- Press is considered as the 'Fourth branch of the Government' and it is important to celebrate the concept of Free Press.
- Therefore World Press Freedom day is celebrated to enable a legal environment for press freedom.
- A Free Press is necessary for peace, justice and human rights and sustainable development.

PRADHAN MANTRI VAYA VANDANA YOJANA : INVESTMENT LIMIT FOR SENIOR CITIZENS DOUBLED

- The Union Cabinet has approved doubling of investment limit from Rs 7.5 lakh to Rs 15 lakh under the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY).
- This scheme will help senior citizens to get a pension of up to Rs. 10,000 per month.
- The time limits for subscription were also increased from 4th May 2018 to 31st March 2020.
- This was announced by the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley while presenting the Union Budget 2018-19.
- The PMVVY has been implemented through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) to provide social security to elderly persons aged 60 years and above.
- The scheme provides an assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8 per cent per annum for ten years.
- The differential return is borne by the Central Government as subsidy on annual basis. Differential return is the difference between return generated by LIC and the assured return (8% per annum).

HARYANA TO ADOPT START UP RANKING

- Haryana government has decided to adopt start up ranking framework issued by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).
- This proposal was approved by the Chief Minister of Haryana, Manohar Lal Khattar.
- This decision has been taken to undertake an exercise to assess the state on key areas of interventions that are relevant to a healthy start-up ecosystem.
- The framework is spread across seven areas of interventions with a total of 38 action points and overall score of 100 marks.
- Haryana Government had launched the entrepreneur and start-up policy during the Digital Haryana Summit, 2017.
- This policy aims to transform the state into a resourceful and inventive start-up hub by supporting and assisting the new-age innovators and entrepreneurs across the state.

TOP 5 DEFENCE SPENDERS – INDIA IN TOP 5 LIST

- India has joined the U.S. and China as one of the world's five biggest military spenders.
- It has occupied the fifth spot after-
 - US
 - China
 - Saudi Arabia
 - Russia
- According to a report released by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), India's military spending increased in 2017.
- Worldwide military spending increased to \$1.73 trillion in 2017, which is nearly 2.2 percent of global gross domestic product.
- India spent US\$63.9 billion on defence in 2017, an increase of 5.5 per cent compared to that in 2016.
- Reasons like the growing border tension with China, cross-border threat from Pakistan etc. has resulted in an increase in the military expenditure.
- As per the earlier reports, India was also the largest importer of arms in the world.
- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has allocated Rs 3,59,894 crore to the Defence Ministry in this year's budget session.

VIBRANT NORTH EAST 2018 HELD IN GUWAHATI

- Vibrant North East 2018 event is being organized in Guwahati, Assam.
- It is being organized by a Delhi-based NGO, Centre for Agriculture and Rural Development (CARD).
- 'Vibrant North East 2018' expo is supported by the following-
 - North Eastern Council
 - Department of Science and Technology
 - Ministry of Home Affairs
 - Ministry of Commerce and Industry
 - All India Farmers Alliance
- It is the 4th edition of the event that is being organized.
- It aims to make people aware of central government's schemes and programmes.
- The basic objective of organizing this expo is to disseminate information about the schemes, grants and projects of the Central government to ensure that they are implemented as envisaged officially.
- There is a lack of awareness about such schemes and projects among the farmers and other stakeholders of the North East.

MOST BEAUTIFUL RAILWAY STATIONS IN INDIA – CHANDRAPUR AND BALLARSHAH

- Chandrapur and Ballarshah railway stations in Maharashtra have bagged the first prize in the "most beautiful" stations category of the Indian Railways.
- The first prize includes a cash award of Rs 10 lakh.
- The Nagpur Division of Central Railway has beautified the two stations with paintings, sculptures and murals based on wildlife at the Tadoda National Park and local tribal art.
- A total of 62 entries from across 11 railway zones were received by the railway board for the selection.
- The idea behind the beautification project is to make railway stations look more inviting and attractive.
- The number two slot has gone to Bihar's Madhubani station.

WBC ASIA BOXER OF THE YEAR – NEERAJ GOYAT

- Neeraj Goyat has been honoured with WBC Asia Boxer of the Year Award.
- He is currently the WBC Asia Champion in the welter weight category.
- This award was given by the Asian Boxing Council at WBC Asia and WBC Muaythai annual awards presentation ceremony in Bangkok.
- Neeraj Goyat is a professional boxer from India to have made it to WBC world ranking.
- He has won WBC Asian Champion three times – in 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- He won the title of India's most promising boxer in 2008.
- Since turning pro in 2011, he has won nine fights including two knockouts.

157TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF RABINDRANATH TAGORE – CULTURAL FESTIVAL TO BE ORGANIZED IN EGYPT

- India is organizing a five-day cultural festival in Egypt to commemorate the 157th birth anniversary of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.
- The festival is scheduled to be held from May 3 to 7 in the Maulana Azad Center for Indian Culture, affiliated with the Indian embassy in Cairo.
- During the festival, an exhibition of the paintings of Rabindranath Tagore will be organized. It will be titled "Rabindranath Tagore: Rhythm in Colors".
- Apart from the exhibition, a music concert, film screening and a lecture will also be organized.
- Rabindranath Tagore was the first non-European to win the Nobel Prize. He won the Nobel Prize in Literature in the year 1913 in recognition for his collection of poems, 'Gitanjali'.
- The movie 'Kabuliwala' will be screened at the Hanager Cinema, Opera House Complex. It is based on a novel written by Tagore.

MULTI-SECTORAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME TO BE RENAMED AS PRADHAN MANTRI JAN VIKAS KARYAKRAM

- The Multi-sectoral Development Programme (MsDP) has been renamed as Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK) by the CCEA (Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs).

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has also approved continuation of the programme during the remaining period of the 14th Finance Commission (till 2020).
- The restructured programme would provide better socio economic infrastructure facilities to the minority communities particularly in the field of education, health & skill development.
- The area to be covered under 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram' would be 57 percent more as compared to the existing MsDP.
- Around 196 districts were covered under MsDP whereas 308 districts would be covered under PMJVK.
- 80 percent of the resources under the PMJVK would be earmarked for projects related to education, health and skill development out of which 30-40% would be specifically allocated for women-centric projects.

VIEW PENSION PASSBOOK SERVICE LAUNCHED ON UMANG APP

- Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has launched View Pension Passbook Service for pensioners on Umang App.
- Pensioners would now be able to view their pension passbook on mobile phones with the help of Umang app.
- EPFO is a retirement fund body and is already providing various e-services for its stakeholders through Umang.
- EPFO is a statutory body of Union Government that comes under the aegis of Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- The Umang (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) app was launched by the government last year. It is a common platform for various government services at one place.
- It was developed by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and National e-Governance Division (NeGD).
- Inclusion of View Pension Passbook Service is a part of the EPFO's plan to go paperless by August 2018 and provide all its services online.

EXHIBITION ON INDIAN CIVILIZATION INAUGURATED IN NEW DELHI

- An exhibition on Indian Civilization was inaugurated at the National Museum in New Delhi. The exhibition was inaugurated by the Minister of State for Culture(I/c) and Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr Mahesh Sharma.
- The Exhibition 'India and the World: A History in Nine Stories' is an extensively collaborative effort of the following-
 - British Museum, London
 - National Museum, New Delhi
 - Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj VastuSangrahalaya (CSMVS), Mumbai
 - Culture Ministry

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The exhibition will run for two months until 30th June 2018.
- The exhibition insights into two million years of history.
- It was planned as part of the commemoration of 70 years of India's Independence and a year of major cultural exchange between India and the UK.
- The exhibition chronologically encapsulates the evolution of Indian civilization since antiquity.

- It is spread over nine sections, each representing a pivotal moment in history -
 - Shared Beginnings
 - First Cities
 - Empire
 - State and Faith
 - Picturing and Divine
 - Indian Ocean Traders
 - Court Cultures
 - Quest for Freedom
 - Time unbound

12TH INFORMAL MEETING OF SAARC FINANCE MINISTERS HELD IN MANILA

- The twelfth informal meeting of SAARC Finance Ministers was held in Manila, Philippines on the sidelines of the 51st Annual Meeting of Asian Development Bank (ADB).
The meeting was attended by the Finance Ministers/Heads of Delegations from the SAARC member states.
- The meeting was held under the Chairmanship of the Finance Minister of Nepal, Yuba Raj Khatriwada.
- The Chairman thanked ADB for its continuous support to SAARC.
- The Finance Ministers/Heads of Delegation briefed the meeting about the current status of economic progress achieved by their countries.
- They also appreciated ADB for its contribution in the economic growth of SAARC countries.

NATIONAL MISSION FOR CLEAN GANGA APPROVED

- The 11th Executive Committee meeting of National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) recently approved the project encompassing the use of GIS technology for Namami Gange Programme.
- The project has been approved at an estimated cost of 86.84 crore for a period of five years.
- In order to facilitate the Ganga rejuvenation task through the Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, the National Mission for Clean Ganga has tied-up with the Survey of India.
- The project includes the use of Digital Elevation Model (DEM) technology which ensures accurate data collection.
- DEM is an important aspect for river basin management planning.
- It enables identification of entire topography of an area making it easy for policy makers to analyse the available data thereby supporting the decision-making process.
- The data collected and subsequent actions taken by the government can easily be shared with the local public through geo portals and mobile apps.
- The technology will also enable people to send their feedback up to the national level.
- National Mission for Clean Ganga has approved a project to strengthen State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs) of five main stem Ganga basin states of the following states-
 - a) Uttarakhand
 - b) Uttar Pradesh
 - c) Bihar

- d) Jharkhand
- e) West Bengal

GOOGLE TO GRANT \$3 MILLION FOR E-LEARNING, TEACHERS IN INDIA

- Google.org - Google's philanthropic arm, has announced additional grants of USD 3 million to India's education-based NGO's.
- It was done with an aim to bridge the learning gap in India and improve the quality of education access. \$3 million grants has been given to two Indian NGOs- a) Central Square Foundation (\$2 million grant) b) Teacher App (\$1 million grant)
- Google.org aims to provide teachers with training and resources on the concepts of math, science, language, and pedagogy.
- The funds are expected to scale the platform to reach 500,000 teachers in two years.
- The grant will support a minimum of 20 content creators to produce at least 200 hours of quality science, technology, engineering and Math content in Hindi and vernacular languages.
- With growing connectivity and affordable internet in India, online educational content is emerging as a popular destination for learning.
- India was among the first countries to receive grants from Google.org for education.
- Last year, Google.org had funded grants of \$8.4 million to four Indian NGOs.

NITI AAYOG AND IBM JOIN HANDS TO DEVELOP AI BASED PRECISION FARMING

- NITI Aayog and IBM to collaborate to develop Precision Agriculture based on AI
NITI Aayog would collaborate with IBM to develop Precision Agriculture over Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- The Statement of Intent (SoI) between NITI Aayog and IBM was signed in the presence of Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog and Karan Bajwa, MD, IBM India.
- This partnership aims to work together towards use of technology to provide insights to farmers to improve crop productivity, soil yield, control agricultural inputs with the overarching goal of improving farmers' incomes.
- The first phase of the project will focus on developing the model for 10 Aspirational Districts across the following States-
 - i. Assam
 - ii. Bihar
 - iii. Jharkhand
 - iv. Madhya Pradesh
 - v. Maharashtra
 - vi. Rajasthan
 - vii. Uttar Pradesh
- The scope of this project is to introduce and make available climate-aware cognitive farming techniques and identifying systems of crop monitoring, early warning on pest/disease outbreak based on advanced AI innovations.
- It also includes deployment of weather advisory, rich satellite and enhanced weather forecast information along with IT & mobile applications with a focus on improving the crop yield and cost savings through better farm management.

- IBM will be using Artificial Intelligence to provide all the relevant data and platform for developing technological models for improving agricultural output and productivity.
- NITI Aayog will facilitate the inclusion of more stakeholders using the insights generated through these models.

'GO TO VILLAGE' LAUNCHED BY MANIPUR CM

- Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh launched the "Go to Village" mission at Konuma ground, in Imphal West district, Manipur
- The mission was launched in 60 villages of all the 60 Assembly constituencies.
- The CM also announced that there would be an interaction session cum meeting regarding the 'Go to the Village' mission at City Convention Centre in Imphal.
- All the cabinet ministers, administrative secretaries, deputy commissioners, heads of departments and other top officials would attend the interaction programme.
- They would chalk out plans for the successful implementation of the mission which is scheduled to be launched in the first week of May, 2018.
- The government would provide alternative livelihood to those farmers who were engaged in poppy plantation in the past.
- The government would identify and encourage promising entrepreneurs especially those living in villages.
- N Biren Singh directed the deputy commissioners to create wide awareness campaigns about the mission in every district of the State.

FIRST ORGANIZED CENSUS OF INDUS DOLPHINS IN PUNJAB

- The first-ever census of the Indus Dolphins is being conducted by the Punjab Government in collaboration with the WWF (World Wildlife Fund) India.
- The main aim behind the exercise is to establish the accurate population of the dolphins, in order to plan the conservation of the species accordingly.
- It is the first organised census and would be conducted over a period of five days.
- It will be conducted by two joint teams of Department of Forests and Wildlife Preservation, Punjab and WWF-India.
- Indus Dolphins are one of the rarest mammals found only in India and Pakistan. It is the National mammal of Pakistan.
- The Indus dolphins are confined to only a 185 km stretch between Talwara and Harike Barrage in India's Beas river in Punjab.
- Dolphins are a key indicator of river health- if a river is healthy the dolphins will be there.
- Indus Dolphin was also found in Sutlej decades back, but river pollution has caused its extinction in Sutlej.
- Indus dolphins are one of the seven freshwater dolphins found across the world.
- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) suspects the population size of the Indus river dolphins has reduced by more than 50% since 1944.
- Their numbers have declined dramatically after construction of irrigation system.
- It listed by the IUCN as endangered on its Red List of Threatened Species.

COCHLEAR IMPLANT AWARENESS PROGRAMME ORGANIZED IN HARYANA

- Cochlear Implant Awareness Programme' was organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in Haryana.
- The programme was organised by DEPwD in association with Indian Red Cross Society and Sarvodaya Hospital & Research Centre.
- The Chief Guest at the programme was the Minister of State for Social Justice & Empowerment, Krishan Pal Gurjar.
- The event was named Swar Swagtam and it aims to create awareness among the public about the Cochlear Implant Programme under the Assistance to Disabled persons (ADIP) scheme of the Department.
- Under the Assistance to Disabled persons (ADIP) scheme of the DEPwD, there is a provision for Cochlear Implant surgeries of hearing impaired children up to the age of 5 years at the cost of Rs 6.00 Lakhs per unit.
- The Cochlear Implant is a modern technology to help young children who have severe to profound deafness in both ears.
- Cochlear Implant provides such children to hear normally in one ear and with post surgical rehabilitation they are able to speak also.
- These implants are costly therefore the Cochlear Implant programme has been introduced by the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry under the revised scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons.
- It would enable the purchase of aids and appliances (ADIP) for the poor and needy young children

GRAVITYRAT MALWARE THAT SPIES ON COMPUTER, UPDATED

- GravityRAT, a malware allegedly designed by Pakistani hackers, has recently been updated further and equipped with anti-malware evasion capabilities.
- GravityRAT is designed to infiltrate computers and steal the data of users and relay the stolen data to Command and Control centres in other countries.
- It was first detected by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team, CERT-In in 2017.
- RAT' in its name stands for Remote Access Trojan, which is a program capable of being controlled remotely and is thus difficult to trace.
- It acts as an Advanced Persistent Threat (APT), which, once infiltrates a system, silently evolves and does long-term damage.
- GravityRAT has now become self aware and is capable of evading several commonly used malware detection techniques.
- GravityRAT infiltrates a system in the form of an innocuous looking email attachment, which can be in any format, including MS Word, MS Excel, MS Powerpoint, Adobe Acrobat or even audio and video files.
- The data is sent in an encrypted format, making it difficult to detect exactly what is leaked.
- The new version of GravityRAT can check system temperature by recording thermal readings for detecting the presence of VMs (virtual machines).
- It can also collect open ports on the targeted system and creates a list of all the active processes after which it starts stealing files stored on any connected USB drive.

NO NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE FOR 2018

- The Swedish Academy that awards the Nobel Prize for literature has announced that they will not give out an award this year. It has been postponed until next year in 2019.
- It is the first time since World War II that they have delayed giving this award.
- Seven times previously, the Swedish Academy has chosen to declare a "reserved prize": in 1915, 1919, 1925, 1926, 1927, 1936 and 1949.
- The two Nobel Prizes in Literature will be handed out next year, the 2018 prize and the 2019 prize.

- This announcement was made at a weekly meeting of the Swedish Academy in Stockholm on the grounds that the group was in too deep a crisis to choose a Nobel winner properly.
- The decision has been taken in the wake of a sexual scandal within the Swedish Academy.
- Last year, Japanese-born British novelist Kazuo Ishiguro had won the prize.

6TH MAY - INTERNATIONAL NO DIET DAY

- International No Diet Day is celebrated each year on 6th May
- It is an annual celebration of body acceptance, including fat acceptance and body shape diversity.
- The stigma surrounding body weight and size makes people push themselves to lose weight even if it harms their health.
- This day is dedicated to promoting a healthy life style with a focus on health at any size.
- The International No Diet Day (INDD) has been in celebration since the year 1992.
- It was created by Mary Evans Young, the director of Diet Breakers after her personal experience of being bullied at school for being fat.
- It was originally intended to be a UK-based celebration called National No Diet Day.
- May 6th of this celebration coincidentally falls on Young's birthday. This Day has been celebrated throughout the world with the light blue ribbon as its symbol.
- It aims to raise awareness about the various dieting disorders which exist - anorexia, bulimia etc.

JAIPUR FOOT TO BE EXHIBITED AT UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS

- Jaipur Foot is a world famous and most widely used artificial limb which will be exhibited at the United Nations headquarters in New York.
- It will be exhibited by the Bhagwan Mahavir Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS) at the UN, from 15th May to 18th May 2018.
- An exclusive seminar on Jaipur Foot and an exhibition have been organised at the U.N. Gallery at the initiative of India's permanent representative Syed Akbaruddin.
- The event will be the first of its kind in the U.N.
- The seminar and exhibition will highlight India's contribution in providing mobility and dignity to the differently abled.
- The Jaipur Foot has benefited 17 lakh people across the world and has its presence in 29 countries.
- The Bhagwan Mahavir Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS) is a non-profit organisation dedicated for providing free of cost artificial limbs to disabled people
- The Jaipur Foot was made by the Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS).
- The BMVSS gives aids and the Jaipur Foot free of cost to the beneficiaries.
- The BMVSS has recently entered into an agreement with the Ministry of External Affairs for holding camps abroad.
- So far 66 camps have been organised in 29 countries and artificial limbshave been distributed to the differently abled people.

SOUTH ASIAN JUNIOR ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIP: INDIA FINISHES ON TOP

- India finished on top at the 3rd edition of South Asian Junior Athletics Championship.
- India bagged 20 gold medals whereas Sri Lanka bagged 12 gold medals to finish second in the South Asian Junior Athletics Championship 2018.
- Indian junior athletes bagged 20 gold, 22 silver and eight bronze medals.
- They also created new meet records in the men's long jump, triple jump, women's triple jump, 100m hurdles.
- The SAJAC was co-hosted by Sri Lanka and Pakistan which took second and third positions respectively.
- The other competing countries were Bangladesh, Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan.
- The juniors will next represent India at the 18th Asian Junior Athletics Championships to be held in Gifu, Japan from 7th June to 10th June 2018.

BRO (BORDER ROADS ORGANIZATION) CELEBRATES 58TH RAISING DAY

- Border Roads Organisation (BRO) celebrated its 58th Raising Day on 7th May 2018. BRO is a leader in the field of infrastructure development in the border areas of India.
- BRO was established on 7th May 1960 and since then it has grown from two to nineteen projects.
- The works executed by the agency have ensured the territorial integrity and the socio-economic upliftment of the most inaccessible regions of India and its neighbourhood.
- On the occasion of the BRO Rising Day, Director General Border Roads Lt Gen Harpal Singh conveyed his best regards to all the veterans and BRO personnels.
- BRO functions under the Defence Ministry.
- It has its headquarters in New Delhi.
- BRO develops and maintains road networks in India's border areas and friendly neighbouring countries.
- In order to ensure coordination and execution of the projects handled by BRO, the Government of India set up the Border Roads Development Board (BRDB).
- The BRDB has the Prime Minister as its Chairman whereas the Defence Minister as its Deputy Chairman.

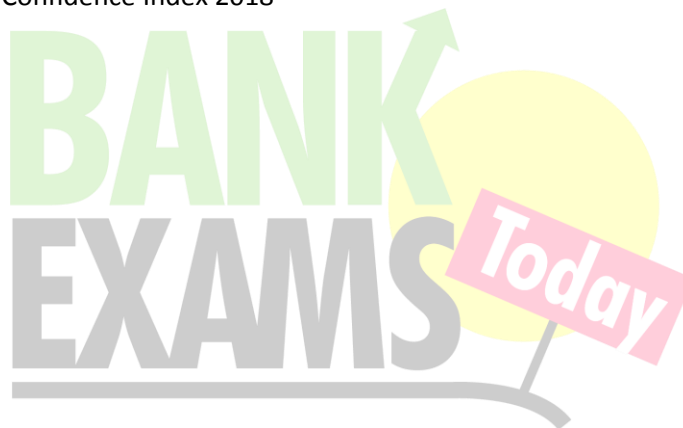
GST COUNCIL APPROVES SIMPLIFIED TAX RETURN FILLING SYSTEMS

- The Goods and Services Tax Council has approved a simplified system for filing tax returns in its 27th meeting.
- The GST Council Meeting was chaired by the Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley who announced the new and simplified return filing process.
- The new scheme will come into effect after almost a year.
- Till then the existing system of GSTR-3B and GSTR-1 will continue.
- It was approved based on recommendations of Group of Ministers on IT simplification for GST implementation.
- All taxpayers have to file their returns once a month, except for the following-
 - those dealing in composition schemes (It allows taxpayers having an annual turnover below 1 crore to pay the tax at a fixed rate)
 - those who have zero tax liability
- The council also decided to change the ownership structure of the GST Network.
- GST Network is a not-for-profit firm in which the central and state governments hold a 49% stake.
- GST Council decided that central and state governments would acquire the remaining 51% stake in the GST Network amounting to Rs 5.1 crore, which is presently owned by private parties.
- This would make the GST Network a fully government-owned company.

- Taxpayer will be given user-friendly IT interface and offline IT tool to upload the invoices.
- Seller will upload unidirectional flow of invoices on anytime basis during the month.
- On non-payment of tax by the seller, there will be no automatic reversal of input tax credit from buyer.

FDI CONFIDENCE INDEX 2018 – INDIA RANKED 11TH

- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Confidence Index 2018 was released by Global consultant AT Kearney.
- It is an annual survey which tracks the impact of political, economic and regulatory changes on the FDI inflows of the country.
- Companies participating in survey have annual revenues of \$500 million or more.
- India was ranked 11th position according to the Index.
- India has slipped by three notches as it was ranked 8th in 2017 and 9th in 2016.
- India fell out of the top 10 for the first time since 2015.
- The United States topped the index for the sixth year in a row.
- The newcomers to the Index are Denmark, Portugal and Norway.
- This year marks an all-time low for the share of emerging markets on index.
- India retained its position as the second highest emerging market on the Index.
- Top 10 countries – FDI Confidence Index 2018
 - United States
 - Canada
 - Germany
 - UK
 - China
 - Japan
 - France
 - Australia
 - Switzerland
 - Italy



8TH MAY – WORLD RED CROSS AND RED CRESCENT DAY

- The Red Cross and Red Crescent Day is celebrated every year on May 8. The holiday was founded in honour of the birth of Swiss humanist Henry Dunant.
- He initiated the creation of volunteer groups to help those wounded in the battlefields.
- He is the founder of International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the recipient of the first Nobel Peace Prize.
- The International Red Cross was approved in 1928 at the 13th International Conference in The Hague.
- The new name of the organization – the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement – was approved at the 25th International Red Cross Conference, held in October 1986.
- The basic objectives of the Red Cross are to help those wounded, sick and prisoners of war during armed conflicts, as well as victims of natural disasters.
- It currently operates in 176 countries around the world.
- On May 8, 1948, the first Red Cross Day was celebrated.
- The theme of World Red Cross Day 2018 is “Memorable smiles from around the world”.
- The Red Cross Society is based on 7 main principles-
 - Humanity
 - Impartiality

- Neutrality
- Independence
- Voluntary Service
- Unity
- Universality

3RD EDITION OF UNPCAP CONDUCTED IN NEW DELHI

- The third edition of United Nations Peacekeeping Course for African Partners (UNPCAP) was held in New Delhi from May 7 to 25, 2018.
- The course is conducted by the Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping in India (CUNPK) in partnership with the US.
- It aims to build and enhance the capacity of the African Troop Contributing Countries to the UN.
- The first and second editions of the course were held in New Delhi in 2016 and 2017.
- The inaugural session was chaired by Ruchi Ghanashyam, Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs.
- The course deals with the concept of training the trainers.
- The students who participated in this two week course included officers who are currently employed in their respective peacekeeping training centres.
- The course would be conducted by experienced instructors from India, the United States as well as alumni instructors from Africa who have attended the previous edition of the course.
- India is the largest contributor to UN Peacekeeping Missions mandated to maintain stability and negotiate peace settlement across the world.

INDIA TO HOST 15TH ASIA MEDIA SUMMIT

- India would host 15th Asia Media Summit (AMS-2018) in New Delhi from May 10-12, 2018. Information and Broadcasting Minister Smriti Irani would be the chief guest at the inaugural ceremony of the summit.
- The summit is being organised by Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) in collaboration with its partners and international organizations.
- Representatives from nearly 40 countries will delve on issues related to the media sector.
- The theme of this summit is "Telling our Stories Asia and More".
- AMS 2018 will be jointly hosted by the following-
 - Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
 - Indian Institute of Mass Communication (IIMC)
 - Broadcast Engineering Consultants India Limited (BECIL)
- It aims to provide a unique opportunity to the broadcasters in Asia to share their thoughts on broadcasting and information.
- India is hosting the event for the first time.
- The Summit would encourage regional and bilateral dialogue and cooperation to respond to challenges to the broadcasting sector in the region.
- Over 200 foreign delegates representing 39 countries and over 100 Indian delegates would participate in the event.
- The AMS 2019 will be hosted by Philippines.

TOONZ ANIMATION MASTERS SUMMIT 2018 HELD IN TRIVANDRUM

- The 19th edition of TOONZ Animation Masters Summit 2018 was held in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
- The summit is organized by the Technopark-based Toonz Media Group.
- It was inaugurated by the Chairman of FICCI for Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming and Comics Forum, Ashish Kulkarni.
- The Animation Masters Summit (AMS) is an animation industry conference organized every year by Toonz Animation India.
- The summit also includes 'Flying Elephant competition' which is an Animation & Short Film Competition constituted to recognize upcoming talents in film industry.
- This award was given to Akash Mihani's 'Mum' and Gautham Sankar's 'Che'.
- V G Samant, a venerated pioneer of Indian animation, was honoured with the 'Legend of Animation' award for his contributions to the animation industry

INDIA SIGNS \$200 MILLION LOAN AGREEMENT WITH WORLD BANK FOR POSHAN ABHIYAAN

- India on May 8, 2018 signed a loan agreement with the World Bank worth USD 200 million for the National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN Abhiyaan)
- The loan will support Indian Government's National Nutrition Mission that aims to reduce stunting in 0-6 years old children from 38.4 percent to 25 percent by the year 2022.
- The PM's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment (POSHAN) Abhiyaan, also known as National Nutrition Mission, was launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 8, 2018 at Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan with a total budget of Rs9046.17 crore.
- The NNM mission aims to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia among young children, women and adolescent girls and reduce low birth weight by at least 2 percent per annum.

ADDITIONAL 100 ONE STOP CENTRES TO BE SET UP FOR WOMEN SAFETY

- As many as 100 additional districts would have One Stop Centres (OSC) aimed at supporting women affected by violence, as part of plans to cover all districts of the country in due course.
- In the Programme Approval Board (PAB) meeting of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, 100 additional One Stop Centres have been approved in the states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh.
- The OSCs aim to facilitate integrated services for violence-affected women like police assistance, medical aid, psycho-social counselling, legal aid/counselling and temporary stay for five days under one roof.
- The government has already set up 182 centres since April 2015.

1ST APEX CONFERENCE FOR CEOS OF SMART CITIES CONDUCTED

- Shri Hardeep Puri, Minister of State (I/C) for Housing & Urban Affairs inaugurated the 'First Apex Conference for the CEOs of Smart Cities ' in Bhopal on 8th May 2018.
- The conference was organized by the Union Urban Affairs Ministry.
- Since its launch on 25 June 2015, the Smart Cities Mission (SCM), has been one of the most transformational urban missions.
- The two-day conference is being organised for providing a platform for cross learning and knowledge sharing among the Smart City CEOs.
- The conference saw participation of representatives from municipal corporation, State and Central Governments.
- The conference will enable the CEOs to learn from the experiences of all city leaders to understand in greater details both successes and failures.
- It aims to provide a single platform for convergence of all best practices in Smart cities mission to provide momentum to cities.

INDIA RANKS 4TH IN ASIA PACIFIC ON POWER INDEX

- The inaugural Asia Power index by the Lowy Institute, an Australian think tank, has ranked India at the 4th position among 25 nations in the Asia Pacific region.
- The index measures the overall power of 25 countries and territories across the Asia-Pacific region including nations such as Pakistan, Russia, Australia, New Zealand and the United States.
- India has been pegged as a "giant of the future" but trails behind in indicators of defence networks and economic relationships.
- The US claimed the top spot in five of the eight Index measures and a 10-point lead over China in overall power.
- A country's overall power is its weighted average across eight measures of power which are as follows-
 - Economic resources
 - Military capability
 - Resilience
 - Future trends
 - Diplomatic influence
 - Economic relationships
 - Defence networks
 - Cultural influence
- According to the Index certain countries are ranked as Middle Powers whereas some are ranked as Minor Powers.

THE COUNTRIES RANKED AS MIDDLE POWERS ARE-

- Russia
- Australia
- South Korea
- Singapore
- Malaysia
- Indonesia
- Thailand
- New Zealand
- Vietnam
- Pakistan

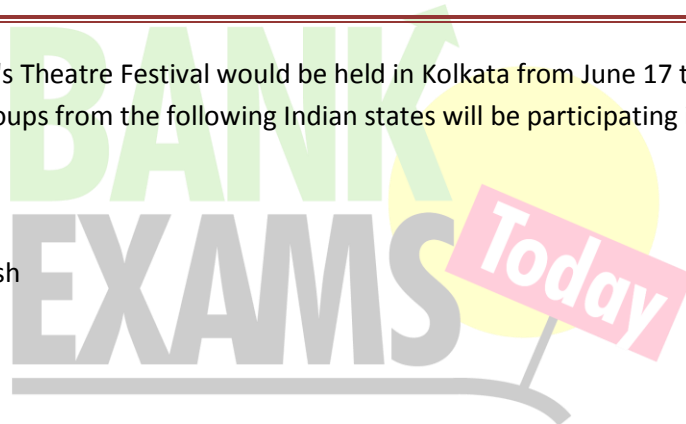
- Taiwan
- Philippines
- North Korea

THE COUNTRIES RANKED AS MINOR POWERS ARE –

- Bangladesh
- Brunei
- Myanmar
- Sri Lanka
- Cambodia
- Mongolia
- Laos
- Nepal

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN THEATRE FESTIVAL TO BE HELD IN
KOLKATA

- International Children's Theatre Festival would be held in Kolkata from June 17 to 21.
- Children of theatre groups from the following Indian states will be participating in the five-day festival at the Academy of Fine Arts-
 - Kerala
 - Assam
 - Andhra Pradesh
 - Manipur
 - Odisha
 - West Bengal



THE EIGHT COUNTRIES PARTICIPATING IN THE FESTIVAL ARE –

- France
- Slovenia
- Swaziland
- Mexico
- South Africa
- Sri Lanka
- Bangladesh
- Nepal
- The festival, organised by the 'Kolkata Eso Natak Shikhi', is based on the theme "Safe Drive Save Life, Save Kids' Life"
- There is no entry fees for the festival which will be open for all the people.
- It is an initiative taken by the West Bengal Government under the CM Mamta Banerjee.
- Shishu Kishore Akademy has been organizing this festival ever since 2011.
- This theatre festival is structured exclusively for the children and juveniles, keeping in mind their interests and likings.

- The festival showcases a plethora of films from across the globe under all categories including feature films, animation films, short films and documentaries, educational films etc.

INDIA AND GUATEMALA SIGN MOU TO COOPERATE IN DIPLOMATIC TRAINING

- India has signed an MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) with Guatemala for expanding cooperation in the area of diplomatic training.
- The MoU was signed between the Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu and his Guatemalan counterpart Dr. Jafeth Ernesto Cabrera Franco.
- The two leaders participated in bilateral discussions.
- During the discussions, areas like culture diversity, economic growth, agriculture and wildlife protection were under consideration.
- The main focus was on core sectors such as pharmaceutical, cooperation in education, technology, conservation of wildlife, yoga, tourism and automobiles.
- M. Venkaiah Naidu is on a five-day visit to Latin America's Guatemala, Peru and Panama.
- Guatemala is the first country that Vice President Naidu is visiting as the VP of India.
- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu interacted with people of Indian origin at a reception hosted by ambassador of Guatemala.
- It is the highest level delegation visit from India to Guatemala since diplomatic relationship began in 1972.
- India and Guatemala also agreed to support each other's candidature for Non-Permanent Membership in the United Nations Security Council.
- Guatemala will support India's candidature for UNSC membership for 2021-22 while India will do so for Guatemala for 2031-32.

MOU SIGNED BETWEEN MINISTRY OF MSME AND NSIC

- The National Small Industries Corporation Limited (NSIC) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) for the financial year 2018-19
- The MoU was signed by Ravindra Nath, CMD of NSIC and Dr. A.K. Panda, Secretary, MSME.
- The MoU aims to enhance the services by NSIC under its marketing, financial, technology and other support services schemes, for MSMEs.
- It projects to increase its total business by 21.30 percent from Rs. 22,258 crore in the year 2017-18 to Rs. 27,000 crore in the year 2018-19.
- NSIC also plans to enhance its activities in the areas of imparting training in the fields of entrepreneurship and skill development by targeting 15 percent growth in the number of trainees.
- NSIC will give special focus on modernizing its technical centres in order to strengthen its training and testing services for MSMEs.
- NSIC also projects growth of 15 percent in 'Revenue from Operation' and 22 percent in 'Profitability' during the year 2018-19.

INDIA'S 1ST INTEGRATED CONTROL AND COMMAND CENTRE LAUNCHED IN MP

- India's first cloud-based Common Integrated Data Centre, Disaster Recovery Centre and Integrated Control and Command Centre (ICCC) was launched recently.
- It was launched by Bhopal Smart City Development Corporation Ltd. (BSCDCL).
- It was inaugurated by the Minister of State (I/C) Housing & Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri.
- The ICCC will enable the Madhya Pradesh state administration to monitor and administer multiple city civic utilities and citizen services across seven cities in the state through a central cloud.
- These cities include-
 - Bhopal
 - Gwalior
 - Jabalpur
 - Indore
 - Ujjain
 - Satna
 - Sagar
- It would enable state-wide monitoring of these cities from a central command view.
- This would help in achieving significant cost savings as compared to deploying a full-fledged data and disaster recovery centre along with command control centres.
- It will enable state government to remotely manage and control various citizen services via single platform.
- HP has provided an end-to-end solution for BSCDCL that combines its Universal IoT platform, industry leading servers, Edge compute systems, HP Pointnext services and broad ecosystem of partners.

NAVAL COMMANDERS CONFERENCE HELD IN NEW DELHI

- The Naval Commanders' Conference was held in New Delhi from 8 to 11 May 2018. It was the first edition of this bi-annual Conference.
- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman addressed the Commanders during the Conference.
- The Indian Navy reviewed its new Mission-Based Deployments philosophy aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the region.
- It is in furtherance of PM Modi's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR).
- The Conference aims at sustained, peaceful and responsive presence of Indian naval ships in the critical areas and choke points.
- Indian Navy's focus over past year has been on combat efficiency and materiel readiness, and upkeep of its large fleet of 131 ships and submarines.
- The Navy also reviewed the overhaul of the training standards of units by revamping the 'Ship Operating Standards (SHOPS)' is also underway.
- The new SHOPS, set to be unveiled shortly, focuses on role-based training in realistic scenarios and has new standards set for both units and individual crews.
- Naval commanders deliberated upon steps to improve the Teeth-to-Tail ratio and explore niche fields such as Artificial Intelligence and Big Data Analytics.
- Focus was also on harnessing cutting-edge technology, specifically those 'Made-in-India', to improve organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

GOVT. TO EXPAND VAN DHAN VIKAS KENDRA IN TRIBAL DISTRICTS

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) has proposed to expand Van Dhan Vikas Kendras in Tribal Districts across the country.
- The Van Dhan Scheme of Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED was launched recently in April 2018 during the celebrations of Ambedkar Jayanti at Chhattisgarh.
- PM Modi had announced to converge Jan Dhan, Van Dhan and Govardhan Schemes.
- Now it is proposed to expand Van Dhan Vikas Kendras in Tribal Districts.
- Around 3000 such Kendras are proposed to be set up in two years in all forested Tribal Districts.
- It aims to provide skill upgradation, capacity building training and setting up of primary processing and value addition facility.
- The Training and technical support is to be provided by TRIFED.
- The scheme will be implemented through Ministry of Tribal Affairs as Nodal Department at the Central Level and TRIFED as Nodal Agency at the National Level.
- At State level, state nodal agency for MFPS and district collectors will play pivot role in scheme implementation at grassroot level.
- Under Van Dhan scheme, 10 Self Help Groups of 30 Tribal gatherers will be constituted.
- They would be trained and provided with working capital to add value to the products, which they collect from the jungle.

ADVISORY COUNCIL CONSTITUTED BY 15TH FINANCE COMMISSION

- The Central government has constituted an Advisory Council to advise the 15th Finance Commission on matters related to its Terms of Reference.
- The Council would assist the Commission in the preparation of any paper or research study. It would enhance the Commission's understanding on the issues containing in its ToR (Terms of Reference).
- It will also help commission in broadening its ambit and understanding to seek best national and international practices on matters pertaining to fiscal devolution and improving the quality and reach and enforcement of its recommendations.
- Any change in ToR will be made by Central Government with the assent of the President.
- The recommendations of 15th Finance Commission will come into effect from 1 April 2020.
- The ToR of 15th Finance Commission have drawn protests from many states, especially from southern ones, over its mandate to use 2011 Census data over 1971 Census data for resource allocation.
- The Advisory Council will have the following members-
 - Arvind Virmani
 - Surjit S. Bhalla
 - Sanjeev Gupta
 - Pinaki Chakraborty
 - Sajjid Chinoy
 - Neelkanth Mishra

WORLD ROBOT CONFERENCE 2018 TO BE CONDUCTED IN BEIJING

- The 2018 World Robot Conference will be held in Beijing from Aug 15 to 19.
- The Conference will be organized by-
 - China Association for Science and Technology (CAST)
 - Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT)

- Beijing Municipal People's Government
- A robot competition will be held during the conference in which the participants will compete in five categories.
- The event will witness more than 12,000 competing teams from more than 10 countries and regions.
- The basic objective of the Conference is to stimulate passion and innovation in the robot industry, and help with research and development
- The WRC 2018 will offer a venue where academic thoughts can be exchanged at high levels and the latest achievements demonstrated.
- The topic of interest at the WRC 2018 would be –
 - Robots
 - AI (Artificial Intelligence)
 - Automation
 - Robotics and Control Systems
- The WRC Symposium on Advanced Robotics and Automation (WRC SARA 2018) will be held as a special technical meeting during the World Robot Conference (WRC).
- The first WRC was held in 2015, and has since then continued to grow into the world's largest-scale and top-level conference for academics and industrialists in Robotics and Artificial Intelligence fields.

UN ANNOUNCEMENT: CLIMATE SUMMIT 2019 TO BE HELD IN NY

- UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced to hold a climate summit in September 2019 in New York.
- The announcement was made at the opening ceremony of the 37th session of the UN Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.
- This climate summit would be conducted to review the commitments of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change.
- The Summit will bring people together from around the world to showcase climate action and inspire deeper commitments from national governments, and each other, in support of the Paris Agreement.
- In March 2018, former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg was appointed as the Special Envoy for Climate Action by the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.
- Antonio Guterres announced that Michael Bloomberg will support the UN in its climate strategy and to organise the 2019 summit.
- The UN Climate Change Summit 2018 would be conducted in Poland in December.

DIGITAL INDIA INTERNSHIP SCHEME PORTAL LAUNCHED

- The Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY) has launched the website of Digital India Internship Scheme.
- It was launched by Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad in New Delhi.
- The basic aim of the portal is to provide an opportunity to secure first hand and practical work experience under the guidance of a mentor.
- The two-month internship (extendable to three months) will start from next month and a certificate will be given to the students on completion of the internship and submission of report.
- This internship scheme will offer 25 slots in each session – summer and winter.
- Students pursuing B.E/B.Tech or M.E/M.Tech or dual degrees can apply for internships on the portal.
- The portal will facilitate students to apply online for internship.
- Under this scheme, 25 interns will be inducted for period of three months and they will be paid a stipend of Rs. 10, 000 per month.
- The internship scheme will enable the young students to learn about the working of the initiative of Digital India.

- It would give exposure to the students about technology policy and decision making of government of India.

GREEN LICENCE PLATE FOR PRIVATE ELECTRIC VEHICLES APPROVED BY THE GOVT.

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) has recently approved distinctive green licence plates for electric vehicles.
- This decision has been taken to promote electric vehicles in India.
- Green licence plates bearing numbers in white fonts has been approved for private e-vehicles whereas yellow licence plates for taxis.
- This would help in easy identification of electric vehicles.
- Apart from that the electric vehicles will get preferential treatment in parking, free entry into certain proposed 'congested zones' along with proposed concessions in tolls on the current road networks.
- This will help boost the growth of e-rickshaws, e-busses and e-taxis across India.
- India at present has 1 to 1.5 lakh electric vehicles which is expected to grow to about 5% of the total vehicles in the next 5 years.
- In 2017-18, out of the 24 million vehicles sold in India, only 1% were the electric vehicles.
- The electric vehicles will help in bringing down vehicular pollution. Therefore it is necessary to promote e-vehicles.
- The government also announced its plan to allow youth of 16-18 years to drive electric scooters.
- The government is also planning to exempt e-vehicles from permits with an aim to promote their use.
- MoRTH will request Union Finance Ministry for 50% rate of depreciation on EVs as against the rate of 15% for conventional vehicles.

RAM NATH KOVIND – 2ND PRESIDENT OF INDIA TO VISIT SIACHEN BASE CAMP

- President Ram Nath Kovind visited the Army base camp in Siachen, the world's highest battlefield. He thus became the second President of India to do so.
- The previous visit was undertaken by former President APJ Abdul Kalam in April 2004.
- Therefore Ram Nath Kovind is the first President to travel to Siachen in 14 years.
- Siachen glacier is also referred to as the "Third Pole" where temperatures can dip to minus 50 degrees Celsius.
- The President of India addressed the soldiers saying that being the Supreme Commander of Indian armed forces he has come there to convey the gratitude of the entire country.
- He congratulated the soldiers for their courage and dedication as Siachen was the world's highest battlefield.
- Ram Nath Kovind also paid his respects at the Siachen War Memorial.
- Siachen War Memorial is a symbol of the sacrifice of 11,000 soldiers and officers who have been martyred since the Indian Army began Operation Meghdoot on the Siachen Glacier on April 13, 1984.

6TH US-INDIA AVIATION SUMMIT INAUGURATED IN MUMBAI

- The 6th United States-India Aviation Summit was held in Mumbai, Maharashtra from 9th to 11th May, 2018.
- The Summit was formally inaugurated by Union Minister for Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu.

- It was hosted by the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) and the Ministry of Civil Aviation in collaboration with the U.S.-India Aviation Cooperation Program.
- Senior representatives from the public and private sectors of India and the U.S will come together to bolster long-term strategic and commercial aviation cooperation, led by activities under the USTDA-sponsored U.S.-India Aviation Cooperation Program (ACP).
- The three-day Summit promoted high-level dialogue on bilateral aviation issues and provided a forum to identify solutions that support the rapid growth of India's aviation sector.
- It included sessions on India's projected aviation growth in next five years, aviation security, aviation and runway safety, regional connectivity etc.
- India's civil aviation sector is the world's ninth largest aviation market, valued at \$16 billion per year.
- It is supposed to be third largest market globally by 2020 and potentially the largest by 2030.
- The Summit would assist Indian civil aviation agencies and aviation industry representatives to identify advanced US technologies and practices that can support their expansion and modernization efforts.

SCO TOURISM MINISTERS' CONFERENCE HELD IN CHINA

- The SCO (Shanghai Cooperation Organization) Tourism Ministers' Conference was held in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China
- This is the first tourism ministerial meeting between member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO).
- India was represented at the Conference by the Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Tourism and Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology, India, K. J. Alphons.
- He mentioned that India's Tourism sector is growing fast and has got an emerging market for outbound travel and a tremendous potential for tourism co-operation with the SCO region.
- The delegation leaders passed the draft of their 2019-20 Joint Action Plan for implementing an outline of tourism cooperation among SCO member states.
- The draft will be submitted to the SCO summit for official signing.
- The SCO Summit will be held in Qingdao, Shandong province, in June 2018.
- The total population of SCO member states amounts to nearly half the world's population. Therefore the rich tourism resources in these countries will unleash the potential of tourism development.

TELANGANA: RYTHU BANDHU SCHEME LAUNCHED FOR FARMERS

- The Telangana Government has launched the Rythu Bandhu Scheme for the farmers.
- Rythu Bandhu refers to a Friend of Farmers.
- The scheme was launched by the Chief Minister of Telangana, K Chandrashekhar Rao.
- It is an investment support scheme dedicated to the farmers.
- The scheme will ensure that a large majority of farmers in the state will get Rs 8,000 per acre per year for two crops.
- This would support the farmers to maximise the agricultural productivity in the state.
- The state government has already set aside Rs 12,000 crore in the 2018-19 budget exclusively for this scheme.
- Out of the 2.9 crore acres land in the state, around 1.4 crore acres of land has been identified as cultivable land.
- The government will issue cheques as well as passbooks to all 58 lakh eligible farmers.
- This will help the farmers in investing in the crops and procuring materials like fertilizers.

WALMART BUYS 77% STAKE IN FLIPKART

- Walmart Inc. has taken control of India's largest e-commerce company, Flipkart Group.
- It is acquiring 77 percent stake in India's e-commerce giant for \$16 billion.
- This deal puts the valuation of Flipkart at over \$20 billion.
- The deal is the biggest merger and acquisition in India so far and marks the entry of Walmart into the Indian retail business.
- Flipkart co-founder Sachin Bansal has announced his exit from the company after this major takeover.
- The other co-founder of Flipkart, Binny Bansal would stay back and will be a part of the board along with Flipkart CEO Kalyan Krishnamurthy.
- Other large investors in Flipkart that will exit are Softbank, Naspers, and IDG etc.

ARUNACHAL PRADESH'S BIGGEST SOLAR POWER PLANT INAUGURATED

- Arunachal Pradesh's biggest solar power plant was inaugurated by the Chief Minister Pema Khandu.
- The plant was inaugurated at the Energy Awareness Park in Itanagar.
- The plant was commissioned on April 1 at an estimated investment of Rs 8.50 crore.
- The project was implemented by the Arunachal Pradesh Energy Development Agency (APEDA).
- It has a capacity of one megawatt and is a fully-automatic plant that will be able to run without manpower.
- The plant has generated more than one lakh units of electricity from the date of its commissioning.
- The import of energy from outside the state was reduced with the commissioning of the plant.
- This helped in reducing the energy bill payable by Arunachal Pradesh.
- It will also contribute in reduction of line losses as it is located in the load centre.
- The state is working towards the fulfilment of the target set by the Centre for rural electrification within this year under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY).
- Till now, 10% off-grid power connectivity in villages of the state are being implemented by the APEDA.
- The state government is planning to install solar plants in various health centres and upcoming mini-secretariats in the districts.

MALAYSIA: OLDEST PM IN THE WORLD

- Mahathir Mohamad sworn in as Malaysia's seventh Prime Minister. His election victory has brought to an end to the coalition that has ruled the Southeast Asian nation for six decades since independence from Britain.
- Mahathir's win marks the end of the nine-year tenure of Najib Razak, who came to power in 2009.
- Mahathir is aged 92 years and is supposedly the Oldest Prime Minister in the world.
- Mahathir had earlier ruled over Malaysia from 1981 to 2003.
- It marks the first time that a Malaysian prime minister will not be from the UMNO party and not be part of the BN coalition, of which UMNO is the main constituent.

COMMITTEE CONSTITUTED TO LOOK INTO BLACK MONEY AND PERFORMANCE OF PSBS

- To study the recovery of black money and performance of public sector banks, a Parliamentary panel was constituted by the speaker of the Parliament.
- It will be a 30-member Estimates Committee which would study a host of subjects related to various ministries in the year 2018-19.
- It is also known as the Continuous Economy committee.
- The panel will be headed by veteran BJP leader Murali Manohar Joshi.
- As per the memorandum of the committee, the panel will look into the import of uranium for nuclear plants, mining activities and environment, upgrading of Indian Post offices etc.
- It will focus on the black money and the unaccounted money that was legitimised during the demonetization period as per RBI's report.
- It would suggest changes in policy or administrative framework to bring efficiency in expenditure.
- The panel has also short listed preparedness of the armed forces, defence production and procurement as subjects to review and give suggestions to the government.
- After the implementation of demonetisation, the issue of black money was looked into by the Public Accounts Committee.

FORBES WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE LIST 2018 – MODI RANKED 9TH

- Forbes World's Most Powerful People list was released which was topped by Chinese President Xi Jinping.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi is ranked 9th according to that list.
- Reliance Industries (RIL) Chairman Mukesh Ambani is the only Indian businessman to feature in the list of 75 people. He is ranked 32nd.
- Xi Jinping has topped the list for the first time, replacing Russian President Vladimir Putin, who slipped to 2nd place after being named as the most powerful person in the world for four consecutive years.
- Top 10 World's Most Powerful People-
 - Xi Jinping
 - Vladimir Putin
 - Donald Trump
 - Angela Merkel
 - Jeff Bezos
 - Pope Francis
 - Bill Gates
 - Mohammed Bin Salman Al Saud
 - Narendra Modi
 - Larry Page
- Forbes business magazine compiles a list of the world's most powerful people annually.
- This year a list of 75 most powerful people in the world was released.
- According to Forbes, the ranking of The World's Most Powerful People is determined on the basis of 4 parameters –
 - number of people the candidate has power over.
 - the financial resources controlled by the candidate.
 - whether the candidate is powerful in multiple spheres.
 - whether the candidate is actively using his/her power.

LATA MANGESHKAR CONFERRED WITH SWARA MAULI AWARD

- Lata Mangeshkar was honoured with the Swara Mauli title by spiritual guru Vidya Narasimha Bharati Swami.
- She was conferred with the award at her residence in Mumbai.
- Her sisters Asha Bhosle and Usha Mangeshkar and brother Hridaynath Mangeshkar were also present.
- Swara Mauli is her second title after Swara Bharati.
- She was awarded the Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award in the country, in 2001.
- She is the second vocalist, after MS Subbulakshmi to receive the honour.

BIMSTEC SUMMIT 2018 TO BE HOSTED BY NEPAL

- Nepal is going to host 2018 Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit.
- This announcement was made by the Prime Minister of Nepal, KP Sharma Oli during his meeting with Indian PM Narendra Modi in Kathmandu.
- BIMSTEC Summit 2018 would be the fourth edition of the summit of the seven-member grouping of the South Asian and South East Asian nations.
- The BIMSTEC is an international organisation of seven nations of South Asia and South East Asia, including Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan, and Nepal.
- BIMSTEC Summit is the highest policymaking body in BIMSTEC process and is comprised of heads of state/government of member states.
- So far, only three Summit meetings have been held in 2004, 2008 and 2014.
- BIMSTEC was established on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.
- The main objective of BIMSTEC is technological and economic cooperation among South Asian and Southeast Asian countries along the coast of the Bay of Bengal.
- It promotes active collaboration and mutual assistance in economic, social, technical and scientific fields of common interest.

CHINA'S 1ST INDIGENOUS AIRCRAFT CARRIER TYPE 001A BEGINS SEA TRIAL

- China launched its first indigenously developed aircraft carrier 'Type 001A'. It started its sea trials from Dalian port in Liaoning province.
- The sea trial comes as China continues its military influence in the South China Sea.
- The trial was conducted to test the reliability and stability of the carrier's power system and other equipment.
- It was launched in April 2017 and construction has been carried out since then.
- Type 001A was constructed by China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation in Dalian.
- It is expected to be commissioned by 2020.
- The aircraft carrier's design is based on the Soviet Union's Kuznetsov class.
- It measures about 315 metres with a displacement of about 55,000 tonnes.
- It is the country's second aircraft carrier after the completion of Liaoning.
- Liaoning was constructed from an incomplete Kuznetsov-class vessel and the 001A is a refined version of Liaoning.

RBI PUTS DENA BANK UNDER PCA (PROMPT CORRECTIVE ACTION)

- Reserve Bank has initiated prompt corrective action against public sector lender Dena Bank.

- It has restricted the bank from giving fresh credit and new hiring.
- Dena Bank reported a further widening of its loss to Rs 1,225.4 crore in the March-ended quarter due to increasing bad loans.
- Bank's asset quality has worsened with the gross NPAs increasing to 22.4% of the gross advances
- Net NPAs also increased from 10.66% to 11.95%.
- The RBI has initiated similar action against other public sector banks, including IDBI Bank, Indian Overseas Bank and UCO Bank before this.
- RBI had last year also initiated Prompt Corrective Action for Dena Bank and imposed certain restrictions on the bank.
- In April 2017, the RBI had issued a new set of enabling provisions under the revised PCA framework.
- The revised framework comes with a clause that if the bank does not show improvement then it could be either be merged or be taken over by other bank.

CHIEF OF ARMY STAFF RELEASED A BOOK “ACROSS THE BENCH – INSIGHT INTO THE INDIAN MILITARY JUDICIAL SYSTEM”

- The Chief of Army the Staff, General Bipin Rawat released the book 'Across the Bench - Insight into the Indian Military Judicial System'.
- The book is written by Lt Gen Gyan Bhushan, former Army Commander and Member 'A', Armed Forces Tribunal of Lucknow Bench.
- The book deals with military judicial system and management issues within the military establishments.
- It also showcases the issues relating to the veterans, their families and dependents.

1ST EVER JOINT CONFERENCE CONDUCTED BY CUSTOMS AND POST DEPARTMENT

- First ever Joint Conference was conducted by the Indian Customs and Department of India Posts in New Delhi.
- The Conference aimed to deliberate on streamlining of imports and exports by post.
- Commissioners of customs and postmaster generals from all states with Foreign Post Offices (FPOs) were present in the Conference.
- It is a move made by the customs department to cater to the small and medium enterprises and boost the Make in India program.
- Customs is also planning the introduction of non-intrusive technologies such as X-ray scanning at foreign post offices to expedite release of goods.
- Imports and exports by post are the 6th highest cited citizen grievances under Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMs).
- Customs and Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) have worked together since a year to liberalise, reform and align laws relating to imports by Post.

AUTOMATIC RECURRING PAYMENTS FEATURE INTRODUCED BY PAYTM

- Paytm has introduced a new feature 'automatic recurring payments' which enables the users to configure the payments app to pay for periodic recurring expenses automatically.

- With this feature, bank transfers can be done from/to any bank account, making it easier to make payments at no charge.
- This facility can be even availed by the non-KYC Paytm users.
- Payments can be scheduled by the customers for a particular day of every month.
- These would be pre-decided amounts that can be paid to certain individuals or businesses (such as EMIs) on a certain date.
- With this added feature PayTM aims to achieve a substantial increase in the transaction via regular recurring payments such as house rent, tuition fees, maid/driver's salary, milk or newspaper, etc.
- There is no upper or lower limit to the number of payments or amount that can be transferred.
- At present, Paytm processes about 1 billion transactions every quarter and it aims to double the figure to 2 billion.
- The company also aims to process Rs 60,000 crore in monthly bank transfers by the end of 2018.

CABINET RESHUFFLE: PIYUSH GOYAL GETS ADDITIONAL CHARGE OF FINANCE MINISTRY

- In the recent Cabinet Reshuffle, Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore has been assigned the independent charge as minister of state in the I&B ministry, in place of Smriti Irani.
- Prime Minister Modi gave Railway Minister Piyush Goyal the additional charge of Finance Ministry till Arun Jaitley fully recovers after his successful kidney transplant surgery.
- Smriti Irani will handle the Textile Ministry.
- This is the second time that Irani has been removed from a key ministry as she was earlier shifted out of the HRD Ministry to the Textile Ministry.
- She was appointed Minister for Human Resource and Development in May 2014.
- In July 2017, Smriti Irani had assumed the charge of Information and Broadcasting Ministry after M Venkaiah Naidu had resigned following his nomination as NDA's vice presidential candidate.
- The I and B Ministry had issued an order last month with provisions of punishing journalists found involved in generating fake news which was widely criticised by a large section of the media.
- It was later withdrawn on the directive of Prime Minister Modi.
- S S Ahluwalia has been relieved from the charge of Minister of State in Drinking Water and Sanitation Ministry and assigned a new portfolio of Electronics and Information Technology.

UNDP TO SET UP SKILL DEVELOPMENT CENTRE IN HYDERABAD

- The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will soon set up a skill development centre at 'Bharosa' in Hyderabad.
- Bharosa, is an integrated support centre for distressed women and children.
- It is an initiative of the Hyderabad City Police, which was launched in 2016.
- Required arrangements for setting up the training centre are in progress and it will start in the next two-three months.
- It would help in empowering vulnerable and marginalised women by imparting skills training.
- In 2017, the Hyderabad Police had signed an agreement with UNDP under the 'Disha' project.
- It aimed to build capacities and skills of women affected by violence to help make them economically self-sufficient.
- It provides support to enable these women to learn marketable skills and connect with the income opportunities.

HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE APPROVES RS 1161 CRORE ASSISTANCE TO 4 STATES AND 1 UT

- A High-Level Committee (HLC), chaired by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, approved central assistance of Rs 1,161.17 crores to 4 States and 1 UT.
- These include the states of Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Rajasthan and the union territory of Lakshadweep.
- Central assistance is being provided to these states and UT as they were affected by floods, landslides and drought.
- Assam was affected by floods during 2017-18, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim were affected by floods as well as landslides during 2017-18, Lakshadweep was affected by cyclone Ockhi during 2017 and Rajasthan was affected by Kharif drought during 2017.
- The HLC approved as the assistance of Rs 480.87 crore for Assam.
- It also approved assistance from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) -
 - Himachal Pradesh - worth Rs 84.60 crore
 - Sikkim – Rs 67.40 crore
 - Lakshadweep – Rs 2.16 crore
 - Rajasthan – Rs 526.14 crore

1ST WORKSHOP OF AYUSHMAN BHARAT PROGRAM HELD IN SHIMLA

- The first workshop of Ayushman Bharat Program was held in Shimla, Himachal Pradesh.
- Ayushman Bharat Northern Region first Workshop on Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Mission (PMRSSM) was addressed by the Union Health Minister J P Nadda.
- During the course of this workshop, MoU was signed between Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and Chandigarh.
- MoUs were signed between five States and one Union Territory with the National Health Mission to implement 'Ayushman Bharat'.
- 'Ayushman Bharat' is a mega scheme to provide free health treatment up to Rs. 5 lakh to the people living below poverty line.
- The scheme would benefit over 10 crore families of the country and provide free treatment to about 15.31 lakh people living below poverty line in the State of Himachal Pradesh.
- Five such workshops would be conducted throughout the country to launch this ambitious scheme.

RS 16,500 CRORE EARMARKED BY GOVT. TO IMPLEMENT SWACHH BHARAT MISSION IN 2018-19

- A sum of Rs 16,500 crore has been earmarked by 71 ministries and departments of the central government for implementation of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) in 2018-19.
- The amount is exceeding the budget of ministries in-charge of sanitation in India which include the following-
 - Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation for Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin)
 - Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs for Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban)
- The Swachhata Action Plan (SAP) 2018-19 was also launched by Cabinet Secretary PK Sinha.

- Apart from this, the SAP Compendium 2018-19 was also released.
- The Committee of Secretaries led by the cabinet secretary reviewed the implementation of SAP 2017-18 by Union ministries/departments.
- At the review meeting, the Cabinet Secretary emphasized that all Secretaries need to personally monitor implementation of SAP on a regular basis.
- Each ministry should look beyond its own programmes and schemes and should bring innovation in the implementation of SAP.

KISS HUMANITARIAN AWARD 2018

- The KISS Humanitarian Award 2018 was presented to Prof. Muhammad Yunus. This was the 11th edition of the Award.
- Prof. Muhammad Yunus is a Nobel Peace award winner (2006) and the founder of Grameen Bank.
- Prof Yunus is the second Nobel laureate to be honoured with the KISS Humanitarian award.
- The award citation recognizes his unwavering commitment to eradicate global poverty and foster economic and social development.
- His recent work focuses on achieving zero illiteracy, poverty and hunger, were very much similar to the goals of Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS).
- Prof. Muhammad Yunus is a Bangladeshi economist, widely known as the Father of Microfinance.
- He was co-awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 along with Grameen Bank – the microcredit organisation he created to provide loans to the poor in Bangladesh.
- KISS Humanitarian Award is an international award given to someone who has made an exceptional contribution to the society in various fields relating to social issues.

ENVIRONMENT MINISTER LAUNCHED PROGRAMME TO TRAIN 5.5 LAKH WORKERS BY 2021

- The Union Environment Ministry has launched its full-fledged Green Skill Development Programme (GSDP).
- It aims to train over 5.5 lakh workers in environment and forest sectors in the country through 30 courses by 2021.
- A mobile app GSDP-ENVIS (Green Skill Development Programme -Environment Information System) was also launched by the Environment minister Harsh Vardhan.
- This initiative will help boost employability and entrepreneurship of the youth in the country.
- The GSDP has launched a year ago, as a pilot project in 10 districts of the country.
- Under the GSDP, 80,000 youths in the country will be trained at 80 institutions in next one year.
- The number will be raised to over 2 lakh in the following year and eventually by 2021 a total over 5.5 lakh youths will be trained as green skilled workers.
- With the help of its Environment Information System (ENVIS) hubs and other institutions, the Environment Ministry would take up skill development of youth in the environment and forest sectors through 30 courses.
- It would promote sustainable conservation and management of natural resources.

BHARTI AIRTEL AND TELENOR INDIA MERGER APPROVED BY DOT

- The department of telecom (DoT) has approved Bharti Airtel's acquisition of Telenor India.
- The Telecom Department has transferred all licences belonging to Telenor along with its liabilities, to Bharti Airtel.
- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) had approved the proposed merger in March 2018.
- The Supreme Court had last week rejected DoT's petition for security deposit of around Rs 1,700 crore from the companies and directed it to approve the merger.
- The guarantee included Rs 1,499 crore for one-time spectrum charge for the radio waves allocated to Airtel without auction, and over Rs 200 crore for spectrum payment, which Telenor has to make.
- The transaction will boost Airtel's 4G spectrum holdings, fortify its network capacity and augment its revenue.
- Telenor India runs operations in seven circles -- Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, Gujarat, UP (East), UP (West) and Assam.
- Airtel will gain 43.4 units of 4G spectrum from Telenor India across these cities.
- According to Bharti Airtel, the deal will help it consolidate its market leadership position with over 330 million customers.

GLOBAL EXHIBITION ON SERVICES (GES) 2018 INAUGURATED BY PRESIDENT

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the 4th Global Exhibition on Services at the Bombay Exhibition Centre, in Mumbai.
- GES 2018 is organized by the Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in partnership with Government of Maharashtra, Services Export Promotion Council (SEPC) and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to promote trade in services.
- A portal on 12 Champion Sectors in Services was also launched by the President.
- He also released the logo for the services.
- The event will feature roundtables and seminars, state investment summits, Business-to-business meetings, exhibition of key services sectors, cultural activities, country and international pavilions etc.
- This is the 4th edition of the Exhibition being held in Mumbai.
- GES 2018 would showcase over 20 services sectors and is expected to see the participation from over 100 countries.
- The first Global Exhibition on Services (GES) was inaugurated by PM Modi in 2015 at New Delhi whereas the second and third GES were held in 2016 and 2017.
- GES aims to position India globally in more services sub-sectors and to create employment through leveraging services exports.

WHO LAUNCHED REPLACE TO ELIMINATE TRANS-FAT BY 2023

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched a comprehensive plan to eliminate industrially-produced artificial trans-fats from the global food supply by 2023.
- REPLACE will provide guidance for all countries on how to remove artificial trans-fats from their foods so as to eradicate it worldwide.
- REPLACE stands for review dietary sources, promote use of healthier fats, legislate, assess changes, create awareness and enforce.
- Artificial trans-fats, or trans-fatty acids, are made when vegetable oil hardens. This process is called hydrogenation.
- Those hydrogenated fats can be used in fried foods, snack foods or baked goods.

- They are often used by the manufacturers as they have a longer shelf life than other fats.
- They have some harmful health effects as they don't spoil as quickly as other fats.
- They lead to raising levels of "bad" LDL cholesterol and increasing risk of heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes.
- In South Asian countries, they have a very high risk of heart disease.
- Several high-income countries are already trying to eliminate trans-fat from their foods through laws limiting the amount that can be included in packaged food.

NATIONAL WIND-SOLAR HYBRID POLICY ISSUED BY THE GOVT.

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) unveiled a National Wind-solar Hybrid Policy
- This policy seeks to promote new projects as well as hybridisation of the existing ones.
- The government has set an ambitious target of achieving 175 gigawatt of installed capacity from renewable energy sources by 2022.
- This includes 100 GW of solar and 60 GW of wind power capacity.
- The policy provides for a comprehensive framework to promote large grid-connected wind-solar photovoltaic (PV) hybrid system.
- This would facilitate efficient utilization of transmission infrastructure and help in achieving better grid stability.
- The policy aims to encourage new technologies, methods and ways involving combined operation of wind and solar photovoltaic plants.
- According to the policy, rated power capacity of one resource has to be at least 25% of rated power capacity of other resource for it to be a recognised hybrid project.
- It will be on tariff based transparent bidding process.

SAWEN (SOUTH ASIA WILDLIFE ENFORCEMENT NETWORK) MEETING HELD IN KOLKATA

- The South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) held its first ever meeting in India.
- It organized the Fourth Executive Committee Meeting and a three day Workshop on 'Strengthening Institutional Capacity of SAWEN' in collaboration with the Government of India.
- The two-day meeting was organized in Kolkata, West Bengal.
- The conference witnessed participation from seven out of the eight member countries.
- The conference was not attended by Pakistan.
- The members agreed on having an operational framework for strengthening the regional body to combat wildlife crime.
- India adopted many proposals to curb wildlife crime in the South Asian Region.
- SAWEN is regional inter-governmental wildlife law enforcement support body of South Asian Countries.
- It was launched in January, 2011 in Paro, Bhutan during the second meeting of the South Asia Expert Group on Illegal Wildlife Trade.
- The SAWEN Secretariat was formally established on 20th April, 2011 in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- India became its formal member in 2016 in order to strengthen ties with the member countries in controlling the trans-boundary wildlife crime through communication and co-ordination.

ICBC LAUNCHED CHINA'S 1ST INDIA-DEDICATED INVESTMENT FUND

- Chinese bank ICBC (The Industrial and Commercial Bank of China) has launched the country's first India-dedicated publicly offered investment fund.
- The fund is named the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) Credit Suisse India Market Fund.
- The fund invest in the future of the Indian economy and track the distribution of the industrial structure across the Indian market.
- It will invest in exchange-traded funds listed on more than 20 exchanges in Europe and the US that are based on the Indian market.
- The ICBC Bank has listed sectors for investments specifically, in terms of the major industries weighted distribution of the index.
- According to the recent research, Indian market has gradually become one of the best-performing markets in the world.
- This fund opens up the way for Chinese investors in India and provides a way for a low-threshold investment in India.
- It will help the investors to better spread risks and obtain a more stable income.

MEETING TO DISCUSS 'SAMARTH SCHEME' HELD IN NEW DELHI

- A meeting of the stakeholders on the Samarth Scheme was held in New Delhi.
- The Samarth Scheme deals with the Capacity Building in Textile Sector under the Skill India Mission.
- The meeting was chaired by Union Minister of Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani.
- The meeting was conducted to make the stakeholders familiar with the scheme and its guidelines.
- The concerns of the stakeholders and challenges faced by them during implementation of the previous scheme were discussed in the meeting.
- It was also discussed amongst the stakeholders how the scheme can contribute and benefit the textile industry and boost skill development in the respective sector.
- The scheme of the Ministry of Textiles and was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on 20th December 2017.
- Its main objective is to skill the youth for gainful and sustainable employment in the textile sector covering the entire value chain of textiles, excluding spinning and weaving.
- It targets to train around 10 lakh people out of which 9 lakh would be trained in the organized sector whereas 1 lakh in the traditional sector.
- These people would be trained in a duration of 3 years from 2017 to 2020 with an outlay of Rs 1300 crore.

MAX THUNDER : US-SOUTH KOREA JOINT MILITARY DRILL BEGINS

- A joint military drill is being conducted between South Korea and the US.
- The military drill is named as 'Max Thunder' which would run for 15 days from 11-25th May 2018.
- This exercise was first conducted in 2009 and has continued since then.
- It aims to co-ordinate the air forces of the two nations.
- The military exercise involves around 100 warplanes including the F-22 stealth fighters which are being deployed by the US military for the very first time.
- It also includes the B-52 bombers and F-15K jets

- North Korea has accused this military drill to be a practice for an invasion.
- It cancelled the high-level conversations with South Korea that were planned to take place in Pyongyang.
- An announcement was made by North Korea that it was pulling out of the meeting that was scheduled with the US due to this military drill.
- The meeting was scheduled to be conducted in Singapore to discuss about the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula.

INTEGRATED CENTRE FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT FOR CBRN EMERGENCIES AT BARC

- The Integrated Centre for Crisis Management (ICCM) was inaugurated by the President Ram Nath Kovind at BARC (Bhabha Atomic Research Centre) in Mumbai.
- The centre will help the nation respond more effectively to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear emergencies.
- It would will monitor radiological data from a network of around 504 radiation sensors across the country.
- Mr. Kovind also inaugurated three other nuclear facilities of the DEA (Department of Atomic Energy).
- These facilities include-
 - Metal fuel pin fabrication facility
 - High power electron beam melting furnace
 - Integrated enriched boron tri-fluoride gas generation facility
- He also launched a multi-leaf collimator system developed by BARC that will enable gamma radiation to be exposed only on cancer-affected organs.

MERCOM: INDIA 3RD LARGEST SOLAR MARKET IN THE WORLD

- According to a report by the Mercom Communications, India emerged as the third largest solar market in the world in 2017.
- The report, "India Solar Market Leaderboard 2018" covers market share and shipment rankings across the Indian solar supply chain in 2017.
- The top two positions were taken by China and the US.
- India set a new record with 9.6 GW of solar installations in 2017, which was more than double the 4.3 GW installed in 2016.
- This boosted the country's total solar installed capacity to 19.6 GW.
- According to the report, the top 10 solar photovoltaic (PV) project developers in the country accounted for over 62 percent of all large-scale project installations in 2017.
- India has quickly emerged as one of the most important solar markets in the world for suppliers and vendors
- Mercom Communications India is an arm of global clean energy consulting firm Mercom Capital Group.

NTPC SIGNS MOU WITH BIHAR GOVT.

- NTPC Limited signed an MoU with the Bihar Government to improve the performance of Power Sector in Bihar.
- The MoU was signed in Patna in presence of the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Power and New & Renewable Energy, R. K. Singh and Chief Minister of Bihar, Nitish Kumar.

- The MoU envisages transfer of Barauni Thermal Power Station (720 MW) to NTPC.
- The deal would raise NTPC's independent coal-based power generation capacity to 43,825 MW.
- An effective date to be notified by Government of Bihar to transfer the three power generation facilities to NTPC.
- This would result in their optimal & efficient utilization and would bring the tariff down, thus benefitting the people of Bihar at large.
- These three power generation facilities include-
 - Barauni Thermal Power Station.
 - Kanti Bijlee Utpadan Nigam Limited (KBUN)
 - Nabinagar Power Generating Company (Pvt.) Limited (NPGC)
- NTPC is a Maharatna Company under the Ministry of Power in the Government of India.

1ST APEX CONFERENCE FOR SMART CITY CEOS HELD IN BHOPAL

- The First Apex Conference for CEOs of Smart Cities was held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- It was inaugurated by the Minister of State (I/C) for Housing & Urban Affairs, Hardeep Puri.
- The basic objective of the two-day Conference was to emphasize on cross learning amongst the Smart City CEOs to accelerate the progress of the Smart City Mission projects.
- It would enable the CEOs to learn from the experiences of all city leaders to understand in greater details both successes and failures.
- It aims to promote sustainability, innovation and participatory approaches in the Smart Cities.
- This is the first such conference after the launch of Smart Cities Mission on June 25, 2015.
- The conference included exhibition and presentations by the Smart Cities CEOs.
- It also saw participation of representatives from municipal, State and Central Government and various other stakeholders in Smart City Mission.
- During the Conference, Agence Française de Development (AFD) launched their Programme to fund Smart City projects through a challenge process.

WILLIAM MARK TULLY TO GET REDINK AWARD 2018

- Sir William Mark Tully has been chosen for this year's RedInk award for lifetime achievement in journalism.
- Mark Tully is a veteran British journalist and former BBC India correspondent.
- RedInk awards are presented by the Mumbai Press Club for excellence in journalism.
- The Award will be presented to Mark Tully on 18th May 2018 by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu.
- Mark Tully is receiving the lifetime achievement award in recognition of his long and outstanding contribution to Indian journalism.
- Tully worked with the BBC for three decades and was the broadcaster's Chief of Bureau for Delhi for 20 years.
- The RedInk awards for excellence in journalism are given in 13 competitive categories to 32 journalists after a process of selection by a jury appointed for each category.
- Mark Tully was also awarded the Padma Shree in the year 1992.

ATAL PENSION YOJANA SUBSCRIBER BASE CROSSES 1CR MARK

- The subscriber base of the Atal Pension Yojana (APY) had crossed the one-crore mark since its launch in 2015.

- This announcement came on the completion of three years of the scheme.
- According to the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA), its current number of subscriber stands at 1.10 crore.
- As per the scheme, the guaranteed minimum pension of Rs. 1,000/- or 2,000/- or 3,000/- or 4,000/ or 5,000/- per month will be given at the age of 60 years depending on the contributions by the subscribers.
- A massive outreach campaign 'APY Formation Day' was organized on the completion of three years of the scheme.
- It was organized by the PFRDA in coordination with 'Department of Financial Services in order to enhance the enrolments in APY by banks and Department of Posts.

SWACHH SURVEKSHAN 2018 - INDORE THE CLEANEST CITY

- The results for Swachh Survekshan 2018 have been announced by the Union Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, Hardeep Singh Puri.
- Indore has retained its title of being India's cleanest city for second consecutive year.
- Bhopal and Chandigarh have been ranked as the second and third cleanest city respectively.
- The survey assessed 4203 Urban Local Bodies, as compared to the 434 cities covered in 2017 and 73 cities covered in the Swachh Survekshan 2016 and.
- According to the survey report, Vijayawada is cleanest among big cities having more than one million population while Mysuru has emerged as the cleanest among cities with population of three lakh to one million.
- As per this year's survey, Jharkhand has become the best performing state, followed by Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh.
- Around 2133 cities and urban local bodies have been certified as ODF (Open Defecation Free).
- In this year's survey, a substantial weightage was given to the feedback from citizens based on their daily experience.
- Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was launched in 2014. Every year, cities and towns across India are Awarded with the title of 'Swachh Cities' on the basis of their cleanliness and sanitation drive as a part of the Abhiyan.

CM T.S RAWAT INAUGURATES UTTARAKHAND'S 1ST CITY GAS DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM

- Uttarakhand's first City Gas Distribution (CGD) network was inaugurated by the Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat.
- It was inaugurated at Rudrapur in Udham Singh Nagar district.
- It is India's eighth City Gas Distribution (CGD) system.
- The budget allocated for this project is around Rs 250 crore which would cover the area from Kashipur to Rudrapur.
- A 500 km long pipeline would be developed by 2020. It would provide employment to around 2000 people living in those areas.
- A total of ten CNG stations have been identified for this pipeline.
- These include one each in Jaspur, Bazpur, Khatima and Kiccha, two in Kashipur and three in Rudrapur.

WHO PUBLISHED ITS 1ST ESSENTIAL DIAGNOSTICS LIST

- The World Health Organisation (WHO) has published its first Essential Diagnostics List.
- The List aims to address the prevalence of late or incorrect diagnoses and improve treatment outcomes globally.
- Many people fail to get tested for diseases as they cannot access diagnostics services.
- WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom mentioned that no one should suffer or die because of lack of diagnostic services, or because the right tests were not available.
- With this list, WHO aims to provide a tool which would be useful to all countries.
- It would help in a better diagnosis and treatment and thus result in the more effective use of the health funds.
- According to WHO, an estimated 46 per cent of adults with Type 2 diabetes worldwide were undiagnosed, risking serious health complications and higher health costs.
- This Diagnostics List focusses on in vitro tests i.e. blood and urine tests.
- 58 tests are listed for detection and diagnosis of a wide range of common conditions.
- The remaining 55 tests are designed for the detection, diagnosis and monitoring of 'priority' diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, hepatitis B and C etc.
- For each test, the Essential Diagnostics List specifies the type of test and its intended use and health facilities with the laboratories.
- The list would be updated by the WHO on a regular basis and it may add certain new categories in the new edition.

CONFERENCE ON NATIONAL IPR POLICY – ORGANIZED BY CIPAM – DIPP

- The Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) organized a conference on National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy in New Delhi.
- CIPAM is a professional body under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP)
- The National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy was adopted by the Government of India in May 2016.
- The main objective of the Policy is “IPR Awareness: Outreach and Promotion”.
- It aims to raise awareness on IPR for school children to nurture creativity and the ability to innovate from a young age.
- The Intellectual Property mascot ‘IP NANI’ was launched by Suresh Prabhu during the Conference.
- The mascot would spread awareness about the importance of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) among people, especially children, in an interesting manner.
- It is also in line with the World Intellectual Property Organization’s (WIPO) campaign for the World IP Day 2018.
- IP Nani represents a tech savvy smart, intelligent grandmother who would help the government and enforcement agencies to combat IP crimes.
- An anti-piracy video featuring Bollywood superstar Amitabh Bachchan was also launched.

B S YEDDYURAPPA TAKES OATH AS KARNATAKA CM

- BJP legislature party leader B S Yeddyurappa took oath as the Chief Minister of Karnataka.
- He has been the Chief Minister of Karnataka two time prior to this.
- He was administered the oath of office and secrecy by Governor Vajubhai Vala.
- B S Yeddyurappa has 15 days to prove in the Karnataka Legislative Assembly the required majority to form a government.
- His cabinet will be named only after he proves his strength in a floor test at the assembly.
- The BJP at present has 104 MLAs in the House, eight short of the required majority of 112 members.
- The Congress, which won 78 seats in the elections, has allied with the JD(S), which has 37 seats.

- The alliance had met the Governor to stake claim to form the government.
- It also approached the Supreme Court regarding this but the apex court refused to stay BJP's BS Yeddyurappa swearing-in.
- The court made it clear that the government formation would depend on the final verdict in the case.

INDIA'S 1ST SOLAR POWERED RAILWAY STATION IN GUWAHATI

- Guwahati now has India's first railway station run by solar power. The project of installing solar panels was commissioned last year in April 2017.
- It aims to reduce carbon-footprint as well as cut down power costs drastically.
- As per Indian Railways, the estimated cost for the project is Rs 6.7 crore.
- The solar power plant will save Rs 67 lakh worth of electricity.
- Its average power generation capacity per day is 2048 KWh.
- It has been set up over the roof of the Guwahati railway station.
- It has around 2352 solar modules with a capacity of generating 700 KW power.
- The Finance Ministry had announced in February 2017 the mission of Indian Railways to implement 1000 megawatts capacity of solar power.
- Under the mission, 7000 railway stations across the country were announced to be powered by solar energy.
- Therefore with an aim to go green and be energy efficient, solar energy is being utilized to power stations.

NATIONAL POLICY ON BIOFUELS 2018 APPROVED BY THE UNION CABINET

- The Union cabinet has approved the National Policy on Biofuels 2018. The policy was drafted in 2009 by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- It aims at promoting the use of biofuels in India.
- This new policy would help the farmers to dispose of their surplus stock in an economic manner and would also reduce India's oil-import dependence.
- It expands the scope of raw material for ethanol production as it allows the use of materials unfit for human consumption.
- It categorises biofuels into different groups such as –
 - First Generation (1G)
 - Second Generation (2G)
 - Third Generation (3G)
- It encourages setting up of supply chain mechanisms for biodiesel production from non-edible oilseeds.
- The policy allows use of surplus food grains for production of ethanol for blending with petrol with approval of National Biofuel Coordination Committee. This would enable the farmers to get an appropriate price for their produce.
- It has indicated viability gap funding scheme for 2G ethanol bio refineries of Rs.5000 crore in six years.
- Through this new policy, the Govt. envisions a reduction in import dependency, cleaner environment through reduction of reducing crop burning and conversion of agricultural residues/wastes to biofuels, reduction in greenhouse gas emissions and other health benefits.

SCO CULTURAL MINISTERS MEETING HELD IN CHINA

- The 15th Cultural Ministers' Meeting of the Member States of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization was held in Sanya, Hainan province, China.
- The meeting was co-organized by the China's Ministry of Culture and Tourism and Hainan province's government.
- The 18th summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization scheduled to be held in Qingdao, 2018.
- Sanya is hosting the meeting for the second time, as is also hosted the 7th SCO cultural ministers' meeting in 2010.
- It aims to achieve more in-depth and creative multilateral cultural cooperation and to promote regional cultural cooperation and mutual understanding of the people.
- India is participating in the Cultural Ministers' Meet for first time as a full time member.
- India became full member of the SCO on June 9, 2017, during the SCO Heads of State Summit in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- In the meeting, the Indian delegation was led by the Minister of State for Culture, Dr Mahesh Sharma.
- He highlighted the role of culture in bringing the people together which is necessary for peaceful coexistence.
- Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a permanent intergovernmental international organization.
- It comprises eight member states, - the People's Republic of China, the Republic of India, the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Russian Federation, the Republic of Tajikistan, and the Republic of Uzbekistan.

CANNES FILM FESTIVAL – SRIDEVI HONORED

- Bollywood actress Sridevi was honored with the TITAN Reginald F Lewis Film Icon Award at the Cannes Film Festival.
- Veteran filmmaker Subhash Ghai and producer Namrata Goyal received the award on behalf of Sridevi.
- The award traditionally celebrates women of the film industry all over the world and also salute the multi-cultural impact on the world of cinema.
- Lately Sridevi was also posthumously honored with the Best Actress award for her performance in MOM at the 65th National Film Awards.
- It was Sridevi's first National Film Award.
- In February 2018, Sridevi died due to accidental drowning in a Dubai hotel.

BSE BECOMES 1ST INDIAN STOCK EXCHANGE TO GET US SE'S DOSM RECOGNITION

- BSE Ltd became the first Indian stock exchange to be designated as 'Designated Offshore Securities Market' (DOSM) from the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC).
- DOSM status will allow the sale of securities to US investors through the trading venue of BSE without registration of such securities with US SEC.
- This would help in the ease of trade and will help US investors in India.
- It would also enhance the attractiveness of Indian Depository Receipts (IDRs) amongst US investors.
- This status would provide additional benefits to companies whose securities are traded both in the US and on the BSE.
- BSE-listed securities, originally issued in the US and exempt from SEC registration, may be freely resold on the BSE.
- Certain directors and officers of dual-listed companies will be permitted to resell their securities on the BSE, regardless of any restrictions that may apply under the US securities laws.

GUJARAT GOVT. TO LAUNCH A FREE TREATMENT SCHEME FOR ROAD ACCIDENT VICTIMS

- The Gujarat Government launched a free treatment scheme for road accident victims.
- It would provide free treatment for the first 48 hours to all victims of road accidents.
- It aims to offer timely and effective care to the victims and thereby minimize the loss of life.
- This announcement was made by the Deputy Chief Minister of Gujarat Nitin Patel.
- The Government will provide up to Rs. 50,000 in medical treatment for the first 48 hours for each individual who meets with a road accident in the state.
- The government would reimburse the amount to the hospital concerned upon submission of bills.
- In certain cases where a hospital refers the patient to another hospital within 48 hours, both the hospitals will be eligible for the reimbursement of their combined bill of Rs 50,000.
- The scheme will benefit not only the people of Gujarat but also people from other states and even citizens of other countries who are travelling within the state.

COMMERCE MINISTRY ISSUES NOTICE TO CREATE DGTR (DIRECTORATE GENERAL OF TRADE REMEDIES)

- The Ministry of Commerce has issued a notification for a unified Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR).
- This approval was made by the Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu.
- It would subsume the functions of the following and would merge them into one single entity-
 - Directorate General of Anti-dumping and Allied duties (DGAD)
 - Directorate General of Safeguards (DGS)
 - Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)
- It would provide trade defence support to domestic industry and to exporters in trade remedy investigations instituted by other countries.
- It aims to boost trade facilitation in the country.
- The Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) will be the apex National Authority for managing all trade remedial measures including anti-dumping, countervailing duties and safeguard measures.
- It will be a multi service organization that will define the skill-sets of various officers from the field of international trade, customs, revenue, finance, economics, costing and law.
- It has been approved with a sanctioned strength of 112 posts drawn from DGAD, DGS and DGFT.
- In the past three years India has initiated more than 130 anti-dumping cases to deal with the rising incidences of unfair trade practices.

UN: DELHI TO BECOME THE MOST POPULOUS CITY BY 2028

- According to the United Nations estimates, Delhi is projected to become the most populous city in the world around 2028
- The 2018 Revision of World Urbanization Prospects produced by the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) was recently released.
- As per the report India is expected to add the largest number of urban dwellers by 2050.
- Currently, 55 per cent of the world's population lives in urban areas.
- According to the report, 68% of the world population is projected to live in urban areas in 2050.

- At present, Tokyo is the world's largest city with an agglomeration of 37 million inhabitants, followed by New Delhi with 29 million.
- The world's rural population will peak in a few years then decline by 2050 as per the estimates of the report on urbanization.
- At the same time, India is expected to surpass China as the country with the world's largest total population.
- By 2050, India, China and Nigeria will account for more than a third of the projected growth in the world's urban population.
- In order to ensure sustainable growth, it is necessary to manage urban growth. It is one of the most important development challenges of the current century.

1ST FLOATING NUCLEAR POWER PLANT UNVEILED BY RUSSIA

- 1st floating nuclear power plant unveiled by Russia. Russia has recently unveiled the world's first floating nuclear power station in the port of the far northern city of Murmansk.
- It will be loaded with nuclear fuel at Murmansk and will be towed to port of Pevek in autonomous Chukotka region in Russia's far northeast in Arctic Circle region.
- Akademik Lomonosov is constructed by the state nuclear power firm Rosatom.
- It is a 144 by 30 meter ship which holds two reactors with two 35 megawatt nuclear reactors.
- It has displacement of 21,500 tonnes and crew of 69 people.
- It will be primarily used to power oil rigs as Russia pushes further north into the Arctic to drill for oil and gas and needs electricity in far-flung locations
- The barge can produce enough electricity to power a town of 2,00,000 residents.
- The barge had initially been scheduled to be fuelled in Saint Petersburg, but that work was moved to Murmansk instead due to concern in countries along the Baltic Sea.
- It has latest security systems and is considered as one of safest nuclear installations in the world.

NITI AAYOG'S VENTURE CAPITAL SYMPOSIUM 2018 HELD IN NEW DELHI

- NITI Aayog has organized the Venture Capital Symposium 2018 in New Delhi. It was organized in collaboration with the Vision India Foundation.
- It aims to strengthen the economic relationships between India and France.
- It is a three-day event where the French investors will be interacting with 100 early to mid-stage Indian start-ups.
- The Venture Capital Symposium 2018 opens doors for French investors to explore Indian market and Indian startups to attain global outreach.
- It aims to provide French investors and business leaders a conceptual understanding of socio-cultural and political factors that shape Indian start-up ecosystems.
- The inaugural day of the Symposium was addressed by the NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant along with DIPP Additional Secretary Atul Chaturvedi.
- It facilitated interaction between French investors, Indian investors, Indian start-ups and critical government functionaries.
- The basic objective of the Symposium was to support the Start-Up India programme launched by Prime Minister Modi.
- It aims to attract flow of foreign capital to India thus making India the most preferred destination for Foreign Direct Investment.

CSTT ADOPTS ACRONYM 'AYUSH' AS A SCIENTIFIC WORD

- The Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) has decided to adopt the acronym "AYUSH" as a word for scientific and technical purposes.
- The CSTT adopted the acronym as a word based on a proposal of the Ministry of AYUSH.
- AYUSH is an acronym for five traditional systems of medicine -- Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy.
- CSTT has decided to adopt the same (AYUSH) as a word in both the Hindi and English languages.
- Following this recognition, AYUSH word is expected to gain currency in popular usage in a short span of time.
- However it would officially be used in all Government communications.
- The word will have the meaning "traditional and non-conventional systems of healthcare and healing, which include Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy etc.
- Through these efforts the Ministry aims to develop integrated solutions to manage the public health challenges of the country.
- It would highlight the unifying features of the different systems.
- The CSTT was formed in 1960 with the objective to evolve and define scientific and technical terms in Hindi and all Indian languages.

INDIA:6TH WEALTHIEST COUNTRY AS PER AFRASIA BANK GLOBAL WEALTH MIGRATION REVIEW 2018

- As per AfrAsia Bank Global Wealth Migration Review 2018, India is the sixth wealthiest country in the world with a total wealth of \$8,230 billion.
- According to the report, the United States is currently the wealthiest country in the world with a total wealth of \$62,584 billion.
- It is followed by China (\$24,803 billion) and Japan (\$19,522 billion).
- Between 2017 and 2027, India's wealth is projected to grow by 200 per cent, the fastest rate among the wealthiest nations.
- The AfrAsia Bank Global Wealth Migration Review 2018 sees India's wealth increasing from \$8,230 billion to \$24,691 billion within a decade to make it the fourth wealthiest nation.
- In the past decade, India has already witnessed an increase of 160% in the private wealth.
- Total wealth in the report refers to the private wealth held by all the individuals living in each country, including all their assets.
- India also emerged as the Nest Performing wealth Markets registering 25% growth in total wealth in 2017.
- The top 10 wealthiest countries as per the report are as follows-
 1. US
 2. China
 3. Japan
 4. UK
 5. Germany
 6. India
 7. Australia
 8. Canada
 9. France
 10. Italy

AMIT KHARE TO BE APPOINTED AS NEW I&B SECRETARY

- The Union Government has appointed senior IAS officer Amit Khare as secretary in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.
- He would succeed incumbent N K Sinha who will superannuate on 31st May 2018.
- Amit Khare is credited with having exposed the fodder scam in Bihar and Jharkhand.
- He exposed the multi-crore fodder scam involving the then Chief Minister of Bihar Lalu Prasad Yadav which eventually led to the resignation of Lalu Prasad Yadav.
- This led to one of the biggest raids in the country which brought into limelight Mr. Amit Khare.
- He is currently serving as the development commissioner in Jharkhand.
- Apart from him other bureaucratic reshuffles include –
 1. Anup Wadhwan will be the new secretary in the Commerce Ministry
 2. M M Kutty will be the new Petroleum secretary
 3. Binoy Kumar will be the new Steel secretary
 4. Rina Ray will serve as Secretary, the Department of School Education & Literacy.

RAJINDER SINGH APPOINTED AS NEW HOCKEY INDIA PRESIDENT

- Rajinder Singh has been appointed as the new president of Hockey India (HI).
- He would succeed Mariamma Koshy who has resigned from the post. She was a former state level hockey player who was appointed as the President of the HI in November 2016.
- She has been a guiding light for the Federation and also a big source of inspiration to many players and administrators.
- He was serving as the Senior Vice President of HI prior to this.
- He was earlier the Treasurer of HI and currently serves as the Treasurer of Hockey Jammu & Kashmir.

WORKSHOP ON CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES OF ARBITRATION IN SAARC REGION HELD IN NEW DELHI

- A workshop on challenges and opportunities of arbitration in SAARC region was held in New Delhi.
- The workshop was conducted in collaboration with FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) and SAARC Arbitration Council (SARCO).
- The welcome address of the event was made by Advisor, ICA and Deputy Secretary General, FICCI, Arun Chawala.
- The Chief Guest at the event was Mr. Suresh Chandra, FICCI Secretary.
- The event aims to focus on the role SARCO (SAARC Arbitration Council in the SAARC region).
- The workshop would include discussions regarding the judicial role in the arbitration of the SAARC region.
- SAARC region accounts for 3 percent of world's area and is 9 percent of the global economy.
- With rising intra-regional trade, arbitration is increasingly becoming important for the region.

IGNCA TO ORGANIZE CHILDREN THEATRE WORKSHOP IN JUNE 2018

- The Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) will organize a children's theatre and personality development workshop from 21st May to 21st June, 2018 in New Delhi.

- This workshop would be organized in partnership with Udaan - the Centre of Theatre Art and Child Development.
- In organizing the workshop, IGNCA will support 'Udaan' which has been organizing theatre workshops for the last 25 years in which more than 25000 children have participated.
- It aims to train children to enhance their fundamental skills and theatrical skills.
- The workshop would be held at Mother Divine Public School and Mount Abu Public School of Rohini in New Delhi.
- Children between the age group 6-14 years can take part in the workshop.
- They will be trained to increase their thinking & mind power, to improve their stage manners including theatre, improvising, etc. along with boosting their confidence.
- Two plays would be conducted at the end of the workshop which will witness the participation of all the trained children.
- Certificates would be offered to the children at the end of the workshop.

JUSTICE C K PRASAD LIKELY TO BECOME PCI CHIEF FOR 2ND TIME

- Justice C K Prasad would get a second term as the chairman of the Press Council of India (PCI).
- This approval was given a nod by a three-member committee headed by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu.
- He was appointed as the chairman of the PCI in November, 2014 for three years.
- He succeeded Justice Markanday Katju and became the PCI Chief.
- The Press Council of India is a statutory body which oversees the conduct of the print media.
- According to the Press Council Act, the council shall consist of a chairman and 28 other members.

PM MODI INAUGURATED ASIA'S LONGEST ROAD TUNNEL: ZOJILA TUNNEL

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Zojila Tunnel in Jammu and Kashmir's Leh district.
- This tunnel would be India's longest and Asia's longest and strategic bi-directional tunnel which is expected to be finished within five years.
- It is a 14.2 long tunnel which will provide all-weather connectivity between Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar, Kargil and Leh districts.
- It will be constructed at an altitude of 3,528 metres high Zojila pass and is expected to bring down the travel time from 3.5 hours to 15 minutes.
- The overall budget for the construction of the Zojila Tunnel is of Rs 6,809 crore.
- It is being implemented by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRT&H) through the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL).
- The project has strategic and socio-economic importance and it aims to develop the economically backward districts in Jammu and Kashmir.
- It would make sure that the land transportation is not disrupted in the region after the snowfall.
- The construction of the tunnel was approved by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs in January 2018.

22ND MAY – INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

- The International Day for Biological Diversity is celebrated annually on May 22.

- The Convention on Biological Diversity is celebrating the International Day for Biological Diversity on May 22, 2018.
- The theme for International Day for Biological Diversity 2018 is “Celebrating 25 Years of Action for Biodiversity” as the year 2018 marks the 25th anniversary of the Convention on Biological Diversity.
- It aims to commemorate the adoption of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) on May 22, 1992 by the Nairobi Final Act.
- It aims to highlight the progress made in the achievement of its objectives at the national and global levels on biodiversity.
- Protecting and restoring ecosystems and ensuring access to ecosystem services are necessary for the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger.
- The International Day for Biological Diversity falls within the scope of the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda's Sustainable Development Goals.

NIPAH VIRUS OUTBREAK IN INDIA

- According to the Centre of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Nipah virus infection is an emerging disease that was first identified in 1999 during an outbreak among pig farmers in Malaysia and Singapore.
- As per the reports, at least three people in India have died from a rare virus known as Nipah virus.
- Recently, the state Health Department has confirmed Nipah virus (NiV) infection for the first time in Kerala.
- The blood and body fluid samples of two persons who died of viral fever indicated the presence of the Nipah virus.
- The Union health minister JP Nadda has directed to constitute a high-level team of doctors.
- This team would visit the district and initiate required steps as warranted by the protocol for the disease in consultation with state government.
- Nipah virus can cause an inflammation of the brain known as encephalitis.
- Symptoms can include fever and headache, followed by drowsiness, disorientation and confusion.
- People who are infected with the virus may fall into a coma within 48 hours of showing symptoms.
- According to the World Health Organization, it naturally infects the fruit bats but can also infect pigs and other domesticated animals, as well as humans.
- The virus can be highly lethal, with an average fatality rate of around 75 percent.
- As of now, there is no drug to treat the illness and no vaccine to prevent it.

BRAHMOS MISSILE SUCCESSFULLY TEST FIRED ALONG ODISHA COAST

- India successfully test-fired the Indo-Russian joint venture BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from a test range along the Odisha coast.
- It was test-fired to validate some new features.
- The missile was test-fired from a mobile launcher stationed at Launch pad 3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur, Odisha.
- Its “life extension” technologies are developed for the first time in India by the DRDO and team BrahMos.
- It is developed by BrahMos Aerospace and DRDO, and manufactured by state-owned Electronics Corporation of India.
- It was the first time a ground-launched BrahMos equipped with an indigenous seeker was successfully tested.
- BrahMos is a two-stage missile, the first stage being solid and the second one, a ramjet liquid propellant.
- This missile has already been introduced in the Indian Army and Navy, while the Air Force version had undergone successful trial.

- It will result in huge savings of replacement cost of missiles held in the inventory of the armed forces.
- The last test firing of a BrahMos surface-to-surface (Block III) cruise missile took place in March at the Pokhran test range in Rajasthan.

1ST COMMERCIAL FLIGHT OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH UNDER UDAN SCHEME

- Arunachal Pradesh hosted its first commercial flight under the Udan scheme of the Central Government.
- Its first fixed-wing commercial aircraft was flagged off from Pasighat to Guwahati by Chief Minister Pema Khandu.
- The Air India Ltd agreed to start ATR-42 services of Alliance Air to Pasighat from Gopinath Bordoloi airport at Guwahati, connecting the state with rest of the country.
- The 42-seat Alliance Air ATR will fly between Guwahati and Pasighat thrice a week as of now.
- Alliance Air, which is a subsidiary of Air India, Zoom Air and Turbo Jet are also set to commence services in the state as soon as the formalities are completed.
- It would help in enhancing Arunachal Pradesh's economic progress and tourism by ensuring better connectivity with the rest of India.
- The air service will benefit as many as eight districts of eastern Arunachal Pradesh.
- Pasighat is among the eight advanced landing grounds in the state.
- The state government is also in the process of hiring 10-seater fixed wing aircraft under the Chief Minister's Air Connectivity Scheme to ensure easier access to other locations.

MP GOVT. LAUNCHED 'MY MP ROJGAR PORTAL'

- Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan launched 'My MP Rojgar Portal' in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.
- The portal was launched as a part of the 'Ham Chhu Lenge Asman' Mukhyamantri Career Counselling programme 'Pahal' in a school in Bhopal.
- It was prepared by the Madhya Pradesh Skill Development and Employment Generation Board under youth empowerment mission.
- It aims to provide jobs to youths as per their educational qualification, skills and interest and to ensure the availability of able candidates to employers as per need of their business.
- Therefore the portal will enable the user to choose the place of employment, job sector and job role.
- The interested youth will be able to open their employment account on the portal by registering their profile as per their qualification.
- The submission of online applications for jobs in the companies will also be enabled in the portal.
- Thus the portal would basically help the user to be able to obtain information regarding interview and job through their registered email and mobile.

NAVIKA SAGAR PARIKRAMA (INSV TARINI) – INDIAN NAVY'S ALL-WOMEN CREW COMPLETES CIRCUMNAVIGATING AROUND GLOBE

- Indian Navy's all-women crew completed its expedition of circumnavigating the globe in more than eight months.
- Under the Navika Sagar Parikrama expedition, the Indian Navy's 6-member all-women crew onboard of INSV Tarini reached Panaji, Goa in around 254 days.

- It was the first ever all women Asian and Indian circumnavigation expedition of the globe.
- They were welcomed by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba at INS Mandovi boat pool in Panaji.
- The 'Navika Sagar Parikrama' expedition was flagged off on 10th September 2017.
- It aimed at promoting women empowerment.
- The crew led by Lt Commander Vartika Joshi covered a total of 21,980 nautical miles in INSV Tarini, which was inducted into the Indian Navy on 18th February 2017.
- The other crew members comprised Lt Commanders Pratibha Jamwal, P Swathi and Lieutenants S Vijaya Devi, B Aishwarya and Payal Gupta.
- The expedition was completed in six legs with five stopovers at Fremantle I Australia, Lyttleton in New Zealand, Port Stanley in Falkland Islands, Cape Town in South Africa, and Port Louis in Mauritius

KISHANGANGA HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT INAUGURATED BY PM MODI AT J&K

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the state run NHPC Ltd's Kishanganga hydro power project in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The project is located in the Bandipora district of J&K and is a run of river scheme.
- The project is based on the river Kishanganga, a tributary of Jhelum which flows to Pakistan as well.
- Pakistan had challenged the project under the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 but the International Court of Arbitration at The Hague ruled in India's favour in 2013.
- The Jhelum originates in India and flows into Pakistan, and according to the Indus Water Treaty, whoever builds the project first will have the first rights on the river water.
- The Project was handed over to NHPC for execution by the State Government after an MoU was signed between J&K Govt. and Ministry of Power, Govt of India in July 2000.
- The hydro power project has a capacity of 330MW.
- It will provide a free power of 13 per cent to the state, which will be around Rs. 133 crore per year.
- The overall cost of the project is Rs 5882 crore and the annual generation would be 1712.96 MU.
- It would provide many benefits to the state which include employment to the people of J&K, infrastructure development etc.
- It is estimated that the project engaged about 1850 local persons during construction stage and 750 local persons during operation stage through direct and indirect employment.

MAN BOOKER INTERNATIONAL PRIZE FOR ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF 'FLIGHTS'

- An English translation of the Polish novel "Flights," was named as the winner of the prestigious Man Booker International Prize 2018.
- The novel is written by Olga Tokarczuk, translated by Jennifer Croft and published by Fitzcarraldo Editions.
- This translated version of the novel has been announced as the winner of the Man Booker International Prize 2018.
- The £50,000 prize, which celebrates the finest works of translated fiction from around the world, has been divided equally between its author and translator.
- 'Flights' is a novel about journeys in time, space and human anatomy and is praised for its wit.
- The novel, first published in 2007 and translated into English by Jennifer Croft, won the prize after finishing as the judges' favorite from a shortlist of six.

- Olga Tokarczuk is one of Poland's most celebrated novelists and has won multiple national and foreign literary prizes,
- The Man Booker International Prize, a parallel to the traditional Man Booker Prize, started in 2005 as an award for the combined works of foreign-language authors.
- Since 2016, it has rewarded an English-language translation of a single work of international literature.

UNION FINANCE MINISTRY TIES UP WITH 40 COMPANIES TO EXTEND LOANS UNDER MUDRA SCHEME

- The Union Finance Ministry has announced that it has tied up with 40 entities for extending loans to small entrepreneurs under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY).
- These companies include Flipkart, Swiggy, Patanjali, Amul etc. They will identify people who need loans under Mudra Yojana, underwrite them and then the Finance Ministry will extend loans under the scheme.
- In order to identify people who can be given funds under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), the ministry will organize an event in Mumbai on May 23, 2018 to extend loan under the scheme.
- The aim of the Seminar in Mumbai would be creating job opportunities and instilling the sense of entrepreneurship, to facilitate people to become job creators in place of job seekers.
- The companies, which have tied up with the financial services department for this, include Make My Trip, Zomato, Meru Cab, Muthoot, Edelweiss, Amazon, Ola, Amazon, Big Basket, Carz on Rent and Habib Salon etc.
- PMMY was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 8, 2015, for providing loans of up to Rs 10 lakh to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.
- Last fiscal the government has extended Rs 2.53 lakh crore credit under the Mudra Yojana, while Rs 5.73 lakh crore has been extended in last 3 years.

CHHATTISGARH TO GET 'BLACK PANTHER' - SPECIALIZED COMBAT UNIT

- The Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh announced that Chhattisgarh would get a specialized anti-Naxal combat force called "Black Panther".
- It will be a new force on the lines of the Greyhounds.
- This announcement was made by Rajnath Singh after chairing a meeting on Left-Wing Extremism (LWE).
- The Greyhounds is a special force in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh that specializes in anti-insurgency operations against Naxals and Maoists.
- Greyhounds are the best anti-insurgency force that specializes in anti-Maoist operations and as experts in jungle warfare.
- It was raised in the year 1989 by IPS officer K. S. Vyas.
- Training for the personnel who will be part of it is being imparted and it would be launched soon.
- Rajnath Singh said the government was keeping an eye on money stashed by Maoists.
- The children of Maoist leaders were studying in big schools and universities and the government was keeping a tab on this too.
- He claimed that the government would make all efforts to choke the resource flow to the Maoists by seizing illegally amassed properties after they are identified

MCX LAUNCHED INDIA'S 1ST COPPER OPTIONS CONTRACTS

- India's Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) has launched the country's first copper options contracts.
- The copper option contracts were launched with lot size of 1 tonne in three contracts expiring in June, August and November 2018.
- The option contract will provide physical market participants an additional instrument to hedge their risk.
- In order to encourage active participation in the market the exchange is not levying any transaction fees on all the commodity options contracts till 30th September 2018.
- It gives copper industry greater flexibility with alternative opportunities to take on price risk.
- It will also complement current futures contracts on the MCX.
- It would help in bringing greater vibrancy to metals market and give stakeholders opportunity to better manage the price risks.
- Copper ranks as the third-most-consumed industrial metal in the world, after iron and aluminium.
- The world's refined copper usage has surged in the last few years, owing to the growing demand in sectors like electrical and electronic products, building construction, industrial machinery and equipment, transportation equipment, and consumer and general products.
- Copper ore production in India stood at 3,846 thousand tonnes in 2016-17 and its consumption demand for refined copper was 820 thousand tonnes in the FY16.

WORKSHOP ON 'GANGA AND ITS BIODIVERSITY: DEVELOPING A ROAD MAP FOR HABITAT AND SPECIES CONSERVATION'

- The Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the workshop on River Ganga in New Delhi.
- The theme of the workshop was 'Ganga and its biodiversity: Developing a road map for habitat and Species conservation'.
- The workshop was organized by the WWF (World Wildlife Fund).
- A report on 'Status of conservation of select aquatic species' was also released during the workshop.
- He also was a database of Ganga Praharis, a self-motivated cadre that is being created by Wildlife Institute of India (WII).
- Ganga Praharis are a self motivated volunteer cadre from local communities who have been trained and taken onboard by National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and WWF to make Clean Ganga Mission a mass movement.
- A clean Ganga will not only be helpful for the environment but will also boost our economy.
- Nitin Gadkari emphasized the need to approach the challenges of cleaning river Ganga through an integrated approach and with synergy between development and ecology.
- Activities like plantation on the river bank, boating, construction of Mukti Dhams and Ghats will be increased.
- This will increase employment opportunities and will mobilize public participation of the local residents in the task of cleaning Ganga.

UNION GOVT. RELEASES MODEL CONTRACT FARMING ACT 2018

- The Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh released the final Model Act titled 'The State/UT Agricultural Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion & Facilitation) Act, 2018'.
- The proposed law was unveiled here in presence of agriculture marketing ministers from many states including Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.
- This act intends to integrate farmers with agro-industries and exporters for better price realization through mitigating market and price risks.

- Once adopted by states, it will formally facilitate entry of private players into the farm sector.
- It would induce competition and ensure assured and better price of farm produce to farmers through advance agreements.
- It can offer assured price to farmers and save them from adverse situations where farmers have to go for distress sale when bumper crops cause glut in the market.
- At present, some states have limited formal contract farming while some others have informal practices.
- It's currently being implemented in a limited manner under provisions of the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act in certain states.
- The model act keeps the contract farming outside the ambit of the APMC Act.
- It also provides for a major role for Farmer Producer Organization (FPO) or Farmer Producer Company (FPC) in promoting contract farming.

NCA: PAKISTAN AMONG TOP THREE SOURCES OF MONEY LAUNDERING IN THE UK

- According to an analysis by the National Crime Agency (NCA), Pakistan has been identified among three main source countries for money laundering in the UK.
- Nigeria and Russia are the top source countries for money laundering in the United Kingdom.
- The report is titled "National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organized Crime 2018".
- As per the report, the UK is a prime destination for foreign corrupt and politically exposed people to launder money.
- The analysis of the NCA is based on the annual assessment of serious and organized crime in the UK.
- Investment in UK property, particularly in London, continues to be an attractive mechanism to launder funds.
- Trade miscinvoicing is the largest component of illicit financial outflows.
- According to the report, the UK is a prime destination for foreign corrupt PEPs (politically exposed persons).
- The overseas jurisdictions that have the most enduring impact on the UK are Russia, China, Hong Kong, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

INDIA'S 1ST NATIONAL SPORTS UNIVERSITY TO SET UP IN MANIPUR

- The Union Cabinet approved an ordinance to set up the country's first national sports university in Imphal (west), Manipur.
- The ordinance is on the lines of National Sports University Bill, 2017 which was introduced in Lok Sabha in August, 2017.
- National Sports University Bill, 2017 establishes National Sports University in Manipur.
- The specialized university will be the first of its kind in the country and adopt best international practices.
- The Manipur government has already allocated land for the proposed university.
- The proposal to set up the national sports university in Manipur was initially announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Rs. 100 crore funds were allocated for it in the 2014-15 budget.
- It also empowers the University to grant degrees, diplomas and certificates.
- The university aims to fill the void in various areas such as sports science, sports technology and high-performance training.
- It would be the first Central University in India, to focus on sports education.
- It aims to strengthen physical education and sports training programmes.
- It would train talented athletes to help them to evolve into international level athletes.

SMART CITIES EXPO 2018 STARTED IN NEW DELHI

- The Smart Cities Expo 2018 is being conducted in New Delhi., It is the 4th edition of the India Smart Cities Expo.
- It is a mega event which comprises five expos-
 - Building India Expo
 - Solar India Expo
 - Transport India Expo
 - Smart Cities India Expo
 - Water India Expo
- The event is co-organized by the India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO), the NASSCOM Center of Excellence – IoT and Exhibitions India Group.
- It aims to develop attractive and safe cities that evoke pride, passion and a sense of belonging among citizens.
- Developing citizen friendly and economically viable cities is an urban initiative by the Government of India.
- This Expo aims to attract industry experts and leaders from the city, government and community to share their views and proposals to make cities more sustainable, efficient, transparent, and to enhance the quality of life of its residents.
- Government and business delegations from all across the globe will attend the expo.
- India's urban population is expected to increase to 843 million by 2050 - accounting for about 50% of the population.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mission of Smart Cities is intended to transform the lives and living conditions of the citizens of the country.

SCO REGIONAL ANTI-TERRORIST STRUCTURE (RATS) MEETING HELD IN PAKISTAN

- Pakistan hosted the first ever Shanghai Cooperation Organization-Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (SCO-RATS) legal experts meeting in Islamabad.
- It was the first-ever SCO meeting being held in Pakistan since it became a permanent member of the organization along with India in Jun 2017.
- It was three-day meeting which saw participation of legal advisors from eight SCO member states.
- These member states include China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan.
- Apart from them the representatives of the SCO-RATS executive committee also participated in the meeting.
- The main agenda of the meeting was to discuss issues related to terrorist threats in the region and how to overcome them.
- It aims to enhance counter-terrorism cooperation between SCO member states.
- The major discussions were related to the terrorist threats being faced by the region and ways and means to enhance regional cooperation in fighting terrorism, drug trafficking and organized crime between SCO member states.
- SCO-Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) is permanent organ of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- The Shanghai Cooperation Organization is a permanent intergovernmental international organization which was founded on June 15, 2001 in Shanghai, China.

NITI AAYOG SIGNS SOI WITH ABB INDIA

- NITI Aayog has signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) with ABB to make India Artificial Intelligence ready.

- It would support the Indian government's vision of 'Make in India' through advanced manufacturing technologies that incorporate the latest developments in robotics and artificial intelligence.
- The agreement was signed by Anna Roy, Adviser (Industry), NITI Aayog and Sanjeev Sharma, MD, ABB India in the presence of NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant and ABB CEO Dr. Ulrich Spiesshofer.
- This collaboration will help India become a center for advanced manufacturing.
- NITI Aayog will work with ABB across various sectors of the economy, such as the power and water utilities, industries like food as well as the heavy industries and the transport (rail and metro) and infrastructure to suggest solutions for digitalization, incorporating the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies.
- NITI Aayog will facilitate participation of policymakers and government functionaries in workshops and training programs organized by ABB India.
- The training programs are expected to feature subject matter experts and will aim to sensitize policymakers and officials about relevant AI capabilities
- The first workshop for senior government officials under this collaboration would be organized in June in Bengaluru.
- The workshop will focus on digital and automation technologies for the Indian food processing sector.
- Similar workshops will be organized for other sectors such as power, urban development and transport in the near future.

KALINGA LITERARY FESTIVAL 2018 TO BE HELD IN BHUBANESHWAR

- The 5th edition of Kalinga literary festival 2018 will be held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- It will explore concepts of equality, equity and humanity in literature.
- It will witness innovative sessions on radio, poetry recitation, short story, lyrics and cinema by eminent speakers, writer, poets etc.
- Kalinga Literary Festival is an annual literary festival held in Bhubaneswar each year in the month of June.
- It was first was launched in 2014 to celebrate the Classical Language Status of Odia language.
- Kalinga Literary Festival is conducted to celebrate this creative spirit of the Smart City of Bhubaneswar and commemorate the literary diversity it offers.
- The festival has been founded and directed by Rashmi Ranjan Parida, an award winning journalist.
- The KLF is organized by Odisha Diary Foundation in collaboration with Odisha Diary news-portal and Odisha Living Legend Initiative.
- The theme for the last year KLF (KLF 2017) was 'Literature for Peace and Harmony'.

NEPAL -1ST COUNTRY IN SOUTH EAST ASIA TO ELIMINATE TRACHOMA

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Nepal to be the first country in South-East Asia Region to defeat trachoma, world's leading infectious cause of blindness.
- The eye disease was second leading cause of preventable blindness in Nepal in 1980s.
- It puts more than 190 million people in 41 countries at the risk of blindness.
- In 1998, the Who had resolved to eliminate trachoma as a public health problem.
- In 2002, the Nepal Government launched the National Trachoma Programme in order to eliminate the disease.
- It helped in the reduction of the active trachoma by 40 percent from 2002 to 2005.

- To increase awareness, the national trachoma programme collaborated with the Ministry of Education to include a module on trachoma in the school curriculum.
- The Nepal government, through the ministry of water supply and sanitation, provided incentives to local communities and districts to build and maintain toilets, measures that were crucial to improve sanitation and reduce the disease carrying flies.
- India had self-declared itself free from infective Trachoma in Dec 2017.
- It met the goal of trachoma elimination as specified by WHO under its GET2020 (Global Elimination of Trachoma by the year 2020) program.
- Trachoma is an eye disease caused by infection with bacterium Chlamydia trachomatis and is particularly common in young children.

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR LAUNCHES SAMAGRA SHIKSHA SCHEME FOR SCHOOL EDUCATION

- Union Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar launched Samagra Shiksha scheme for school education.
- He had announced the launch of 'Samagra Shiksha' programme subsuming three existing schemes-
 - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)
 - Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA)
 - Teacher Education (TE).
- It is an integrated scheme for school education from pre-school to senior secondary levels.
- The scheme focuses on improving quality of education, enhancing the Learning outcomes, bridging social and gender gaps in the school education and using technology to empower children and teachers.
- It mainly focuses on digital education and introducing skill development at the school level.
- An annual grant of five thousand to 20 thousand rupees will be provided for strengthening libraries in schools.
- The scheme will provide holistic education for holistic development.

INSV TARINI TEAM CONFERRED NARI SHAKTI PURASKAR 2017

- The Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Maneka Gandhi presented the prestigious Nari Shakti Puraskar 2017 to the members of the INSV Tarini team in New Delhi.
- INSV Tarini team is a six-member all-women team which recently circumnavigated the world.
- It was the first ever circumnavigation of the globe by an all-women Indian crew.
- The crew comprised the following members-
 - Lt Commander Vartika Joshi
 - Lt Commander Pratibha Jamwal
 - Lt Commander Swathi Patarpalli
 - Lt Aishwarya Bodapatti
 - Lt SH Vijaya Devi
 - Lt Payal Gupta
- Nari Shakti Puraskar was presented to acknowledge the team for their exemplary courage and team spirit.
- The Nari Shakti Puraskars were conferred to the recipients by President Ram Nath Kovind on March 8, 2018, on the occasion of International Women's Day.
- The award could not be presented to the INSV Tarini team, as they were sailing then.
- The award basically aims to demonstrate the importance of Nari Shakti or women power on a global platform

CABINET APPROVES USOF SCHEME FOR MEGHALAYA

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved Implementation of a Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for the North Eastern Region (NER) in Meghalaya.
- The development plan would be funded by the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).
- The total estimated cost of the project is Rs. 3911 crore out of which Rs. 8120.81 crore has already been approved by the Cabinet in 2014.
- It aims to improve the telecom network in the area so as to improve the mobile connectivity in Meghalaya.
- The project has provision of 2G and 4G mobile coverage in identified uncovered areas of Meghalaya and seamless mobile coverage along the National Highways there.
- It would help in providing the people of Meghalaya access to public mobile network.
- The innovative skill of uncovered areas will increase through broadband and internet access.
- The citizens can benefit from ICT to promote socio-economic development.

SURYA KIRAN –XIII : JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE BETWEEN INDIA & NEPAL TO BE CONDUCTED AT PITHORAGARH

- The joint military exercise between India and Nepal will be conducted at Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand from 30th May to 12th June 2018.
- The joint military exercise is name SURYA KIRAN –XIII.
- It is the thirteenth edition of the exercise being conducted.
- This announcement was made by the Indian Army chief Bipin Rawat during his visit Nepal.
- The exercise aims to further enhance and strengthen level of defence cooperation between the two neighbouring nations.
- Exercise SURYA KIRAN is a biannual event which is conducted alternatively in Nepal and India.
- The exercise will comprise of nearly 300 soldiers from both Indian and Nepal Army.
- They would be sharing their experiences gained during conduct of various counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations in the past.
- The military exercise will include training on jungle warfare, anti-terrorism combat as well as disaster response activities.
- Last year, the 12th edition of Surya Kiran Military exercise was held in Kathmandu.

UNION CABINET APPROVES ORDINANCE TO AMEND IBC (INSOLVENCY AND BANKRUPTCY CODE).

- The Union Cabinet has approved an ordinance to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
- Once the ordinance gets the President's approval and the proposed changes will be incorporated in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.
- The amendment will pave way for home buyers to be treated at par with banks and institutional creditors.
- It would provide a right to the homebuyers to initiate a resolution process against the bankrupt real estate companies and get their money back.
- The changes were made to ensure that the wilful defaulters and those whose accounts had been classified as non-performing assets for more than a year, were barred from bidding for stressed assets.
- The amendment was made based on the suggestions of a 14-member committee appointed by the government

- The Insolvency Law Committee had recommended to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs last month, that home buyers should be treated as financial creditors, which will allow them to equitably participate in an insolvency resolution process.
- The Cabinet panel has also suggested relaxations for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) under the IBC.

MISSION INNOVATION (MI) MINISTERIAL HELD AT MALMO, SWEDEN

- The third edition of the Mission Innovation Ministerial Meet was held in Malmo, Sweden.
- Ministers and delegates from around 23 countries participated in the meeting.
- The Indian delegation was led by the Union Minister for Science, Technology and Earth Sciences, Dr Harsh Vardhan.
- The Minister and other delegates participated in several discussions with business leaders, clean energy innovators and policy makers to discuss plans, progress, country highlights etc.
- Mission innovation countries launched Mission Innovation Champions Programme to felicitate clean energy innovators.
- At the Solutions Summit, the MI 2020 Solutions booklet was launched.
- It showcased over fifty cutting-edge breakthroughs emerging from MI members investments ranging from blockchain technologies to the world's first commercial passenger electric boat.
- A World Economic Forum White paper on public-private cooperation was also released.
- A workshop on Smart Grid was inaugurated by Dr Harsh Vardhan at Copenhagen.
- He also chaired public-private round table on Strategies on Decarbonisation through innovations in Smart Grids.
- India announced its plan of hosting MI clean energy material workshop in November 2018.

IMD COMPETITIVENESS RANKINGS – INDIA AT 44TH RANK

- As per the annual rankings compiled by International Institute for Management Development (IMD), India ranks 44th.
- The list was topped by the US which became the most competitive economy globally driven by its strength in economic performance and infrastructure.
- It was followed by Hong Kong and Singapore in the second and third place, respectively.
- India has moved up to 44th position worldwide, up one rank from last year.
- It is ranked the 12th most competitive economy out of the 14 Asian countries on the list.
- China was ranked 13th, It continued with its steady rise in rankings over the past five years.
- This year total 63 countries were ranked out of which Saudi Arabia and Cyprus were the new additions.
- The top 10 countries as per IMD competitiveness rankings are-
 - US
 - HongKong
 - Singapore
 - Netherlands
 - Switzerland
 - Denmark
 - UAE
 - Norway
 - Sweden
 - Canada

- The IMD World Competitiveness Center is a research group at IMD business school in Switzerland.
- It has been publishing the competitiveness rankings every year since 1989.

INDO-DUTCH GANGA FORUM INAUGURATED BY THE PM OF NETHERLANDS

- The Prime Minister of Netherlands Mark Rutte inaugurated the Indo-Dutch Ganga Forum in New Delhi.
- Last year in June, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India and the Ministry of Infrastructure & Environment of the Netherlands.
- This forum was inaugurated in lines of that MoU.
- Mark Rutte appreciated efforts being made under the Namami Gange programme launched by the Modi Government.
- He also advocated waste-to-wealth approach to encourage sustainability of projects.
- He further mentioned that the local governments, the financial sector and the private sector, as well as communities, will need to join hands with the Indian and the Netherlands governments.
- The inauguration of the Indo-Dutch Ganga Forum was followed by a session during which issues like “Innovative Financing Models for Indo-Dutch PPP Projects” were discussed.
- The session included a detailed discussion on Hybrid Annuity based PPP mode.

UNICEF LAUNCHES DATA VISUALIZATION APP ON EDUCATION SCENARIO IN INDIA

- The UNICEF (United Nations Children’s Emergency Fund) has launched a Data Visualization App.
- The app is launched in collaboration with the following-
 - National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT)
 - National Institute of Education Planning and Administration (NIEPA)
- The app provides a user-friendly visual representation of complex analytics of the education scenario in the country.
- It uses the UDISE (Unified District Information System for Education), NAS (National Assessment survey), and demographic data.
- It can be used as a visual tool by policymakers, academia, and researchers to monitor programs in the field of education.
- During the launch of the app, Anil Swarup, Secretary, HRD Ministry, emphasized on the need for digitization in education.
- UNICEF India organized a Shiksha Mela Education Open Day in partnership with HRD Ministry.
- It was organized with an aim to demonstrate case stories showcasing holistic and equitable quality education achieved through convergent programming across 17 states.

15TH FINANCE COMMISSION CONSTITUTES HIGH LEVEL GROUP

- The Fifteenth Finance Commission has constituted a High-Level Group.
- It consists of various eminent experts from across the country in Health Sector.
- This High-Level Group was constituted to examine the strengths and weaknesses for enabling balanced expansion of Health Sector.

- The Committee will be convened by the Director of All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Dr. Randeep Guleria.
- It would provide valuable advice, guidance and support to the Finance commission to analyze the current health regulatory framework.
- It will suggest ways and means to optimize the use of existing financial resources.
- It would incentivize state governments' effort on the fulfilment of well-defined health parameters in India.
- It aims to examine the strength and weaknesses of the health sector so as to enable a balanced yet faster expansion of the health sector, keeping in view India's demographic profile.

INDIA BIODIVERSITY AWARD 2018 – AWARDED TO SINGCHUN BUGUN VILLAGE COMMUNITY RESERVE

- The Singchung Bugun Village Community Reserve Management Committee (SBVCR) of Arunachal Pradesh was awarded the India Biodiversity Award, 2018.
- It was awarded on the occasion of the International Day for Biological Diversity, at Professor Jayashankar Telangana State Agricultural University in Hyderabad.
- The SBVCR is an NGO which was awarded the "Conservation of wildlife species" category.
- The SBVCR not only works towards protecting the environment but also provides jobs to the local youth, by employing them.
- **The award is joint initiative of the following-**
 - Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC),
 - National Biodiversity Authority (NBA)
 - United Nations Development programme (UNDP)
- The Government of India had initiated the India Biodiversity Awards in 2012, in partnership with UNDP India.
- The basic idea behind these awards was to recognize and honour outstanding models of biodiversity conservation, sustainable use and governance at the grassroots level.

INDIAN NAVY CONDUCTS 'PRASTHAN' EXERCISE

- The Eastern Naval Command conducted a 2-day offshore security exercise 'Prasthan'.
- The exercise was conducted in the KG Basin and Ravva area located in the Krishna Godavari Basin.
- The exercise was conducted on the MHN platform of ONGC.
- This exercise is conducted by the Headquarters Western Naval Command, in every six months.
- It aims to integrate maritime stakeholders, including the Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, ONGC, Port Trust, Customs, State Fisheries department and Marine Police, towards refining standard operating procedures for response to various contingencies that could occur in the ODAs (Offshore Development Area).
- The basic objective is to evaluate surveillance capabilities of offshore rigs against unaltered intruders.
- It also prepares all agencies in handling a crisis developing in the offshore development area.

ANUBRATA BISWAS APPOINTED AS THE NEW MD AND CEO OF AIRTEL PAYMENTS BANK

- The Airtel Payments Bank has appointed former ICICI Bank senior executive Anubrata Biswas as its Managing Director and CEO.

- Prior to joining Airtel Payments Bank, Anubrata was Joint General Manager and Retail Business Head - South India for ICICI Bank.
- He would succeed the former CEO Shashi Arora.
- Airtel Payments Bank's former CEO Shashi Arora had quit the company in December 2017 following the e-KYC controversy.
- Shashi Arora was the first MD and CEO of Airtel Payments Bank.
- Bharti Airtel and Airtel Payments Bank were barred by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) from conducting Aadhaar-based verification of customers using the e-KYC process.
- Airtel Payments Bank was the first payments bank to start operations in India.

5TH INDIA-CLMV BUSINESS CONCLAVE HELD IN CAMBODIA

- The 5th India-CLMV Business Conclave was held at Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- CLMV is an acronym for Cambodia, Lao PDR, Myanmar and Vietnam.
- The conclave was jointly organized by Ministry of Commerce & Industry along with Ministry of Commerce of Cambodia.
- The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is institutional partner of the event.
- Around 400 delegates from India, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam and Laos participated in the conclave.
- The inaugural session was followed by plenary and country sessions which focussed on sectors such as SME, manufacturing, agriculture, plantation, fisheries and related industries, healthcare, education, information technology and skill development.
- It provided an opportunity for developing better understanding of CLMV economies.
- During the conclave, the Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu emphasized the need for strengthening the business and trade relations between India and CLMV.
- India proposed setting up of India-Cambodia Chamber of commerce with institutional partnership between CII and Cambodian Chamber of Commerce.

PAYTM LAUNCHES INITIATIVE 'ASHAKIRAN' TO EDUCATE WOMEN

- Paytm Payments Bank has launched an initiative 'AshaKiran' to empower women in India's smaller towns and cities.
- They would be trained for financial services and creating new employment opportunities.
- This initiative will enable these women to act as a catalyst in the nationwide roll-out of Paytm's bank offerings.
- With this program, the Paytm Payments Bank aims to educate these women about the financial services and create new employment opportunities across small towns and cities in India's banking system.
- It will offer skill development opportunities to rural women by training and certifying them to act as banking correspondents.
- The bank will continue partnering with other government bodies and other such organizations to reach out to more women across India.
- The Paytm Payments Bank plans to empower over one million women within the first year of operations through entrepreneurial opportunities.

ISC STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD IN NEW DELHI

- 13th meeting of the Standing Committee of the Inter-State Council (ISC) was held in New Delhi.
- The meeting was headed by the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh.

- The meeting of the Standing Committee focuses on the volumes 6th and 7th of the Punchhi Commission's report.
- Discussions were held on all the 273 recommendations of the Punchhi Commission.
- All the recommendations that are finalized in the meeting will be placed before the Inter State Council for its decision.
- **The recommendations mentioned in the volume 6th of the Punchhi Commission report are related to-**
 - Environment
 - Natural Resources
 - Infrastructure.
- **The recommendations mentioned in the volume 7th of the Punchhi Commission report are related to-**
 - Socio-economic development
 - Public Policy
 - Good Governance
- The Inter State Council is a non permanent constitutional body setup by a presidential order on recommendation of Sarkaria Commission
- It aims to discuss or investigate policies, subjects of common interest, and disputes, among states.

RASHTRIYA SANSKRITI MAHOTSAV 2018 ORGANIZED IN UTTARAKHAND

- The Ministry of Culture organized the 9th edition of the Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav in Tehri, Uttarakhand from 25th May to 27th May, 2018.
- The Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav 2018 was organized under the 'Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat' initiative.
- The Mahotsav was inaugurated by the Minister of State for Culture (I/C) and Environment, Forest & Climate Chang, Dr. Mahesh Sharma in the presence of Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Trivendra Singh Rawat.
- It was a 3 days water sports and cultural event.
- The North Zone Cultural Centre (NZCC) is the nodal agency responsible to carry out the execution of the entire event.
- This year the partner state for the festival of Utarakhand is Karnataka.
- The Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav was conceived by the Union Ministry of Culture in 2015.
- The Ministry decided to organize the Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav in order to showcase the rich cultural heritage of India.
- As of now 8 Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav has already been organized at various places in India which include-
 - Delhi – 2
 - Karnataka – 2
 - Varanasi – 1
 - Gujarat – 1
 - Madhya Pradesh – 1
 - NE states -1

DRDO TO DELIVER RUSTOM-2 DRONE SYSTEM BY 2020

- The Rustom-2 is an UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) system, indigenously developed by the DRDO.
- The initial test of the UAV recently got conducted at a test facility based in Chitradurga in Karnataka. Mr. S Christopher, the DRDO Chairman has declared in Pune that currently they are perfecting various systems to be mounted on the UAV and additionally, attempts will be made to enhance the altitude of the drone. With the

current pace of development, it's expected that by 2020, the drone system should be ready to deliver for the service of the nation.

KEY FACTS

- The UAV system will cater to all three wings of the Indian Armed Forces. The system is primarily developed to cater to ISR (Intelligence, surveillance & reconnaissance) needs of the armed forces. The drone will be able to operate at an altitude of 22,000 feet & it's its flight time is about 20 hours at a stretch, which makes it eligible to be called as long endurance UAV.

'REUSE OF TREATED WASTE WATER' POLICY LAUNCHED IN GUJARAT

- With an objective to reuse 70% of the treated waste water, the government of Gujarat has approved the "Reuse of Treated Water Policy". The policy is expected to treat 100% of the treated wastewater by 2030.

LAUNCHED BY

- Launched by Chief Minister of Gujarat Vijay Rupani and Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel, the action plan will reduce state's dependence on freshwater sources like the Narmada river.

OBJECTIVE

- As stated above, the policy is launched by an objective to diminish state's independence on freshwater sources. Also, it will help in resuing almost 100% of treated wastewater by 2030. Under this policy of treated wastewater will be reused and sewage treatment plants (STP) will be set up in all major towns and cities of Gujarat. The policy will try to fulfil 50 per cent requirement of water from retreated water in collaboration with the state's industrial units.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Using treated water in industrial units, thermal power plants, gardening and in the construction sector
- Doubling the existing water treatment capacity to around 5,000 MLD in the next two years
- Stressing the use of treated wastewater in order to conserve other ground and freshwater sources
- Making it mandatory for thermal power plants located within a radius of 50 kilometres of an STP to use treated water

DEHRADUN TO ORGANISE 4TH YOGA DAY CELEBRATIONS

- Dehradun has got the privilege to organise the 4th edition of International Yoga Day celebration to be held on 21st June 2018. The event will highlight the Mass Yoga Demonstration with the presence of PM Modi.

HISTORY OF INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY

- In 2001, a proposal for “World Yoga Day” was observed by Portuguese Yoga Confederation and the Yoga Samkhya Institute. As a result of the proposal, the first World Yoga Day was celebrated on 21st June 2002. During a conference, titled ‘Yoga: A Science for World Peace’ which was held in Bengaluru on 4th and 5th December 2011 yoga guru from all parts of the world endorsing the idea for an International Day for Yoga

FIRST INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY

- International Day of Yoga is celebrated annually on 21 June since its inception in 2015. An international day for yoga was declared unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). The Ministry of AYUSH made the necessary arrangements in India. 35,985 people, including Narendra Modi and a large number of dignitaries from 84 nations, performed 21 yoga asanas (postures) for 35 minutes at Rajpath in New Delhi. The day devoted to yoga was observed by millions across the world. NCC cadets entered the Limca Book of Records for the "largest yoga performance simultaneously by a single uniformed youth organisation" by performing at multiple venues.

PANKAJ SARAN APPOINTED AS DEPUTY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

- Pankaj Saran's appointment has been appointed as the deputy of National Security Advisor for a period of two years. Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved his appointment replacing Rajinder Khanna.

ABOUT SARAN

- Pankaj is a 1982-Batch Indian Foreign Service officer who is presently serving as India's ambassador to Russia since 2015. He had once served as country's High Commissioner to Bangladesh and twice in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) as Deputy Secretary/ Director. He will serve Ajit Doval.

WHO IS A NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR?

- The National Security Adviser is the chief executive of the National Security Council (NSC), and the primary adviser to the Prime Minister of India on national and international security.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Advising the Prime Minister on all matters relating to internal and external threats to the country, and oversees strategic issues.
- Serving as the Prime Minister's Special Interlocutor on border issues
- Receiving all intelligence reports and co-ordinates them to present before the Prime Minister.

SCO –AFGHANISTAN CONTACT GROUP MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

- The second edition of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation(SCO)-Afghanistan Group Meeting was organised in China's Beijing in which India's delegation was led by Gitesh Sharma, Additional Secretary (Multilateral Diplomacy).

- The meeting followed the expansion of SCO by adding India as its full-time member in 2017.

THE AGENDA

- The meeting focused on three main agendas namely;
- Current situation of Afghanistan and its neighbouring regions
- Reconciliation process in Afghanistan
- Role of SCO and measures for cooperation between SCO and Afghanistan

INDIA'S ROLE

- In the meeting, India promised to extend support for Afghanistan to combat terrorism and extremism imposed from beyond its borders. Also, India pledged to show readiness in work closely with the SCO Member States in efforts to bring peace, prosperity and stability in Afghanistan.

WHAT IS SCO?

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic, and security organisation that came into existence on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China.
- It was formed by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter was signed in June 2002 and entered into force on 19 September 2003. India and Pakistan joined SCO as full members on 9 June 2017 at a summit in Astana, Kazakhstan.

WORLD NO TOBACCO DAY- 31 MAY 2018

- World Tobacco Day is annually observed on May 31 with an aim to draw people's attention towards the hazardous effects that come with the consumption of Tobacco.

BACKGROUND

- World No Tobacco Day was started by World Health Organization (WHO) in 1987 to spread awareness about the dangers of tobacco consumption. WHO has joined hands with World Heart Federation to highlight the connection between tobacco and cardiovascular diseases (CVD) that are the world's leading causes of death, responsible for approximately 17.9 million deaths annually.

"TOBACCO AND HEART DISEASE"

- Considering the threat to cardiovascular system from Tobacco, this year's theme revolves around "Tobacco and Heart Disease" The campaign will increase awareness on the:
- link between tobacco and heart and other cardiovascular diseases (CVD), including stroke, which combined are the world's leading causes of death;
- feasible actions and measures that key audiences, including governments and the public, can take to reduce the risks to heart health posed by tobacco.