



CURRENT AFFAIRS (JUNE - 2017) :

National

- ⇒ The Minister of Law & Justice and Electronics & IT Ravi Shankar Prasad launched three key legal aid and empowerment initiatives of the Department of Justice. They are –
 - Pro Bono Legal Service – it is a web-based platform through which interested lawyers can register themselves to volunteer pro bono services for the underprivileged litigants who are unable to afford it. (pro bono means undertaking legal work without charge).
 - Tele Law Service – It is aimed at facilitating delivery of legal advice through an expert panel of lawyers, stationed at the State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA). The project would connect lawyers with clients through video conferencing.
 - Engagement of Nyaya Mitra – At present more than 2.4 crore cases are pending in the district and lower judiciary, of which nearly 10% are more than 10 years' old. A retired judicial or executive officer, with legal experience will be designated as the Nyaya Mitra. His responsibility will be to assist the litigants who are suffering due to delay in investigations or trial.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina recently visited India and was received by the PM Narendra Modi. The two countries inked two dozen pacts including starting Kolkata-Khulna-Dhaka bus service and Kolkata-Khulna train service. However, much-delayed pact on Teesta water sharing remained unresolved. PM Modi announced a new line of concessional credit of \$ 4.5 billion for the implementation of projects in Bangladesh.
- ⇒ China unilaterally renamed six places in Arunachal Pradesh in its official map, in retaliation against the nine-day high-profile visit of the Dalai Lama in the State. Renaming the places is a step to reaffirm China's territorial sovereignty in South Tibet.
- ⇒ Nepal's President Bidhya Devi Bhandari came to India in her first state visits and met India's President, Vice-President and Prime Minister. Both the sides assessed the implementation of ongoing cross border connectivity projects including the development of tarai roads, cross border railway lines, integrated border check posts and cross border pipeline for carrying petroleum products.
- ⇒ India and Nepal have renewed the supply agreement between Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) and Nepal Oil Corporation (NOC) for another five years. Both countries at present are working on the construction of Motihari-Amlekhgunj petroleum product pipeline.
- ⇒ The British Parliament passed a motion condemning Islamabad's announcement which declares Gilgit-Baltistan as its fifth frontier. It also said that Gilgit-Baltistan is a legal and constitutional part of Jammu and Kashmir of India. It condemned the illegal construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which further aggravated and interfered with the disputed territory.

- ⇒ India has become the associate member of International Energy Agency (Hq. – Paris). India will now be involved in the key committees and dialogues of the IEA and will also be able to represent the interest of the emerging markets of the world. India is the world's third largest oil consumer and after India's entry, IEA now formally covers 70% of the world's energy consumption.
- ⇒ Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull recently visited India and had discussions with his Indian counterpart Narendra Modi. Both countries signed six agreements on terrorism, civil aviation security, sports, healthcare & medicine, climate & wildlife and earth observation.
- ⇒ The Agriculture Ministry has signed a MoU with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in order to keep a record of agriculture assets in the country through online recording and monitoring. The ISRO has assigned this task to the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad. The NRSC will geo-tag (add latitude, longitude and location specific information) all the assets using its 'Bhuvan' platform. Bhuvan is the geo-platform of the country's space agency ISRO.
- ⇒ India is going to sign a \$ 2 billion medium range surface-to-air missile (MRSAM) with Israel. It is the single largest contract in Israel's defence industry history. Israel currently is the fourth largest arms supplier to India after US, Russia and France.

International

- ⇒ Iceland is the first country to introduce a Bill to mandate equal pay for women. Iceland's Parliament presented a Bill that would require public and private businesses to prove that they offer equal pay to employees irrespective of their sex, race, national origin, religion, disability, age etc.
- ⇒ Pakistan has handed over the operations and development of the Gwadar Port to a Chinese company China Overseas Port Holding Company (COPHC) for a period of 40 years. The route through Gwadar offers China its shortest path to the oil-rich Middle East, Africa and most of the Western hemisphere. It features the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) plan and is considered to be a link between the Chinese 'One Belt, One Road' initiative and the Maritime Silk Road project.
- ⇒ The first rail freight service from the UK to China departed on a 7,500 mile journey from Essex on April 10 and reached Yiwu in Zhejiang province on April 27, 2017. The train passed through seven countries – France, Belgium, Germany, Poland, Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan. The service is a part of China's One Belt One Road (OBOR) programme.
 - OBOR is the brainchild of the Chinese President Xi Jinping. China invited India also to join the project, but India refused to do so due to its sovereignty concerns over the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor which passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).



⇒ Nepal and China organised their first ever joint military exercise 'Sagarmatha Friendship', 2017 with a special focus on combating terror. This move is a cause of concern for India because Nepal is mostly dependent on India for its imports.

Economy

⇒ Under the money circulation and credit control policy of the RBI, the existing rates (as on 30.05.2017) are :

- * Repo Rate (*Repo Rate is the rate at which commercial banks borrow money from the central bank, i.e., RBI*) : 6.25%.
- * Reverse Repo Rate (*Reverse Repo Rate is the rate at which the commercial banks deposit their surplus money to the central bank*) : 6%
- * Statutory Liquidity Ratio (*SLR is the percentage of deposits that commercial banks have to maintain with themselves*) : 20.5%
- * CRR (*Cash Reserve Ratio is the proportion of deposits which the banks have to keep with the central bank*) : 4%
- * Bank Rate (*Bank rate is the rate at which central bank, i.e. RBI, rediscounts the bills of exchange of commercial banks*) : 6.5%
- * MSF (*Marginal Standing Facility is the loan banks are permitted to avail themselves from the RBI on overnight basis, using its SLR securities*) : 6.5%.
- * Base Rate (*Base Rate reflects the actual cost of banks that has to be covered through lending. Banks cannot lend money below the Base Rate, which varies from bank to bank*) : 9.1% - 9.6%.
- * Term Deposit (Fixed Deposit) Rate (more than 1 year) : 6.25% - 6.90%.
- * MCLR: 7.75% - 8.1%.

(MCLR, the Marginal Cost of Fund-based Lending Rate, is the new benchmark lending rate at which banks will now lend to new borrowers. Till 31 March 2016, banks used the Base rate as the benchmark lending rate. MCLR is built on four components – Marginal cost of funds, Negative carry on account of CRR, Operating costs and Tenor premium).

⇒ The Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Committee, headed by former Revenue Secretary N K Singh to review the Centre's fiscal roadmap, has submitted its report. Its main recommendations are –

- A gradual reduction of the fiscal deficit to 2.5% of the GDP and revenue deficit to 0.8% by 2022-23.
- The existing FRBM Act, 2003 should be replaced with a new law and also set up a Fiscal Council.
- The Council should comprise a chairperson and two members and they should not be in the current service of the government. Their posts should have a non-renewable term of 4 years.

⇒ The World Bank has approved a \$ 375 million loan to India's first waterway project. The National Waterway (NW) 1 Project is to create a water transport fairway on a 1,300 km stretch of the Ganga river between Varanasi and Haldia.

⇒ The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) ordered Reliance Jio to withdraw its 'Summer Surprise Offer' immediately. Under this offer, all Jio Prime members who made their first recharge payment of ₹ 303 or higher plans got three months' complimentary services in addition to the benefits of their purchased plan.

⇒ The RBI has come up with a notification titled 'Revised Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework for banks' with effect from April 1, 2017. The revised framework would apply to all banks operating in India including small and foreign banks. The revised PCA was required for State-run banks as the bad loans including those already restructured reached ₹ 6.3 lakh crore as of September, 2016 (almost \$ 100 billion) as compared to \$ 5.5 lakh crore in June, 2016. Capital, Asset Quality and Profitability would be the basis on which banks would be monitored.

⇒ The Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on the occasion of the 126th birth anniversary of Bhim Rao Ambedkar released BHIM Aadhar (Bharat Interface for Money) Pay app in Nagpur. The biometric based payment system will enable digital payments using biometric data. One would be able to make digital payments without having a mobile phone, internet connection, debit or credit card.

⇒ Over 4 crore members of the retirement fund body Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) will soon be able to settle their claims like EPF withdrawal through the mobile app UMANG (Unified Mobile App for New-edge Governance). The Finance Ministry has permitted the Labour Ministry to go ahead with 8.65% rate of interest to EPF members.

⇒ India has become the third largest aviation market in terms of domestic passenger traffic. India's domestic air passenger traffic stood at 100 million in 2016 and was behind the US (719 million) and China (436 million).

⇒ State Bank of India surpassed ONGC to become the most valued Public Sector Undertaking (PSU) in terms of market capitalisation.

⇒ The RBI has proposed to float Wholesale and Long Term Finance (WLTF) banks that would fund long-term high-value projects.

⇒ The Banks Board Bureau (BBB), chaired by Vinod Rai, has evolved a Governance, Reward and Accountability Framework (GRAF) – an elaborative roadmap for Public Sector Banks to make them more competitive and ensure that they have the ability to compete successfully against Private Sector Banks, small finance and payments banks, foreign banks and non-banking finance companies.

⇒ The Union I & B Minister Venkaiah Naidu launched the 'Rastriya Vayoshri Yojana', a scheme for providing physical aids and assisted-living devices to senior citizens belonging to BPL category. The devices that will be provided to eligible elderly beneficiary senior citizens include walking sticks, elbow crutches, hearing aids, wheelchair, spectacles, etc.



- ⇒ Direct tax collection (viz., income tax, property tax, wealth tax, corporation tax, etc.) in 2016-17 stood at ₹ 8.47 lakh crore, 14.2% more than that in 2015-16. Indirect tax collection (central exercise, customs, service tax, sales tax, VAT, etc.) stood at ₹ 8.63 lakh crore, 22% more than that in 2015-16. Thus the total tax revenue of the government in 2016-17 was (₹ 8.47 + ₹ 8.63) = ₹ 17.10 lakh crore. The government's budgeted estimated of tax collection was ₹ 16.25 lakh crore and the revised estimate was ₹ 16.97 lakh crore. This increase may be because of better tax compliance in the wake of government's crackdown on black money.
- ⇒ The International North-South Transportation Corridor (INSTC) may soon become a reality as India has decided to join international customs convention TIR. INSTC is a land-and-sea based 7,200 km long corridor comprising rail, road and water routes in a bid to boost trade between Russia, Iran, Central Asia, India and Europe. It will substantially reduce transportation time by 40% and cost by 30%. INSTC is one of the corridors that India is working on as part of connectivity initiatives parallel to China's One Belt One Road strategy.
- ⇒ A tripartite agreement between the Ministry of Human Resources Development (MHRD), Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Panchayati Raj has been signed to formulate and implement the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (UBA). The MHRD has advised all the higher education institutes which are funded by the Central/State governments to adopt clusters of backward Gram Panchayats and villages in their vicinity and apply their knowledge in suggesting innovative solutions to the issues faced in the day-to-day lives of the households. IIT Delhi has been designated as the coordinating Institute.
- ⇒ India's leading state-run oil marketing companies – IOCL, BPCL and HPCL have planned to revise retail fuel prices of diesel and petrol everyday from May 1, 2017. Initially five cities have been chosen for this – Puducherry and Vishakhapatnam in the Southern India, Udaipur in the West, Jamshedpur in the East and Chandigarh in the North. Later it may be implemented nationwide. At present, the oil prices are reviewed every fortnight.
- ⇒ Odisha has become the first State in the country to carry financial inclusion and extend banking services to unbanked areas through Self Help Groups (SHGs). Odisha government, in this regard, has signed an agreement with SBI to provide banking facilities to people in unbanked areas. The financial inclusion is not just opening of bank-accounts, but meeting credit needs of the people for enhancing their livelihood and income.
- ⇒ The Union Power Minister Piyush Goyal launched the 'Urja Mitra' mobile application that allows consumers across India to exchange real-time information with electricity distribution companies (discoms) on power supply.
- ⇒ The Union government has approved the construction of 1 crore houses in the first phase (from 2016-17 to 2018-19) under the Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana – Grameen (PMAY-G).
- ⇒ Japan has implemented a law that categorises Bitcoin as a legal payment option within the country. With this, Bitcoin has finally gained the recognition of a mainstream currency along the lines of other currencies. Bitcoin is a form of digital currency, created and held electronically. Bitcoin was invented by an unknown programmer or a group of programmers under the name Satoshi Nakamoto. It was released as open-source software in 2009.
- ⇒ Quoting of Aadhar has been made mandatory for filing income tax returns. Aadhar will also be compulsory for making an application for the allotment of Permanent Account Number (PAN).
- ⇒ The Central GST (CGST) Act provides that if the offences relating to taxable goods and/or services where the amount of tax evaded exceeds ₹ 5 crore, shall be cognizable and non-bailable.
- ⇒ India signed its first loan agreement with the New Development Bank(NDB), the bank constituted by BRICS members, for \$ 350 million to be used in the development and upgradation of district roads in Madhya Pradesh.
- ⇒ Karnataka Bank and SBI Card have launched co-branded credit cards for the customers of Karnataka Bank.
- ⇒ SBI Card has introduced 'Unnati' Card in an effort to bring new users into the fold of cashless transactions. All SBI customers, including Jan Dhan account holders who maintain a balance of at least ₹ 25,000 in his/her savings account, are eligible for SBI Unnati Credit Card. There would be no annual fees for the initial four years.
- ⇒ Nokia, the mobile giant of Finland, has signed a MoU with both Airtel India and BSNL to introduce 5G services in India. According to the International Telecommunications Union standards, any 5G offering should have a peak download speed of 20 Gbps or more. The 5G service is likely to be introduced in 2020. Not only people be connected to each other but so will machines, automobiles, infrastructure, public safety and more.
- ⇒ The Indian Railways Organisation for Alternative Fuel and Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd. (BHEL) have signed an agreement for constructing a 2MW roof-top power plant at Diesel Loco Modernisation Works in Patiala.
- ⇒ Kotak Mahindra Bank announced the launch of '8-11' app which is a completely digital and paperless account opening system. The 8-11 app was named so by being inspired by the PM Narendra Modi's November 8 decision to demonetise the old ₹ 500 and ₹ 1000 notes.
- ⇒ According to the World Press Freedom Index, released by a Paris-based media rights group 'Reporters without Borders', India was ranked at 136th spot out of 180 countries. Last year India was at 133rd. Norway was placed at the top position followed by Sweden. North Korea was ranked at the last spot.



- ⇒ According to the Huawei Global Connectivity Index (GCI) 2017, India has been placed at 43rd position among 50 nations across the globe. The USA topped the list being the best digitally developed nation, followed by Singapore and Sweden.
- ⇒ According to the World Economic Forum's Global Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report 2017, India ranked 40th globally in travel and tourism competitiveness list. Among the 136 countries, Spain topped the list followed by France and Germany.
- ⇒ India has jumped to 8th rank among 25 countries in the 2017 A. T. Kearney Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Confidence Index. The index is an annual analysis of how political, economic and regulatory changes will likely affect FDI inflows into countries in the coming years. The US topped the list followed by Germany and China.
- ⇒ The Government of India kick-started its Regional Air Connectivity Scheme, also called UDAN (*Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik*). With this, the government aims to connect 45 unserved and underserved airports and make flying affordable. Main features –
 - The government awarded 128 regional routes to five airlines – Alliance Air (a subsidiary of Air India), Spice-Jet, Turbo Megha, Air Odisha and Air Deccan.
 - The government has proposed at least half the seats on every flight be available under a fare cap of ₹ 2,500 per seat per hour of flying.
- ⇒ As per the Ernst and Young Europe, Middle East, India and Africa (EMEIA) Fraud Survey, 2017 report, India ranks ninth among 41 countries in bribery and corrupt practices in businesses.

Sports

- ⇒ Younis Khan has become the first from Pakistan and 13th in the World to score 10,000 runs in Test cricket. Sunil Gavaskar was the first to touch the milestone in 1987.
- ⇒ Aizawl FC emerged the I-League Champion, becoming the first club from the north-east to win the championship. Mohun Bagan finished at the second position.
- ⇒ B. Sai Praneeth clinched his maiden Badminton Super Series crown when he defeated Kidambi Srikanth in a historic all-India final in Singapore to lift the Singapore Open Men's Singles Crown.
- ⇒ Rio Olympics silver medallist PV Sindhu clinched the Indian Open Badminton Super Series Women's Singles title, beating the top seed Olympics champion Carolina Marin of Spain.
- ⇒ Sixteen time world champion Pankaj Advani clinched his sixth Asian Billiards Crown, defeating his compatriot Sourav Kothari.

Awards

- ⇒ Eminent filmmaker Kasinadhuni Viswanath has been announced the winner of the 48th Dadasabab Phalke Award for his immense contribution to the Indian film world. The award, the highest recognition in Indian cinema, carries a golden lotus, a cash prize of ₹ 10 lakh and a shawl.

- ⇒ Eminent environmentalist and social activist Prafulla Samantra has been announced one of the six winners of the Goldman Environmental Prize for 2017. Being a lawyer, Prafulla opposed the Vedanta Company's proposed mining project in Niyamgiri hills in Odisha. By winning the legal battle he saved the forests and rights of an 8000-member indigenous Dongria-Kondh tribe.
- ⇒ The 64th National Film Awards for films of 2016 were announced. The 11-member jury was chaired by filmmaker Priyadashan. Some of the prominent awardees –
 - Best Film – Kasaav (Marathi)
 - Best Director – Rajeshy Mapuskar (Ventilator, Marathi)
 - Best Actor – Akshay Kumar (Rustam, Hindi)
 - Best Actress – Surabhi Lakshmi (Minnam-inungu, Malayalam)
 - Best Children's Film – Dhanak (Hindi)
 - Best Music Direction – Babu Padmanabha (Allama, Kannada).
 - Best Male Playback Singer – Sundara Iyer (Joker, Tamil)
 - Best Female Playback Singer – Iman Chakraborty (Praktan, Bengali)
 - Best Film on Social Issues – Pink
- ⇒ The 75th Master Dinanath Mangeshkar Award has been given to Aamir Khan for his great movie 'Dangal'. By receiving the award, Aamir Khan broke his own record of not being part of any award function. Some more awards were given, viz. –
 - Kapil Dev – For his outstanding contribution to Indian Sports.
 - Vyjayantimala Bali – For her achievement in Hindi Cinema.

Persons

- ⇒ For the first time all the four major High Courts in India viz. Bombay, Delhi, Madras and Kolkata are headed by women Chief Justices –
 - Bombay H.C. – Justice Manjula Chellur
 - Delhi H.C. – Justice G. Rohini
 - Madras H.C. – Justice Indira Banerjee
 - Calcutta H.C. – Justice Nishita Mhatre.However, among the 632 High Court judges in 24 High Courts, there are only 68 women judges. There is just one woman judge, R. Banumathi, among 28 judges in the Supreme Court.
- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi has become the world's most followed 'leader' on facebook's photosharing app Instagram. Mr. Modi has 6.8 million followers. Donald Trump of the USA and Pope Francis are at the second and third places respectively.
- ⇒ Achal Khare has been appointed Managing Director of National High Speed Rail Corporation.
- ⇒ Malala Yousafzai is the youngest and sixth person ever to get the honorary Canadian citizenship. Others were Nelson Mandela, Dalai Lama, Karim Aga Khan IV, Raoul Wallenberg and Aung San Suu Kyi. 19 year old Malala has also been declared the 'Ambassador of Peace' by the UN.



- ⇒ Ms. Vanaja N. Sarna has been appointed Chairperson, Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC). She replaced Najib Shah.
- ⇒ Rajiv Kumar Chander has been appointed Ambassador and Permanent Representative of India to the United Nations. He replaced Ajit Kumar.
- ⇒ Kulbhushan Jadhav, an Indian, has been awarded death sentence by a Pakistan Court for alleged involvement in espionage and sabotage activities in Karachi and Balochistan.
- ⇒ Tayyip Erdogan has been re-elected the President of Turkey.

Died

- ⇒ Kishori Amonkar, the renowned Hindustani Classical vocalist passed away.
- ⇒ Akhilesh Das Gupta, the Badminton Association of India (BAI) President passed away.
- ⇒ Vinod Khanna, the veteran actor and a BJP MP from Gurdaspur, Punjab passed away.

Miscellaneous

- ⇒ The Haryana government has decided to implement the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) by providing accidental insurance cover up to ₹ 2 lakh to all Haryana residents in the age group of 18-70 years.
- ⇒ Railway Minister Suresh Prabhu has flagged off a train with Vistadome coach between Visakhapatnam and Araku having features like glass roof, LED lights, rotating seats, GPS-based information system among others.
- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a special digital exhibition on Swachhagraha 'Bapu Ko Karyanjali' at National Archives in New Delhi, marking 100 years of Champaran Satyagraha. Champaran Satyagraha was a protest against the British law which forced many farmers to grow indigo on a portion of their land. Champaran is in Bihar.
- ⇒ Under the 'Aapki Beti, Hamari Beti' scheme, the Haryana government announced to provide a one-time grant of Rs. 21,000 to all those families whose third girl child was born after August 24, 2015.
- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 9.28 Km long 'Chenani Nashri tunnel', India's longest highway tunnel on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway.
- ⇒ The International Centre for Foot and Mouth Disease (ICFMD) has been established at Arugul near Bhubaneswar by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) is an infectious and sometimes fatal viral disease that affects cloven-hoofed animals like cattle, goat, sheep, deer, etc.
- ⇒ A postage stamp on Cub Scouts has been released to commemorate the Centenary Year of Cub Scouts in India and abroad. Cub Scouting is meant for children of age group between 8 and 11 years and it makes children involve in games, stories, play acting, handicrafts, cooking etc. as a fun.

- ⇒ The Lok Sabha passed the new Mental Healthcare Bill, 2016 which had already been passed by the Rajya Sabha last year. There are two major amendments in the Bill – (i) It separates an attempt to suicide from the Indian Penal Code, i.e., a person who attempts to suicide will not be considered as guilty but be presumed to be suffering from mental illness and (ii) Ban of electric shock therapy for treating children with mental illness. For adults, shock therapy can be given, after being given anaesthesia and muscle relaxants.
- ⇒ Morocco's King Mohammed VI launched the fourth and final stage of 'Noor Ouarzazate', the world's largest solar plant spanned over an area of 137 hectares (1.37 sq. km.).
- ⇒ The Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the web-portal and mobile application 'Bharat Ke Veer' on the occasion of Valour Day of CRPF on April 9, 2017. It is a brainchild of the Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar. The app and the website enables and allows anyone to make direct monetary donations to the families of martyred Indian soldiers of paramilitary forces.
- ⇒ Myanmar has become the 7th member of the South Asia Subregional Economic Cooperation (SASEC). The other six members are – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka.
- ⇒ Phoenix India Research has launched India's first bio-gas fuelled bus in Kolkata keeping a flat fare of just ₹ 1, irrespective of the distance from Garia to Ultadanga.
- ⇒ Kanha in Madhya Pradesh became the first tiger reserve in India to officially introduce a mascot named 'Bhoorsingh the Barasingha'. Barasingha (swamp deer) is the state animal of Madhya Pradesh and is on the verge of extinction.
- ⇒ An India-Mongolia military training exercise, christened as 'Nomadic Elephant-XII' was held at Vairengle in Mizoram.
- ⇒ According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI) annual report on defence spending, India was at the fifth place on the list of the world's highest spenders on defence in 2016. India's military expenditure in 2016 stood at \$ 55.9 billion. The list is topped by the USA, followed by China, Russia and Saudi Arabia.
- ⇒ The USA announced to stop funding the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), the international body's agency focused on family planning as well as maternal and child health in more than 150 countries. According to the US State Department, the UNPF focuses more on forced abortion – a concept opposed by liberals and conservatives alike.
- ⇒ London has become the first city in the world to announce an ultra-low emission zone to tackle air pollution. The ultra-low emission zone is an area within which all vehicles will need to meet emission standards or pay a daily charge to travel. London mayor Sadiq Khan announced that the new zone would be launched from April 8, 2019.



- ⇒ The Supreme Court banned the sale and registration of Bharat Stage III (BS-III) vehicles from April 1, 2017 as BS-IV emission norms has come into force across the country. The apex court dismissed the plea of automakers to allow them to dispose of the existing stocks of 8.2 lakh BS-III vehicles.
- ⇒ Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu unveiled a new mobile app 'C M Connect' in Vijayawada with an objective of reaching out to the people easily.
- ⇒ The Human Resources Development (HRD) Ministry of the government of India has published the rankings of the country's top colleges and universities –
 - Top Colleges –
 1. Miranda House, Delhi
 2. Loyola College, Chennai
 3. Shri Ram College of Commerce, Delhi
 - Top Universities –
 1. IISc, Bangaluru
 2. JNU, New Delhi
 3. BHU, Varanasi(Jadavpur University ranked fifth)
- Indian Institute of Technology, Madras was the top engineering school while Jamia Hamdard was judged the best pharmacy institute. IIM, Ahmedabad was adjudged the best management institute.
- ⇒ Bond Safari, an underwater adventure company, in collaboration with Hotel Udaya Samudra conducted an underwater conference at the Grove Beach of Kovalam, Kerala. CEOs of five IT and hospitality companies participated in the underwater conference to raise public awareness around the issues of marine life protection and global warming.
- ⇒ China has announced to establish the Xiongan New Area in the northern province of Hebei, 100 km South-West of Beijing. It will operate as a new growth pole for the country's economy and will be of the same national significance as the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone. It will cover about 100 sq. km. initially and will be expanded to 200 sq. km in the mid term and about 2,000 sq. km. in the long term in 1000 years.
- ⇒ The representatives of 16 opposition parties met top Election Commission officials to demand a return to the paper ballot system as opposed to the electronic voting machines (EVMs).

- ⇒ The Supreme Court recently ordered a total ban on the sale of liquors within 500 meters of national and State highways throughout the country, noting that drunk driving was one of the leading causes of road accidents in the country.
- ⇒ Indian School of Business (ISB), a private business school with campuses in Hyderabad and Mohali has been accredited by the EFMD Quality Improvement System (EQUIS) and re-accredited by the Association of Advancement of Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). EFMD (European Foundation for Management Development) is a global accreditation body for quality and impact assessment business schools, corporate universities and courses.

ISB thus joins the league of just about a 100 select business schools worldwide that have both AACSB and EQUIS accreditation. In India, other than ISB, IIM-Calcutta has the accreditation from both the bodies.
- ⇒ Hyderabad has become India's first city to have access to the 1 Gpbs-speed wired broadband connectivity, launched by ACT Fibernet. The high speed internet would mean the citizens are no longer dependent on cable TV or direct-to-home (DTH) service provider for viewing TV programmes in high-digital clarity.

Though India ranks second in the world in the number of internet users (462 million) next only to China (731 million), it does not figure in the top-ten list in terms of internet speed. In the top-ten list, South Korea ranks number one with an average internet speed of 29 Mbps. India has an average speed of 2.5 Mbps.
- ⇒ The Central government released a postal stamp on coffee.

Books & Authors :

- ⇒ The Undoing Project : A Friendship That Changed the World – Michael Lewis
- ⇒ Crooked Minds – Kiran Karnik
- ⇒ Zelaldinus : A Mosque – Irwin Allan Sealy
- ⇒ The Theft of India – Roy Moxham
