



CURRENT AFFAIRS (APRIL - 2018) :

National

- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently paid an official visit to some Gulf countries like Jordan, Palestine, United Arab Emirates and Oman. After a brief visit in Jordan, he visited Palestine and met the President Mohmoud Abbas. They held a meeting in the West Bank city of Ramallah. He is the first Indian PM to visit the occupied West Bank for talks with the Palestinian President. The two sides signed 6 agreements including the setting up of a super speciality hospital in Beit Sahur. Mr Modi then visited the United Arab Emirates. In Dubai, he addressed World Government Summit, in which India was the 'Guest Country'. Mr Modi launched the stone-laying ceremony for the first Hindu temple at Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE. Next he visited Muscat, the capital of Oman and met its Sultan Qaboos bin Said al Said. 8 agreements were signed including one pertaining to military cooperation. India gained access to the Duqm Port in Oman. The geo-strategic importance of Duqm is important for India as it sits atop the crucial waterways of the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean. As China takes over Gwadar Port in Pakistan, India's presence in Duqm is crucial as a security checkmate.
- ⇒ India and Pakistan have extended agreement of Thar Link Express, the second rail service between the two countries for three more years i.e., till 2021. The Thar Express links Jodhpur (India) and Karachi (Pakistan) via Munabao (Rajasthan) and Khokhrapar (Sindh province) border crossing. India and Pakistan currently have only two trans-border trains. They are – (i) Samjhauta Express which operates on Delhi-Lahore route via Attari-Wagaha border crossing. It carries passengers and freight both. (ii) Thar Express which links Jodhpur (India) and Karachi (Pakistan) via Munabao-Khokhrapar border crossing. It carries only passengers.
- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared the inaugural of the first edition of Khelo India School Games (KISG) open at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium in New Delhi. The first KISG was held under the Khelo India Programme to highlight India's young sporting talents and showcase India's sports potential. It was held across 16 disciplines in Under-17 age category. 199 gold medals, 199 silver medals and 275 bronze medals were awarded.
- ⇒ Iranian President Hassan Rouhani was on a three-day visit to India. Iran and India signed 9 pacts. India is all set to start operations on a part of the Chabahar Port, also known as Shahid Beheshti Port, by May-end.
- ⇒ The Fifth edition of South Asia Region Public Procurement Conference was held in New Delhi. It was hosted by Public Procurement Division (PPD) of Ministry of Finance and All India Management Association (AIMA). It was held under the auspices of South Asia Region Public Procurement Network

(SARPPN), which is sponsored and facilitated by the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Islamic Development Bank. Its objective was to enable heads of Public Procurement and other key stakeholders in South Asian countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan) to meet and learn from one another and from experts in the field of public procurement.

- ⇒ The Union Cabinet approved the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) for Secondment Programme between India and Australia. Under the Secondment Programme, one officer from Australian Treasury will be seconded to DEA, Ministry of Finance and one officer from Indian Economic Service (IES) will be seconded to Australian Treasury, Government of Australia, for a period of three months.
- ⇒ The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for ratification of Minamata Convention on Mercury and depositing instrument of ratification enabling India to become a part of the convention. The Minamata Convention on Mercury is a global treaty that aims to protect human health and the environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds. It derives its name after the Japanese city Minamata which had went through devastating incident of mercury poisoning.
- ⇒ The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved setting up of tribunal for adjudication of long-pending dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over Mahanadi river waters. The tribunal will be chaired by Justice AM Khanwilkar.
- ⇒ The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) recently organized Youth Exchange Programme 'Watan Ko Jano'. Under it, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh met the youth of Jammu and Kashmir in New Delhi. It aims to give exposure to youth and children of J&K about the cultural and socio-economic development taking place in other parts of the country.
- ⇒ Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India have ceremonially started the ambitious, multi-billion dollar TAPI gas pipeline project. The ceremony was attended by Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani and his Turkmenistan counterpart Gurbangu Berdymukhamedov, Pakistani Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi and India's Minister of State for external affairs M. J. Akbar. TAPI gas pipeline project is a proposed trans-country natural gas pipeline from Caspian Sea, Turkmenistan to India through Afghanistan and Pakistan.

International

- ⇒ Britain's fertility regulator Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) has allowed doctors to create the country's first 'three-parent' babies through mitochondrial donation therapy (MRT). The move is aimed at preventing passage of incurable genetic diseases from mothers to offsprings.



- ⇒ Venezuela and Libya were suspended from voting United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2018-19 session for not paying dues to 193-member world body. It was for the third time in three years that these countries have been suspended from voting for unpaid dues.
- ⇒ The Paris based global watchdog Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has placed Pakistan on a so called 'grey list' of nations that are not doing enough to combat terrorism financing. Its implication is that it could endanger Pakistan's handful of remaining banking links to the outside world. Moreover, foreign investment may also dry up.

Economy

- ⇒ Under the money circulation and credit control policy of the RBI, the existing rates (as on 25.03.2018) are :
 - * Repo Rate (*Repo Rate is the rate at which commercial banks borrow money from the central bank, i.e., RBI*) : 6%.
 - * Reverse Repo Rate (*Reverse Repo Rate is the rate at which the commercial banks deposit their surplus money to the central bank*) : 5.75%
 - * Statutory Liquidity Ratio (*SLR is the percentage of deposits that commercial banks have to maintain with themselves*) : 19.5%
 - * 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*) : 6.25%
 - * MSF (*Marginal Standing Facility is the loan banks are permitted to avail themselves from the RBI on overnight basis, using its SLR securities*) : 6.25%.
 - * 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*) : 8.65% - 9.45%.
 - * Term Deposit (Fixed Deposit) Rate (more than 1 year): 6.25% - 6.75%.
 - * Savings A/c.: 3.50% - 4.00%.
 - * MCLR: 7.80% - 7.95%.

(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 Union Government has inked \$250 Million Loan Agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) to Improve Rural Connectivity in 5 States viz., Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY). The loan proceeds will be used to finance the construction of 6,254 kilometres all weather rural roads in these 5 States under the PMGSY.

- ⇒ According to recent report published by World Steel Association (WSA), India has overtaken US to become the world's third largest steel producer in 2017. India's crude steel production has grown to 101.4 million tonnes (MT) in 2017. China has remained world leader by producing 831.7 MT in 2017, followed by Japan.
- ⇒ The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Arun Jaitley launched CriSidEx, India's first sentimental index for Micro and Small Enterprises (MSMEs) developed jointly by CRISIL and SIDBI.
- ⇒ The Ministry of Commerce & Industry has launched third version of the Government e-Marketplace (GeM 3.0). The earlier version GeM 2.0 was launched as a pilot project in August 2016. GeM 3.0 will offer standardised and enriched catalogue management, powerful search engine, real time price comparison, template based Bid and RA creation, demand aggregation, e-EMD, e-PBG, user rating advanced MIS and analytics and more. Government e-Marketplace (GeM) is an Online Market platform to facilitate procurement of goods and services by various Ministries and agencies of the Government. It has been envisaged as National Procurement Portal of India.
- ⇒ India, world's largest democracy was ranked 42nd among 165 independent states on annual 2017 Global Democracy Index (GDI) released by the UK-based company Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). India ranked 32nd in 2016. Moreover, India was classified as a flawed democracy in 2017 GDI. The index was topped by Norway and followed by Iceland and Sweden.
- ⇒ According to the UNICEF's rankings based on newborn mortality rate (NMR), India ranked the 12th worst (i.e., 41st from the top) among 52 low-middle income countries based on the number of children dying within the first month of their birth. For India, the figure is 25.4 per 1000 live births. Pakistan is found to be the worst with 45.6 deaths. Japan, with NMR of 0.9 has been ranked the world's safest country for a child to be born.
- ⇒ India has joined the Ashgabat Agreement which envisages facilitation of transit and transportation of goods between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf to significantly boost up trade and investment. All its four founding members have consented to India's accession. Ashgabat Agreement aims at establishment of International Transport and Transit Corridor between Iran, Oman, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It was signed in April 2011 and was named after Ashgabat, the capital of Turkmenistan. It establishes international transport and transit corridor between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf countries.



- ⇒ The State Bank of India wrote off bad loans worth ₹ 203 billion (₹ 20,300 crore) in 2016-17. All PSU banks had a collective write off of ₹ 817 billion for the financial year 2016-17.
- ⇒ Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) signed a project agreement with World Bank and for Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP), i.e., National Waterway-1 on Ganga River from Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) to Haldia (West Bengal). The project covers Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. It aims to develop fairway with three metre depth to enable commercial navigation of at least 1500 tonne vessels on the river Ganga.
- ⇒ The Union Government has announced Rs.1.4 lakh-crore Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahaabhiyan (KUSUM) scheme for promoting solar farming, i.e., decentralised solar power production of up to 28,250 MW to help farmers. KUSUM scheme will start with building 10,000 MW solar plants on barren lands and providing 1.75 million off-grid agricultural solar pumps.
- ⇒ A new Manchester-India partnership has been set up to further trade, investment, science and innovation ties between India and Britain.
- ⇒ As per an evaluation study of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) done by the Institute of Economic Growth of the University of Delhi, Tamil Nadu stands at the top for implementation outcomes of the NRHM and can be a benchmark for other States.
- ⇒ The SIDBI (Small Industries Development Bank of India) and ratings agency Crisil have launched CriSidEx, India's first MSE Sentiment Index for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The index will help to indicate the current state and expected outlook on the MSME sector every quarter. The main significance of this index is to provide crucial insights into employment, business environment and foreign trade in MSME sector.
- ⇒ India was ranked 44th out of 50 countries in the Intellectual Property (IP) Index released by the US Chamber of Commerce. The US topped this edition of list, followed by United Kingdom and Sweden.
- ⇒ The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has imposed Rs.136 crore fine on world's most popular search engine Google for unfair business practices in Indian market for online search. The penalty was imposed on Google for infringing anti-trust conduct. It was alleged that Google is indulging in abuse of dominant position in market for online search through practices leading to search bias and search manipulation, among others.
- ⇒ The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has released India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2017. It has revealed that total forest and tree cover in India has increased by over 8,021 sq km (about 80.20 million hectare) i.e., about 1% from 2015. The total forest and tree cover is 24.39% of the geographical area of the country.
- ⇒ India's financial capital Mumbai, with a total wealth of U \$950 billion was ranked 12th richest city globally in the report published by New World Wealth. In the report, total wealth refers to private wealth held by all individuals living in each city. It includes all the assets (cash, equities, property, business interests, etc.) less any liabilities. Government funds are excluded from it. New York with total wealth of U \$3 trillion topped the list followed by London and Tokyo.
- ⇒ The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) under its 'Development of Solar Cities' scheme has sanctioned development of 60 Solar Cities including 13 Pilot and Model Cities up to 12th Five-year Plan period (2012-2017).
- ⇒ The Union Finance Ministry is planning to ban cryptocurrencies from payments system and at the same time appoint a regulator to oversee unregulated exchange that trades in crypto assets. The Dinesh Sharma committee, constituted by the Government to look into issues relating to cryptocurrencies will finalise its recommendations by submitting its report in current fiscal year, ending on March 2018. The examples of virtual currencies are Bitcoin, Litecoi Darkcoin, Peercoin, Dogecoin, Primecoin etc.
- ⇒ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved to enhance target base of Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) from 5 crore to 8 crore connections of LPG to women who are a part of the families that are below the poverty line. The revised target of PMUY will be achieved by 2020.
- ⇒ The Union Cabinet has approved amendment to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act, 2006 for classifying MSMEs from current 'investment in plant and machinery' criteria to 'annual turnover criteria'. A Micro enterprise will be a unit with annual turnover not exceeding Rs. 5 crore; a Small enterprise will be a unit with annual turnover more than Rs. 5 crore but not exceeding Rs. 75 crore and a Medium enterprise will be a unit with annual turnover more than Rs. 75 crore but not exceeding Rs. 250 crore.
- ⇒ According to the NITI Aayog Health Index, Kerala topped the list followed by Punjab and Tamil Nadu.
- ⇒ Foreign tourist arrivals in India hit a new high of 10 million (1 crore) in 2017.
- ⇒ State owned Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) is planning to introduce carbon dioxide (CO₂) injection technology in its Gandhar oil field in Gujarat. It will be the first large scale CO₂-injected project in Asia. Its purpose is to recover extra 20 million barrels of crude oil under Enhanced Oil Recovery (EOR) programme. EOR programme aims at recovering up to 20% of residual oil from ageing oil fields to improve India's energy security.
- ⇒ India's biggest electricity producer NTPC Ltd has won tender to supply 300 megawatts (MW) of electricity to power-starved Bangladesh for 15 years.



- ⇒ Government has signed second \$100 million Loan Agreement with New Development Bank (NDB) for financing of Rajasthan Water Sector Restructuring Project for the Desert Area. This is India's second loan from NDB. The first loan of \$350 million was taken for development and upgradation of major district road projects in Madhya Pradesh.
 - ⇒ Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an expert committee to look into the entire gamut of issues relating to classification of bad loans, effectiveness of audits and rising incidents of frauds. The committee will be headed by Y H Malegam.
 - ⇒ The Union Government has formulated ambitious water conservation scheme Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY) to tackle ever-deepening crisis of depleting groundwater level. The scheme, after Cabinet's clearance, will soon be launched in water-stressed states Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
 - ⇒ The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has allowed Facebook-owned WhatsApp to beta test its BHIM UPI beta payments service with limited user base of 1 million and low transaction limit. NPCI is the umbrella organisation for all retail payments system in India. It is being promoted by the Reserve Bank of India. (BHIM : Bharat Interface for Money) is a mobile app developed by NPCI. (UPI : Unified Payment Interface) is a single window mobile payment system launched by NPCI.
 - ⇒ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has directed banks to link SWIFT (Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication system platform) with their core banking solutions (CBS) by April 30, 2018. This decision is a part of RBI's efforts to tighten internal controls on banks following Rs 11,400 crore fraud that was unearthed at Punjab National Bank (PNB). CBS is a centralised software used to support bank's most common transactions. The mega PNB fraud surrounds around SWIFT technology which was misused by its branch officials by fraudulently issuing LoUs (letters of undertaking), a kind of Bank guarantees to diamond and jewellery importer Nirav Modi-linked companies without getting proper approvals and without making entries in CBS. SWIFT is a global financial messaging service that enables financial institutions worldwide to send and receive information about financial transactions. SWIFT was founded in 1973 and is headquartered in Belgium. Over 11,000 financial institutions in more than 200 countries use the services of SWIFT.
 - ⇒ The Union Finance Ministry (Department of Revenue) has imposed anti-dumping duty on import of ceramic tableware and kitchenware from China in a bid to promote domestic producers. Anti-dumping duty is an import duty imposed by government on imported products which have prices less than their normal values or domestic price.
 - ⇒ Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), the nodal authority for issuing Aadhaar cards has launched 'B Aadhaar', i.e., Bal Aadhaar, meant for kids under 5 years of age. It will have blue colour to differentiate with regular Aadhaar. It will be linked with one of parent's Aadhaar card. No biometric details will be captured. Biometrics are not developed for children before 5 years of age.
 - ⇒ India was ranked 81st among 180 countries in Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2017 released by the NGO Transparency International. India has dropped by two ranks from 79th slot in CPI 2016. New Zealand and Denmark were ranked as cleanest countries in 2017 in CPI index, followed by Finland.
 - ⇒ Telecom Major Bharti Airtel and Chinese telecom equipment maker Huawei have successfully conducted India's first 5G (fifth generation) network trial. It was conducted at Airtel's network experience centre Manesar, Gurugram (Haryana) and was able to achieve over 3 gigabit per second (Gbps) data speed.
 - ⇒ India was ranked 47th out of 86 countries in Inclusive Internet Index (III) 2018 report. India has slipped by 11 positions compared to 36th rank in 2017 III report due to low internet usage and poor quality. Sweden topped the list followed by Singapore and the United States.
 - ⇒ China-based Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved \$1.5 billion in loans to India for infrastructure related projects in 2018. The funds will be used for investment in India's energy, roads and urban development projects.
- ### Sports
- ⇒ India has won Under-19 ICC World Cup 2018 by defeating Australia by eight wickets at Mount Maunganui, New Zealand. With this victory, India became the first nation to win Under-19 World Cup four times. It was India's sixth appearance in the under 19 World Cup finals. Indian team was led by Prithvi Shaw and was coached by Rahul Dravid.
 - ⇒ Indian cricket team defeated South Africa by 5-1 matches in the bilateral One-Day International (ODI). It was India's first ODI series triumph in South Africa. Virat Kohli was adjudged the Man of the Series.
 - ⇒ India defeated South Africa in the bilateral T20 series also by 2-1 matches. Bhuvneshwar Kumar was adjudged the Man of the Series.
 - ⇒ Virat Kohli became the first Indian batsman and second batsman overall after AB de Villiers of South Africa to achieve 900 rating points in the ICC rankings for Tests and ODIs concurrently.
 - ⇒ Karnataka defeated Saurashtra to win the Vijay Hazare Trophy (cricket).
 - ⇒ Australia set a new record of the highest successful run chase in T20 International match when they chased 244 runs and defeated New Zealand at Auckland, New Zealand.



- ⇒ Odisha government struck a five-year deal with Hockey India to sponsor all national hockey teams – senior and junior, men and women of India.
- ⇒ Roger Federer of Switzerland became the oldest world number one tennis player at the age of 36 years and 195 days.

Awards

- ⇒ NITI Aayog member Dr Vinod Paul became the first Indian to be selected for the prestigious IhsanDogramaci Family Health Foundation Prize by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Dr Vinod Paul is an internationally renowned researcher, clinician, educator and public health advocate in the area of family health, with special focus on newborn health.
- ⇒ Ritu Sarin, the Executive Editor – Investigations of The Indian Express has been honoured with the International Press Institute India (IPI) Award, 2018.
- ⇒ Magahi writer Shesh Anand Madhukar was honoured with the Sahitya Akademi Bhasha Samman award. He was the second writer of Magahi language to be given this award. Magahi language, also known as Magadhi is a language spoken in Bihar-Jharkhand region of eastern India. It was spoken in ancient kingdom of Magadha. It was believed to be the language spoken by Gautama Buddha. It was the official language of the Mauryan court.
- ⇒ Odisha Government has won 'Geospatial World Excellence Award-2018' for successful IT application for tracking of mineral production, dispatch and value accrued on real-time basis through its i3MS web-base software. The award was presented at the Geospatial World Forum Meeting held in Hyderabad, Telangana. (i3MS : Intelligent Multi-Sensor Multi-Baseline Mapping System).
- ⇒ Asha Bhosle has been honoured with the 5th Yash Chopra Memorial Award.
- ⇒ Veteran film-maker Shyam Benegal has been selected for the prestigious V Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award.
- ⇒ India's Aadhaar and Umang apps have won awards at the recently concluded 6th World Government Summit 2018 in Dubai. Umang App won in Best m-Government Service Award for Accessible Government Category and Aadhaar won in the Best Government Emerging Technologies Award.
- ⇒ Vikas Sathaye, along with his three other team members was awarded Scientific and Engineering Academy Award at Oscars Scientific and Technical Awards 2018 for their contribution towards conceptualisation, design, engineering and the implementation of the 'Shotover K1 Camera System'. The system is a camera mount that is used for aerial filming.

Persons

- ⇒ KP Sharma Oli was sworn in as Nepal's Prime Minister for the second time.

- ⇒ Indra Nooyi, the PepsiCo Chairperson and CEO has been appointed to the International Cricket Council (ICC) as the governing body's first independent female director.
- ⇒ Cyril Ramaphosa, head of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) has sworn in as the new President of South Africa. He was elected new President after the resignation of scam-tainted Jacob Zuma.
- ⇒ Flying Officer Avani Chaturvedi became the first Indian woman to fly an aircraft solo, when she flew a MiG-21 from the IAF's Jamnagar base.
- ⇒ Khaleda Zia, former Bangladesh Prime Minister has been sentenced to five years in jail as she was found guilty of embezzling money.
- ⇒ Jacob Zuma, the South African President resigned following the charges of corruption, scandals, economic slowdown and falling popularity.
- ⇒ Chandrashekhar Kambar (81), the Jnanpith award recipient and Kannada litterateur was elected President of the Sahitya Akademi for a period of five years.

Died

- ⇒ Asma Jahangir, one of Pakistan's most prominent rights activists and lawyers died of a heart attack.
- ⇒ Dhruvjayoti Ghosh, the veteran ecologist and first Indian recipient of the Luc Hoffmann award died recently.
- ⇒ Actress Sridevi died recently following accidental drowning in Dubai, UAE.

Miscellaneous

- ⇒ Himachal Pradesh Government has launched Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) project to promote organic farming. It was launched by Chief Minister, J Ram Thakur. The project aims to increase agriculture produce and the income of farmers by the year 2022. Zero Budget Natural Farming is a set of natural farming methods where cost of growing and harvesting plants is zero. It is a farming practice that believes in natural growth of crops without adding any fertilizers and pesticides or any other foreign elements.
- ⇒ Gujarat University announced a course on spoken Sanskrit in order to popularise the ancient language. It is possibly the first such course to be launched by a university in India.
- ⇒ Syed Akbaruddin, India's permanent representative to the UN Security Council, in an open air debate, criticized the Security Council's Veto Power in protecting terrorists. He indicated China's repeated blocking the bid to list Pakistan-based Masood Azhar as a global terrorist.
- ⇒ Ministry of Earth Science (MoES) has inaugurated high performance computer system (HPC) or supercomputer Mihir (meaning sun) at National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), Noida. The HPC will provide facility for improving weather/climate forecasts. It is country's largest HPC facility in terms of peak capacity and performance. It also propelled India's ranking to Top 30 in the list of HPC facilities in the world.



- ⇒ The India-Vietnam Bilateral Army Exercise (VINBAX 2018) was conducted at Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh. It was the first military exercise between the two countries.
- ⇒ Indian Navy has launched Scorpene submarine 'INS Karanj' at the Mazagaon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd, Mumbai. It is the third Scorpene class submarine built by MDSL under the ambitious Project 75 of the Indian Navy. The first was INS Kalvari and the second INS Khandari.
- ⇒ India is likely to join a league of nations by signing the Budapest Convention on Cyber Crime that came into force in 2004. It is a first-of-its-kind international treaty established to address cyber crime across the globe through increased cooperation between countries developing technologies and harmonising laws.
- ⇒ The G4 nations comprising Brazil, Germany, India and Japan supported each others bids for permanent seats in the United Nations General Assembly.
- ⇒ Punjab Government's Department of Agriculture has issued directions to discontinue the sale of 20 pesticides (insecticides) including Endosulfan, which are harmful to the health of humans and environment with immediate effect.
- ⇒ The Ministry of Railways has decided to set up a massive rail coach factory in Latur district of Maharashtra. This plant will manufacture Electric Multiple Units for suburban trains and coaches for metros.
- ⇒ The Maharashtra Government has approved Ghodazari in Chandrapur district as a new wildlife sanctuary in the State.
- ⇒ The Ministry of Defence (Department of Defence Production) constituted a 17 member task force headed by Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran to study the use and application of artificial intelligence (AI) in military. The task force will study the whole gamut of issues surrounding strategic implications of AI in national security perspective, in global context. (*Artificial intelligence AI is branch of computer science concerned with making computers behave like humans. In contrast to normal hardware and software, AI enables machine to perceive and respond to its changing environment.*)
- ⇒ The Supreme Court directed Karnataka to release 2.44 tmc (thousand million cub feet) water of Cauvery river to Tamil Nadu. The court dismissed the objections of Tamil Nadu which sought 9 tmc of water for the State.
- ⇒ The Floating Treatment Wetland (FTW) was inaugurated on World Wetlands Day (February 2) in Nekkampur Lake in Hyderabad to clean and purify the polluted water-body. The plants planted on FTW can clean the lake by absorbing nitrates and other pollutants in the water. FTW's working is based on soil-less hydroponics technique. Hydroponic permits plants to grow only on sunlight and water. There is no need of soil.
- ⇒ Britain's Prince Charles has launched a new 10-million dollar Development Impact Bond (DIB) to help improve education for over 2,00,000 children in India. The DIB is the largest bond of its type in South Asia.
- ⇒ Uttar Pradesh Government has launched a massive door to door 'DASTAK campaign against Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) and Japanese Encephalitis (JE)' to eradicate these deadly diseases from the State.
- ⇒ The Ministry of External Affairs is working on a plan to set up an 'India Corner' each in selected university libraries across the world to stock up books in Indian languages.
- ⇒ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) carried out a test flight of the unmanned aerial vehicle 'Rustom-2'. The flight of this indigenous drone was conducted at its Aero-nautical Test Range in Chitradurga, Karnataka.
- ⇒ Tanzania has announced its withdrawal from the United Nation's 'Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework', citing security reasons and lack of funds.
- ⇒ The International Conference on Unani Medicine was held in New Delhi. The birthday of great Unani researcher Hakim Ajmal Khan, i.e., 11th February is celebrated as Unani Day.
- ⇒ Search engine giant Google has launched '#SecurityCheckKiya' campaign in India to create awareness around Internet safety. It was launched on the occasion of Safer Internet Day (6 February). The campaign aims to protect first-time web users from account hijacking, safeguard Android devices from malicious apps and secure all their personal data if they lose their device.
- ⇒ Ministry of Science & Technology has set up Mechanism in Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) to interact with Small-Scale Industry (SSI) for transfer of Technology from CSIR Labs. Nodal officer in CSIR will coordinate with the SSIs and CSIR labs for appropriate technology required by them. SSI sector is the second largest employment provider in the country, next to agriculture.
- ⇒ Only two Indian institutes have featured in the top 5 Asian institutes in recently released TIMES Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings for educational institutes in Asia. The two institutes that have made their way to top 50 are Indian Institute of Science (29th rank) and Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay (44).
- ⇒ Foundation stone of Rhododendron Park was laid in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh by Chief Minister Pema Khandu. Tawang district was once home to about 100 species of rhododendron, but now they have been reduced to only 50 plus species due to construction activities in border areas.



- ⇒ King Salman bin Abdulaziz in presence of Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj inaugurated the 32nd edition of Saudi Arabia's National Heritage Festival in Janadriya village, Riyadh. This year India was the guest of honour country.
- ⇒ The World Cancer Day (WCD) is observed every year on the 4th of February across the world to raise awareness of cancer and to encourage its prevention, detection, and treatment. Its primary goal is to reduce the illness and related deaths by 2020. The theme (tagline) for this year is "We can. I can".
- ⇒ The book 'Exam Warriors', authored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was released by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj at a function in New Delhi.
- ⇒ Harsh Vardhan, the Union Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has launched Green Good Deed campaign. The purpose of the people-oriented campaign is to sensitise people and students about climate change and global warming.
- ⇒ According to the recently published National Family Health Survey (NFHS), 72.5% children surveyed in the age group of 12 to 23 months have not been given proper vaccination in or on time. The situation is worst in Manipur. NFHS data show that the infant mortality rate in India is currently 41 deaths per 1000 live births (under one year of age). As per the current medical protocol, vaccination is to be given as follows – Tuberculosis : within one month of birth; Hepatitis B : within 24 hours; Diphtheria, Pertussis and Tetanus : 6th, 10th and 14th weeks respectively; Polio drops : up to 5 years; Measles : between 9 and 12 months.
- ⇒ Veteran actor Kamal Haasan launched his political party 'Makkal Nidhi Mayyam' (People's Justice Centre) in Madurai, Tamil Nadu.
- ⇒ The Maratha Light Infantry celebrated 250 years of its existence on the 4th of February 2018. The first battalion of the regiment was raised as 'Second Battalion Bombay Sepoys' on this day in 1768.
- ⇒ The Union Ministry of Defence (MoD) has constituted 13-member Raksha Mantri Advisory Committee on Ministry of Defence Capital Projects (RMCOMP), headed by former secretary Vinay Sheel Oberoi. The committee will monitor and expedite capital acquisition projects for modernisation of armed forces and bolster armed forces preparedness.
- ⇒ The 'Pelican Bird Festival-2018' was held for the first time at Atapaka Bird Sanctuary on Kolleru lake in Andhra Pradesh. During winter season, thousands of pelicans, painted storks and other birds migrate to Kolleru lake. Recently, Atapaka Bird Sanctuary was recognised as one of the largest pelicanry in the world.
- ⇒ Tri-service maritime exercise 'Paschim Lehar' was held off India's western coast with an aim to build interoperability between Indian Navy, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Coast Guard.
- ⇒ India's first radio festival was held at the UNESCO House in New Delhi to mark World Radio Day (February 13).
- ⇒ The Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has released India's first ever Highway Capacity Manual (Indo-HCM) to guide road engineers and policy makers about road expansion.
- ⇒ Indian Army is contributing approximately 2300 personnel to support United Nations Peacekeeping Missions to South Sudan (UNMISS) in order to bring peace and normalcy in the war-torn country.
- ⇒ The 2018 edition of World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS 2018) was held at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. WSDS is a flagship forum of The Energy and Resource Institute (TERI). It seeks to bring together global leaders and thinkers in the fields of sustainable development, energy and environment sectors on a common platform.
- ⇒ Government has constituted Empowered Expert Committee (EEC) to select 20 Institutions of Eminence from amongst 104 institutions (public or private) that have applied for the status. The committee will be headed by former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) N Gopalaswami. It aims to help 20 higher educational (10 public and 10 private) institutions from the country break into top 500 global rankings in 10 years, and then eventually break into top 100 over time.
- ⇒ The Virgin Group led by Richard Branson has signed an intent agreement with Maharashtra Government to build world's first hyper-loop transportation system between Mumbai and Pune.
- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated World Information Technology Congress (WITC) 2018 in Hyderabad, Telangana via video conference. The theme of this edition of conference was 'Future Enterprises.' Around 2500 delegates and top IT experts from across the world participated in the mega IT event.
- ⇒ The Union Cabinet approved the setting up of a tribunal to restore the dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over the sharing of the Mahanadi river water.
- ⇒ The South Central Railway has become the first Railway Zone in the country to complete 100% LED lighting at all the 733 stations under its jurisdiction.
- ⇒ The President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the Mahamastakabhisheka Mahotsav 2018 of Lord Gomateshwara in the Hassan district of Karnataka.
- ⇒ The Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and UK's Natural History Museum (NHM) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the fields of genetic and taxonomic studies, research and training conservation in India, including species and habitat conservation assessments



EXCELLENT TUTORIAL

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- ⇒ The Roads and Transport Authority of Dubai launched the test of the world's first 'Driverless Transport Pods' during the World Government Summit recently.
- ⇒ India's Tiger census will now see coordination with Bhutan, Bangladesh and Nepal. This is the first time that all these countries are united in arriving at the number of tigers. India currently has 2,226 tigers.
- ⇒ The 75-storey Gevora Hotel in Dubai is now the world's tallest hotel with the height of 356 metres having 528 rooms.
- ⇒ India and Vietnam released the first ever set of commemorative postage stamps on the theme of ancient architecture. The two sets of stamps released carried pictures of Sanchi Stupa and Thien Mu Pagoda.
- ⇒ The United Kingdom and India have launched joint research projects on 'Water Quality Research' and 'Energy Demand Reduction in Built Environment'. The 'Water Quality Research' programme has 8 projects and 'Energy Demand Reduction in Built Environment' programme has 4 projects. These projects aim to deliver two sustainable development goals – clean water and clean energy.
- ⇒ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved construction of 4.5 km long 2-Lane Bi-Directional Silkyara Bend-Barkot Tunnel in Uttarakhand as part of 'Chardham Mahamarg Pariyojana'. The construction of this tunnel will provide all weather connectivity to Yamunotri, one dhams of the Chardhams.
- ⇒ According to the latest report of Census Directorate, about 42 languages or dialects in India are considered to be endangered and are believed to be heading toward extinction as only few thousand people speak them. There are 22 scheduled languages and 100 non-scheduled languages in the country, which are spoken by one lakh or more people.
- ⇒ India will be the Global Host for World Environment Day (WED) 2018 which is observed annually on 5 June. The central theme for this year is 'Beat Plastic Pollution'.
- ⇒ UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched 'One District One Product' scheme to help the artisans of the State preserve their heritage in a more profitable and economically secured way.
- ⇒ Madhya Pradesh has become the first State in the country to achieve the 100% door-to-door garbage collection target in urban bodies.
- ⇒ The Mahadayi river (called Mandovi in Goa) originates in Karnataka and flows to Goa and Maharashtra. The three States are locked in its water sharing dispute.
- ⇒ The Oxford Dictionaries has chosen 'Aadhar' as the Hindi word of 2017.
- ⇒ The Gandhi Nagar railway station in Jaipur, Rajasthan became the country's first major non-suburban railway station to be fully-managed by women. It is the second railway station in the country to be managed solely by women – the first being Matunga in Mumbai.
- ⇒ Venezuela has become the first sovereign country to officially launch its own cryptocurrency called 'Petro' backed by oil, gas, gold and diamond reserves to circumvent US-led financial sanction.
- ⇒ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has carried out its first successful test-flight of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) Rustom-2 in user configuration with higher power engine. It is a medium-altitude long-endurance drone (MALE).
- ⇒ The 21st National Conference on e-Governance was held in Hyderabad, the capital city of Telangana. This year, the theme of the conference was 'Technology for accelerating Development'.
- ⇒ Scientists from Indian Institute of Science (IISc Bengaluru) have indigenously developed country's first super critical carbon dioxide (S-CO₂) Brayton Test Loop facility. The facility was inaugurated at the IISc campus. It is the first test loop technology coupled with solar heat source in the world that will generate clean energy from power plants, including solar thermal.
- ⇒ Ministry of Railways has launched SRIJAN (Station Rejuvenation through Joint Action), an idea competition for development of 635 railway stations. It is a citizen engagement platform launched by Central Government to promote active participation of citizens in country's governance and development.
- ⇒ The eighth edition of Lamitye 2018, a bilateral military exercise between Indian Army and Seychelles People Defence Force was held at Mahe Island in Seychelles archipelago.
- ⇒ The National Science Day is observed every year on the 28th of February with an objective to spread the message of importance of science and its application among the people. The theme for National Science Day 2018 is 'Science and Technology for a sustainable future.'
- ⇒ India's first Aviation Multi Skill Development Centre (MSDC) was launched at Chandigarh Airport. The Centre is a CSR initiative of Airport Authority of India (AAI) and will initially train 2,360 students free of cost in three years.

Books & Authors :

- ⇒ Exam Warriors – Narendra Modi
- ⇒ Jasoda, A Novel – Kiran Nagarkar
- ⇒ Imperfect – Sanjay Manjrekar
