



## **CURRENT AFFAIRS (MAY - 2018) :**

### **National**

- ⇒ Myanmar has indefinitely deferred signing agreement with India to streamline free movement of people within 16 km along open border between the two countries. The Central Government had asked four border states with Myanmar to distribute "border pass" to all the residents living within 16 km from the border. The agreement has been deferred twice in the past seven months.
- ⇒ The French President Emmanuel Macron visited India recently to strengthen the 20-year old Indo-French strategic partnership. The two countries signed 14 agreements ranging from cooperation in security and space to clean energy. Mr. Macron and Mr. Modi targeted starting work of building the world's largest nuclear power plant at Jaipur by the end of this year. The two leaders inaugurated a solar power plant at Mirzapur in UP. PM Modi's brainchild International Solar Alliance's (ISA) first conference was held in New Delhi. Modi and Macron co-chaired the conference. The ISA has so far been ratified by 30 countries. A total of 62 countries signed up for the alliance.
- ⇒ The Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang visited India recently and inked three pacts including one on nuclear cooperation.
- ⇒ Joint investigation committee (JIC) comprising US and Indian officials has test-fired M777 ultra-light howitzers (ULH) at Pokhran firing range in Rajasthan. In November 2016, India signed Rs 5,070-crore deal with US to procure 145 M777 ULH for deployment on mountainous terrain in northern and eastern borders. Recently it has been agreed upon that 25 ULHs will be inducted directly while the rest to be assembled at BAE Systems facility in Maharashtra.
- ⇒ The Supreme Court recently upheld passive euthanasia, saying that every individual has a right to die with dignity. In a landmark verdict, the Court permitted the removal of life-support systems for the terminally ill or those in incurable comas. The Court also permitted the individuals to decide against artificial life support, should the need arise, by creating a 'living will'.
- ⇒ The director generals of Border Security Force (BSF) of India and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) have declared the 8.3 km stretch of Indo-Bangladesh border as the first 'crime-free zone'. The stretch covers Gunarmath and Kalyani border outposts in India and Puthkhali and Daulatpur outposts in Bangladesh. Bangladesh and India share 4,156 km long international border. It is the longest international border shared by India with any of its neighbours. It passes through five states viz. Assam (262 km), Tripura (856 km), Mizoram (180 km), Meghalaya (443 km) and West Bengal (2,217 km).

- ⇒ The Indian Navy hosted the eight-day long multi-national naval exercise 'Miles-18', the first-ever multi-national naval exercise at the Andaman and Nicobar islands. The exercise was conducted as part of 10th edition of MILAN 2018. The event was organised by Andaman Nicobar Naval Command with the theme 'Friendship Across the Seas' to expand regional cooperation and combat unlawful activities in critical sea lanes. The naval ships of 8 countries (Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand) and nine Indian ships participated in MILES-18.
- ⇒ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the World Hindi Secretariat building in Port Louis, Mauritius. He also launched secretariat's logo, an Early Digital Learning Programme as well as unveiled foundation stones of social housing project and a large ENT hospital being built with Indian assistance. President Kovind visited Mauritius as a part of the first leg to his two-nation state visit (Mauritius and Madagascar). Later he visited Madagascar, making him the first Indian President to visit the largest African island country.
- ⇒ Iraq has overtaken Saudi Arabia to become India's top crude oil supplier by supplying 38.9 million tonnes (MT) crude oil in the current financial year. It is the fifth of the India's oil needs. India is 80% dependent on imports to meet its oil needs.
- ⇒ Indian Navy's indigenously built warship INS Ganga (F22) was decommissioned in Mumbai, after over three decades of service. INS Ganga was a Godavari-class guided-missile frigate of the Indian Navy. It was built by Mazagaon Dock Limited, Mumbai and was commissioned into Indian Navy on December 30, 1985.

### **International**

- ⇒ Sri Lanka on March 6, 2018, declared a nationwide state of emergency after riots targeting Muslims broke out in Kandy. However, the emergency was withdrawn ten days later.
- ⇒ Pakistan Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi was recently on a visit to Nepal. He sought Nepalese Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli's support for efforts to host the much delayed SAARC Summit in Islamabad. It is to be noted that Pakistan was to hold the Summit in 2016, but it was cancelled when India pulled out over a string cross-border terror attack from Pakistan. Bangladesh, Bhutan and Afghanistan also decided to boycott the Summit on the same issue.
- ⇒ Marshall Islands in Pacific Ocean is set to become the first country in the world to recognize cryptocurrency as its legal tender and adopt transparent crypto monetary system. The parliament of the islands has passed a law to create the digital currency called "Sovereign" with the symbol SOV to raise some hard cash to pay bills and boost economy.



- ⇒ 35 years ago the then Chinese President Deng Xiaoping fixed a maximum period of two-term limit for a President to prevent the country from returning to one-man rule like that of Mao Zedong. But recently, on a historic decision, China removed the two-term limit, clearing the way for the present President Xi Jinping to rule the country for life. Besides being the President, he is the General Secretary of the Communist Party and Chairman of the Central Military Commission.
- ⇒ Philippines has announced to withdraw from the International Criminal Court (ICC), citing the reason of international bias and held that ICC was being utilised as a political tool against it. It will make Philippines only the second country to withdraw from the Rome statute, following Burundi in 2017. The headquarters of the ICC is in the Hague (Netherlands).

## Economy

- ⇒ Under the money circulation and credit control policy of the RBI, the existing rates (as on 18.5.2018) 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*) : 8.70% - 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*).
- ⇒ India for the first time has started the process of importing Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) from the United States. India primarily imports LNG from Qatar and Australia under long-term contracts.

- ⇒ The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has crossed an important milestone of having signed 200 Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs). With this, CBDT till has entered into 203 APAs (185 Unilateral and 18 Bilateral APAs). An Advance Pricing Agreement (APA) is an ahead-of-time agreement between a taxpayer and a tax authority.
- ⇒ National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) is going to conduct National Sizing Survey dubbed as 'Size India', to develop comprehensive size chart for ready-to-wear industry based on body measurements of Indian population. So far, 14 countries have successfully completed national sizing. At present, in India, either US or UK size system of 'Small, Medium, Large and Extra Large' is being used, and people then have go for fitting accordingly.
- ⇒ India's cumulative solar energy capacity crossed 22,000 MW on March 31, 2018. Karnataka is the top ranking State in solar power generation among all Indian States. Telangana is in the second place followed by Rajasthan. World's largest solar park Shakti Sthala, with a capacity of 2000 MW has been launched in Tumakuru district of Karnataka.
- ⇒ The Union Cabinet approved establishment of National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) as an independent regulator for the auditing profession. It aims to tighten regulatory oversight over auditors and plug loopholes.
- ⇒ As per the data released by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, India remains the world's largest arms importer accounting for 12% of the global import during 2013-17. Saudi Arabia is in the second position followed by Egypt, UAE, China and Australia. The largest arms suppliers to India from 2013 to 2017 were Russia (62%), the USA (15%) and Israel (11%).
- ⇒ The PSU banks have started rationalising overseas operations by consolidating 35 operations and closing down non-viable branches as part of the clean and responsible banking initiative. The rationalisation of overseas operations of banks came at the time when jewellery designer Nirav Modi had allegedly cheated Punjab National Bank (PNB) of Rs.12,700 crore in connivance with PNB staff and officials of overseas branches of other state-owned banks. Presently, public sector banks have about 165 overseas branches, besides subsidiaries, joint ventures and representative offices. State Bank of India has the largest number of overseas branches (52) followed by Bank of Baroda (50).
- ⇒ The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development has approved projects worth Rs 2,919 crore under Nirbhaya Fund for creating eight safe cities. They are Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Lucknow.



- ⇒ The Union Government has set up an 8-member steering committee, headed by Subhash Garg, to look into the development and regulation of the financial technology (fintech) sector in India.
- ⇒ The Union Cabinet has approved introduction of Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 in Parliament. The bill, proposed by the Finance Ministry, aims to curb practice of evading criminal prosecution by economic offenders (wilful defaulters) who flee from the country to evade the clutches of Indian law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts.
- ⇒ According to the data of the Chinese General Administration of Customs, India-China bilateral trade has reached \$84.44 billion last year. India's exports to China have increased by 39.11% year-on-year to \$16.34 billion in 2017. India's imports from China have increased by 14.59% to \$68.10 billion. Significantly, diamonds along with copper, iron ore, organic chemicals and cotton yarn contributed to increase Indian exports to China. China's exports on the other hand were dominated by electrical machinery and equipment.
- ⇒ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved Rs. 1,151 crore Central Sector Scheme for in situ management of crop residue in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi. It will promote agricultural mechanization for the next two years (2018-20) to provide cost-effective and eco-friendly solution to farmers to deal with the problem of stubble burning that results in raising air pollution levels in Delhi and neighbouring states every winter.
- ⇒ The Union Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers has launched 'Suvidha', a 100% Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin, under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP). The affordable Suvidha sanitary napkins will be available for Rs. 2.50 per pad at over 3200 Janaushadhi Kendras across India.
- ⇒ The government has constituted Field Inspection and Scientific Evaluation Committee (FISEC) to investigate the matter of illegal cultivation of Herbicide Tolerant (HT) or BG-III cotton in four States Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Maharashtra. The cultivation of HT cotton (BG-III) is not approved by the country's biotech regulator, Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of Ministry of Environment. The unofficial estimates put the extent of unauthorised cotton to be about 20% in the country.
- ⇒ The Revenue Department in the Finance Ministry has imposed anti-dumping duty on import of 'Ofloxacin', a pharma product used in treatment of certain infections, from China. It has been found that Ofloxacin exported to India from China was below its normal value, resulting in dumping.
- ⇒ India-United Kingdom (UK) Joint Team has won Newton-Bhabha Fund for project on Groundwater Arsenic Research in Ganga River Basin. The project was undertaken to find solutions to water challenges faced in pervasively arsenic-affected Ganga River Basin. The Newton Bhabha Fund is provided by the British Council. It aims to bring together the UK and Indian scientific research and innovation sectors to find joint solutions to the challenges facing India in economic development and social welfare.
- ⇒ India was ranked 133rd among 156 countries in the World Happiness Index 2018, recently released by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network. Finland topped the index, followed by Norway and Denmark.
- ⇒ India was ranked at 78th among 114 countries on the World Economic Forum's (WEF) Energy Transition Index (ETI) released as part of the report titled Fostering Effective Energy Transition. The index ranks countries on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability. Sweden topped the index, followed by Norway and Switzerland.
- ⇒ Pune was ranked first among 23 cities across India in terms of quality of urban governance in the fifth edition of Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS) 2017 report released by the Bengaluru-based non-profit organisation, Janaagraha. Kolkata, Bhubaneswar and Thiruvananthapuram were placed jointly at the second position.
- ⇒ President Ram Nath Kovind has released Rs. 1,000 and Rs. 10 commemorative coins on the occasion of Nabakalebar festival at a function held in Puri, Odisha. These coins were released to mark the festival which is a symbolic recreation of sibling deities – Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra.
- ⇒ Indian Railways has formally handed over eighteen 1350 HP AC/DC diesel electric locomotives to Myanmar Railways. Moreover, Indian Railways is playing a pivotal role in developing cordial relations with the neighbouring countries. The 18 locomotives were supplied by RITES, a PSU of Ministry of Railways and manufactured by Diesel Locomotive Works, Varanasi, U.P.
- ⇒ The Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC) has scrapped export duty of 20% on raw and refined sugar to boost shipments. The removal of export duty will help to export excess sugar output in India for the sugar season 2017-18. This will also prevent further price erosion of the domestic sugar prices. Sugar output is estimated to rise sharply to 29.5 million tonnes (MT) in 2017-18 marketing year (October-September) from 20.3 MT in the previous year. The domestic demand is 24-25 million tonnes annually.



- ⇒ The Union Cabinet has approved the launch of Ayushman Bharat — National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM). The scheme will integrate two on-going centrally sponsored schemes viz. Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS). AB-NHPM aims to target over 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC) database.
- ⇒ India's largest commodities exchange platform, Multi Commodity Exchange of India Limited (MCX) launched world's first brass futures contracts. It will facilitate brass stakeholders to hedge their price risk. Brass is a metallic alloy of copper (55-60%) and zinc (40-45%) with small amounts of lead and iron.
- ⇒ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has entered into a Technology Transfer Agreement (TTA) with Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) to transfer technology for manufacturing space grade Lithium-Ion (Li-Ion) cells. ISRO uses Li-Ion batteries as power sources for satellite launch vehicle applications due to their high energy density, reliability and long cycle life.
- ⇒ Department of Posts has launched Cool EMS Service between India and Japan. It is a one-way service from Japan to India which allows customers in India to import Japanese food items for personal use in refrigerated boxes.
- ⇒ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved for the removal of prohibition on export of all varieties of edible oils except mustard oil.
- ⇒ India received its first Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) cargo from United States (US) under long-term supply deal. The first US-sourced LNG shipment was imported by the state-owned GAIL (Gas Authority of India Limited). It was discharged at GAIL's Dabhol terminal, Maharashtra.
- ⇒ Chennai based Geographical Indication Registry and Intellectual Property India has awarded Geographical Indication (GI) Tag to Madhya Pradesh's Kadaknath chicken. The GI tag will ensure that no one else can use the name Kadaknath Chicken while selling any other black chicken. Kadaknath chicken breed is unique for its black colour due to its black-feathers. Recently, Kadaknath chicken had virtually become bone of contention between Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh with both the States staking claim over its nativity for GI tag.
- ⇒ The Public Financial Management System (PFMS) portal has processed record Rs 71,633 crore transactions on a single day. This was a historical record breaking volume of digital transactions achieved by PFMS, which is an end-to-end solution for processing payments, tracking, monitoring, accounting, reconciliation and reporting.

## Sports

- ⇒ India emerged champion of the Nidahas Trophy (cricket) by beating Bangladesh in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- ⇒ India B won the 45th edition of Deodhar Trophy by defeating Karnataka in the final at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamsala.
- ⇒ Steve Smith, the captain of the Australian cricket team stepped down following a ball-tampering scandal in the third Australia – South Africa Test in Cape Town. Australia's opening batsman Cameron Bancraft was caught on camera, attempting to illegally alter the condition of the ball.
- ⇒ Ranji Trophy (cricket) champion Vidarbha won the Irani Cup (cricket) by defeating the Rest of India at the Vidarbha Cricket Association, Nagpur.
- ⇒ Chennaiyin FC emerged champion of the India Super League (ISL) football by beating Bengaluru FC at Sree Kanteerva Stadium, Bengaluru.
- ⇒ Minerva Punjab defeated Churchill Brothers to win the I-League football crown.
- ⇒ India's B Adhiban clinched the Reykjavik Open Chess title in Ireland.
- ⇒ The first edition of a special marathon named 'Soldierathon' was held at Nehru Stadium in New Delhi. It was held in four categories – 10Km, 5Km, 3Km and wheelchair.
- ⇒ World champions Australia won 27th edition of the Sultan Azlan Shah cup 2018 for record 10th time. In the final match held in Ipoh, Malaysia.
- ⇒ Ace wrestler Navjot Kaur won gold medal in the 65kg freestyle wrestling category of Senior Asian Championships held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. With this, she created history by becoming the first Indian woman wrestler to win a gold medal in Senior Asian Championships.

## Awards

- ⇒ Balkrishna Doshi, the legendary Indian architect and pioneer of low-cost housing design has won the prestigious Pritzker Prize, which is considered the architecture field's Nobel.
- ⇒ India won the Best Exhibitor Award at ITB–Berlin World Tourist Meet convened at Berlin, Germany. More than 100 countries participated in the mega meet. The ITB Berlin is the world's largest tourism trade fair.
- ⇒ The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) was awarded the 2017 Kochon Prize by the Stop TB Partnership of South Korea, for building the tradition of excellence in Tuberculosis (TB) research and development.
- ⇒ Canadian mathematician Robert P. Langlands (81) has won the prestigious Abel Prize 2018 for his visionary programme connecting the representation theory to number theory.
- ⇒ Chhattisgarh was awarded National Water Digest Award for Water Conservation-Diversion and increasing the irrigation capacity in the State.



## Persons

- ⇒ Krishna Kumari Kolhi (39) from Sindh province in Pakistan became the first-ever Dalit Hindu woman to get elected as Senator, the member of upper house (Senate) of the Muslim-majority country. She is a member of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari-led Pakistan People's Party (PPP)
- ⇒ Neil Basu became the first person of Asian heritage to be appointed Counter-terrorism Chief of the Scotland Yard.
- ⇒ Bidya Devi Bhandari, Nepal's first woman President was re-elected for the second term in office.
- ⇒ Chandra Bhushan Kumar has been appointed Deputy Election Commissioner.
- ⇒ Angela Merkel has been elected Chancellor of Germany for the fourth term.
- ⇒ Vladimir Putin has been re-elected President of Russia for the fourth term.
- ⇒ Biplab Deb of BJP is the new Chief Minister of Tripura.
- ⇒ Conrad Sangma of National People's Party and the son of PA Sangma is the new Chief Minister of Meghalaya.
- ⇒ Neiphiu Rio, the leader of the BJP–National Democratic Progressive Party-led alliance is the new Chief Minister of Nagaland.

## Died

- ⇒ Stephen Hawking, the renowned British physicist and cosmologist passed away. He was the author of the best-seller book 'A Brief History of Time'. Hawking dedicated his life to unlocking the secrets of the universe.
- ⇒ Oskar Groening, one of the last Germans to face war crime charges arising from the Holocaust during the World War II, passed away.

## Miscellaneous

- ⇒ The Lok Sabha passed the Specific Relief (Amendment) Bill, 2018. The Bill aims to tweak a 54-year old law that deals with specific fulfilment of a contract. The Bill proposes to grant a party the right to seek damages from the other side in case of the breach of a business contract.
- ⇒ The first phase of Shakti Sthala Solar Park, having total capacity of 2,000 megawatts (MW) was inaugurated in the Tumkur district, Karnataka. It is claimed to be the world's largest solar park.
- ⇒ Tri-service maritime exercise 'Paschim Lehar' was conducted by the Indian Navy off the western coast in the Arabian Sea. The objective of the exercise was to build interoperability between Indian Navy, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Indian Coast Guard.
- ⇒ A new train between Naharlagun in Arunachal Pradesh and Anand Vihar Terminal, New Delhi named Arunachal Express was flagged off recently.
- ⇒ The Supreme Court recently upheld the Madras High Court and the Bombay High Court judgements regarding the question of foreign law firms practising in India. As per the verdict, the foreign law firms and foreign lawyers cannot practise in India.

- ⇒ Bharati Defence and Infrastructure Ltd (BDIL), a Mumbai based private sector shipbuilding, delivered high-speed interceptor boat ICG C-162 to Indian Coast Guard (ICG) at BDIL jetty in Mangaluru, Karnataka. It is the fifth interceptor boat delivered by BDIL's Mangaluru shipyard to ICG.
- ⇒ The Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Delhi End TB Summit in presence of the member countries of WHO South East Asia Region. India is committed to eradicate tuberculosis (TB) by 2025.
- ⇒ India, Bangladesh and Russia have signed tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) for cooperation in construction of Rooppur nuclear power plant near Dhaka, Bangladesh. It is the first initiative under India-Russia nuclear deal to undertake atomic energy projects in third countries. It will also be India's first atomic energy venture abroad. India, not being a member of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) cannot participate directly in construction of atomic power reactors.
- ⇒ Indian Navy's sailboat INSV Tarini, led by all-women crew, reached Cape Town, South Africa as part of Navika Sagar Parikrama expedition. This stop is the last phase of its maiden voyage to circumnavigate. This is the first-ever Indian circumnavigation of the globe by an all-women crew. The vessel is skippered by Lieutenant Commander Vartika Joshi.
- ⇒ India's plan to build a military base at Mahe in Seychelles islands has run into controversy. While the Seychelles government is in favour of the project, its public is against it.
- ⇒ Odisha Government has launched 'Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas' (Our Village, our development) programme to reach out to people in rural areas and make themselves involved in developmental activities. Under this programme, people can directly send their grievances to Chief Minister's Office (CMO) at the Secretariat in Bhubaneswar through Wi-Fi enabled latest technology video wall vans.
- ⇒ Researchers from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru, have developed silver copper telluride (AgCuTe), a novel compound that exhibits poor thermal conductivity but shows good electrical conductivity.
- ⇒ India's first helicopter shuttle service (HeliTaxi) was launched in IT capital Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ⇒ Cybersecurity agencies have detected a new malware called 'Saposhi' that can take over electronic devices and use them for Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks.
- ⇒ Guatemala has decided to relocate its embassy in Israel to Jerusalem. The decision came promptly after Donald Trump's decision to transfer the US embassy from Tel Aviv to the disputed city of Jerusalem.
- ⇒ The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched '#Yes I Bleed' menstrual hygiene campaign on the occasion of Women's Day on March 8, 2018.



- ⇒ The government has shifted the headquarters of Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) from Chennai to Ballabgarh in Faridabad district of Haryana for better coordination between the Environment Ministry and AWBI for carrying out the animal welfare activities.
- ⇒ The Union Government has expanded Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) programme from 161 districts to all 640 districts of the country. As per the data available in the Health Management Information System (HMIS), there has been an improvement in sex ratio at birth (SRB), which was 918 in 2014-15, has improved to 926 in 2016-17.
- ⇒ Diu has become the first and only Union Territory in the country to be fully run on solar energy.
- ⇒ India's first national coastal policing academy, National Academy of Coastal Policing (NACP) to train police forces in effectively safeguarding country's shoreline started functioning from April 2018. It was launched from the Okha town in Devbhumi Dwarka district of Gujarat.
- ⇒ Samvedna 2018, the first multilateral Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise of Indian Air Force (IAF) in association with South Asian Region nations was held off the coast of Kerala. The multilateral exercise involved the representatives from air forces of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and UAE.
- ⇒ The National Conference on Counterfeiting and Role of Enforcement Agencies was held in New Delhi. It was organised by the Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) in collaboration with the European Union (EU). The conference aimed to provide common platform to national and international experts to have dialogue and exchange best practices for benefit of enforcement agencies and industry representatives and provide fresh ideas for further strengthening IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) protection ecosystem.
- ⇒ The government has constituted Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal for adjudication of longstanding disputes between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over sharing of Mahanadi river water. The tribunal will have three members with Justice A M Khanwilkar as the Chairman of it.
- ⇒ The Indian Air Force (IAF), for the first time flawlessly landed its largest transport US-manufactured aircraft, C-17 Globemaster at the strategic Tuting Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) in Arunachal Pradesh, which is close to the Chinese border.
- ⇒ The Ministry of Environment and Forests has given environmental clearance to India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) project to be set up in Bodi West hills in Tamil Nadu. The project aims at building a world-class underground laboratory with a rock cover of approximately 1200 meters. Its mandate is to conduct basic research on elementary particle called neutrino.
- ⇒ The Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes (CIRB) has claimed that India's first cloned Assamese buffalo male calf named Sach-Gaurav was born in Hisar, Haryana, making it the first buffalo calf to be born in field.
- ⇒ The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched LaQshya programme aimed at improving quality of maternity care in labour room and maternity Operation Theatre.
- ⇒ The 8th Theatre Olympics, the largest international theatre festival was recently held for the first time in India. The event was organised by National School of Drama (NSD). The theme of festival was – "Flag of Friendship".
- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the 105th session of Indian Science Congress (ISC) at Manipur Central University in Imphal. The focal theme of the 5-day ISC was "Reaching the Unreached Through Science & Technology". The 7th Women Science Congress was also held in Imphal.
- ⇒ NITI Aayog has released comprehensive roadmaps and detailed timelines for its initiative Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E) project. The SATH-E project aims at promoting vocational education, skill development, teacher training and introducing technology in classrooms.
- ⇒ The Gulf Shield – 1 military exercise of 23 countries including Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states was held in Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia.
- ⇒ The Indo-French joint naval exercise Varuna-18 was held off the Goa coast. Varuna-18 was conducted in three sea areas, including the Arabian Sea, the Bay of Bengal and the South Western Indian Ocean.
- ⇒ The National Cultural Audiovisual Archives (NCAA) project of Ministry of Culture was certified as world's first Trusted Digital Repository. The certification was granted by Primary Trustworthy Digital Repository Authorisation Body Ltd. (PTAB), United Kingdom. The primary objective of NCAA is to identify and preserve cultural heritage of India available in audiovisual form through process of digitization and make it accessible to the people.
- ⇒ The Union Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers has approved the proposal of setting up of Plastic Park in Deoghar District, Jharkhand.
- ⇒ NITI Aayog and Piramal Foundation have inked Statement of Intent (SoI) to work closely with District Collectors and key officers of 'Aspirational Districts' to support their transformation in terms of healthcare, education and nutrition.
- ⇒ The Raja Ramanna Centre for Advanced Technology (RRCAT), an Indore-based unit of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has developed an instrument called Fluorimeter, to measure the traces of uranium in water.



- ⇒ The Union Cabinet has approved the opening of 18 new Indian Missions in Africa over a four year period from 2018- 2021. It will increase the number of Resident Indian Missions in Africa from 29 to 47.
- ⇒ The Union Cabinet has approved the second and final extension of the term of the commission constituted to examine the issue of Sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes in Central List up to June, 2018. The Commission is headed by Justice (Retd.) G. Rohini.
- ⇒ Andhra Pradesh Government launched multi-utility vehicle 'Naipunya Ratham', or World on Wheels to bring technology to remote corners. It was launched at the State Secretariat in capital Amaravathi.
- ⇒ The Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) has delivered second Advanced Offshore Patrol Vessel (AOPV) to Sri Lanka Navy. This was overall the fourth Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) delivered in the current financial year. The vessel is the largest and most advanced ship in Sri Lankan Navy fleet.
- ⇒ The world's longest sandstone cave named Krem Puri was discovered near Laitsohum village in Mawsynram area in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya. The cave is 24,583 metres (24.6 km) in length and is more than 6,000 metres longer than the world record holder Cueva Del Saman in Edo Zulia, Venezuela.
- ⇒ The twelfth edition of Earth Hour was observed across the world on 24 March 2018 to take a global call on climate change. To mark this day, cities worldwide turned their lights off for one hour from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm local time. This initiative aims to inspire organisations, institutions and individuals to make choice to curb some habits, practices and lifestyles that burden our lives and environment. It includes taking steps like giving up of fossil fuels, single-use plastics, lonely car rides and e-waste. It is organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).
- ⇒ The Union Ministry of Culture for the first time had organised Madhavpur Mela in Madhavpur Ghed in Porbandar District of Gujarat under the banner of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat. Its purpose is to bring various parts of the country, especially the North-East, close to each other.
- ⇒ The National Conference on Down Syndrome was held in New Delhi. Down Syndrome is a chromosomal condition associated with intellectual and learning disabilities. It leads to delayed development and behavioural problems in children suffering from it.
- ⇒ Surat district in Gujarat become the first in the country to have 100% solar powered Primary Health Centers (PHCs).
- ⇒ India's first insect museum with state-of-the-art amenities was unveiled at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University campus in Coimbatore. The lobby of the museum depicts the theme "BUGS ARE KINGS".
- ⇒ NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has signed Statement of Intent (SOI) with German tech company SAP to promote the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across 100 Atal Tinkering Labs across India. The collaboration will allow SAP to further ignite innovation in India's large student population by providing right guidance, knowledge and infrastructure.
- ⇒ Hindon Elevated Road, India's longest elevated road was inaugurated in Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. It will make it easier to commute between Delhi and Ghaziabad.
- ⇒ NASA will send first-ever mission named as InSight (Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport) dedicated to exploring the deep interior of Mars.
- ⇒ Union law ministry is preparing to file a review petition against the Supreme Court's ruling on the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 that puts a stop to immediate arrests in complaints filed under its provisions. One of the provisions of the law states that public servants (non SC/ST) neglecting his duties related to SCs/ STs will be punished with imprisonment for a term of 6 months to 1 year.
- ⇒ Scientists have discovered a new organ in human body and have named it as 'interstitium'. It will be the 80th organ in the human body. It might also be the biggest organ in human body. The discovery of interstitium, the new organ, is a network of interconnected and fluid-filled spaces all over the body. It is found everywhere in human bodies, acting as shock absorber in all places where tissues are moved or subjected to force.

### Books & Authors

- ⇒ Dirty Genes – Ben Lynch
- ⇒ The Ministry of Utmost Happiness – Arundhati Roy
- ⇒ Indian Cultures as Heritage – Romila Thapar

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