



CURRENT AFFAIRS (OCTOBER - 2018) :

National

- ⇒ The Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently visited Nepal to take part in the 4th summit of the BIMSTEC member states in Kathmandu. BIMSTEC is the abbreviation of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation. It is an organisation of seven nations of South Asia and South-East Asia. They are – India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal. The theme of the 4th BIMSTEC summit was 'Towards a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable Bay of Bengal region'. The 5th BIMSTEC summit will be held in Sri Lanka.
- ⇒ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has postponed Chandrayaan-2, India's second mission to moon to January 2019. This is the second time that the mission has been postponed. The ambitious mission was earlier planned to be launched in April 2018 and was later fixed for October 2018. With this delay, India may lose the fourth position in the world for soft-landing on the moon to Israel as it too is planning to launch the moon mission in December 2018.
- ⇒ Indigenously developed Helicopter launched Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) 'HELINA' was successfully flight tested from Indian Army Helicopter at Pokhran range. HELINA is designed and developed indigenously for Indian Army under integrated guided missile development programme (IGMDP). It is manufactured by India's sole missile producer, state-owned Bharat Dynamics Limited. HELINA is one of the most advanced Anti-Tank Weapons in the world.
- ⇒ Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) announced its first indigenous human space mission dubbed as 'Gaganyaan' to be launched in 2022 with three Indian astronauts. This will be the first human space mission to be indigenously developed by ISRO. If successful, India will become the fourth nation in the world to send astronauts into space after US, Russia and China. Rakesh Sharma was the first Indian to travel to space aboard the Soviet Union's Soyuz T-11 expedition in 1984.
- ⇒ India has opened Zokhawthar land immigration check-post in Mizoram along the border with Myanmar. It has been designated as authorised immigration centre for entry into and exit from India with valid travel documents for all passengers to or from Myanmar. Zokhawthar is the second immigration check-post in Mizoram along Myanmar border after Zorinpui check-post.

International

- ⇒ Russia and Pakistan signed an agreement to allow Pakistani troops to receive training from the Russian defence centres. The USA immediately suspended more than a decade-long military training programme of Pakistani personnel at the institutions in the USA.

- ⇒ United States announced creation of Iran Action Group (IAG) to impose sanctions on Iran after it had withdrawn (unilaterally) from Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (also known as Iran nuclear deal). It was signed between Iran and P5+1 countries (P5: China, France, Russia, United Kingdom, United States and +1: Germany,) and the European Union in 2015. Donald Trump warns that 'Anyone doing business with Iran is not doing business with us'. But the European Union encourages companies to do more business with Iran.
- ⇒ Iran unveiled the first domestically manufactured fighter jet nicknamed Kowsar. It was unveiled at the defence show held in the capital city of Tehran.
- ⇒ The World Bank launched world's first public block-chain bond named 'Bond-i' created, allocated, transferred and managed by using block-chain technology. Bond-i is an acronym standing for Block-chain Offered New Debt Instrument and also refers to tourist famous Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia. Funds raised from this bond will go towards sustainable development initiatives.
- ⇒ The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Peace Mission 2018 was held in Chebarkul, Russia. Military contingents of the all eight SCO member nations (China, Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan) participated in this exercise. The exercise was aimed at enhancing cooperation between member states to deal with growing threat of terrorism and extremism. It was for the first time since independence that India and Pakistan simultaneously took part in a military exercise, though armies of the two rival neighbouring countries had earlier worked together in the United Nations (UN) peacekeeping missions.
- ⇒ European Space Agency (ESA) has successfully launched wind-sensing satellite named 'Aeolus' into the orbit on board of Vega rocket from French Guyana. It is the world's first wind-sensing satellite dedicated to map Earth's wind on global scale.

Economy

- ⇒ Under the money circulation and credit control policy of the RBI, the existing rates (as on 20.10.2018) are :
 - * Repo Rate (*Repo Rate is the rate at which commercial banks borrow money from the central bank, i.e., RBI*) : 6.50%.
 - * Reverse Repo Rate (*Reverse Repo Rate is the rate at which the commercial banks deposit their surplus money to the central bank*) : 6.25%
 - * 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*) : 6.75%
- * MSF (*Marginal Standing Facility is the loan banks are permitted to avail themselves from the RBI on overnight basis, using its SLR securities*) : 6.75%.
- * 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*) : 8.85% - 9.45%.
- * Term Deposit (Fixed Deposit) Rate (more than 1 year): 6.25% - 7.25%.
- * Savings A/c.: 3.50% - 4.00%.
- * MCLR (Overnight) : 8.00% - 8.40%.
- (*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 Cabinet has approved the LIC's proposed acquisition of up to 51% stake in IDBI Bank.
- ⇒ Union Ministry of Culture launched Seva Bhoj Yojana, a new scheme to provide financial assistance on purchase of specific food items by Charitable Religious Institutions (CRIs) for free distribution among people.
- ⇒ According to the World Economic Forum report, India has been ranked at the 62nd place among the 103 emerging economies on the Inclusive Development Index, 2018. Norway remains the world's most inclusive advanced economy, followed by Ireland and Luxembourg. The index takes into account the 'living standards, environmental sustainability and protection of future generations from further indebtedness'.
- ⇒ India is the largest milk producer in the world. India's milk production is estimated to have increased by 6.6% to 176.35 million tonnes during 2017-18.
- ⇒ The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) has launched Unified Payments Interface (UPI) 2.0. UPI is a system that powers multiple bank accounts into a single mobile application of any participating bank.
- ⇒ SBM Group of Mauritius will soon open six bank branches in India under the name of SBM Bank (India) Ltd.
- ⇒ Andhra Pradesh Government has approved Mukhyamantri Yuva Nestam, an unemployment allowance scheme to provide Rs 1000 per month to the unemployed youth in the State.
- ⇒ The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has unveiled tricolour logo for geographical indication (GI) certified products. The logo has the tagline 'Invaluable Treasures of Incredible India' printed below it.
- ⇒ FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO), the women's wing of Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has launched WOW (Wellness of Women) mobile application aimed at creating awareness on preventive healthcare for women across the country. WOW app is backed by Chennai-based Apollo Hospitals Group that offers access to renowned doctors and provides health tips.
- ⇒ According to the National Council for Applied and Economic Research (NCAER), Delhi has emerged as the most attractive State for investors, followed by Tamil Nadu and Gujarat.
- ⇒ NITI Aayog has launched global mobility hackathon 'Move Hack' to crowdsource solutions aimed at future of mobility in India. It is envisaged as one of the largest hackathons globally. It is the first platform in the world that has enmeshed public transport, private transport, road safety, multimodal connectivity and new-age transport technologies such as zero emission vehicles and intra city aerial transport spearheaded by the Government.
- ⇒ Union Government has announced that it has reached the target of providing 5 crore free LPG connections under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY). The poor of Uttar Pradesh got the highest number of connections (87 lakh) followed by those of West Bengal (67 lakh).
- ⇒ National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with SBI for long term unsecured loan of Rs. 25,000 crore for 10 years with 3 years of moratorium on repayments. This is SBI's highest long term unsecured loan to any entity and also largest loan ever sanctioned to NHAI in one stroke by any institution.
- ⇒ President Ram Nath Kovind has given the assent (under Article 111) to Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 passed by Parliament. With this assent, the Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 will deter fugitive economic offenders to evade legal process in India and flee the country. The new law defines fugitive economic offender (FEO) as any individual against whom warrants for arrest is issued for his involvement in select economic offences involving amount of at least Rs 100 crore or more and has left India so as to avoid criminal prosecution. The President also gave assent to Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Act, 2018. It is aimed at allowing a court to try offences related to cheque bounce expeditiously and direct the drawee to pay a minimum of 20% of the cheque amount as interim compensation.
- ⇒ Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has asked insurers to cover mental illness under medical insurance policy from immediate effect, treating it at par with physical illness. At present, insurers exclude mental illness from the ambit of medical insurance policies.



- ⇒ Union Government has constituted a four-member Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu to decide on 16-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations. It was constituted to advise Prime Minister on whether to continue with or withdraw from RCEP negotiations. The RCEP consists of 10-ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) and its six FTA partners (Australia, New Zealand, India, China, Japan and Korea).
 - ⇒ India's largest bank State Bank of India (SBI) has launched its Multi Option Payment Acceptance Device (MOPAD) for digital payments convenience of merchants and consumers. It aims at providing convenience to merchants by eliminating multiple machines that they keep in order to facilitate transaction from different sources.
 - ⇒ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has transferred surplus (dividend) of Rs. 50,000 crore to Government for the year ended in June 2018. It is over 63% more than Rs 30,659 crore which it transferred in 2017. Significance of Surplus RBI surplus forms sizeable chunk of revenue which government earns under the head of 'non-tax', which is mainly dividends distributed by state owned firms.
 - ⇒ The NITI Aayog and the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and entered into a three-year partnership.
 - ⇒ Fertiliser major IFFCO has entered into a joint venture with Congelados De Navarra of Spain to set up a food processing plant at Ludhiana in Punjab. With this joint venture, co-operative IFFCO for the first time will foray into food processing sector.
 - ⇒ Axis Bank became the first bank in the country to introduce Iris Scan Authentication feature for Aadhaar-based transactions through its micro ATM tablets. The transaction process through iris scan is very simple. Customers need to select desired services (funds transfer, cash withdrawal) and feed-in their Aadhaar numbers in micro ATM. Next, they have to choose IRIS as desired mode of authentication.
 - ⇒ NITI Aayog has launched 'Pitch to MOVE' – a mobility pitch competition that aims to provide budding entrepreneurs of India the unique opportunity to pitch their business ideas to distinguished jury. Using this platform, startups working in various fields of mobility can pitch their ideas to industry leaders and venture capitalists for raising investments.
 - ⇒ Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal delivered its final verdict to ending 50-year-old dispute over sharing of the Mahadayi (also called Mandovi in Goa) River. The dispute was mainly between Goa and Karnataka and also Maharashtra.
 - ⇒ India has released additional Rs. 470 million (Nepali) for Phase I of Postal Highway Project being constructed in Southern Plains of Nepal. It is also called Hulaki Rajmarg which runs across the Terai region of Nepal.
 - ⇒ Banks Board Bureau (BBB) has appointed two firms Egon Zehnder International Pvt. Ltd. of Switzerland and Hay Consultants Pvt. Ltd. of the USA to assist in developing strategies for top bank management. Their expertise will help to bring in experienced professionals as whole-time directors and also focus to ensure more effective monitoring of decisions taken by state owned bank management.
 - ⇒ Union Government is expecting that public sector banks (PSBs) placed under RBI's Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework will come out of it by the end of this year. As many as 11 out of 21 state-owned banks are currently under PCA framework. Prompt corrective action (PCA) framework is a supervisory tool of RBI, which involves monitoring of certain performance indicators of banks to check their financial health as early warning exercise and to ensure that banks don't go bust. Its objective is to facilitate banks to take corrective measures including those prescribed by RBI, in timely manner to restore their financial health.
 - ⇒ Mukesh Ambani-led oil-to-telecom company Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) became the first Indian company to cross the Rs 8 lakh crore (\$114 billion) market capitalisation. 'M-cap' is the value of a company that is traded on stock market, calculated by multiplying total number of shares by present share price.
 - ⇒ 126 MW wind power capacity, part of India's first inter-state transmission system (ISTS) auction, was commissioned in Bhuj, Gujarat.
 - ⇒ Germany has announced to provide soft loan of euro 120 million to India to strengthen sewage water treatment infrastructure in Uttarakhand in an effort to clean River Ganga under Clean Ganga Mission. The purpose of this project is to reduce inflow of untreated waste water in River Ganga and, thus, to improve the water quality of the river.
- Sports**
- ⇒ The 18th Asian Games were organised in Jakarta and Palembang, Indonesia. 45 nations participated in it. China emerged overall champion winning 289 medals including 132 golds. India remained at the 8th position winning 69 medals including 15 golds and 25 silvers. Japanese swimmer Rikako Ikee was declared the most valuable player of the 2018 Asian Games. The athletes from North Korea and South Korea entered the stadium as a united team. However, they contested for medals separately. The 19th Asian Games in 2022 will be organised in Hangzhou, China.



- ⇒ Kento Momota became the first Japanese shuttler to win the World Badminton Championship Men's Singles title. Spain's Carolina Marin won the Women's Singles title defeating PV Sindhu of India.
- ⇒ Indian Teen cyclist Esow Alben of Andaman & Nicobar created history by winning the country's maiden medal in track cycling at the world level. He achieved this feat by winning silver medal in Men's Keirin event of UCI Junior Track Cycling World Championships held in Aigle, Switzerland.
- ⇒ India won South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Under-15 Women's Championship in Thimpu, Bhutan, by defeating Bangladesh.
- ⇒ Nihal Sarin has become the 53rd Chess Grandmaster of India.

Awards

- ⇒ Pepsico Chairperson and CEO Indra Nooyi has been selected as Asia Society's Game Changer of the year 2018 in recognition of her pioneering business achievements, humanitarian record and advocacy for women and girls around the world.
- ⇒ President Ram Nath Kovind has conferred Outstanding Parliamentarian Awards on five Members of Parliament. The recipients are —
 - Dr Najma Heptulla, the former Rajya Sabha MP. She was selected for this award for the year 2013.
 - Hukumdev Narayan Yadav, the Lok Sabha MP. He was selected for this award for the year for 2014.
 - Ghulam Nabi Azad, the Rajya Sabha MP was selected for this award for the year for 2015. He is the Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha representing Congress party.
 - Dinesh Trivedi, the Lok Sabha MP was selected for 2016.
 - Bhartruhari Mahatab, the Lok Sabha MP was selected for 2017.
- ⇒ United States Government has awarded Legion of Merit (Degree of Commander) to General Dalbir Singh Suhag (Retired) of Indian Army, for his exceptionally meritorious service as Chief of the Army Staff from August 2014 to December 2016. With this, he becomes the second Indian to get this award, first being General Rajendrasinghi Jadeja in 1946.
- ⇒ Former West Bengal Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi was conferred with 2018 Rajiv Gandhi National Sadbhavana Award. He was presented the award in New Delhi on the occasion of the 74th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Persons

- ⇒ Harivansh Narayan Singh of National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has been elected Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha. He succeeded PJ Kurien.
- ⇒ Emmerson Mnangagwa, who took power after the veteran leader of Zimbabwe Robert Mugabe was ousted last year, won the elections to become the President of Zimbabwe.

- ⇒ Imran Khan has been sworn in as the Prime Minister of Pakistan when his PTI (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) Party won the election.
- ⇒ Scott Morrison has become the new Prime Minister of Australia. He replaced Malcolm Turnbull.
- ⇒ Ramesh Powar has been named the head coach of the women's national cricket team.
- ⇒ Rekha Sharma has been appointed Chairperson of the National Commission for Women (NCW).
- ⇒ Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways appointed Bollywood actor Akshay Kumar as brand ambassador of its Road Safety campaigns.
- ⇒ New Governors –
 - Satya Pal Malik is the new Governor of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). It makes him, the first careered politician to be appointed Governor of J&K in 51 years.
 - Lal Ji Tandon is the new Governor of Bihar.
 - Ganga Prasad is the new Governor of Sikkim.
 - Tathagata Roy is the new Governor of Meghalaya.
 - Kaptan Singh Solanki is the new Governor of Tripura.
 - Satyadev Narayan Arya is the new Governor of Haryana.
 - Baby Rani Mauryais the new Governor of Uttarakhand.
- ⇒ Dr. G Satheesh Reddy has been appointed Secretary of Department of Defence R&D (DDR&D) and Chairman of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- ⇒ Satya S. Tripathi, an Indian development economist and environment expert has been appointed assistant secretary general of the United Nations and will head the New York office of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP).

Died

- ⇒ Former Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee passed away in Kolkata.
- ⇒ Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the veteran BJP leader, prolific writer and former Prime Minister of India passed away in New Delhi. He was 93. He was the Prime Minister thrice in 1996 (13 days), 1998-1999 and 1999-2004. He was the first non-Congress leader to have completed full term as the Prime Minister.
- ⇒ M Karunanidhi, the former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu and supreme leader of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) passed away.
- ⇒ Kofi Annan, the former United Nations General Secretary and Nobel Peace Prize laureate passed away in Bern, Switzerland.
- ⇒ VS Naipaul, the author of many books and winner of the Nobel Prize for literature in 2001, passed away. His popular books include 'A Bend in the River', 'House of Mr. Biswas', 'The Mimic Men', 'In A Free State', 'The Enigma of Arrival' and 'Finding the Centre'.



- ⇒ Kuldeep Nayyar, the veteran journalist and writer passed away. His popular books include 'Beyond the Lines', 'An Autobiography', 'India after Nehru', 'Without Fear', 'Distant Neighbours' and 'The Judgement'.
 - ⇒ Ajit Wadekar, former Indian Test cricket captain passed away.
 - ⇒ Rajan Nanda, the leading industrialist and Chairman of Escorts passed away. Nanda was married to Raj Kapoor's daughter Ritu while his son Nikhil is married to Amitabh Bachchan's daughter Sweta. (*How is Sweta related to Raj Kapoor?*)
- Miscellaneous**
- ⇒ India is the 37th country in the world and only 3rd country in Asia after Japan and South Korea to get the Strategic Trade Authorization – 1 (STA – 1) status by the USA. Traditionally the USA places in the STA – 1 list only those countries which are the members of all the four export control regimes : Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), Wassenaar Arrangement (WA), Australia Group (AG) and Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). India is a member of all the three groups except the NSG because of the political opposition from China.
 - ⇒ President Ram Nath Kovind has given assent to the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2018, that provides for stringent punishment, including death penalty for those convicted of raping girls below the age of 12 years.
 - ⇒ India is keeping a close watch on incoming tourists, fearing transmission of a new respiratory virus that belongs to the same family as the deadly Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). India has 25 airports, 12 ports and 7 international land borders catering to international traffic. These can be possible points through which dangerous pathogens can be brought by international passengers.
 - ⇒ Rajasthan has become the first State in the country to implement National Policy on Biofuels unveiled by the Union Government in May 2018. Its implementation was approved by high-power Biofuel Authority. Under this policy, State Government will lay emphasis on increasing production of oilseeds and establish Centre for Excellence in Udaipur to promote research in fields of alternative fuels and energy resources
 - ⇒ Vienna, the capital of Austria was adjudged the most livable city in the world in the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual survey this year. Melbourne of Australia finished at the second position. Out of 140 cities, New Delhi secured the 112th place.
 - ⇒ NASA, the US Space Agency launched the Parker Solar Probe into space from Cape Canaveral, Florida to study the sun.
 - ⇒ Sweden released a handbook 'Feminist Foreign Policy' for rights groups and foreign governments to promoting women's rights globally.
 - ⇒ Common Service Centre (CSC) and National Health Accounts (NHA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to implement the Ayushman Bharat scheme through 3 lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs) across the country. Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS) aims to cover over 10 crore poor vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) providing coverage of up to Rs. 5 lakh (per family per year) for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization. Common Service Centre (CSC) is an initiative of Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeitY).
 - ⇒ Lok Sabha has unanimously passed Constitution (123rd Amendment) Bill, 2017 by two-thirds majority. The constitutional amendment bill seeks to grant National Commission on Backward Classes (NCBC) constitutional status at par with National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST).
 - ⇒ The National Registrar of Citizens (NRC) published the final draft recently excluding more than 4 million people out of the list. NRC is the list of Indian citizens in Assam. Assam, which faced influx of immigrants from Bangladesh since the early 20th century, is the only State having the NRC.
 - ⇒ Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur launched 'horn not ok' awareness campaign and 'Shaur Nahin' (no noise) mobile application in Shimla. The campaign aims to spread awareness of unnecessary blowing horn as it creates unnecessary noise pollution and is harmful to health. The first phase of campaign has been launched in Shimla and Manali.
 - ⇒ Computer scientists from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras have developed the first of the family of six industry-standard microprocessors under Project Shakti. The initial batch of 300 chips have been named RISECREEK and have been fabricated at Intel's facility at Oregon, US for free to run Linux operating system. Project Shakti was started in 2014 at IIT-Madras.
 - ⇒ Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has approved 122 new research project proposals worth Rs 112 crore for funding under its IMPRINT-II (Impacting Research Innovation and Technology) scheme. The 122 approved new research projects aims to advance research in energy, healthcare, security and defence domains in the higher education institutions. IMPRINT was launched in November 2015 with an aim to develop new engineering education policy and create road map to pursue engineering challenges.
 - ⇒ India's first genetic resource bank has been inaugurated at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology's (CCMB) Laboratory of Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES) in Hyderabad, Telangana.



- ⇒ The Civil Aviation Ministry has approved the setting up of water aerodromes in the country, with three places – Chilka Lake in Odisha, Sardar Sarovar Dam and Sabarmati River Front in Gujarat being identified in the first phase. A water aerodrome is an area of open water that can be used by sea-planes for landing and also taking off.
- ⇒ Joint military exercise Maitree 2018 between Indian Army and Royal Thai Army was conducted in Thailand.
- ⇒ The world's first-ever thermal battery plant owned by Bharat Energy Storage Technology Private Limited (BEST) was inaugurated in Amravati, Andhra Pradesh
- ⇒ Tokyo 2020 will be the first Olympics to use facial recognition technology to increase security around all venues. The facial recognition technology will use IC chips within identification cards to automatically verify the identity of those entering over 40 sporting venues. The system will not be aimed at spectators but instead will concentrate on strengthening security and decreasing waiting times for athletes. This system will help to prevent fraudulent entry by people borrowing, stealing or faking an ID card.
- ⇒ The Delhi High Court decriminalised begging in national capital. The act of begging in the national capital was made a criminal offence after the Bombay Prevention of Begging Act, 1959, was extended to Delhi by a Central government amendment in 1960. The court's order came on PILs which had sought decriminalisation of begging in the capital. The PILs had argued that poverty can never be a crime and if a person is destitute and begs for living, such person cannot be treated as criminal. Delhi High Court observed that people beg on streets not because they wish to, but because they need to.
- ⇒ The Government has informed the Lok Sabha that Non-Resident Indians (NRI) cannot file Right to Information (RTI) applications to seek governance-related information from Central government departments. It mentioned that only citizens of India have the right to seek information under the provisions of RTI Act, 2005.
- ⇒ World Bio-fuel Day (The International Biodiesel Day) is observed every year on August 10 to create awareness about the importance of non-fossil fuels i.e., Green Fuels or Bio-fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels.
- ⇒ The World Elephant Day is observed every year on August 12 to create awareness of urgent plight of African and Asian elephants.
- ⇒ International Youth Day is observed every year across the world on August 12 to draw attention to give a set of cultural and legal issues surrounding the youth. The theme for this year is 'Safe Spaces for Youth'.
- ⇒ The World Mosquito Day is observed every year on August 20 to raise awareness about the causes of malaria,
- ⇒ The World Senior Citizens Day is celebrated every year on 21 August across the world to raise awareness of the condition of elder people and support them through the process of senescence.
- ⇒ The Parliament has passed Homoeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Bill, 2018 to replace the Ordinance promulgated by the President in May 2018. It amends Homoeopathy Central Council Act, 1973 which sets up Central Council of Homoeopathy and regulates homoeopathic education and practice.
- ⇒ Indian Navy launched Operation Madad, a major rescue and relief operation in flood-hit Kerala. Indian Army also launched Operation Sahyog to rescue people there. Both operations supported rescue and relief efforts of civil administration and National Disaster Relief Force (NDRF).
- ⇒ The projects for defence industrial corridor in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh were launched recently by the Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. It was launched as part of the Union Government's efforts to develop specialised zones dedicated to defence production in the state. Defence Manufacturing was identified as one of the 25 key sectors as part of the Make in India initiative. In 2018-19 Union Budget, Government had announced setting up of two corridors – one in Tamil Nadu and the other in UP exclusively for defence manufacturing.
- ⇒ India has handed over 404 houses built for Indian-origin people in Sri Lanka's tea plantation areas at Dunsinane Estate in Nuwara Eliya city.
- ⇒ The Digital North East Vision 2022 was released in Guwahati, Assam by Union Minister for Electronics & Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad. The first electronics manufacturing cluster in the north-eastern region was also inaugurated in Guwahati. The vision document emphasizes on leveraging digital technologies to transform the lives of people of the north-east and enhance their ease of living.
- ⇒ Delhi Police has inducted India's first all-woman Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team for anti-terrorist operations.
- ⇒ National Wildlife Genetic Resource Bank was inaugurated at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology's (CCMB) Laboratory of Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES) facility in Hyderabad, Telanagana. It is India's first genetic resource bank where genetic material will be stored for posterity which will further the cause of conservation of endangered and protected animals.
- ⇒ The first project under Swadesh Darshan Scheme 'North East Circuit: Imphal and Khongjom' was inaugurated in Manipur. The project covers two sites i.e. Kangla Fort and Khongjom in Manipur.



- ⇒ Union Railway Ministry released Third Party Survey Report on Station Cleanliness which ranked 407 railway stations including 75 A1 category stations and 332 A category stations on the basis of cleanliness performance. Jodhpur (Rajasthan) was ranked first in survey A1 category stations, Marwar (Rajasthan) was ranked first in A category stations and North Western Railway was ranked first among all Zonal Railways.
- ⇒ Pune (Maharashtra) ranked first among 116 cities (with population of 1 million plus) in Ease of Living Index released by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. Besides, two more Maharashtra cities — Navi Mumbai and Greater Mumbai — figured in the second and third spots.
- ⇒ International Conference on Recent Advances in Food Processing Technology (iCRAFPT) was held at the Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology (IFPT), Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu. The theme of the conference was “Doubling farmers’ income through food processing”.
- ⇒ Israeli Navy has announced to procure Barak 8 missile defence system, jointly developed by India and Israel. Barak-8 Missile, also known as LR-SAM or as MR-SAM, is an Indian-Israeli surface-to-air missile defence system used by the Israeli Navy as well as by the Indian Navy and Air Force.
- ⇒ A team of international researchers including 18 Indian scientists for the first time have decoded wheat genome
- ⇒ Pitch Black – 18 (PB -18), the biennial multinational air exercise hosted by Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) was concluded recently at Darwin, Australia. In this edition of exercise, Indian Air Force (IAF) for the first time participated with air assets. In earlier exercises it had participated as observer.
- ⇒ Panini language laboratory was recently inaugurated at Mahatma Gandhi institute in Mauritius to promote reading and writing Hindi amongst the young and its further development.
- ⇒ Five northern States Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Union Territories of and Delhi and Chandigarh have decided to set up centralised secretariat at Panchkula (Haryana) to tackle the drug menace.
- ⇒ The month of September 2018 was observed as the National Nutrition Month to mark the country’s fight against malnutrition. The month-long intensive campaign was undertaken with an aim of reaching every household with the message of nutrition — ‘har ghar poshan tyohar’ (every house a celebration of nutrition).
- ⇒ The Supreme Court scrapped the use of NOTA (none of the above) option for Rajya Sabha elections, saying it defeats fairness in indirect elections, destroys democratic values and serves as Satan of defection and corruption.
- ⇒ According to the recent report by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), the maximum number of cyber attacks on the official Indian websites come from China, followed by the USA and Russia.
- ⇒ Former President Pranab Mukherjee launched National Electoral Transformation (NETA) mobile application that allows voters to rate and review their political representatives. The app is the brainchild of a 27-year-old entrepreneur Pratham Mittal. It is the first of its kind platform in India that allows voters to rate and review the political representatives in their constituencies.
- ⇒ Union Ministry of Home Affairs has withdrawn the security clearance of Qatar government’s state-funded English television channel Al Jazeera. It is believed that the main reason for this revocation is considered to be over a documentary made by the Qatari channel on militancy in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), which the Indian Government viewed as ‘biased’.
- ⇒ India’s first captive-born Humboldt Penguin named ‘Freedom Baby’ died barely a week after it was born on August 15, 2018 at Veermata Jijabai Bhosale Udyan and Zoo (Byculla zoo). It was named Freedom Baby as it was born on Independence Day. Byculla zoo imported eight Humboldt Penguins from a South Korea zoo in July 2016.
- ⇒ Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has approved procurement of 24 anti-submarine capable multi role helicopters to enhance the capability of the Indian Navy. This approval will allow Government to sign contract with the US based aviation giant Lockheed Martin for purchasing 24 MH-60R helicopters for the Indian Navy.
- ⇒ The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), one of India’s premier avian research institutes, will start operating its first regional centre or avifauna observatory on the campus of Wetland Research and Training Centre near Chilka Lake (Asia’s largest brackish water lagoon), Odisha. The avifauna observatory will be engaged in identifying air route of foreign birds flocking Chilika lake during winter, sample collection, training related to bird census, etc.
- ⇒ India’s first first-ever environment friendly biofuel powered flight between Dehradun and Delhi was propelled by a blend of oil from jatropha seeds and aviation turbine fuel. The 43-minute flight was operated by SpiceJet’s Bombardier Q-400 aircraft. This plane had carried a blend of 25% of bio jet fuel (derived from jatropha seeds) and 75% of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) in one of the two engines of the plane, while the other carried only ATF.
- ⇒ Punjab Legislative Assembly has unanimously passed Indian Penal Code (Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2018 and Code of Criminal Procedure (Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2018 to make sacrilege of all religious texts punishable with life imprisonment.



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- ⇒ Search engine giant Google has unveiled 'Project Navlekha' to make online content relevant for more Indian users especially in local languages. It was unveiled along with a host of upgrades of Google's other products at the fourth 'Google for India' event held in New Delhi.
- ⇒ Union Government and European Union (EU) have collaborated for research programme named Horizon 2020 to develop Next Generation Influenza Vaccine to protect citizens across the globe.
- ⇒ The Government has constituted a 21-member advisory panel on science, technology and innovation called Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC). It will be headed by Principal Scientific Advisor to government K Vijay Raghavan.
- ⇒ Global IT giant IBM has partnered with Indian IT companies for its 'Call for Code' initiative that aims to build global solutions for disaster management. Indian IT companies that will partner with IBM for Call for Code initiative include Persistent Systems, Invest India, Wipro, Capgemini and NASSCOM.
- ⇒ Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a financing package of \$245 million to implement projects for providing safe and sustainable drinking water service to the people in three districts of West Bengal affected by arsenic, fluoride, and salinity. The three districts are North 24 Parganas, Bankura and Purba Medinipur.
- ⇒ Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) has launched the third edition of Smart India Hackathon 2019 (SIH2019). Smart India Hackathon is world's biggest open innovation model which aims to provide students with platform to solve some of pressing problems faced by people in their daily lives. It also seeks to inculcate culture of product innovation and mindset of problem-solving among young children
- ⇒ Indian Naval Ship Sahyadri reached Port of Darwin, Australia to participate in multilateral regional maritime exercise KAKADU 2018 conducted by Australia. The Indian Navy won the coveted KAKADU Cup 2018 as it participated in a multilateral maritime exercise involving 27 navies.
- ⇒ The government has removed Restricted Area Permit (RAP) from 29 islands in Andaman for foreigners except those from China, Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- ⇒ Mughalsarai railway station of UP has been renamed as Deen Dayal Upadhyaya station.
- ⇒ The Lok Sabha passed a Bill establishing a National Sports University in Manipur.

Books & Authors

- ⇒ 21 Lessons for the 21st Century – Yuval Noah Harari
- ⇒ Gandhi : The Years That Changed the World (1914 to 1948) – Ramchandra Guha
- ⇒ Missing – Sumana Roy
