



### Current Affairs - February to July 2018

Month  Type



- ▶ 472 Current Affairs were found in **Last Six Months** for Type - **International**

(Showing **293** Important Ones)

#### International

- ▶ A public health emergency has been declared in Oceania Nation Papua New Guinea (PNG), amid recent polio outbreak (first in 18 years).
- ▶ Forbes released 4th annual *America's Richest Self-Made Women* list 2018 -

It lists 60 women with combined net worth of \$71 billion, with minimum net worth needed is \$320 million.

Top 5 are -

Rank	Name	Company	Net Worth (\$B)
1.	Diane Hendricks	ABC Supply	\$4.9 billion
2.	Marian Ilitch	Little Caesars	\$4.3 billion
3.	Judy Faulkner	Epic Systems	\$3.5 billion
4.	Meg Whitman	Hewlett Packard Enterprise	\$3.3 billion
5.	Johnelle Hunt	J.B. Hunt Transport Enterprise	\$3.2 billion

Actress Kylie Jenner is notable entrant in list as at just 21 years, she has built a \$900 million cosmetics fortune with virtually no employees or capital. Kylie Cosmetics launched 2 years ago has sold over \$630 million worth of makeup accessories.

2 Indian-origin Women named in List. Jayshree Ullal (CEO of Arista Networks, ranked 18th) has net worth of 1.3 billion dollars. Neerja Sethi is Vice president of Syntel and ranked 21st.

- ▶ North Korea extended its Clocks by 30 Minutes, to synchronize its time zone with that south Korea, which was pulled back 30 minutes 3 years ago. Its a major step towards unification among 2 Koreas looking for peace.
- ▶ 11 Pacific Rim countries entered into Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership or CP TPP or TPP11 in Santiago (Chile). It is revised version of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) proposed by US, finalized after US withdrew from it.
  - ▶ TPP11 includes Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.
  - ▶ It will be world's third largest trade bloc after European Union (EU) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It will come into effect 60 days after 6 of 11 member countries ratify it domestically.
- ▶ 11th World Hindi Conference (विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन) will be hosted by Mauritius in Port Lois in August 2018 with theme *Vaishvik Hindi Aur Bharatiy Sanskriti*.
- ▶ 12th Global Peace Index (GPI) 2018 by Australian Think Tank Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), Rankng 163 Nations -
  - ▶ Top 5 - Iceland (1), New Zealand (2), Austria (3), Portugal (4), Denmark (5)
  - ▶ Bottom 5 - Syria (163), Afghanistan (162), South Sudan (161), Iraq (160), Somalia (159)
  - ▶ Neighbours - Nepal (84), Pakistan (151), **Sri Lanka (67)**, Bangladesh (93)
  - ▶ BRICS - Brazil (106), Russia (154), **India (136)**, China (112), South Africa (125)
  - ▶ India improved as compared to 137th Rank in 2017 List.
- ▶ 18th International Children's Film Festival began in Kolkata, to screen 36 films from 17 countries. It is organised by Cine Central in collaboration with UNICEF.
- ▶ 1st Asia Power Index Australia Based Lowy Institute -
  - ▶ Termed as *giant of the future*, India is ranked 4th out of 25 nations in Asia-Pacific region. As per Report, India trails behind in indicators of defence networks and economic relationships.

-  A country's overall power is its weighted average across eight measures of power - *economic resources, military capability, resilience, future trends, diplomatic influence, economic relationships, defence networks and cultural influence.*
-  USA, China And Japan are top 3. While Russia is at 5th Place.
9. ▶ 2 Indian institutes featured in top 50 Asian institutes in *TIMES Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings for educational institutes in Asia*. These institutes are Indian Institute of Science (29th) and Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (44). List is Topped by National University of Singapore.
10. ▶ 2018 *Soft Power 30* Index, by UK-based firm Portland and University of Southern California -
-  UK topped the list, with France placed second. List does not feature India. Germany was ranked 3rd, followed by USA.
-  India does not feature in global list, but is ranked 8th 10 countries in Asia.
11. ▶ 2018 A.T. Kearney Foreign Direct Investment Confidence Index (25 Nations) -
-  Top 5 - USA, Canada, Germany, UK, China.
-  India is ranked at 11th, down from 8th Position in China.
12. ▶ 2018 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
-  India ranked 138th (falling 2 positions from 136th in 2017).
-  Top 5 - Norway (1), Sweden (2), Netherlands (3), Finland (4), Switzerland (5)
-  North Korea is at Bottom (150th).
-  Neighbours - Bangladesh (146), Sri Lanka (131), Pakistan (139), Nepal (106)
13. ▶ 3rd BRICS Film Festival held in Durban (South Africa), along with International Durban Film Festival (DIFF). Last day of festival was celebrated as India Country Day. Indian winners of Film Festival -
-  Best Actress - Bhanita Das, Village Rockstars
-  Best Film - Newton by Amit Masurkar
-  Special Jury Award - Village Rockstars by Rima Das
14. ▶ 44 African countries from total 55 members of African Union (AU) have signed agreement to create African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), one of world's largest free trade blocs, during a summit held in Kigali (Rwanda). AfCFTA will bring together 1.2 billion people with combined gross domestic product (GDP) of more than \$2 trillion from Africa.
15. ▶ *End of Childhood Index 2018* report by global child rights group named *Save the Children*.
-  India ranked 113th in list of 175 countries.
-  Top 5 - Singapore (1), Slovenia (2), Norway (3), Sweden (4), Finland (5)
-  Bottom 5 - Niger (175), Mali (174), Central African Republic (173), Chad (172), South Sudan (171)
16. ▶ *Gulf Shield – 1* military exercise of 23 countries including Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states held in Saudi Arabia. This 1 month exercise is largest military drill in region.
17. ▶ A three-day international conference on “Accessible Tourism” has been held in Nepal,. During this, Nepal launched first accessible trekking trail for differently abled and elders in Pokhara city. Inaugurated trek is a 1.3 kilometers section of the 14 kilometer hiking path in ridge connecting Sarangkot to Naudanda areas.
18. ▶ According to *Migration and Development Brief* by World Bank, India retained top position as recipient of remittances with about \$69 billion in 2017. India was followed by China (\$64 billion), Philippines (\$33 billion), Mexico (\$31 billion), Nigeria (\$22 billion) and Egypt (\$20 billion). Global remittance grew 7% to US \$613 billion in 2017.
19. ▶ According to *Military Balance 2018* report by International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) -
-  India overtook UK to become 5th largest defence spender in world in 2017, with \$52.5 billion defence expenditure in 2017 (compared to UK's \$50.7)
-  Top 5 - USA (\$602.8 billion), China (\$150.5 billion), Saudi Arabia (\$76.7 billion), Russia(\$61.6 billion), India (\$52.5 billion).
20. ▶ According to FDI Report 2018 by FDI Intelligence (division of Financial Times Ltd.), USA surpassed India as top destination to attract Greenfield FDI investment (\$87.4 billion FDI).
-  Number of greenfield FDI projects in India during year fell sharply by 21% to 637.
21. ▶ According to International Energy Agency, USA will overtake Russia as world's biggest oil producer by 2019. USA's crude oil output rose above 10 million barrels per day late last year for first time since 1970s, overtaking top oil exporter Saudi Arabia.
22. ▶ According to International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) ‘*Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/ GM Crops in 2017*’ report -
-  India with 11.4 million hectares (mh) has world's 5th largest area cultivated under genetically modified (GM) crops in 2017. India's entire GM crop area is under single crop BT Cotton incorporating genes from *Bacillus thuringiensis* or Bt soil bacterium coding for resistance against heliothis bollworm insect pests.

- ✎ USA has highest area under transgenic crops (75 mh), followed by Brazil (50.2 mh), Argentina (23.6 mh) and Canada (13.1 mh).
  - ✎ In 2017, farmers planted 189.8 mh under transgenic crops, as against 1.7 mh in 1996, when transgenic crops were grown commercially for first time.
  - ✎ Highest share in world's total 189.8 mh GM crop area in 2017 is of soyabean (94.1 mh), followed by maize (59.7 mh), cotton (24.1 mh).
23. ▶ According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) -
- ✎ Total nuclear warheads with 9 nuclear countries (*USA, Russia, Britain, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea*).
  - ✎ Out of 14465 nuclear warheads at beginning of 2018, 3750 are actually deployed.
  - ✎ Top Holders are -
    - ✎ Russia - 6850
    - ✎ USA - 6450
    - ✎ France - 300
    - ✎ China - 280
    - ✎ Pakistan 140-150
    - ✎ Britain - 215
    - ✎ India - 130-140
    - ✎ Israel - 80
    - ✎ North Korea - 10-20
24. ▶ According to US Treasury Department, India is now 12th largest overseas holder of US government securities, with India's exposure being US \$144.7 billion.
- ✎ Overall, China is largest holder of US government securities with holdings to tune of \$1.18 trillion, followed by Japan at \$1.06 trillion. Ireland third with \$326.5 billion.
25. ▶ According to global traffic scorecard published annually by *Inrix*, top 5 most congested cities are -
- ✎ Los Angeles (USA)
  - ✎ New York City (USA)
  - ✎ Moscow (Russia)
  - ✎ Sao Paulo (Brazil)
  - ✎ San Francisco (USA)
  - ✎ Further, most congested country is Thailand, followed by Indonesia and Colombia.
26. ▶ Acting New Zealand PM Winston Peters demanded Australia to change their flag, As the Flag of New Zealand looks similar to that of Australia. New Zealand flag was adopted 52 years before Australian flag and was adopted in 1902, replacing union jack. Australian flag was adopted in 1954.
27. ▶ Aditya Puri, managing director of HDFC Bank is only Indian in Barron's top 30 global CEO list 2018, Featuring for fourth consecutive year.
28. ▶ AfrAsia Bank Global Wealth Migration Review -
- ✎ India is named 6th wealthiest country in world, with total wealth of 8,230 billion dollars.
  - ✎ USA is ranked top with total wealth of 62,584 Billion dollars, followed by China with wealth of 24,803 billion dollars and Japan (19,522 billion dollars).
29. ▶ African Nations Ethiopia and Eritrea declared end to their long conflict, with marking launch of a commercial flight from Ethiopia to Eritrea in 20 years.
- ✎ Eritrea was once a province of Ethiopia. In 1993, Eritrea separated after an independence struggle. Demarcation of shared border caused a brutal conflict in 1998-2000, in which 80,000 people were killed.
30. ▶ After USA withdrawing recently from UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), UN General Assembly elected Iceland to replace USA. Iceland's term will be valid until December 31, 2019.
31. ▶ Airports Council International (ACI) ranked New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport as 16th in world in terms of traffic volumes. Georgia's Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) ranked as busiest airport in world.
32. ▶ An Indo-German MOU has been signed for *Implementation Agreement in Sustainable Urban Development and Smart Cities in India*, to develop and apply concepts for sustainable urban development about the provision of urban basic services and housing in selected cities and Smart Cities in India.
33. ▶ Andhra Pradesh ranks 51st globally in Multidimensional Poverty Index according to a household survey conducted in state, in association with University of Oxford (UK). It is first Indian state to conduct a household survey at state and district level to estimate multidimensional

poverty.

34. ▶ Andijan Region of Uzbekistan and India signed agreement for cooperation in pharmaceutical industry, for implementation of program for production of pharmaceutical, bio-pharmaceutical products and medical equipment in Andijan region of Uzbekistan.
35. ▶ Arab Nation Qatar announced \$50 million donation to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). India also increased aid for Palestinian refugees to \$5 million, from \$1.5 Million Initially.
36. ▶ Arms import by India increased by 24% between 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 period as per data by International Peace Research Institute.
  - ✎ India is followed by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, China, Australia, Algeria, Iraq, Pakistan and Indonesia as world top importers.
  - ✎ Largest arms suppliers to India are Russia (62%), US (15%) and Israel (11%).
37. ▶ As part of its plan to connect billions of people who are still offline, Facebook will launch Athena, its own Internet satellite, early in 2019. The project is designed to *efficiently provide broadband access to unserved and underserved areas throughout the world.*
38. ▶ As per *Water Resources Research*, Phosphorus levels in freshwater bodies across world are escalating, posing serious threat to ecosystem. About 1.5 teragrams of phosphorus (1.5 billion kilograms) is dumped annually into freshwater systems. China contributes most with 30%, followed by India (8%), USA (7%). Huang He river basin of China has highest phosphorus-related water pollution. India's Ganges basin is ranked 4th in list.
39. ▶ As per Airports Council International (ACI), Dubai International Airport retained No 1 rank as world's busiest airport for international travel, with 88.2 million passengers.
  - ✎ Dubai witnessed 15% growth in tourist arrivals from India in 2017, hosting 2.1 million visitors, retaining top spot as source market.
40. ▶ As per Future Development blog of World Bank's Brookings Institute titled as *The start of a new poverty narrative* -
  - ✎ India is no longer a nation having world's largest poor population. Nigeria has now overtaken India with largest number of extremely poor people at 87 million in early 2018.
  - ✎ India is moving down in global poverty ranking. From 125 million poor people in 2016, India had just 73 million people in poorest of poor index as of May 2018.
  - ✎ Approx 44 Indians are being taken out of poverty every minute, highest rate in world.
41. ▶ As per Hurun's Global Rich List 2018 -
  - ✎ India has 3rd highest number of Billionaires across world with 131 names (31 added this year). Mukesh Ambani remains India's richest person with net worth of \$26 billion.
  - ✎ China with 819 names and USA with 571 are at top 2 places.
42. ▶ As per a UN Report, Delhi will surpass Tokyo (Japan) as most populous city in world by 2028.
43. ▶ Asia's first arbitration centre specialised in intellectual property, called *International Arbitration Centre in Tokyo (IACT)*, will be opened in Tokyo (Japan) in September 2018. It will have around 12 arbitrators from various parts of the world, who would try to resolve disputes within a time period of 1 year. IACT would also handle disputes between non-Japanese companies if both parties agree.
44. ▶ Azerbaijan inaugurated a pipeline at Sangachal Terminal, creating first direct route to transport gas from one of world's largest fields to Europe bypassing Russia. Project is worth USD 40-billion. It consists of 3 linked pipelines that will bring gas from Azerbaijani Shah Deniz 2 field across Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Greece, Albania and Adriatic Sea to southern Italy.
45. ▶ Bangladesh Government ended quota system in government services, that sets aside jobs for some special groups. It has been done after several protests against the same.
46. ▶ Bangladesh's first communication satellite Bangabandhu-1 will be launched by SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket from Kennedy Space Center Launch Complex 39A. It will provide wide range of broadcast and communication services throughout Bangladesh. It is built by Thales Alenia Space, a Franco-Italian aerospace manufacturer. It is named after Bangladesh's *Father of the Nation - Sheikh Mujibur Rahman*.
47. ▶ Bank of Baroda will cease its 21 years long operations in South Africa by March-end, amid a probe into alleged compliance lapses by BOB there.
48. ▶ Bermuda became first country to legalize and then repeal same-sex marriage, after it reversed right of gay couples to marry.
49. ▶ Blood Moon 2018 or century's longest total lunar eclipse of 1 hour 43 minutes occurred on July 27-28, 2018. It was majorly seen in Eastern Hemisphere including Central Asia, Eastern Africa and South East Asia.
  - ✎ Moon was gradually covered by Earth's shadow and totality phase was seen on July 28 and total eclipse lasted up to 2h 43m. During this time, Moon was located at apogee (i.e. at farthest from Earth) in its orbit and moved at slower speed in its orbit, making it longest duration of total eclipse of this century.
  - ✎ Such long duration of total lunar eclipses earlier had occurred on July 16, 2000 for totality duration of 1 hour 46 minutes and on June 15, 2011 for totality duration of 1 hour 40 minutes.
50. ▶ Bloomberg Billionaires List 2018 -

- ✎ Mukesh Ambani ranked 19th Globally, 3rd in Asia and 1st in India with net worth of \$38.3 billion. Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma is ranked 14th, Followed by Tencent Founder Pony Ma (Ma Huateng).
- ✎ Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos is at top (\$126 Billion), Followed by Bill Gates (\$91 B).
- 51. ▶ Bolivia unveiled its 200 km long flag and 3 metre wide, claimed to be world's biggest flag. It extended between cities La Paz and Oruro. Bolivia is demanding access to Pacific Ocean, which it lost to Chile in a war in the 19th century.
- 52. ▶ BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands List 2018 -
  - ✎ HDFC Bank is only Indian brand in List, ranked 60th.
  - ✎ Top 4 - Google (1), Apple (2), Amazon (3), Microsoft (4).
- 53. ▶ Brazil declared *social emergency* on Venezuela border, to tackle influx of people fleeing crisis hit Venezuela. The declaration will free the authorities to allocate infrastructure funds and other humanitarian measures on Venezuela border.
- 54. ▶ Brazzaville declaration was signed to promote better management and conservation of world's largest tropical peatlands-Cuvette Centrale region in Congo Basin from unregulated land use and prevent its drainage and degradation.
  - ✎ It was signed by Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo and Indonesia during 3rd Partners Meeting of Global Peatlands Initiative held in Brazzaville (Republic of Congo).
  - ✎ Peatlands are wetlands that contain mixture of decomposed organic material, partially submerged in layer of water, lacking oxygen. Their high carbon content makes them uniquely vulnerable to incineration if they are drained. They are globally important carbon store.
- 55. ▶ Britain's Prince Charles launched a new 10-million-dollar Development Impact Bond (DIB) to help improve education for over 200,000 children in India, as largest such bond in South Asia. It is the latest fundraising initiative by British Asian Trust (BAT) set up by royal 10 years ago to fight poverty in South Asia.
- 56. ▶ Cabinet Approvals -
  - ✎ CCEA Approvals -
    - ✎ Approved proposal of Department of Commerce to give focused attention to 12 identified Champion Services Sectors for promoting their development, Including IT & ITeS, Tourism and Hospitality Services, Medical Value Travel, Transport and Logistics Services, Accounting and Finance Services, Audio Visual Services, Legal Services, Communication Services, Construction and Related Engineering Services, Environmental Services, Financial Services and Education Services. Fund of INR 5000 crores has been proposed for this purpose. It will enhance competitiveness of India's service sectors, thereby promoting GDP growth, creating more jobs and promoting exports to global markets.
    - ✎ Approved extension of Govt. Guarantee provided to lender Bank for providing credit limit to National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) to 19000 crores from INR 9500 crores for undertaking procurement operation of pulses and oilseeds under Price Support Scheme (PSS).
      - ✎ These Government Guarantees are provided for a period of five years i.e. till 2021-22 by Govt. of India and with waiver of 1% Government Guarantee fee.
      - ✎ Provision of Govt. Guarantee will help in protecting farmers producing these commodities from making distress sales during peak arrival period and to provide remunerative prices to encourage higher investment and production.
  - ✎ MOUs -
    - ✎ With Jordan for cooperation in Customs, Health, Manpower and mining / beneficiation of Rock Phosphate & MOP and setting up facility in Jordan for Phosphoric Acid / DAP / NPK Fertilizers.
    - ✎ With Vietnam on Economic and Trade Cooperation.
    - ✎ With Fiji on Cooperation in Renewable Energy.
    - ✎ With Macedonia on cooperation in Health.
  - ✎ Misc -
    - ✎ Government reduced airfares for devotees travelling to Saudi Arabia or Haj, with prices of round tickets being slashed by INR 20000 (to INR 97000 now).
- 57. ▶ Canadian Parliament passed a historic bill legalizing recreational use of marijuana nationwide, becoming second country to do so.
- 58. ▶ Caribbean Nation Dominican Republic and China established diplomatic relations, amid China's growing influence. With this, Dominican Republic has broken 77-year alliance with Taiwan.
- 59. ▶ Central Asian Nation Kazakhstan launched a 72-hour-long transit visa free regime for Indian citizens from 17th April 2018 to 31st December 2018.
- 60. ▶ Central Bank of Argentina raised interest rates by 300 basis points to fight inflationary pressures. Interest rates have been raised from 27.25 to 30.25 %, to prop up its ailing currency from sliding further against US dollar.

61. ▶ Chemical weapons watchdog Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has granted itself new powers to help identify those responsible for chemical attacks in Syria, as a proposal tabled by United Kingdom. Until now, OPCW was only able to say whether chemical weapons were used – but not who had used them.
62. ▶ China abolished 2 term limit on Presidency, allowing Xi Jinping to remain as country's leader for life.
63. ▶ China has built world's longest cross-sea bridge with length 55 KMs, connecting Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China. It took 7 years to complete, is six lanes wide and comprises of 4 tunnels and 4 artificial islands. It has cost approx 20 Billion USD.
  - ✍ World's longest bridge is also in china, known as Danyang-Kunshan Grand Bridge, with 164.7 KM Length.
  - ✍ China also aims to deliver its domestically developed AG600 by 2022, world's largest amphibious aircraft.
64. ▶ China is constructing world's fastest wind tunnel, to help in development of spacecraft. This 265 meter-long tunnel would be used to test hypersonic aircraft that can travel up to a speed of 30,625 kph.
65. ▶ China is elected as vice chair of Financial Action Task Force (FATF), global body mandated to combat terror financing and money laundering. Further, FATF in its plenary meeting in Paris, placed Pakistan under *grey list*, subject to direct monitoring and intense scrutiny by International Cooperation Review Group till June 2018 for compliance of Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Finance of Terrorism regulations.
66. ▶ China launched 2 Beidou-3 MEO satellites (Beidou-30 and Beidou-31) as part of its third and final stage of launching its domestic Beidou (Compass) satellite navigation system. The new Twin satellites are MEO (Medium Earth Orbit) satellites, as third phase of Beidou satellite navigation system. BeiDou is 2nd generation of Chinese homegrown navigational system seen as rival to US's Global Positioning System (GPS). It comprises total 35 satellites (including 27 MEO (21,500 km orbits), 3 IGSO and 5 GSO satellites).
67. ▶ China launched a hyperspectral imaging satellite 'Gaofen-5' for comprehensive observation of atmosphere, including air pollution. It is first China-developed satellite that can monitor air pollution.
68. ▶ China launched a new communication satellite named *APSTAR-6C*. It will offer TV transmission, communication, Internet and multimedia services to customers in Asia-Pacific region.
69. ▶ China launched an optical remote sensing satellite which will be used to monitor its Belt and Road Initiative, named Gaofen-11.
70. ▶ China proposed construction of the India-Nepal-China Economic Corridor with multi-dimensional connectivity through Himalayas, during Nepalese foreign minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali's Visit to China.
71. ▶ China resumed Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through Nathu La route, which was stopped by China amid Doklam military face-off with India last year.
72. ▶ China successfully launched 'Zhangheng 1', its first seismo-electromagnetic satellite to study seismic precursors. The Long March-2D rocket carried China Seismo- Electromagnetic Satellite (CSES) of 730 kg. Zhangheng 1 will let scientists monitor the electromagnetic field, ionospheric plasma and high-energy particles for five years.
73. ▶ China will build its first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Liaoning by 2025, as part of its plans to achieve weaponry and technical developments for People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy by 2025.
  - ✍ At present, China's navy has 2 aircraft carriers running on conventional oil. French Navy's *Charles de Gaulle* is only non-US aircraft carrier powered by nuclear reactors. USA's Nimitz-class and Ford-class carrier are run by nuclear power.
74. ▶ China will launch world's longest cross-sea bridge, connecting Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China. It will be 55km-long and six lanes wide.
75. ▶ China, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Pakistan signed USD 4 million agreement to provide assistance to people of Fata and Balochistan region in Pakistan.
76. ▶ China's first domestically manufactured aircraft carrier known only as "Type 001A" started sea trials. Its name is speculated to be *Shandong*, after province of same name. It is approx 315 metres long, with displacement capacity of about 55,000 tonnes (70,000 loaded).
77. ▶ Chinese Air Force commissioned its new generation J-20 fourth-generation stealth fighter into combat service. China is 2nd country (after USA) to commission domestically developed stealth aircraft.
78. ▶ Chinese e-Commerce giant Alibaba acquired Pakistan's Largest e-commerce firm *Daraz.pk* for \$150 Million.
79. ▶ Cobra Gold training exercise held in Thailand, that includes activities such as drinking cobra blood. This year, 7 countries participated - USA, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, and Singapore.
80. ▶ Colombia Became first South American Nation to Join North Atlantic Treaty Organization as global partner. NATO reached partnership agreement with Colombia in May 2017, just after Colombia signed peace agreement with communist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), ending longest civil conflict in Latin America.
81. ▶ Corruption Perceptions Index 2017 by Transparency International (180 Nations) -
  - ✍ India ranked 81st.
  - ✍ Neighbours - Sri Lanka (91), Pakistan (117), Myanmar (130) and Bangladesh (143), Bhutan (26) and China (77).

📌 Top 5 - New Zealand (1), Denmark (2), Finland (3), Norway (4), Switzerland (5)

📌 Bottom 5 - Somalia (180), South Sudan (179), Syria (178), Afghanistan (177), Yemen (176)

📌 BRICS - Brazil (95), Russia (136), **India (81)**, China (77), South Africa (72)

82. ▶ Cyclonic Storm Sagar, the strongest tropical cyclone to ever make landfall in Somalia (East Africa), and first named cyclone of 2018 North Indian Ocean cyclone season. It traversed entire Gulf of Aden, affected Yemen and made landfall over northwestern Somalia.
83. ▶ Denmark banned wearing of face veils (burqa and niqab) in public places, a move that will criminalise Muslim women who choose to wear niqab or burqa.
84. ▶ East African Nation Uganda's parliament passed a law to impose a controversial tax on people using social media platforms. It imposes a 200 shilling (\$0.05, £0.04) daily levy on people using internet messaging platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber and Twitter, arguing that social media encouraged gossip.
85. ▶ East African Nations Ethiopia and Eritrea agreed to fully implement a peace deal reached in 2000, ending 20-year war between two countries. Eritrea seceded from Ethiopia in 1993, and the two countries fought a border war from 1998 to 2000.
86. ▶ European Nation France approved making 15 years as legal age of sexual consent.
87. ▶ European Nation Hungary will withdraw from Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration agreement, to be adopted in December 2018. Hungarian government opposed migration, arguing that UN agreement could aid flow of migrants to Europe and force countries to shelter them. USA withdrew from it last year.
88. ▶ European Parliament rejected a controversial European Union copyright law proposal that was proposed by Beatles legend Paul McCartney against creators of Wikipedia.
- 📌 It proposed to put more responsibility on websites to check for copyright infringements and forced platforms to pay for linking to news.
  - 📌 Wikipedia went down on July 4 in Poland, Spain and Italy, in protest against the Draft law.
  - 📌 The two highly contested parts of the law are -
    - 📌 Article 11 -
      - 📌 Required online platforms to pay publishers a fee if they link to their news content. It proposed to protect newspapers and other outlets from internet giants like Google and Facebook using their material without payment.
      - 📌 However, article failed to clearly define what constitutes a link and hence, could be manipulated by governments to curb freedom of speech on Internet.
    - 📌 Article 13 -
      - 📌 Proposed greater responsibility on websites to enforce copyright laws. It would make online platforms legally liable for copyrighted material put on the web by users.
      - 📌 It means that social media sites and other websites would check every piece of content uploaded including texts, images, sounds or code. It is too expensive for most companies.
      - 📌 Article has been most controversial and it faced most resistance from critics.
89. ▶ European Union (EU) and Japan have signed Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), as biggest ever trade deal negotiated by EU and creates free trade zone covering nearly third of the world's GDP. Key Fats Include -
- 📌 Eases up Agricultural exports. It ensures protection in Japan of more than 200 high-quality European agricultural products (Geographical Indications (GIs)), and protection of several Japanese GIs in EU.
  - 📌 Services markets - Opens up services markets, in particular financial services, e-commerce, telecommunications and transport.
  - 📌 Procurement markets - Guarantees EU companies access to large procurement markets of 48 large Japanese cities.
  - 📌 Automotive sector - Addresses sensitivities of EU in this sector and elimination of customs duties in transition periods of up to 7 years.
  - 📌 Trade and sustainable development .
  - 📌 Data protection.
90. ▶ European Union Film Festival (EUFF) began in New Delhi on 18th June at the Siri Fort Auditorium, With 24 latest European films from 23 EU Member States. The festival will traverse through 11 cities in India till 31st August.
91. ▶ European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) brought into full effect, clarifying individual rights to personal data collected by companies for targeted advertising and other purposes.
- 📌 GDPR sets new rules for how companies manage and share personal data. Though rules apply only to citizens of European Union, global nature of internet means that nearly every online service will be affected.
  - 📌 GDPR sets a higher than ever bar for obtaining personal data on the internet, higher seen before. Rules will also force companies that suffer data breaches to disclose them within 72 hours.

92. ▶ Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) signed line of credit (LoC) agreement with Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) to provide US \$500 million credit facility to fund various development projects in 15-member countries of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region in western-south Africa.
- ▶ ECOWAS is regional group of 15 West African countries. It was founded in May 1975, with signing of Treaty of Lagos. It aims to promote economic integration in all fields of activity of constituting countries.
93. ▶ Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg apologised for recent data breach controversy related to Data analytics firm *Cambridge Analytica*.
- ▶ Cambridge Analytica (CA) is 2013 established data analytics firm, under its British parent company Strategic Communications Laboratories (SCL) Group. Main objective of CA is to come up with political campaigns and reach out to potential voters by combining data from multiple sources.
  - ▶ CA alleged assisted in Donald Trump's victory in US Presidential Elections 2016, by using unethically gathered data to manipulate voter behaviour. CA also allegedly worked with the Leave EU camp during Britain's exit from the European Union (Brexit).
  - ▶ Facebook controversy -
    - ▶ One of CA co-founders, Christopher Wylie stated that CA exploited Facebook to harvest millions of people's profiles without their permission and used information to create a psychological profile of users as well as their friends. This was then used for targeted political advertising during UK's Brexit referendum as well as during the 2016 US presidential elections.
    - ▶ How -
      - ▶ Facebook lets app developers seek permissions from users to use their personal data to help develop the app. CA reportedly got private data from a Cambridge researcher - Aleksandr Kogan, who created an app called 'thisisyourdigitallife' to offer personality predictions online. Though Kogan got access to the data, it was only meant to be used by him for developing the app and not be shared with others. However, he allegedly sold the data to the CA.
    - ▶ Issues related to India -
      - ▶ CA reportedly planned expanding its services to other nations' electoral processes, especially India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh as they approach elections.
      - ▶ CA reportedly reached out to the two main political parties of the nation for a possible collaboration for the upcoming 2019 Lok Sabha elections.
      - ▶ Recently, IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad delivered a sharp warning to Facebook stating that Government would take stringent action including summoning its CEO Mark Zuckerberg to India, in case of any data theft of Indians.
      - ▶ Meanwhile, both ruling party and main opposition party of India reportedly accused each other of having links with Cambridge Analytica and engaging the firm in past elections.
94. ▶ Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg overtook Warren Buffett as world's third-richest person, with \$81 Billion Net Worth. He is now only behind Amazon founder Jeff Bezos (\$141 Billion) and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates (\$93 Billion).
95. ▶ Facebook obtained a licence to set up a startup incubator in China despite its website being banned in country since 2009. The \$30-million subsidiary will be located in Hangzhou city, to reportedly make small investments and give advice to local businesses.
96. ▶ Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) partnered with Department of Science and Technology (DST) to implement ASEAN India Research Training Fellowship (AIRTF).
- ▶ AIRTF scheme was introduced to promote scientific cooperation between India and ASEAN member countries.
  - ▶ It provides opportunities to upto 50 young researchers annually from ASEAN member countries to undertake research and training for period of 6 months at Academic and Research Institutions in India.
  - ▶ Note that FICCI in partnership with Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and DS&T also gives away C V Raman International Fellowship for African Researchers, in line with efforts of promoting scientific and technological cooperation between India and Africa.
97. ▶ Fiji (island nation in South Pacific Ocean) signed partnered with India's The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) for assistance in tackling climate change effects and achieving environmental sustainability.
98. ▶ Financial Action Task Force (FATF) placed Pakistan in its 'grey list' for its failure to check activities of terrorists operating from and within its territory, including failure to curb Terror Financing.
- ▶ This may hurt Pakistan's economy as well as its international standing and make it tough for it to receive international funding.
  - ▶ FATF is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 to combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
99. ▶ For the first time, Nepal Rastra Bank (Nepal's Central Bank) permitted domestic commercial banks to borrow funds from foreign banks and financial institutions, aiming to resolve liquidity crunch prevailing in Nepal's banking system since past few months. Banks of Nepal can now borrow loans up to 25 % of their core capital for 1 - 5 years.




100. ▶ Forbes' *World's Most Powerful People 2018* List (75 People) -
  - ✍ Xi Jinping (China's President) is at top for first time ever.
  - ✍ Top 5 - Chinese President XI Jinping (1), Russian President Vladimir Putin (2), US President Donald Trump (3), German Chancellor Angela Merkel (4), Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos (5).
  - ✍ 2 Indians named in list - PM Modi (9th) and Reliance Chairman Mukesh Ambani (32nd).
101. ▶ Forbes' First Ever Crypto Rich List (comprising 20 wealthiest people in cryptocurrency space)-
  - ✍ Ripple Co-founder Chris Larsen at atop with crypto net worth of \$7.5-8 billion.
  - ✍ Ethereum Co-founder Joseph Lubin (\$1-5 billion) is 2nd and Founder of cryptocurrency exchange Binance Changpeng Zhao (\$1.1-2 billion) is 3rd.
102. ▶ Forbes' billionaires List 2018 -
  - ✍ Top 5 -
    - ✍ Amazon founder Jeff Bezos (\$110 Billion)
    - ✍ Microsoft founder Bill Gates (\$90 billion),
    - ✍ Warren Buffet (\$84 billion)
    - ✍ Bernard Arnault and family (\$72 billion)
    - ✍ Facebook founder-CEO Mark Zuckerberg (\$71 billion)
  - ✍ India's Mukesh Ambani (chairman of Reliance Industries) is 19th on list with worth of \$40.1 billion. Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma (aged 39 years) is youngest Indian billionaire with net worth of \$1.7 billion.
103. ▶ France announced to contribute 61.9 million dollars toward urgent humanitarian aid for Syria.
104. ▶ France will reintroduce compulsory national service for all 16-year-olds. French boys and girls would do a minimum of 1 month service in first phase which would focus on voluntary teaching and working with charities among others. 2nd phase will be voluntary and focus on areas linked to defence and security.
105. ▶ France banned smartphones, tablets and other internet-enabled devices in schools, applicable for pupils aged between 3 - 15 years.
106. ▶ German conglomerate Bayer completed its \$63-billion takeover of US-based Monsanto to create world's biggest agro-chemical and seed company.
107. ▶ Gevora Hotel in Dubai became *world's tallest hotel* with 356.53 Metres height, 1 metre taller than previous title holder *JW Marriott Marquis*.
108. ▶ Global Democracy Index by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) (165 Nations and 2 Territories) -
  - ✍ India slipped to 42nd place among 165 Nations, from 32nd place last year.
  - ✍ List has been divided into 4 broad categories - *full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime and authoritarian regime*.
  - ✍ North Korea is ranked lowest 167th, while Syria is a 2nd worst at 166th place.
  - ✍ Top 5 - Norway (1), Iceland (2), Sweden (3), New Zealand (4) and Denmark (5).
109. ▶ Global Firepower index 2017 (133 Nations) -
  - ✍ India's military strength is ranked 4th, after USA, Russia and China. France is ranked 5th. Pakistan is ranked 13th.
110. ▶ Global Flight Pricing Report by Melbourne-based Rome2rio Low-cost carriers IndiGo & Air India among top 5 cheapest airlines in world in providing international connectivity, ranked 2nd and 5th position. Air Asia X is named as cheapest airline in world.
111. ▶ Global Innovation Index (GII) 2018, by Cornell University, INSEAD and World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) -
  - ✍ India ranked 57th, improving from its last year rank of 60.
  - ✍ Top 6 - Switzerland (1), Netherlands (2), Sweden (3), United Kingdom (4), Singapore (5), USA (6)
  - ✍ Neighbours - China (17), Bangladesh (116), Pakistan (109), Sri Lanka (88), Nepal (108)
112. ▶ Global Military Expenditure Report 2017 by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) -
  - ✍ India surpassed France to become 5th largest military spender.
  - ✍ Top five (Amount in Billion USD) - US (610), China (228), Saudi Arabia (69.4), Russia (66.3) and India (63.9).
113. ▶ Google launched *Bulletin* app that allows anyone to submit stories related to their local communities. Users can do this easily with their phone and it will be published straight away in the web. Google has not mentioned how it will verify the authenticity of the content.
114. ▶ Google launched Android Things (codenamed Brillo), a variant of Android operating system for Internet of Things (IoT) devices, aiming to enable IoT machines developers to be built faster, cheaper and more secure.
  - ✍ *Android Things* is aimed to be used with low-power and memory constrained Internet of Things (IoT) devices, which are usually built from different microcontroller unit (MCU) platforms.
115. ▶ Google signed USD 1.1 billion deal with HTC for talent acquisition, to acquire nearly 2000 HTC engineers, to expand in hardware sector and in Asia Pacific region.

116. ▶ Greece and Republic of Macedonia reached a historic agreement to end a bitter 27-year name dispute that kept Macedonia out of international institutions such as Nato and EU.
- ▶ Macedonia naming dispute is a political dispute over use of name "Macedonia" between Greece and Republic of Macedonia, formerly a region within Yugoslavia.
  - ▶ Agreement says that Republic of Macedonia will be Known as *Republic of Northern Macedonia*, ending the naming dispute.
  - ▶ Deal reached by two countries' prime ministers is expected to be signed by their foreign ministers soon. After that, Macedonia's parliament would vote on it, and if it approved, Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov's signature would be needed.
  - ▶ However, Macedonian President Mr. Ivanov said that he will not sign the accord to change his country's name.
117. ▶ Greece's first space agency named *Hellenic Space Agency* has been officially launched. It is expected to benefit the country in various sectors viz. telecommunications, defense, medical applications, environmental monitoring, agriculture, fire prevention and control.
118. ▶ Guatemala (Central America) and Paraguay (South America) moved their Israeli Embassy to Jerusalem, after USA recently moved its Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
119. ▶ HDFC has been ranked as 5th biggest public company globally in 'consumer financial services category' on Forbes' list. American Express topped category, while Indiabulls Housing Finance is only other Indian company (at 13th place). In overall list topped by China's ICBC, HDFC took 321st place. There are a total of 58 Indian companies on the overall list of 2000 firms, with Reliance Industries (83rd) as Best in India.
120. ▶ Healthcare Access and Quality Index Data for 195 countries from Global Burden of Disease Study 2016 by Lancet -
- ▶ India ranked 145th.
  - ▶ Top five - Iceland (1), Norway (2), Netherlands (3), Luxembourg (4), Finland and Australia (5th rank each)
  - ▶ Countries with lowest scores are Central African Republic (195), Somalia (194), Guinea-Bissau (193), Chad (192), and Afghanistan (191).
  - ▶ China (48th), Sri Lanka (71st), Bangladesh (133rd), Nepal (149th), Pakistan (154th).
121. ▶ IFFCO (Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative) and Indian Potash Ltd (IPL) acquired 37 % stake in JPMC (Jordan Phosphate Mines Company), Jordan's largest mining and chemical firm, for INR 900 crores.
122. ▶ IMD World Competitiveness Rankings (63 countries) -
- ▶ India rose one place to 44th. China is ranked 13th.
  - ▶ Top 5 - US (1), Hong Kong (2), Singapore (3), Netherlands (4), Switzerland (5).
123. ▶ Inclusive Internet Index (III) 2018 report by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) -
- ▶ 2018 edition of report covered 91% of the world's population and expanded data set of 86 countries, up from 75 countries in 2017.
  - ▶ India ranked 47th out of 86 countries, slipping by 11 positions compared to 36th rank in 2017.
  - ▶ Top 3 Nations - Sweden, Singapore, USA.
124. ▶ Index of Economic Freedom 2018 by Heritage Foundation -
- ▶ India ranked 130th out of 186 economies.
  - ▶ Top 5 - Hong Kong (1), Singapore (2), New Zealand (3), Switzerland (4), Australia (5)
  - ▶ Bottom 5 - North Korea (180), Venezuela (179), Cuba (178), Congo (177), Eritrea (176)
  - ▶ Neighbours - Bangladesh (128), Pakistan (131), Nepal (133), Sri Lanka (111)
125. ▶ India - UK Joint research projects on *Water Quality Research (WQR)* and *Energy Demand Reduction in Built Environment (EDR)* have been launched. WQR programme has 8 projects and EDR programme has 4 projects, with joint investment of up to £15 million.
126. ▶ India and Bangladesh signed agreement to set up a 129.5 km oil pipeline with capacity of 1 million metric tons per annum. Pipeline will be built from Siliguri Marketing Terminal of Numaligarah Refinery Ltd (NRL) in India to Parbaripur depot of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC). Other MoUs Included -
- ▶ Cooperation between India's Prasar Bharati and Bangladesh Betar.
  - ▶ Installation of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Urdu Chair in Dhaka University.
  - ▶ Set up language labs in 500 schools in Bangladesh.
  - ▶ Trial run of first container train between India and Bangladesh flagged off from Kolkata.
127. ▶ India and European Union (EU) signed cooperation agreement related to sharing of earth observation satellite data. Under this, EU will provide India with free, full and open access to data from Copernicus Sentinel family of satellites using high bandwidth connections from data hub to data hub. India will provide Copernicus programme and its participating states with free, full and open access to data from ISRO's earth observation satellites.
- ▶ This comprises data from land, ocean and atmospheric series of ISRO's civilian satellites (Oceansat-2, Scatsat-1, Megha-Tropiques, SARAL, INSAT-3D, INSAT-3DR) with exception of commercial high-resolution satellites data.


128. ▶ India and Finland signed agreement on tax dispute with Nokia under Mutual Agreement Procedure (MAP) system. This involves payment of Rs 1,600 crore, a sum that was deposited with government by Nokia in March 2018. This paves way for the sale of Nokia's Chennai (Sriperumbudu) plant, which has been shuttered since November 2014.
129. ▶ India and Pakistan extended agreement of Thar Link Express, second solitary rail service between both countries for upto 2021. It links Jodhpur (India) and Karachi (Pakistan) via Munabao (Rajasthan)-Khokhrapar (Sindh) border crossing and carries only passengers.
130. ▶ India and UAE signed MoU to create a bilateral Artificial Intelligence Bridge that envisages the generation of \$20 billion in economic benefits during the next decade. It was signed During Visit of Deepak Bagla to UAE, managing director and CEO of Invest India.
131. ▶ India approved granting long-term visa (LTV) to minorities from Afghanistan seeking refuge in India.
132. ▶ India became 3rd largest electricity producer, with Electricity production of 1,003.525 Billion Unit between April 2017 – January 2018, as per data by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) under commerce ministry. Top 3 Producers of Electricity are - China, USA and India.
133. ▶ India become 69th shareholder of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
  - ▶ European Bank is headquartered in London (UK). President is Suma Chakrabarti (Indian Origin).
134. ▶ India contributed additional \$1 million to India-UN Development Partnership Fund, earmarked for South-South cooperation. It aims to intensify partnerships with other developing countries in south
  - ▶ India pledged multi-year contribution of \$100 million to the fund established in June 2017. India has already provided \$6 million within 7 months since launch of fund.
135. ▶ India dragged USA to World Trade Organisation's (WTO) Dispute Settlement Mechanism over imposition of import duties on steel and aluminium.
  - ▶ In March 2018, USA imposed heavy import tariffs on imported steel and aluminium items, sparking fears of global trade war. USA levied 25% tariff on steel and 10% tariff on aluminium imported from all countries except Canada and Mexico.
136. ▶ India extended financial aid of INR 99 million (approx 10 Crores) to Nepal for construction of 2,700 shallow tube well (STWs) irrigation systems in 12 districts of southern Terai region to boost agricultural productivity. It is final payment for Nepal-Bharat Maitri Irrigation Project, which has seen India release total 227.6 million Nepali rupees to Nepal for implementing this project.
137. ▶ India invited USA President Donald Trump to be chief guest at 2019 Republic Day celebrations. If accepted, Trump will be 2nd serving US President after Barack Obama to be invited as chief guest of Republic Day Parade.
  - ▶ Also, 1st India-USA 2+2 Talks may be held in September 2018. On India's Behalf, Sushma Swaraj (External Affairs Minister) and Nirmala Sitharaman (Defence Minister) will be attending the talks.
138. ▶ India is elected as Vice Chair of Asia Pacific Region of World Customs Organisation (WCO) for 2 years.
  - ▶ WCO is Located in Brussels (Belgium), with 182 customs administrations as Members and Kunio Mikuriya as Secretary General.
139. ▶ India is ranked 10th on a new Commonwealth Innovation Index, topped by UK, Singapore and Canada. Index was launched as part of a new Commonwealth Innovation Hub on the sidelines of Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London (UK). Theme of CHOGM 2018 *Towards a Common Future*. India was represented by PM Narendra Modi.
  - ▶ Alongside, Malaria Summit was also held in London (United Kingdom), organized by non-profit organisation Malaria No More in conjunction AND Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
  - ▶ 53 Commonwealth Nations adapted Commonwelath Cyber Declaration at summit, to take action on cybersecurity by 2020. It also aims to tackle criminal groups and hostile state actors who pose a global threat to cybersecurity.
  - ▶ Commonwealth Nations also agreed for Britain's Prince Charles succeeding his mother Queen Elizabeth II as Head of Commonwealth.
  - ▶ India and 3 other countries (Sri Lanka, Mauritius and Malta) participated creating in USD 5 million *Commonwealth Small States Trade Finance Facility* which will enable small states to obtain easier access to international trade finance to diversify their economies and achieve sustainable development goals. Standard Chartered Bank and Bank of Baroda, are facility managers for this fund. 31 Commonwealth nations classified as small states can avail this facility. Before it is available to all such nations, it will be rolled out on pilot basis in Bahamas, Botswana, Brunei, Dominica, Fiji, Mauritius, Namibia and Seychelles.
140. ▶ India is ranked 6th in global optimism index in second quarter (Q2) of 2018, by Grant Thornton's International Business Report (IBR), a quarterly global business survey. It was topped by Indonesia followed by Netherlands, Austria, Philippines and China.
141. ▶ India joined Ashgabat Agreement which envisages facilitation of transit and transportation of goods between Central Asia and Persian Gulf to significantly boost up trade and investment.
  - ▶ Ashgabat Agreement aims at establishment of International Transport and Transit Corridor between the Iran, Oman, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, signed in April 2011.
142. ▶ India moved up 15 places to 73rd in terms of money parked by its citizens with Swiss banks in 2017, while UK remains on top. UK accounted for over 27% (403 billion francs) of total foreign money while India accounted for 0.07%. The money held by Indians rose 50% to 1.01 billion francs (INR 7000 crores).


143. ▶ India named 3rd largest solar market in world in 2017 behind China and USA, in a Mercom Communications report. India had set up record 9.6 GW of solar installations in 2017, more than double 4.3 GW installed in 2016.
144. ▶ India overtook Germany to become fourth largest automobile market, growing its Automobile by 9.5%. China topped the list followed by USA and Japan.
145. ▶ India pledged \$5 million for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in Near East. Besides, 19 other countries also made pledges for UNRWA at Pledging Conference for UNRWA in New York (US). Sweden pledged US \$250 million over 3 years, \$ 51 million and UAE \$50 million.
  - ✎ India also increased its grant to Global Environment Facility's (GEF) new four-year investment cycle, known as GEF-7 from \$12 million to \$15 million. It was announced at GEF Council meet at Da Nang (Vietnam), and approved \$4.1 billion replenishment of GEF-7.
146. ▶ India ranked 11 in terms of FDI attractiveness, according to AT Kearney report, down from 8 in 2017 and 9 in 2016.
  - ✎ Top 5 - US (1), Canada (2), Germany (3), UK (4), China (5)
147. ▶ India received first shipment of its so far cheapest Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from Russian supplier Gazprom, priced USD 7 per million British Thermal Unit (mmBtu), which is around 1.5 USD cheaper from LNG imported from Qatar (India's oldest and largest supplier of LNG).
  - ✎ India is fourth largest importer of LNG, with import dependence 45% to 50 %.
148. ▶ India released grant of Nepalese Rupees (NRs) 18.07 crore for river training and construction of embankments along Lalbakeya, Bagmati and Kamla rivers in Nepal. India also released 33.10 Crore rupees to Nepal towards cost of two road packages of Birgunj-Thori Road being implemented under Postal Highway Projects.
149. ▶ India revised Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with Kenya, to enhance transparency in tax matters, control tax evasion, and eliminate double taxation. It offers reduced withholding tax rate on dividend and interest to 10 % from 15 %.
150. ▶ India signed agreement with UN to build homes 50000 Houses for Nepal's April 2015 earthquake quake victims. India will give USD 8.41 million to UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services) and USD 7.41 Million to the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) to build 50000 homes by this agreement.
151. ▶ India will become 69th member of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Membership process includes purchase of shares by India at an estimated cost of around 1 million euros.
152. ▶ India won 6 elections to United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) bodies, and won places on executive boards of four UN bodies.
  - ✎ India won elections to Executive Boards of UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and UN-Women. India will serve three-year terms from January 2019 on those executive boards.
  - ✎ India was elected on UN Commission on Population and Development, Social Development, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.
153. ▶ India's BSF and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) declared 8.3 km stretch of Indo-Bangladesh border as first 'crime-free zone', stretching Gunarmath and Kalyani Border Out Posts (BOPs) in India and Puthkhali and Daulatpur BOPs in Bangladesh. Bangladesh and India shared 4156 km long international border.
154. ▶ India, Bangladesh and Russia signed MoU for cooperation in construction of 2\*1200 MWs Capacity Rooppur nuclear power plant near Dhaka (Bangladesh). It is first initiative under India-Russia nuclear deal to undertake atomic energy projects in third countries. It will India's first atomic energy venture abroad and Bangladesh's first atomic energy project.
155. ▶ India, China and other Asian countries will Coordinate to raise voice against Asian premium charged by Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).
  - ✎ Asian Premium is extra charge being collected by OPEC countries from Asian countries when selling oil in comparison to western countries. They charge approx 10% extra from Asian Nations as Asian Premium and they give 10% discount to western Nations.
  - ✎ Its a concern for India as for Oil, India is largely dependent on Imports. India sources about 86% of crude oil, 75% of natural gas and 95% of LPG from OPEC member nations.
  - ✎ OPEC is an organization of 14 oil-exporting developing nations. Its headquarters are in Vienna (Austria) and Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia (de facto leader of OPEC), Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Algeria, Angola, Libya, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, Ecuador and Venezuela. OPEC members account 43% of global oil production and 73% of world's oil reserves.
156. ▶ India, Netherlands and Sweden launched first-of-its-kind joint research programme on HIV/AIDS, aimed at harnessing complementary research strengths and diverse expertise of 3 nations to catalyze development of better tools to address epidemic of HIV.
157. ▶ India-United Kingdom (UK) Joint Team won Newton-Bhabha Fund for project on Groundwater Arsenic Research in Ganga River Basin. Project is aimed to assess problem of arsenic poisoning and to understand aggravation such situation in next 25 to 30 years and its


influence on groundwater management practices and suggest water remedial technologies accordingly, conducted from 3 sites – Bijnor and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Nadia in West Bengal.


 Newton Bhabha Fund is provided by the British Council and aims to bring together UK and Indian scientific research and innovation sectors to find joint solutions to the challenges facing India in economic development and social welfare.


158. ▶ Indian Consortium consisting of IOCL, BPCL and HPCL and Saudi Aramco signed an MOU to jointly develop an integrated refinery and petrochemicals complex called Ratnagiri Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd. (RRPCL) in Maharashtra.


 It will be capable of processing 1.2 million barrels of crude oil per day (60 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA)). Project cost is estimated at INR 3 lakh crores (USD 44 billion).
159. ▶ India's Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) bagged order for executing largest hydro power project in Nepal, The 900 Megawatt Arun-3 hydro project placed by SJVN Arun-3 Power Development Company (SAPDC). Order is worth INR 536 Crores.
160. ▶ India's NTPC will supply 300 megawatts (MW) of electricity to Bangladesh for 15 years, earning 900 Crores in annual revenue. It is under a Tender by Bangladesh for supply of 500 MW power from India.
161. ▶ India's National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) established 2nd Digital Collaborative Opportunities Plaza (SIDCOP) platform in Guiyang (China), as India's second IT corridor in China (1st in Dalian) to provide Indian IT firms access to Chinese software market.
162. ▶ Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) launched China's first India-dedicated publicly offered investment fund, named *Industrial and Commercial Bank Credit Suisse India Market Fund* with over \$3.6 trillion in assets (largest in world ).




 It will invest in exchange-traded funds listed on more than 20 exchanges in Europe and US that are based on Indian market. It will invest in future of Indian economy and track distribution of industrial structure across Indian market.

 This fund opens way for Chinese investors and provided good tool for low-threshold investment in India. It is also regarded as significant to boost investments in India.
163. ▶ International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) removed Nepal from its Significant Safety Concern (SSC) list. In 2013, ICAO enlisted Nepal in SSC category as Nepal's compliance to ICAO's standard at that time stood only at 55 % out of standard 60 %.
164. ▶ International Intellectual Property (IP) Index report by Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC) of US Chambers of Commerce (50 Nations) -

 India Ranked 44th, increasing substantially from 25% in 5th edition of Index to 30% in 6th edition.

 Top 3 - USA, United Kingdom, Sweden.
165. ▶ Internet Firm Google has been fined a record €4.34bn by European Commission, saying it used Android mobile operating system to illegally *cement its dominant position* in search.
166. ▶ Investment Firm SoftBank signed \$930-million deal with China's energy conglomerate Golden Concord (GCL) to produce and sell solar equipment in India. GCL will have 40% stake in joint venture. The project will have a 4 gigawatt-capacity and will produce solar ingots, silicon wafers, batteries, and components.
167. ▶ Iran banned use all cryptocurrencies including bitcoin by its banks and financial institutions. Iran Govt stated that it was necessary since cryptocurrencies can be turned into a means for money-laundering and financing terrorism.
168. ▶ Iraq overtook Saudi Arabia as India's top crude oil supplier by supplying 38.9 million tonnes (MT) crude oil in the current financial year. India is 80% dependent on imports to meet its oil needs.
169. ▶ Ireland People voted to end *abortion ban*, hailed as *a quiet revolution* in a very socially conservative country. Government proposed that law should be changed to allow unrestricted access to abortions up to 12 weeks of pregnancy.
170. ▶ Israel government enacted a new law which will financially penalize Palestinian Authority for paying stipends to Palestinians killed or jailed by Israel. Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu repeatedly demanded to stop Palestinians from paying stipends to prisoners and their families.
171. ▶ Israel passed a Controversial Bill declaring that only Jews have right of self-determination in country, defining it as an exclusively Jewish state. It also strips Arabic of its designation as an official language alongside Hebrew, downgrading it to a special status that enables its continued use within Israeli institutions.
172. ▶ Israel withdrawn its bid for a non-permanent seat at UN Security Council (UNSC) for 2019-2020 term.

 UNSC has 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members who are elected for a two-year term.
173. ▶ Japan Based Conglomerate Sony Corporation acquired London Based EMI Music Publishing, in a USD 1.9-billion deal. EMI is second-largest music publishing company by revenue. It will add over 2.1 million songs to Sony's huge list, which already owns 2.3 million copyrights.
174. ▶ Japan activated Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (ARDB), its first marine unit since World War 2. In Japan's Constitution that was formed after WW 2, it renounced the right to wage war.

175. ▶ Japan adopted an economic plan that will allow more foreign workers to work in country. This will help rapidly aging country to make up for its declining workforce. Under it, Japan will relax visa requirements in sectors facing severe labour shortages and will create new five-year visa category for non-professional foreign workers. Applicants for new visa status will need to pass certain skill tests and have some degree of Japanese language proficiency in order to receive new five-year visas.
176. ▶ Kotak Mahindra Bank overtook SBI to become India's second-most-valued Bank in terms of market capitalisation. KMB's Market cap rose to 2.23 Lakh Crores. HDFC Remains at top with 5.03 Lakh Crores Market Cap. Bandhan Bank debuted in top 50 Indian Brands with 64000 Crores Market Cap.
177. ▶ Malaysia Government announced abolishing Goods and Services Tax (GST) by reducing it to 0%. New Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad had promised to abolish 6% GST levy before his electoral victory.
178. ▶ Malaysian Government proposed 10 years in jail and Geftly fines for publishers of fake news. Under Anti-Fake News Bill, anyone who publishes fake news could face fines of up to 500000 ringgit (USD 128140), up to 10 years in jail, or both.
179. ▶ Maldives Govt. declared a state of emergency deepening political crisis, after armed troops stormed country's top court.
180. ▶ Maldives Parliament approved anti-defection bill which states that MPs elected on political party tickets will lose their seat if they leave their party, get expelled, or change parties.
181. ▶ Microsoft launched prototype of an underwater data centre off the coast of Scotland's Orkney Islands, as part of Microsoft's Project Natick. The capsule contains 864 servers and 27.6 Petabytes of storage, and has been placed 117 feet below ocean's surface. It is designed to hold data for up to 5 years without maintenance.
182. ▶ Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) will tie up with US and Finland to develop new pollution-forecast system that will help anticipate particulate matter (PM) levels at least two days in advance and at greater resolution.  
 Currently, System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), run out of Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, serves as apex forecaster of pollution trends in Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad. It generates likely air quality profile for a day in advance, for these cities.
183. ▶ Mumbai is named 16th among top 20 costliest cities in world, according to Knight Frank Wealth Report 2018, based on 4 major indicators - wealth, investments, lifestyle and future. Top 3 Wealthiest Cities - Guangzhou (China), Hong Kong (China), New York (USA).
184. ▶ Mumbai is named among top 15 wealthiest cities globally, with a total wealth of \$950 billion. New York (USA) topped the list. Mumbai also features among top 10 cities in terms of billionaire population, with 28 billionaires.
185. ▶ Myanmar deferred signing agreement with India to streamline free movement of people within 16 km along the open border between two countries, citing domestic compulsions and asked for more time for the agreement to be sealed.  
 India and Myanmar share 1643 km unfenced border along Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.
186. ▶ NASA launched GOES-S (*Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite*), an advanced weather satellite meant to safeguard Western USA, by forecasting natural calamities such as hurricanes, wildfires, floods etc. GOES-S will not only keep a watch over West Coast of USA, Alaska and Hawaii, but also over Mexico and Central America.
187. ▶ National Gallery of Modern Art (New Delhi) organized an exhibition titled *To the End of Land*, in collaboration with Embassy of Israel in India, on occasion of 25 years of diplomatic relations with Israel.
188. ▶ Neighbouring Nation Sri Lanka declared a state of emergency for 10 days, to curb heightening violence targeting Muslim minority, mainly in Kandy.
189. ▶ Nepalese tea received an international trademark, after over 150 years of beginning of cultivation in country. Now, tea will be sold in international market with a common logo, representing national identity.
190. ▶ New Manchester-India Partnership (MIP) aimed at connecting Indian companies with Northern regions of England has been launched in London (UK). This partnership is aimed at advancing trade, investment, science and innovation ties between India and Britain.
191. ▶ New Zealand Govt. banned all new offshore oil exploration permits as a part of Government's plan to transition towards a carbon-neutral future. Note that existing permits cover an area of 100000 sq km and some still have decades left on their exploration rights.
192. ▶ North Korean leader Kim Jong Un declared that his nation would stop its nuclear tests and intercontinental missile launches and will shut down its atomic test site. This brings relief to global community as North Korea has been continuously doing Nuclear tests and aggressively enhancing its nuclear capabilities over past few years.  
 In a historic first, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un crossed border that separates 2 Koreas at demilitarized zone (DMZ) to enter South Korea, becoming first North Korean leader to step into South Korean territory since 1953.
193. ▶ Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) and Electricite de France (EDF) of France signed an Industrial Way Forward Agreement for implementation of six nuclear power reactor units at Jaitapur (Maharashtra) with a total capacity of about 10000 MW. Evolutionary Pressurized Reactors (EPRs) are evolutionary reactors, whose design has evolved from "KONVOI' and "N4' reactors are operational in Germany and France respectively for over 20 years.

194. ▶ ONGC Videsh Ltd signed MoU with IDRO Oil (a subsidiary of state-run Iranian Development and Renovation Organisation) for developing Susangerd field in Iran. OVL and IDRO Oil will jointly bid for a USD 1 billion contract for development of Susangerd oilfield in southern Iran.
195. ▶ Oklahoma will become first US State to use Nitrogen Gas for executions. Nitrogen is an odourless and tasteless gas that makes up about 78 % of air that humans breathe. However, it causes death when inhaled without any oxygen.
196. ▶ Pacific Ocean Nation Marshall Islands will become first country to recognize cryptocurrency as its legal tender and adopt transparent crypto monetary system. Its Parliament passed law to create a digital currency called *Sovereign* (symbol *SOV*) to raise cash and boost economy. It will be implemented with Israeli fintech startup Neema.
- Initially, 24 million SOVs will be circulated and will be backed by Govt as a legal tender in country. SOV will be different from other cryptocurrencies because it will be officially recognized by law as legal tender and effectively backed by government.
197. ▶ Pakistan declared Mandarin as an official language of Pakistan, along with Urdu and English.
198. ▶ Passport Index 2018 by Henley and Partners -
- It analyzes 199 different passports across 227 destinations to list rankings annually.
  - Japanese passport is named most powerful passport in world, granting visa-free access to 189 countries.
  - Indian passport secured 76th rank in index with its holders getting visa-free access to 59 countries.
199. ▶ Philippines formally Withdrawn from Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), mentioning that ICC was a righteous stand against those who politicise and weaponise human rights.
200. ▶ QS World Best Universities Ranking 2019 (Top 1000 Universities Listed) -
- Top 5 -
    - Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA)
    - Stanford University (USA)
    - Harvard University (USA)
    - California Institute of Technology (Caltech) (USA)
    - University of Oxford (UK)
  - Indian Universities in List -
    - 24 Indian Universities in 2018 List, up from 20 last year.
    - IIT Bombay topped among Indian Universities in List (162nd Place), Followed by IISc Bengaluru (170), IIT Delhi (172), IIT Madras (264) and IIT Kanpur (283).
201. ▶ Qatar introduced national service for women for first time. Women aged over 18 will now be able to volunteer for national service under law, men will have to serve for a year instead of three months.
202. ▶ Quality of Living survey 2018 by Mercer -
- Austria's capital city Vienna has been rated world's most liveable city for 9th consecutive year.
  - Top 3 - Vienna (Austria), Zurich (Switzerland), Auckland (New Zealand) AND Germany's Munich tied for third place.
  - Hyderabad and Pune have been rated India's most liveable cities as they have tied for 142nd place.
  - Iraq's capital Baghdad is rated least liveable city for the tenth consecutive year.
203. ▶ Rajnitha Starrer Kaala become first Indian film to release in Saudi Arabia. Note that Hollywood's Black Panther recently became first film to release in Saudi Arabia in 35 years. Saudi Arabia also recently gave away its first batch of driving licenses to women after decades long ban.
204. ▶ Report by global startup ecosystem map StartupBlink -
- India is ranked 37th out of 125 countries in global startup ecosystem in 2017.
  - Top 5 - United States (1st), United Kingdom (2nd), Canada (3rd), Israel (4th) and Germany (5th).
  - In Asia - Singapore (10th), China (12th), South Korea (17th), Japan (20th).
  - In Africa - South Africa (38th), Kenya (53rd), Egypt (54th), and Nigeria (57th).
205. ▶ Researchers discovered new strain of Ebola virus in bats in northern Bambuli region of African Nation Sierra Leone, named as Bambuli. It is 6th known virus strain Ebola virus. Others are Zaire, Sudan, Tai Forest, Bundibugyo and Reston. Zaire strain of Ebola virus is the most deadly strain known.
206. ▶ Researchers from Institute of Archaeology of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Peking University announced that Chinese civilization was born 5800 years ago and got matured 3800 years ago., after 15 years of state-funded work. First civilisation emerged in areas around Yellow, Yangtze and Western Liao rivers.
207. ▶ Ruling Communist Party of China (CPC) proposed amending China's Constitution to allow 3rd term of any Individual as President of China. It will allow Xi Jinping to continue as President beyond 2023.

208. ▶ Russia established a new directorate in Russian Army to promote patriotism. A similar directorate existed in the Soviet Army to ensure that soldiers remained loyal to then-ruling Communist party.
209. ▶ Russia launched Glonass-M positioning satellite on board of Soyuz-2.1b carrier rocket, as part of GLONASS network GLONASS (Russian acronym for Global Navigation Satellite System) which provides real-time positioning data for surface, sea and airborne objects around globe, at accuracy reportedly at par with US Global Positioning System (GPS). With this, there are now total 26 Glonass satellites in orbit.
210. ▶ Russia launched world's First floating nuclear power unit into Baltic Sea, with 70-megawatt Capacity, named Akademik Lomonosov.
211. ▶ Russia tested hypersonic missile named *Kinzhal*, said to travel at 10 times speed of sound and have a range of 2,000 km.
212. ▶ Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation (Rosatom)'s subsidiary Nikiret signed an agreement with Indian engineering services firm Core Energy Systems Pvt Ltd for promotion of its technical security equipment in India, to assist in India's Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) project.
213. ▶ Russian space agency Roskosmos launched *Progress MS-08* unmanned cargo spacecraft for International Space Station (ISS). It carried equipments for German-Russian ICARUS research project aimed at studying wildlife-migration patterns and other material.
214. ▶ Russian-drafted resolution on a technical rollover of Yemen sanctions regime is adopted by United Nation Security Council (UNSC). Note that a Britain-drafted resolution failed to adopt after being vetoed by Russia. It committed for action against Iran and censured it for providing missiles and drones to Houthi rebels in Yemen.
215. ▶ Rwanda (East Africa) became first low-income country to provide universal eye care for its 12 million population. Its Government partnered with *Vision for a Nation (VFAN)* to train over 3,000 eye care nurses based in over 500 local health centres.
216. ▶ SAARC Development Fund (SDF) will launch social enterprise development programme (SEDP) as part of its social window, aimed at building social enterprises by using mix of grants and concessional returnable capital. It intends to fund around 80 enterprises across 8 SAARC member states (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) annually.
217. ▶ SWIFT (Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication System) platform expanded its GPI (Global Payment Innovation) Tracker system to help banks track their global transactions and keep full vigil on payments activity. From November 2018, GPI Tracker system will be included in all payment instructions carried between all 11,000 customers on SWIFT at all times. It will extend transparency and drive more banks to join service to make GPI new normal in cross-border payments.
- ▶ SWIFT GPI was launched in May 2017 to help banks to track their global transactions at all times, keeping full vigil on payments activity. It accounts for 10% of cross border payment traffic on SWIFT network.
  - ▶ SWIFT is global financial messaging service that enables financial institutions worldwide to send and receive information about financial transactions in secure, standardized and reliable environment.
218. ▶ Saudi Arabia Government established Ministry of Culture, separating it from Information Ministry, amid attempts to modernise the conservative kingdom.
219. ▶ Saudi Arabia Govt. allowed women to open their own businesses and benefit from government e-services without having to prove consent from husband or male guardian, as a major step away from country's strict guardianship system that has ruled it for decades. Saudi Arabia has also for the first time opened applications for women to enlist in military in rank of Soldiers.
220. ▶ Scientists from Australian Institute of Marine Biology have developed an ultra-fine biodegradable film, some 50000 times thinner than a human hair, to prevent coral bleaching, that had spread across the Great Barrier Reef in Australia in 2016 and 2017. Shield has been designed to sit on the surface of the water above the corals rather than directly on corals to provide an effective barrier against sun.
221. ▶ Seychelles President Danny Faure said that India-Seychelles joint project to develop naval base at Assumption Island in his country can not move forward. Seychelles will develop military facilities at the island on its own.
- ▶ Agreement was signed with India in 2015 to develop a naval facility at Assumption Island which would have given India strategic advantage in Indian Ocean Region (IOR), but the project had to be halted after growing political opposition in Seychelles. It was meant to India's first Naval Base project overseas and had acquired significance after China had acquired its first African naval base in Djibouti (near Horn of Africa) in November 2014.
  - ▶ Assumption Island is a small island situated southwest of Seychelles main and largest island of Mahe. It is situated very close to Mozambique Channel from where much Indian Ocean maritime routes pass. Its location lends it strategic importance for monitoring shipping in the Mozambique Channel.
222. ▶ Singapore will impose a 'carbon tax' from 2019 to cut its greenhouse gas emissions and make companies more competitive as global agreements on climate change take effect. Tax will be SG\$5.0 (USD 3.8) per tonne of greenhouse gas emissions from 2019 to 2023.
223. ▶ Singapore's Changi Airport is named world's best airport for 6th consecutive year by consultancy firm Skytrax.
- ▶ Incheon International Airport in South Korea and Haneda Airport in Japan were placed 2nd and 3rd respectively.
  - ▶ Mumbai airport (Chhatrapati Shivaji Airport) is ranked 63rd, Bangalore (Kempegowda Airport) and Delhi (Indira Gandhi Airport) are at 64th and 66th place respectively.



224. ▶ South Africa declared a *national disaster* over a drought that has ravaged parts of country and threatened to leave city of Cape Town without domestic tap water.
- ▶ Cape Town is in grip of a catastrophic 3 year long drought as sparse winter rains have failed to bring relief, and dam levels have dropped to dangerously low levels.
225. ▶ South Africa unveiled a powerful radio telescope, part of an international project that scientists say will provide new details on the Milky Way and other galaxies, called MeerKAT.
- ▶ MeerKAT, originally Karoo Array Telescope, is a radio telescope consisting of 64 mirrors.
  - ▶ It is largest and most sensitive radio telescope in southern hemisphere until Square Kilometer Array is completed in 2024 (tentative).
  - ▶ Square Kilometre Array (SKA) is a large multi radio telescope project aimed to be built in Australia and South Africa. If built, it would have a total collecting area of approximately one square kilometer.
226. ▶ Swaziland's King Mswati III, Africa's last absolute monarch officially changed name of his country to *Kingdom of eSwatini*. Its a Swazi language name that stands for 'place of the Swazi'.
227. ▶ Sweden signed Strategic Partnership Agreement with United Nations for committing record \$370 million dollars to UN World Food Programme, for next 4 years (2018-2021). It is biggest ever contribution made by a donor within a WFP Strategic Partnership Agreement.
228. ▶ Swedish Academy, That organizes Nobel Prize in Literature announced that, Nobel Prize in literature will not be awarded this year due to sex-abuse allegations and other issues. Swedish Academy has been in stress due to #MeToo campaign since November 2017. Academy has been alleged of sexual misconduct by husband of one of its members.
229. ▶ Syria returned to France Légion d'honneur (France's Highest Civilian Honour) presented to its President Bashar al-Assad. Syria stated that it has been done as France is a PRO-USA Nation.
230. ▶ Tanzania withdrew from United Nation's *Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework*, citing security reasons and lack of funds. Tanzania is considered as safe haven for refugees, particularly from conflict hit Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi.
231. ▶ Tata Steel and Wipro are 2d Indian companies in US-based Ethisphere Institute's list of World's Most Ethical Companies for 2018, containing 135 companies from 23 countries. Tata Steel and Wipro are receiving the award for the sixth and seventh time respectively.
232. ▶ Tropical cyclone Gita hit small South Pacific island country Tonga with Category 4 intensity. with winds upto 145 mph. India contributed 1 Million USD as rehabilitation aid to Tonga.
233. ▶ UK launched new UKRI Science, Research and Academia scheme for overseas scientists and researchers, including Indians, to enhance growth of UK's research sector. It invites researchers and academics to come to UK for up to 2 years. It is being added to the already existing Tier 5 (Temporary Worker Government Authorised Exchange) visa route.
234. ▶ UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) launched UN Road Safety Trust Fund to improve road safety worldwide. The fund has potential to galvanise global efforts to address road safety situation, building on progress made and experience gained over Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. It will serve as catalyst for progress towards road safety targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
235. ▶ UN Environment Programme (UNEP) partnered with Google to monitor impacts of human activity on global ecosystems by using sophisticated online tools, to develop platform to enable governments, NGO's and public to track specific environment-related development targets with user-friendly front-end.
- ▶ In long term, it will strive to establish platform for open-source data and analysis of UN Sustainable Development Goals. It will enable UNEP to get access to most sophisticated online tools to track progress, identify priority areas for action, and needs for making world sustainable.
236. ▶ UN Member states approved a 6.69 billion US Dollar budget for 13 peacekeeping operations for 2018-19. It is 2nd year in a row, that UN has made significant cuts to overall peacekeeping budget.
- ▶ Missions include -
    - ▶ MINUJUSTH (UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti)
    - ▶ MINUSCA (Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Central African Republic)
    - ▶ MINURSO (Mission for Referendum in Western Sahara)
    - ▶ MONUSCO (Stabilisation Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo)
    - ▶ UNIFIL (Interim Force in Lebanon).
  - ▶ United States is biggest contributor to UB, paying 22% of \$5.4 billion core budget and 28.5% of US \$7.9 billion peacekeeping budget. China is other top contributor with 10.3% followed by Japan with 9.7 %.
237. ▶ UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced to hold a climate summit in September 2019 in New York to review commitments of 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Considering effects of climate spreading all over the world. Earlier, Guterres appointed Michael Bloomberg as his Special Envoy for Climate Action.

238. ▶ UNICEF report on newborn mortality rate -
- ▶ Pakistan has worst NMR in world, with 45.6 babies dying out of every 1,000 births in 2016. Pak is Followed by Afghanistan and Central African Republic.
  - ▶ Japan has best NMR, followed by Iceland and Singapore.
  - ▶ India's NMR is 25.4, making it 12th worst among 52 'lower-middle-income countries' that pose risk for newborns. India aims to attain NMR of 12 by 2030.
  - ▶ Further, As per report by NITI Aayog, sex ratio at birth (SRB) declined in 17 out of 21 large states of India, with Gujarat recording 53 points fall. Gujarat is followed by Haryana (35 points drop) and Rajasthan (32 points drop).
239. ▶ US Department of Treasury included India in monitoring list of its major trading partners that merit close attention to their currency practices and macroeconomic policies. This list identifies countries that are trying to artificially manage value of their currency to gain trade advantage, by keeping exchange rate low to promote cheaper exports. India is 6th addition to this watch list after China, Japan, South Korea, Germany and Switzerland.
240. ▶ US President Donald Trump signed an executive order to create a *faith-based* initiative, which would recognize vital role of faith in American life. It would ensure that faith-based organizations have equal access to government funding and equal right to exercise their beliefs.
241. ▶ US state California's economy surpassed UK to become world's fifth largest, With GDP of \$2.7 trillion, with UK and India as Next. California is only behind USA, China, Japan and Germany.
242. ▶ US state of New Jersey declared April as 'Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month' as part of its effort to promote awareness of Sikhism.
243. ▶ USA Govt. cancelled NASA's Carbon Monitoring System (CMS) programme, amid budget constraints and higher priorities within science budget. NASA's CMS Programme costing \$10 million per year was meant to track carbon and methane, key greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.
244. ▶ USA Trade Representative (USTR) again placed India on 'Priority Watch List' in its annual Special 301 Report on state of intellectual property protection, along with 11 Other Nations.
- ▶ This Report identifies US trading partners that do not effectively protect IP rights or deny market access to its innovators that rely on protection of their IP rights.
  - ▶ India remains one of world's most challenging major economies with respect to protection and enforcement of intellectual property, as India's enforcement action and policies are insufficient to curb problem.
  - ▶ Report slammed Health Ministry of India for creating uncertainty in pharmaceutical market by demanding that pharmaceutical companies provide details of how they were using granted patents.
245. ▶ USA and Israeli forces held *Juniper Cobra 2018* Joint military drill.
246. ▶ USA and Philippine Armies held their Joint annual military exercise *Balikatan*.
247. ▶ USA and South Korea began their joint military training exercise named 'Foil Eagle'.
248. ▶ USA announced its withdrawal from United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), accusing it of "chronic bias" against Israel. Recently, UNHRC blamed Israel for Gaza violence, and rejected USA demand to condemn Hamas (The Palestinian Extremist Group).
249. ▶ USA banned use of Venezuelan cryptocurrency (Petro) by its Citizens, stating that its introduction is intended to skirt US sanctions.
250. ▶ USA designated India as Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA-1) country that will allow it to buy highly advanced and cutting-edge sensitive technologies from USA, bringing India in par with US's closest allies such as NATO.
- ▶ Currently there are 36 countries on STA-1 list, with India being only South Asian on list.
  - ▶ STA-1 treatment will expand scope of technology exports subject to Export Administration Regulations (EAR) that can be made to India without individual licenses.
251. ▶ USA imposed stiff 25% tariff on US \$50 billion worth of Chinese goods, accusing China of intellectual property (IP) theft and unfair trade practices. Tariffs will be applied in two waves, first to 818 Chinese goods worth \$34 billion and in second wave it will apply to 284 goods worth another \$16 billion. As a backfire action, China also imposed additional tariffs and duties on \$50-billion worth of American products.
- ▶ Also, India also imposed higher import tariffs (ranging from 20 to 50%) on 30 goods from USA, ranging from automobile components to agro products such as almonds, shrimps and chocolates. It is expected to rake in additional \$240 million to India.
252. ▶ USA proposed establishing an *Arab NATO* force to counter Iran's military expansion in region. Proposed Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA) will consist of the US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt and Jordan.
253. ▶ USA pulled out of an international nuclear deal with Iran signed in 2015 by USA and 5 other Powers (UK, Russia, France, China, Germany and European Union).
- ▶ This could raise risk of conflict in Middle East, upset America's European allies and bring uncertainty to global oil supplies.

- ✎ The deal eased sanctions on Iran in exchange for the country limiting its nuclear programme, seen by many as a way to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear bomb.
  - ✎ USA Prez Trump complained that the agreement, does not address Iran's ballistic missile programme, its nuclear activities and nor its role in conflicts in Yemen and Syria. It did not prevent Iran from cheating and continuing to pursue nuclear weapons, so it needs to be vanished and Tough Economic Sanctions are being put back on Iran.
254. ▶ USA renamed its oldest and largest strategically important military command US Pacific Command (PACOM) to Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM). It is responsible for all US military activity in greater Pacific region. It has about 375,000 civilian and military personnel assigned, which also includes India. Renamed INDOPACOM will now extend its reach from Pacific Ocean to Indian Ocean Region.
  255. ▶ USA unveiled world's most powerful supercomputer called 'Summit', beating previous record-holder China's Sunway TaihuLight. With a peak performance of 200,000 trillion calculations per second (200 petaflops), it is over twice as fast as Sunway TaihuLight, which is capable of 93,000 trillion calculations per second. Summit has 4,608 servers.
  256. ▶ USA withdrawn invitation to Chinese navy to participate in 2018 Rim of Pacific (RIMPAC) maritime exercise, amid China's continued illegal militarisation of islands in disputed South China Sea. RIMPAC 2019 is 26th edition of this exercise. RIMPAC is world's largest international maritime warfare exercise, held biennially near Honolulu, Hawaii (USA).
  257. ▶ USA's Stanford University will assist Uttar Pradesh Government to combat chronic disease like Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES).
  258. ▶ United Arab Emirates (UAE) adopted a new system of entry visas, under which it will issue long-term residency visas for up to 10 years to international investors and 'exceptional talents' including professionals and students. It will attract investors and increase economic competitiveness globally. UAE also allowed foreign investors to own 100% of UAE-based businesses by end of 2018, up from 49% cap currently.
  259. ▶ United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Malaysia concluded joint military exercise *Desert Tiger 5*, in Dubai (UAE).
  260. ▶ United Arab Emirates (UAE) approved law on Equal Wages and Salaries for men and women, to provide women with equal opportunities as partners in UAE's development.
  261. ▶ United Arab Emirates (UAE) became first arab nation to have Nuclear Power after construction of its \$20 billion Barakah Plant west of Abu Dhabi has been Completed, led by Korea Electric Power Corp.
  262. ▶ United Kingdom chosen *Sutherland*, on A'Mhoine peninsula on north coast of Scotland as site of UK's first spaceport, to send satellites vertically into orbit by early 2020s.
  263. ▶ United Kingdom's National Crime Agency (NCA) listed Pakistan among top three sources for money laundering, other two being Nigeria and Russia. UK is prime destination for foreign corrupt and politically exposed people (PEPs) to launder money.
  264. ▶ United Nations E-Government Survey 2018 -
    - ✎ India jumped 22 places to break into top 100 this year, ranked 96th.
    - ✎ Top 5 - Denmark (1), Australia (2), South Korea (3), UK (4), Sweden (5)
  265. ▶ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) elected South Africa, Indonesia, Dominican Republic, Germany and Belgium as non-permanent members of UN Security Council (UNSC). They will have two-year term beginning January 1, 2019.
  266. ▶ United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres constituted a High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation, to be co-chaired by Melinda Gates and Jack Ma (Executive Chairman of Alibaba Group).
    - ✎ Panel has been mandated to contribute to broader public debate on the importance of cooperative and interdisciplinary approaches to ensure a safe and inclusive digital future. It Panel will identify policy, research and information gaps, and make proposals to strengthen international cooperation in the digital space.
  267. ▶ United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2428 to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan, 5 years after civil war began. It calls upon all UN member states to prevent supply, sale or transfer to South Sudan — from or through their territories till 31 May 2019.
  268. ▶ United Nations finalized Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration to better manage international migration and strengthen migrant rights. Its first time that UN Member countries negotiated an agreement covering all dimensions of international migration, forming a non legally binding framework. US did not agreed upon these new UN Migration terms.
  269. ▶ United States Trade Representative (USTR) announced reviewing eligibility of India, Indonesia and Kazakhstan in Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) based on concerns about countries' compliance with program.
    - ✎ In Case of India, This review is based on concerns related to its compliance with GSP market access criterion and two petitions related to same criterion, filed by US dairy industry and US medical device industry.
    - ✎ Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) GSP is largest and oldest US trade preference programme introduced in 1976. It is designed to promote economic development by allowing duty-free entry for thousands of products from designated beneficiary countries. In

India's case, GSP enables duty-free entry of 3,500 product lines in US markets. Total US imports under GSP in 2017 was \$21.2 billion, of which India was biggest beneficiary with \$5.6 billion.

270. ▶ Venezuela and Libya were suspended from voting in United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2018-19 session for not paying UN dues. It was for third time in three years these countries have been suspended from voting for unpaid dues. Their dues are - \$25 Million (Venezuela) and \$6 Million (Libya).
271. ▶ Venezuela become first country to officially launch its own cryptocurrency called *Petro*, backed by oil, gas, gold and diamond reserves to circumvent US-led financial sanctions. Venezuelan Government claimed that pre-mined cryptocurrency Petro raised US \$735 million on first day of its pre-sale.
272. ▶ Venezuelan Government led by President Nicolas Maduro decided to remove three zeros off Venezuelan currency Bolivar, to counter hyperinflation and crippling economic crisis. It is aimed to guarantee commercial activities and it will come into effect from June 4, 2018.
- ▶ Government will take out of circulation current bills and put into circulation new bills, to be known as *sovereign bolivar*.
  - ▶ Largest bill in circulation is 100000 bolivar note, which trades for about \$0.50.
  - ▶ A kilo of sugar (2.2 pounds) costs around 250,000 bolivars, while average wages are approx 450000 Bolivars only.
  - ▶ Venezuela's new set of monetary denomination will consist of 2 coins of 1 bolivar and 2 bolivar. There will be Notes of 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 bolivars.
  - ▶ Venezuelan government also recently launched cryptocurrency *Petro*.
273. ▶ WHO launched new *WHO Global action plan on physical activity and health 2018-2030: More active people for a healthier world*, explaining how countries can reduce physical inactivity in adults and adolescents by 15% by 2030. It specifies a set of 20 policy areas aimed to develop more active societies by improving the environments and opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to do more Physical Activities.
274. ▶ Washington become USA first state to enact its own net-neutrality requirements after U.S. regulators repealed Obama-era rules designed to keep internet an even playing field. New law also requires internet providers to disclose information about their management practices, performance and commercial terms.
275. ▶ West African country Sierra Leone became first country to deploy blockchain technology in election process. Blockchain based solution used in Sierra Leone's election was developed by a Switzerland based voting technology company *Agora*.
276. ▶ World Bank Group approved USD 13 billion increase in paid-in capital, as part of a series of internal reforms. It consists USD 7.5 billion paid-in capital for International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and USD 5.5 billion for International Finance Commission (IFC). It also includes a USD 52.6 billion callable capital increase for IBRD.
277. ▶ World Bank approved \$700 million to help Bangladesh achieve its education for all vision by improving primary education sector, under Quality Learning for All Program (QLEAP). Also, Pakistan and World Bank inked agreements worth \$565 million to support projects in power and water sectors.
278. ▶ World Economic Forum's (WEF) released Report Energy Transition Index 2018 titled *Fostering Effective Energy Transition*. It ranks countries on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability
- ▶ India was ranked at 78th among 114 countries.
  - ▶ Top 5 - Sweden (1st), Norway (2nd), Switzerland (3rd), Finland (4th), Denmark (5th).
  - ▶ BRICS - Brazil (38th), Russia (70th) and China (76th).
279. ▶ World Happiness Index 2018 by UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network -
- ▶ In this report, Several parameters are used to generate a happiness score of country on a scale from 1 to 10.
  - ▶ India is ranked 133rd among 156 countries, down from 122 rank last year.
  - ▶ 2018 edition, for the first time ranked happiness of foreign-born immigrants in 117 countries.
  - ▶ Top 5 Happiest - Finland (1st), Norway (2nd), Denmark (3rd), Iceland (4th), Switzerland (5th). USA ranked 18th and Britain 19th.
  - ▶ Neighbours - Pakistan (75th), Nepal (101st), Bhutan (97th), Bangladesh (115th), Sri Lanka (116th).
280. ▶ World Health Organisation (WHO) classified gaming addiction as mental health disorder in its International Classification of Diseases (ICD). WHO defines gaming disorder as pattern of gaming behaviour characterized by impaired control over gaming, increased priority given to gaming over other activities.
281. ▶ World Health Organisation (WHO) published its first *Essential Diagnostics List*, a catalogue of tests needed to diagnose most common diseases along with number of global priority diseases.
- ▶ It aims to address inability to access diagnostic services, keeping the away from correct treatment.
  - ▶ The list contains 113 tests, out of which 58 are for detection of a wide range of common conditions and Remaining 55 tests are for detection of *priority* diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, HIV, hepatitis B and C, syphilis and human papillomavirus.
  - ▶ WHO will update list on regular basis and will also issue call for applications to add categories to next edition.

- ✎ It will provide a uniform tool useful to all countries, to test and treat health complications better and use health funds more efficiently by concentrating on truly essential tests.
- 282. ▶ World Health Organization (WHO) invited pharmaceutical companies around world to submit proposals to manufacture affordable versions of newer medicines for treatment of drug resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB). It requested drug makers to submit Expression of Interest (EoI) for Bedaquiline and Delamanid, two new-generation drugs, recommended for DR-TB.
- 283. ▶ World Health Organization (WHO) launched comprehensive plan to eliminate industrially-produced artificial trans fats from global food supply by 2023. WHO calls on governments to use 'REPLACE' action package to eliminate industrially-produced trans-fatty acids from food supply. World Health Organization (WHO) also held an emergency meeting to discuss on outbreak of Ebola in Congo (Central Africa).
- 284. ▶ World Health Organization (WHO) validated Nepal for having eliminated trachoma, a contagious bacterial infection of eye. It makes Nepal first country in WHO's South-East Asia Region to defeat trachoma, world's leading infectious cause of blindness.
- 285. ▶ World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) notified declaration submitted by India related to Article II and III of Appendix to Paris Act (1971) related to Berne (*Switzerland*) Convention for Protection of Literary and Artistic Works.
  - ✎ It will enable India to avail facilities provided for Article II and III of Appendix to Berne Convention during 10 years period that will expire, on October 10, 2024.
  - ✎ India has been member of Berne Convention since April 1928 and has been submitting declaration as per Article II and III of Appendix from time to time.
  - ✎ Berne Convention for Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (Berne Convention) is international copyright agreement that mandates equal treatment of copyrighted works by signatories, known as Berne Union. It was adopted in 1886 in Berne, Switzerland.
- 286. ▶ World Meteorological Organization (WMO) designated India as nodal centre for developing customized model to issue advance warning of floods to Asian countries, called as Flash Flood Guidance System.
  - ✎ It will provide forecasts by computing likelihood of rainfall and soil moisture levels to warn of possible floods. It will be customized weather model, originally developed by US and donated to WMO to warn about flash floods at least six hours in advance.
- 287. ▶ World Reputation Rankings 2018 Times Higher Education (THE) -
  - ✎ Indian Institute of Science Bengaluru (IISc Bangalore) is Only University in Global Top 100 (Ranked 91).
  - ✎ Top 5 - Harvard University (USA), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA), Stanford University (USA), University of Cambridge (UK) and University of Oxford (UK).
- 288. ▶ World Trade Organization (WTO) will set up panel to examine whether India has complied with its 2016 ruling in case against US regarding domestic content requirements (DCR) rules for solar cells and modules.
  - ✎ In 2016, WTO ruled against India for favouring local manufacturers in its solar power programme, on petition filed by USA.
  - ✎ Afterwards, USA alleged that India continues to apply WTO-inconsistent measures and had approached WTO demanding action against India for non-compliance of WTO ruling in December 2017.
- 289. ▶ World's First third generation European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) reactor started working in Taishan (China).
  - ✎ EPR is a third generation pressurised water reactor (PWR) design, developed mainly by Framatome and Électricité de France (EDF) in France, and Siemens in Germany. In Europe this reactor design was called European Pressurised Reactor, and internationalised name was Evolutionary Power Reactor. 2 EPR units under construction in Finland and France are both facing costly construction delays.
- 290. ▶ Worldwide Cost of Living report 2018 by the Economist Intelligence Unit -
  - ✎ Top 5 Costliest Cities - Singapore (1st for 5th straight year), Paris (France), Zurich (Switzerland), Hong Kong, Oslo (Norway).
  - ✎ Syrian capital Damascus is world's cheapest city.
  - ✎ Indian cities of Bangalore, Chennai and New Delhi and Pakistan's Karachi featured among ten cheapest locations surveyed.
- 291. ▶ World's first robot ski competition *The Edge of Robot: Ski Robot Challenge* held near PyeongChang (South Korea), with Eight humanoid robots participating and \$10000 Prize Money.
- 292. ▶ World's longest sandstone cave named 'Krem Puri' has been discovered in Meghalaya.
  - ✎ It was discovered in 2016, but its actual length was found between 5th February and 1st March 2018.ii. It is 24583 metres long, over 6000 metres longer than world record-holder Cueva Del Saman, a sandstone cave in Edo Zulia, Venezuela.
- 293. ▶ Yahoo launched a group messaging app called *Squirrel*, focussed on friends, family and work groups.

