



Current Affairs - September 2017 to February 2018

Month Type




- [579 Current Affairs were found in Last Six Months for Type - International](#)


(Showing **455** Important Ones)

International

- ▶ Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) become first Indian Oil Marketing Company (OMC) to enter lubricant market in Myanmar.
- ▶ 2 Days after Saudi Arabia Allowed Indian Haj Pilgrims to travel to Haj via Sea Route, Saudi Arabia has now Increased India's Haj Quota for 2018 to 175025 (1 Lakh 75 Thousand and 25 Pilgrims), an increase of 5000 compared to previous year.
 - ▶ Additionally, Women above 45 years of age will be allowed to travel for Haj in groups of 4 or more women, without a Mehram (Male Companion).
- ▶ 2 Democratic lawmakers, Ami Bera and Frank Pallone introduced a legislation in USA House of Representative to support India's permanent membership to UN Security Council.
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 2017 Global Talent Competitiveness Index by INSEAD -
 - ▶ India is ranked 81st among 118 countries, improving from 92nd rank last year.
 - ▶ Top 5 Nations - Switzerland, Singapore, United Kingdom, United States, Sweden.
- ▶ 2017 Melbourne Mercer Global Pension Index by Australian Centre for Financial Studies (ACFS) -
 - ▶ India has ranked 28th out of 30 countries. India's overall index value in 2017 is 44.9, which marks an improvement over index value of 43.4 in 2016.
 - ▶ Denmark has retained the top spot in this index for sixth consecutive year.
- ▶ 2018 *World Economic League Table* report released by Centre for Economics and Business Research (UK) -
 - ▶ India will overtake UK and France to become fifth largest economy in 2018, and will further move to 3rd spot by 2032.
 - ▶ China is likely to overtake USA as world's largest economy by 2032.
 - ▶ Russia will fall to 17th place among world's largest economies by 2032, from 11th place in 2017, mainly because of low commodity (oil) prices in international market and its excessive reliance on energy sector.
- ▶ 2018 Edelman Trust Barometer Report -
 - ▶ In Both Categories of General Public and Informed Experts - China ranked 1st and India ranked 3rd. Indonesia is at 2nd place in both categories.
 - ▶ Note that In 2017 report, India was at top in both categories.
- ▶ 2nd India-Afghanistan air cargo route linking Kabul to Mumbai inaugurated at Hamid Karzai international airport in Kabul, to boost export of fresh fruits and medicinal plants from Afghanistan. First air corridor between both countries linking Kabul-New Delhi was inaugurated in June 2017.
- ▶ 34th Harbin International Ice and Snow Festival (world's largest ice festival) began in Harbin (north-east China). It highlights ice sculptures of castles, historic landmarks and famous figures.
- ▶ 5 Day youth film festival of Nordic-Baltic European nations started at India Habitat Centre in New Delhi.
 - ▶ Nordic-Baltic countries are *Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden*. They are tied together geographically and historically through trade, culture and many other value systems.

12. ▶ *Feminism* is named as Merriam-Webster's Word of the year 2017.


 *Feminism* word has its roots in the Latin language, where it was used for "woman" and "female" in 14th century English.

 Other Words of The year 2017

 *Populism* - Cambridge Dictionary.

 *Kwaussie* - Australian National Dictionary.

13. ▶ *Global Manufacturing Index* released by World Economic Forum (WEF, titled *Readiness for the future of production report* -

 Japan is at top, while India is ranked 30th. Top 5 Nations -




1	Japan
2	South Korea
3	Germany
4	Switzerland
5	China

14. ▶ *Government at a Glance 2017* report by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) -

 Indian government is ranked 3rd most trusted government in world, with 74 % Indians trusting their current PM Modi led Government.

 List is topped by Switzerland, followed by Indonesia.

15. ▶ *The Legatum Prosperity Index 2017* (149 countries) -

 India ranks 100th in this list of prosperity.

 Top 5 - Norway, New Zealand, Finland, Switzerland and Sweden.

16. ▶ A 910-carat gem diamond, considered 5th largest gem-quality diamond ever found has been discovered in a Lesotho mine (Africa). It is more valuable as it is colourless, with worth of approx \$40 million.

17. ▶ A consortium of chinese firms is Constructing Bangladesh's first eco-friendly thermal power plant with ultra-modern clean coal technology, near sea port in Payra town in Patuakhali district of Bangladesh. Estimated cost of the project is USD 1.56 billion.

18. ▶ A painting of Christ by Italian Renaissance painter Leonardo da Vinci is sold for USD 450 million, breaking all previous records of artworks sold or auctioned. Previously, Highest price ever for a work of art at auction was USD 179.4 million for Pablo Picasso's painting 'Women of Algiers (Version O)' in May 2015. While, highest sale price for any artwork was USD 300 million for Willem de Kooning's painting 'Interchange'.

19. ▶ A tomb belonging to a royal goldsmith who lived more than 3500 years ago has been discovered in Luxor (Egypt).

20. ▶ ADIA (Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA)) became first institutional investor in India's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)'s Master Fund and a shareholder in NIIF's investment management Company. ADIA invested approx 1 Billion USD in NIIF.

21. ▶ 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).

22. ▶ According to Forbes Real-Time Billionaires List, Hui Ka Yan (chairman of Chinese real estate giant Evergrande Group) is now Asia's richest man with net worth of \$41.1 billion. Asia's second and third richest persons are Tencent Holdings Chairman Ma Huateng (\$39.1 billion), Alibaba Group Chairman Jack Ma (\$38.9 billion).

23. ▶ 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.

24. ▶ According to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)'s Trade and Development Report (TDR) 2017, India and China at their current levels of growth will not serve as "growth polls" for global economy in near future.

 Global Growth will reach 2.6% this year, well below pre 2008 financial crisis average of 3.2%.

 India's Growth will slow down to 6.7% in 2017 from 7% in 2016.

 China's Growth has been retained at 6.7%, same as in 2016. China's estimated debt-to-GDP ratio is 249%, so it needs to introduce measures to contain its rising debt as domestic demand could be squeezed, with adverse consequences.

25. ▶ According to World Energy Access report by International Energy Agency (IEA) -

 Half a billion people have gained access to electricity in India since 2000, almost doubling country's electrification rate. It paves way for India to achieve access to electricity for all in early 2020s.

26. ▶ According to World Steel Association (WSA), India overtook USA to become 3rd largest steel producer in 2017, with crude steel production growing 6.2% to 101.4 million tonnes (MT). China remains 1st by producing 831.7 MT in 2017, followed by Japan (104.7 MT).

27. ▶ According to global airlines' grouping IATA -

- ✎ India's domestic aviation sector grew the fastest and India topped domestic growth chart again in September with 15.5 % Growth, compared to 5.7 % Globally. China is at 2nd place.
- 28. ▶ 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.
- 29. ▶ Adani Power signed 25 year Power purchase agreement (PPA) for net capacity of 1,496 MW with Bangladesh Power Development Board to supply electricity from its upcoming 1,600 MW plant at Godda in Jharkhand.
- 30. ▶ African country Burundi became first nation to withdraw from International Criminal Court (Hague, Netherlands) that has authority to prosecute individuals for international crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.
 - ✎ In recent years, 3 African Nations South Africa, Gambia and Burundi expressed their intent to leave ICC citing reason that it focuses too much on African nations.
- 31. ▶ Agricultural Minister Radha Mohan Singh sent a proposal to United Nations for declaring 2018 as *International Year of Millets*.
 - ✎ Mr. Radha Mohan also stated that total fish production in India remained 11.41 million tonnes in 2016-17, making India 2nd largest fish producing country.
- 32. ▶ Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) launched promotion of north eastern products in Bangladesh and Myanmar. Exports of APEDA scheduled products to Bangladesh during 2016-17 were US \$396.44 million and US \$24.15 million for Myanmar.
- 33. ▶ Air India launched its direct flight from New Delhi to Copenhagen (Denmark), as 11th destination for Air India in Europe (described as connecting *Maharaja with the Mermaid*).
- 34. ▶ Air New Zealand has been named *2018 Airline of the Year* for 5th consecutive year. It is followed by Qantas Airways, Singapore Airlines, Virgin Australia and Virgin Atlantic.
- 35. ▶ Airbus Perlan 2 Engineless aircraft has set a new altitude world record for a glider, climbing to 52,172 feet in El Calafate (Argentina)
- 36. ▶ Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Microsoft launched open-source and deep learning interface *Glueon* that will help developers to deploy machine learning models across several platforms. It will give developers a place to prototype, build, train and deploy machine learning models.
- 37. ▶ American and Japanese armies launched 13th edition of their joint exercise named Iron Fist, in California (USA).
- 38. ▶ American digital payments company PayPal launched domestic operations in India.
 - ✎ Merchants offering PayPal will be able to process both local and global payments through the platform, getting access to PayPal's more than 20 Crore customers across world.
- 39. ▶ American electric Car maker TESLA has built world's biggest lithium-ion battery to be plugged into an Australian state grid, capable of powering 30,000 homes for up to an hour in the event of a severe blackout.
- 40. ▶ 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.
- 41. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Government and Zurich (Switzerland) signed a letter of intent to promote mutual prosperity and development.
- 42. ▶ 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.
- 43. ▶ Annual survey of *Gallup International* ranked Indian PM Narendra Modi as 3rd among world leaders, with German chancellor Angela Merkel at top and French president Emmanuel Macron at 2nd place.
- 44. ▶ Apple and Google respectively took 2 top spots in list of world's 100 most valuable brands, as per report by consultancy group Interbrand. This is the fifth consecutive year with Apple and Google at top of the list.
- 45. ▶ Arab Nation Jordan, that is 90% desert, has launched *Sahara Forest Project* near Aqaba City to turn desert land into farming land to produce food using sun and sea water. It is funded by Norway and European Union.
- 46. ▶ As per *Authentic Brands Study* by Cohn & Wolfe -
 - ✎ Indian consumers regard Google as most authentic brand, followed by Microsoft, Amazon, Maruti Suzuki and Apple.
 - ✎ Amazon tops list globally, followed by Apple.

47. ▶ 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.
48. ▶ 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.
49. ▶ As per Credit Suisse Research Institute's (CSRI) report CS Family 1000 -
- ✍️ India has 108 publicly-listed family owned businesses, 3rd highest in world. With average market capitalization of USD 6.5 billion, India ranks 5th in Asia Pacific and 22nd globally, in terms of average m-cap.
 - ✍️ Top 5 countries in terms of number of family-owned companies - China, USA, India, France AND Hong Kong
50. ▶ As per Data by Forbes, based on a recent research by Transparency International (TI) -
- ✍️ India beats Vietnam, Thailand, Pakistan and Myanmar in terms of corruption, making India most corrupt Asian nation with 69 % bribery rate.
51. ▶ As per Data by Twiplomacy (Burson Marsteller research project that tracks use of Twitter by governments and international organizations) -
- ✍️ USA Prez Donald Trump is most followed leader on Twitter, followed by Pope Francis and Indian PM Narendra Modi.
52. ▶ As per HSBC, India ranks 14th in terms of best country for expats to live and work in. The list is topped by Singapore.
53. ▶ As per Report by Tourism Australia, Maharashtra is leading Indian tourist source market for Australia with over 59,000 tourists having visited Australia in year ended June 2017, followed by Delhi and Karnataka.
54. ▶ As per consultancy and research firm Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) -
- ✍️ India will 3rd largest aviation market for departures by 2019, up from 4th place with 131 Million passengers in 2016.
 - ✍️ USA is largest aviation market with 815 million passengers, followed by China (490 million) and Japan (141 million).
55. ▶ As per data by *International Air Transport Association (IATA)*, India topped worldwide growth chart of domestic air passenger traffic for November 2017 with growth by 16.4 %, highest in world.
56. ▶ As per data by Bank of Thailand, India has highest unemployment rate in Asia (8%). Thailand's 1.3% employment rate is ranked best in Asia.
57. ▶ As per new discovery, *Mount Hope* is new tallest mountain in British Antarctic Territory (BAT) with height measured at 3,239 meters above, more than 3,184 meters tall *Mount Jackson*.
58. ▶ As per rankings released by *Fortune Magazine*, Qatar is World's Richest Country in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) Per Capita.

Top 5 Nations -





Rank	Country	GDP Per Capita
1	Qatar	\$124930
2	Luxembourg	\$109190
3	Singapore	\$90530
4	Brunei	\$76740
5	Ireland	\$72630

- ✍️ India is Ranked 126th with USD 7170 GDP Per Capita.

59. ▶ As per survey by personal finance platform *GoBankingRates*
- ✍️ India is 2nd cheapest country to live or retire among 112 countries, after South Africa. It is based on four metrics - local purchasing power index, rent index, Groceries index, and Consumer price index. These metrics evaluate relative affordability as compared to New York city.
 - ✍️ Most Expensive - Bermuda (112), Bahamas (111), Hong Kong (110), Switzerland (109) and Ghana (108).
60. ▶ Asia Index Pvt Ltd (joint venture of S&P Dow Jones Indices and BSE) launched Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) index, to measure exposure to securities meeting sustainability investing criteria.
61. ▶ Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide USD 152 million to Nepal for implementation and enhancement of its power transmission and distribution.
62. ▶ Assam government signed MoU with Singapore for skilling youth of state. Additionally, Indiana (USA State) and Karnataka signed agreement to establish sister-state ties for cooperation in economic, educational and cultural fields.
63. ▶ Australia and East Timor (Known as *Timor - Leste*) agreed on a maritime boundary and revenue sharing agreement from a natural gas field beneath seabed between them.

64. ▶ Australia became 25th country to recognize same-sex marriage as it passed a bill that changed a 2004 law that stipulated a legal marriage as the one between a man and a woman.
65. ▶ Australian Government announced that it will establish a national space agency as a part of long term plan to develop Australia's domestic space industry. It will be called ARSE (Australian Research & Space Exploratio).
66. ▶ Australia's last car factory was shut down as USA carmaker GM Holden Ltd closed its plant in South Australia. It marks end of car manufacturing industry in Australia.
67. ▶ Austria's law banning face veils such as burkhas or niqabs came into effect, to promote cohabitation between majority Austrian population and people from third countries living in Austria.
68. ▶ BRICS - themed subway train with carriages representing five member nations started test operations in China's Xiamen city.
 - ▶ Indian carriage depicts elephants and yoga.
 - ▶ Chinese carriage is red and displays icons such as the Great Wall and Tian'anmen Square.
 - ▶ Brazilian carriage is green and decorated with images of footballs and football stars.
 - ▶ Russian carriage shows country's ballet and matryoshka dolls.
 - ▶ South African carriage displays pictures of diamonds.
 - ▶ Sixth carriage combines cultural elements from all the five BRICS countries.
69. ▶ BRICS Nations' New Development Bank (NDB) approved 2 development projects in India and Russia with loans of \$400 million -
 - ▶ In India, funds procured by means of NDB loan will be used to rehabilitate the Indira Gandhi canal system.
 - ▶ In Russia, loan will be used to build a toll transport corridor connecting M-5 federal highway to Ufa city centre.
 - ▶ New Development Bank is Headquartered in Shanghai (China) with India's K V Kamath as Current President.
70. ▶ Bangkok Bank (Thailand) selected India based iGTB (Intellect Global Transaction Banking - a specialist firm of Intellect Design Arena Ltd) as tech partner to implement a cash management platform and corporate portal.
71. ▶ Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina floated a five-point peace proposal at United Nations to find a permanent solution to Rohingya crisis (Over 430,000 refugees fleeing violence in Bangladesh's Rakhine State from Myanmar since August 2017). These Points Include UN Intervention to ensure safe return of all displaced Rohingyas in Bangladesh to their homes in Myanmar and implementing Kofi Annan Commission Recommendations immediately.
72. ▶ Bangladesh and USA Armies held Joint Pacific Resilience Disaster Response Exercise and Exchange (DREE) in Dhaka.
73. ▶ Bangladesh, India and Nepal approved operating procedures for passenger vehicle movement (Passenger protocol) in sub-region under Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA).
74. ▶ 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.
75. ▶ Bank of Cyprus selected digital security company Gemalto to supply world's first biometric payment card for both chip and contactless payments. These cards will use fingerprint recognition instead of a personal identification number (PIN) to authenticate the cardholder.
76. ▶ Belgium became first country to send a female ambassador (Dominique Mineur) to Saudi Arabia.
77. ▶ Bengaluru based IT Firm Mindtree inaugurated its first international Digital Pumpkin innovation hub in New Jersey (USA).
78. ▶ Bengaluru city signed MoU with C40 cities network to work together to tackle air pollution.
 - ▶ C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group (C40) is grouping of cities aims at tackling climate change and reducing greenhouse gas emissions in urban areas.
79. ▶ Bermuda became first country to legalize and then repeal same-sex marriage, after it reversed right of gay couples to marry.
80. ▶ Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) signed agreement with USA's networking solutions provider Coriant to study possibilities of bringing and expanding 5G and Internet of Things (IoT) in India.
81. ▶ Bharti Airtel acquired Consumer Mobile Businesses (CMB) of Tata Teleservices Ltd (TTSL) and Tata Teleservices Maharashtra Ltd (TTML) with over 4 crore TTSL customers joining Bharti Airtel. Bharti Airtel will absorb TTSL's CMB operations across country in nineteen circles (17 under TTSL and 2 under TTML).
82. ▶ Bharti Airtel received Ghana's National Communications Authority's approval for merger between Bharti Ghana (Airtel) and Millicom Ghana (Tigo). Merger will result in 2nd largest mobile network operations in Ghana.
83. ▶ Bharti Airtel signed agreement with Millicom International, under which *Airtel Rwanda Ltd* will acquire 100% equity in Tigo Rwanda Ltd.
84. ▶ Bhutan has become the first country to pledge rapid deployment troops to the UN peacekeeping operations, keeping them at the ready for participation in missions within 60 days.
85. ▶ Bollywood Film Padmaavat has been banned in Malaysia by country's censor board, stating that it touches on the *sensitivities of Islam*.
86. ▶ Brand Finance's Nation Brands 2017 -

- ✎ India ranked 8th most valuable nation brand while USA retained its top position and China took second spot.
 - ✎ In terms of valuation, India's National Brand Value in 2017 is \$2.04 trillion, down by 1% from last year's \$2.06 trillion. However, India's brand rating has improved from 'AA-' to 'AA'.
87. ▶ 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.
88. ▶ Brazil's securities regulator prohibited local investment funds from buying cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin, Ethereum.
89. ▶ Britain launched a new plastic 10-pound note featuring Jane Austen (*renowned British Author*), To tackle counterfeiting. Apart from Queen, Austen is 3rd woman (after Florence Nightingale and Elizabeth Fry) to feature on a modern-day British banknote.
90. ▶ 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.
91. ▶ Bulgaria taken over European Union's six-month revolving presidency, from Estonia.
92. ▶ 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).
93. ▶ Cabinet Approvals-
- ✎ Approved enhancement of age of superannuation of doctors other than Central Health Service (CHS) doctors to 65 years.
 - ✎ MOU with Ethiopia in field of Information, Communication and Media.
 - ✎ MoU with Belarus in the oil and gas sector
 - ✎ MoU with Afghanistan on Technical Cooperation on Police Training and Development
 - ✎ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare signed a Letter of Intent with Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to extend cooperation in health sector.
 - ✎ Letter of Intent (LoI) with Norway to extend cooperation within health sector through Norway India Partnership Initiative (NIPI) for 3 years starting from 2018.
94. ▶ Cabinet approvals -
- ✎ Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) with Japan on *Technical Intern Training Program (TITP)*. Under this, India will send 3-lakh youth to Japan for on-job training for 3-5 years.
 - ✎ MOC with Japan on establishing a Liquid, Flexible and Global LNG Market.
 - ✎ MoU between Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Financial Services Commission (Gibraltar) for mutual co-operation and technical assistance.

-  MOU between Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) and Capital Markets Authority (Kuwait).
 -  MoU with Morocco on cooperation in water resources.
 -  Government approved updating status of *International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA)* from Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to Inter-Governmental Organization (IGO). It will bring IALA at par with International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO) and will enable more safe, economic and efficient movement of vessels.
 -  Extradition Treaty with Lithuania to provide legal framework for seeking extradition of economic offenders, terrorists and other criminals from and to Lithuania.
95. ▶ Canada has been chosen as partner country for 23rd Technology Summit to be held in November 2017 in New Delhi, organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and Department of Science and Technology (DST).
 96. ▶ Central American Nation Guatemala announced to move its Israeli Embassy to Jerusalem, after USA recently recognized Jerusalem as capital of Israel and announced to move USA's Israeli embassy to Jerusalem.
 97. ▶ Central American country Nicaragua signed Paris Agreement on climate change, leaving USA and Syria as only 2 countries left to sign this global climate pact.
 98. ▶ China Great Wall Industry Corporation (CGWIC) launched Algeria's first telecommunications satellite, Alcomsat-1, aboard a Long March 3B rocket.
 99. ▶ China and Australia joint military training exercise *Panda-Kangaroo 2017* concluded in Kunming (China).
 100. ▶ China and Pakistan Joint Air Exercise *Shaheen VI* has been organized.
 101. ▶ China commissioned its first radar-evading J-20 stealth fighter jets into military service.
 102. ▶ China constructed a 330-foot tall air purifying tower in Xian (Shaanxi Province), biggest in world. It has produced more than 10 million cubic meters of clean air since launch.
 103. ▶ China displayed its first unmanned combat helicopter AV500W for foreign buyers. The aircraft's length is 7.2 meters.
 104. ▶ China has developed a new underwater surveillance network which will help its submarines to accurately track target vessels and will protect its interests in the Indian Ocean and South China Sea. It will acquire information about underwater environment, streaming acquired information to intelligence centres and providing actionable information to Chinese navy which will use it for tracking, navigation and positioning.
 105. ▶ China has shut down its legal government-sanctioned ivory (*elephant teeth*) trade.
 106. ▶ 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.
 107. ▶ China launched 2 BeiDou-3 satellites to provide navigation and positioning services to countries along Belt and Road initiative (BRI) by end of 2018. Launched satellites were BeiDou-3 M7 and BeiDou-3 M8 (26th and 27th satellites) in BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS).
 108. ▶ China launched 2nd Land Surveying Satellite LKW-2 (also known as Yaogan Weixing-32), to be used for remote sensing exploration of land resources. It was launched on board of Long March-2D rocket.
 109. ▶ China launched BeiDou-3 M1 and BeiDou-3 M2 Navigation satellites on board Long March-3B rocket.
 110. ▶ China launched remote sensing VRSS-2 satellite for Venezuela by Long March-2D carrier rocket. This is 3rd Venezuelan satellite launched by China after Venesat -1 (2008) and VRSS - 1 (2012).
 111. ▶ China launched world's fastest bullet train *Fuxing* between Beijing and Shanghai at 350 kms per hour, covering 1,250-km in 4 hours and 30 minutes.
 112. ▶ China launched world's first all-electric ship, which can travel up to 80 km with 2000-tonnes cargo after a two-hour charge. It is 70.5-metre-long and weighs about 600 tonnes.
 113. ▶ China resumed Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through Nathu La route, which was stopped by China amid Doklam military face-off with India last year.
 114. ▶ China started trial operations of world's biggest automated container terminal at Yangshan Deep Water Port in Shanghai. Terminal covers 2.23 million square metres and has a 2,350-metre shoreline.
 115. ▶ 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.

116. ▶ China today launched three remote sensing satellites to improve observation capability to promote commercial use for remote sensing industry. Satellites are Jilin-1 04, Jilin-1 05 and Jilin-1 06.
117. ▶ China unveiled Asia's largest artificial island-building ship named *magic island maker*, with 140-metre length and capable of digging 6,000 cubic metres an hour.
118. ▶ China will build its second foreign naval base in Pakistan, after Djibouti (Nation in Horn of Africa).
 - ✎ It will be set up in Gwadar on the southwestern coast of Balochistan, that holds strategic significance as Gwadar is located near Chabahar port in Iran, that is being jointly developed by Iran, India and Afghanistan.
119. ▶ China will establish 3 international courts (*in Beijing, Shenzhen and Xi'an*) to deal with disputes related to its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a development strategy focused on road connectivity and maritime cooperation between Eurasian countries.
120. ▶ China will launch 10 satellites into space over next three years to maintain non-stop surveillance on disputed waterway of South China Sea. It would provide scientific support for China's One Belt One Road initiative and emergency response efforts at sea.
121. ▶ China will provide financial support to construct counter-terrorism base in Badakhshan province of northern Afghanistan that would prevent cross-border infiltration of Chinese Uyghur militants.
122. ▶ China's Shanghai will have first Tesla Electric Car factory outside USA. Tesla is headed by Noted Entrepreneur Elon Musk.
123. ▶ 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.
124. ▶ China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) will issue its first US dollar-denominated bond with minimum worth of \$1 billion by June 2018.
 - ✎ Minimum size of issuance will be 1 billion USD, which will be increased upon increase in demand for first bond.
 - ✎ Bond Maturity will be 3 - 5 years, depending on investor demand. AIIB plans to cap its total 2018 borrowing volume at US \$3 billion.
125. ▶ China's Zhejiang Electric Power Company will construct world's tallest power supply pylon in east Zhejiang Province, with 380-metre height. It will get past China's Dabaoshan pylon (370 m).
126. ▶ 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.
127. ▶ Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) 2018 by environmental organisation Germanwatch (56 Nations) -
 - ✎ India - Ranked 14th This year, up from 20th Rank Last Year.
 - ✎ Top 5 - Sweden (1), Lithuania (2), Morocco (3), Norway (4), UK (5)
 - ✎ Bottom 5 - Russia , USA, Australia, South Korea, Saudi Arabia (Last)
 - ✎ BRICS - Brazil (19), Russia (53), China (41), South Africa (48)
128. ▶ 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.
129. ▶ 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)
130. ▶ Cross Border Train Service between India & Bangladesh, Kolkata-Khulna Bandhan Express has been inaugurated.
131. ▶ Cuba began a five-month political transition expected to end with Raul Castro's departure from Presidency, due to his family's dominance in country's political system for 60 years.
132. ▶ Delhi Government signed twin city agreement with Seoul (South Korea), to strengthen cooperation i fields of smart city, e-governance, climate change and transportation.
133. ▶ Denmark launched USA based global alliance to manage Climate change in Copenhagen. It is called Partnering for Green Growth and the Global Goals 2030 (P4G).
 - ✎ P4G is supported by China, Indonesia and C40(group of more than 90 large cities of world that represent 25% of global economy).
134. ▶ Disney acquired certain assets of 21st Century Fox (FOXA), for approximately USD 52.4 billion in stocks, with transaction valued at USD 66.1 billion including 21st Century Fox's debt.
135. ▶ East African country Zimbabwe banned import of fruits and vegetables to preserve scarce foreign currencies.
136. ▶ Economist Intelligence Unit's Safe Cities Index 2017 -
 - ✎ Japanese capital Tokyo topped the list of 60 cities. Singapore and Japanese city Osaka ranked second and third.
 - ✎ Indian cities Delhi and Mumbai have been ranked 43rd and 45th respectively.















137. ▶ Ecuador granted citizenship to WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange.
- ▶ In 2012, Assange, an Australian-Ecuadoran, was granted asylum at Ecuadorian Embassy in London to avoid extradition to Sweden, where he faced an investigation over rape allegations.
138. ▶ Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) of India launched UJALA (Unnati Jyoti by Affordable Lighting for All) Scheme in Melaka State of Malaysia. Malaysia became 2nd country after United Kingdom (UK) where EESL launched UJALA scheme. Under this, each household in Melaka will get 10 high quality 9-watt LED bulbs at a cost of only RM 10.
139. ▶ Environmental Performance Index (EPI) 2018 by World Economic Forum (WEF) in collaboration with Yale University and Columbia University -
- ▶ India is ranked 177 among 180 countries.
 - ▶ Top 5 countries - Switzerland, France, Denmark, Malta and Sweden.
 - ▶ Bottom 5 countries - Nepal (176), India (177), Congo (178), Bangladesh (179), Burundi (180)
140. ▶ Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kuwait, Peru, Poland and Netherlands joined UN Security Council as non-permanent members.
- ▶ UN Security Council has 15 members, including 5 with permanent seats who have power to veto resolutions – Britain, China, France, Russia and USA.
141. ▶ European Nation Iceland became First Nation to legalise equal pay between men and women, by passing a law that makes it illegal to pay men more than women, applicable for Companies employing minimum 25 people.
142. ▶ European Union Election Observation Mission (EUEOM) launched to monitor general and provincial polls in Nepal to be held in Nov - Dec 2017, with 3.5 million euros allocated for entire election observation process.
143. ▶ Export control regime Wassenaar Arrangement included India as its 42nd member, during its plenary meeting in Vienna (Austria).
- ▶ Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies, is a multilateral export control regime established to ensure regional and international security by promoting transparency in transfer of arms and dual-use goods and technologies.
 - ▶ This will enhance India's credentials in field of non-proliferation, although, India is not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.
144. ▶ External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will lead a ministerial delegation to the ASEAN-India 'Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas' (PBD) to be held in 2018, in Singapore. PBD 2018 will also mark 25 years of the ASEAN-India partnership.
145. ▶ 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.
146. ▶ Fifty Indian peacekeepers stationed in South Sudan awarded with UN Medal for their professionalism and service in protecting civilians and building durable peace in conflict-ridden South Sudan.
147. ▶ 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.
148. ▶ Fiji, Niger, Tuvalu and Seychelles ratified ISA Framework Agreement and became members of ISA framework agreement.
- ▶ ISA will need the ratification of just 4 more countries to become a recognized inter-governmental body (Total 15 were needed). After which, ISA can embark on its task to channelise \$300 billion in 10 years to promote renewable energy globally.
149. ▶ Financial Times London's Global MBA Ranking 2018 -
- ▶ Rankings of Prominent Indian B-schools -
 - ▶ Indian School of Business (ISB) - 27th (28th last year)
 - ▶ IIM Ahmedabad - 31st (29th last year)
 - ▶ IIM-Bangalore - 35th (49th last year)
 - ▶ IIM-Calcutta - 78th (95th last year)
 - ▶ Stanford Graduate School of Business, US has topped the ranking followed by France's INSEAD.
150. ▶ First India-UK Createch Summit will be held in Mumbai in February 2018, to explore convergence of creativity and technology, 'Createch' and its application across a range of areas.
151. ▶ First USA crude oil cargo of 1.6 million barrels bought by Indian Oil Corporation reached Paradip Port (Odisha). Indian Oil became placed order of 3.9 million barrel from USA.

152. ▶ First ever *Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) - India Music Festival* held at Purana Quila in New Delhi, to celebrate 25 year anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations.
153. ▶ First metro train of Pakistan arrived from China as a gift. It has been called *Orange Line Metro Train service* and will begin operations in December 2017. Also, Pakistan and Iran signed MoU to improve border security.
154. ▶ First project funded *BRICS New Development Bank* has started operations in Shanghai (China), that was set up using \$76 million loan granted to Shanghai Lingang Distributed Solar Power Project from NDB.
155. ▶ For the first time, WHO will add gaming disorder to its International Classification of Diseases (ICD)
 - ▶ ICD is a diagnostic manual published by WHO that was last updated 27 years ago. 11th edition of the manual is due in 2018.
156. ▶ Forbes Highest Paid TV Actresses 2017 -
 - ▶ Modern Family' star Sofia Vergara earned USD 41.5 million (Rs 271 crore), topping the list for the sixth consecutive year.
 - ▶ India's Priyanka Chopra ranked 8th, as she made USD 10 million (INR 65 crore).
157. ▶ Forbes annual list of the highest-paid musicians -
 - ▶ Top 3 -
 - ▶ Diddy (\$130m) (USA)
 - ▶ Beyonce (\$105m) (USA)
 - ▶ Drake (\$94m) (Canada)
158. ▶ 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.
159. ▶ Forbes' Highest Paid Women in Music List 2017 -
 - ▶ American singer Beyonce at top with earnings of \$105 million (Rs682 crore).
 - ▶ Top 5 - Beyonce (\$105 million-USA), Adele (\$69 million-ENG), Taylor Swift (\$44 million-USA), Celine Dion (\$42 million-Canada), Jennifer Lopez (\$38 million-USA).
160. ▶ Forbes' Highest-Paid Athletes of All Time-
 - ▶ Retired American Basketball Legend Michael Jordan is named as highest-paid athlete of all time with \$1.7 billion income, followed by golfer Tiger Woods (\$1.7 billion) and Late American golfer Arnold Palmer at 3rd place (\$1.4 billion).
161. ▶ Forbes' best countries in world for business in 2018 (153 Nations) -
 - ▶ UK stayed at top of List, followed by New Zealand and Netherlands.
 - ▶ India is ranked 62nd on list. China ranks 66th.
162. ▶ Foreign Policy magazine's 2017 list of '50 Leading Global Thinkers' List -
 - ▶ Indian-American California senator Kamala Harris topped the List. South Korean President Moon Jae-in is ranked second in list and Indian-origin stand-up comedian Hasan Minhaj ranked 3rd.
163. ▶ Foreign ministers of India, US and Japan held a trilateral meeting in New York on sidelines of 72nd annual session of UN General Assembly. It was attended by Sushma Swaraj on India's Behalf.
 - ▶ Miroslav Lajcak (Slovakia) is president of 72nd UN General Assembly.
164. ▶ Fortune Most Powerful Women in Business List -
 - ▶ USA - Indian Origin PepsiCo chairman Indra Nooyi ranked at 2nd, led by General Motors chairman and CEO Mary Barra.
 - ▶ Outside USA - Chanda Kochhar (ICICI Bank CEO) ranked 5th and Axis Bank CEO Shikha Sharma ranked 21st. List is topped by Banco Santander group executive chairman Ana Botin.
165. ▶ Fortune magazine's *World's Most Admired Companies* List 2018
 - ▶ Apple topped the for 11th Consecutive year.
 - ▶ E-commerce firm Amazon retained 2nd spot, followed by Google's parent Alphabet.
166. ▶ Fortune's 'Businessperson of the Year' list -
 - ▶ It is annual ranking of world's top 20 heads of companies.
 - ▶ Aditya Puri, Managing Director of HDFC Bank, is the only Indian on (ranked 18th).
 - ▶ Top 3 - Jensen Huang (Nvidia), Jamie Dimon (JPMorgan Chase), Marc Benioff (Salesforce)
 - ▶ Indian Origin Person on list -Ajay Bagga (Mastercard, 6th), Shantanu Narayan (Adobe)
167. ▶ France's lower house of parliament approved new Anti-Terror Law. Now several controversial measures under state of emergency that has been in act for nearly two years have been made permanent.
168. ▶ French Govt. approved banning all exploration and production of oil and natural gas by 2040 within country and its overseas territories.

169. ▶ French anti-doping laboratory of Chatenay-Malabry provisionally suspended by World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), upon self-reported analytical issues to WADA by laboratory.
170. ▶ German Development Bank KfW signed agreement with India's North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited (NEEPCO) for Providing \$20 Million of Additional Funding for India's *Pare Hydroelectric Plant* project under Indo-German Bilateral Development Cooperation.
171. ▶ Germany will assist Indian Railways to make country's existing rail corridors semi high speed (max speed of 200 km per hour) on existing 643 km Chennai-Kazipet corridor of Indian Railways.
172. ▶ Gevora Hotel in Dubai became *world's tallest hotel* with 356.53 Metres height, 1 metre taller than previous title holder *JW Marriott Marquis*.
173. ▶ 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).
174. ▶ Global Financial Centres Index 2017 by Z/Yen Partners and the China Development Institute (CDI). It is released twice a year, in March and September, and ranks 92 financial centres. Top 10 -
- ▶ London
 - ▶ New York
 - ▶ Hong Kong
 - ▶ Singapore
 - ▶ Tokyo
 - ▶ Shanghai
 - ▶ Toronto
 - ▶ Sydney
 - ▶ Zurich
 - ▶ Beijing
175. ▶ Global Human Capital Report 2017 by World Economic Forum (130 Nations) -
- ▶ Top 5 - Norway (1), Finland (2), Switzerland (3), United States (4), Denmark (5)
 - ▶ Bottom 5 - Mali (126), Ethiopia (127), Senegal (128), Mauritania (129), Yemen (130)
 - ▶ Neighbours - Bangladesh (111), Pakistan (125), Nepal (98), Sri Lanka (70)
 - ▶ BRICS - Brazil (77), Russia (16), **India (103)**, China (34), South Africa (87)
176. ▶ Global Hunger Index (GHI) 2017 report released by Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) -
- ▶ India ranked 100th position among 119 countries, slipping 3 positions as compared to 97th rank in 2016 GHI.
 - ▶ Neighbours - Nepal (72), Bangladesh (88), Sri Lanka (84) and China (29), Pakistan (106).
 - ▶ BRICS - Brazil (18), Russia (22), **India (100)**, China (29), South Africa (55)
 - ▶ Top 5 - Belarus (1), Bosnia & Herzegovina (2), Chile (3), Croatia (4), Cuba (4)
 - ▶ Bottom 5 - Zambia (115), Madagascar (116), Sierra Leone (117), Chad (118), Central African Republic (119)
177. ▶ Global TB Report 2017, released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) -
- ▶ India tops list of seven nations, accounting for 64 % of the 10.4 million new tuberculosis (TB) cases worldwide in 2016.
 - ▶ India is followed by Indonesia, China, Philippines, Pakistan, Nigeria and South Africa.
 - ▶ Estimated 1.7 million people died from TB in 2016.
178. ▶ Global ranking for least and most stressful cities, by Zipjet (150 Cities) -
- ▶ Top 5 - Stuttgart (Germany), Luxembourg (Luxembourg), Hannover (Germany), Bern (Switzerland), Munich (Germany)
 - ▶ Bottom 5 - Cairo (Egypt), Dakar (Senegal), Lagos (Nigeria), Kabul (Afghanistan), Baghdad (Iraq) (150th)
 - ▶ India - New Delhi (142), Mumbai (138), Kolkata (131), Bangalore (130)
179. ▶ Google acquired a part of electronics company HTC Corporation's engineering and design teams for \$1.1 billion. Bought team of approx 2000 engineers are the ones that worked on *Pixel smartphones*.
180. ▶ 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.
181. ▶ Google launched *Datally* App that will help users understand, control and save on their mobile data. It will enable users to track their data usage in real time, and get personalized recommendations on saving data along with notifications of public Wi-Fi spots available


nearby.




























 Google also launched *Files Go* app that takes a mobile-first approach to freeing up space, finding files faster and easily sharing them with others, even when offline.

182. ▶ 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.
183. ▶ Google will open a research lab focused on Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Beijing (China), its first such centre in Asia.
184. ▶ Google will shut down its high-end smartphone Augmented Reality (AR) platform named *Tango* and will focus on its mass market product *ARCore*. *Tango*, support will stop on March 1, 2018.
 -  *Tango* was introduced in 2014 and relied on advanced camera hardware to build 3D meshes of spaces.
 -  It was difficult for Google to get phone manufacturers to build this expensive functionality into their products.
185. ▶ Government of India will assist Mauritius to develop and set up digital locker services, under DigiLocker (a key initiative of Indian government under its flagship Digital India program).
 -  This service provides citizens a shareable private space on a public cloud wherein they can store their documents, aimed at paperless governance.
186. ▶ Government of South Australia approved building a major solar thermal plant which will be largest such thermal power plant in world and will power 35 % of households in South Australia. It will be developed by a US Firm, Solar Reserve at cost of Australian Dollar 650 million.
187. ▶ Grant Thornton's International Quarterly Business Report (IBR) -
 -  India remained 7th in *business optimism* index In Jul - Sep 2017 quarter, compared to 2nd slot in previous Quarter.
 -  Indonesia is at top, followed by Finland and the Netherlands.
188. ▶ Guinea became a member of International Solar Alliance (ISA) as it handed over its instrument accession to India-initiated ISA (headquarters in Gurugram (Haryana)).
 -  Additionally, International Solar Alliance (ISA) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) signed Joint Financial Partnership Declaration for cooperation on renewable energy projects around world.
189. ▶ Gulf Nation Qatar announced that it will introduce a minimum wage for workers, amid increasing global scrutiny over its alleged ill-treatment of migrant labourers.
190. ▶ HSBC (Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation) Pledged to provide \$100billion of finance for low-carbon technology and sustainable development by 2025 as part its commitment to tackling climate change and other "green" goals.
191. ▶ Haryana Agriculture University (HAU) and Netherlands government will jointly work on a project to tackle issues like crop residue management, bio-defence strategy, protected cultivation, peri-urban and urban horticulture, floriculture and hydroponic vegetables. An Indo-Dutch Horticulture Centre at Jhajhar would also be set up.
192. ▶ Henley & Partners – Kochenov Quality of Nationality Index (QNI) Report -
 -  Top 3 - Germany (1st), France and Denmark (Joint 2nd), Iceland (3rd)
 -  Afghanistan is ranked at bottom of index
 -  India is ranked 101 among 159 countries
193. ▶ Hinduja Group's Ashok Leyland signed MoU Russian Firm Rosoboronexport for supplying tracked vehicle solutions to armed forces.
194. ▶ Hindustan Shipyard Ltd partnered with Hyundai Heavy Industries Co Ltd of South Korea for construction of fleet support ships (FSS) for Navy in both countries.
195. ▶ Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry signed an agreement with Germany's GIZ for technical cooperation in implementation of transport projects in Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu), Bhubaneswar (Odisha) and Kochi (Kerala).
196. ▶ Hurricane Nate has hit Louisiana (USA) with maximum wind speed of 137 kilometres per hour.
197. ▶ IMD Talent Rankings 2017 (63 Nations)
 -  India ranked 51st (as compared to 54th rank last year). Rankings based on performance in three categories — investment and development, appeal, and readiness.
 -  Top 5 - Switzerland, Denmark, Belgium, Austria, Finland. Leading Asian economies in rankings are Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan.
198. ▶ 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.


199. ▶ India & Sri Lanka signed MoU to upgrade Thondaman Vocational Training Centre in Srilanka. India would provide LKR 199 million to upgrade training facility.
200. ▶ 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.
201. ▶ India Stated to UN General Assembly that there is no possibility of India joining Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as non-nuclear weapon state.
- ▶ As per NPT, those countries that have built and tested a nuclear explosive device before January 1, 1967 are nuclear-weapon states. Note that Pokhran I (Codenamed *Smiling Buddha*) was India's first successful nuclear test that was held on 18 May, 1974.
 - ▶ India advocates maintaining a credible minimum deterrence based on a No-First Use policy. India also committed to not using nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.
202. ▶ India and Buhtan jointly unveiled *Special logo* for Golden Jubilee (50 years) celebrations through video-conference. During 2018, India and Bhutan will conduct several high-level exchanges.
203. ▶ India and Germany signed Govt-to-Govt Umbrella Agreement to formalize an amount up to Euro 200 million for Financial Cooperation in form of loan for project 'Climate Friendly Urban Mobility III' and Euro 11 million Accompanying measures in form of grant for four projects.
204. ▶ India and Israel Jointly Launched a centre for excellence in floriculture, Thally in Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu.
- ▶ A similar centre specialising in vegetables such as capsicum, cucumber and tomatoes will be established in Dindigul, Tamil Nadu in January 2018, as part of a 3-year Indo-Israel agricultural partnership.
 - ▶ These centres will develop agricultural practices suitable for that particular geographical region and will share the best practices with local farmers.
205. ▶ 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.
206. ▶ India and Saudi Arabia signed bilateral annual Haj 2018 agreement, allowing Indian Haj pilgrims through sea route also (that was suspended in 1995). Sending pilgrims through ships will help cut down travel expenses significantly.
207. ▶ India and Spain signed Techno-commercial agreement to provide institutional mechanism for mutual cooperation in field of urban transport and for construction of the three Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS).
- ▶ 3 RRTS corridors Delhi-Meerut, Delhi – Panipat and Delhi – Alwar will be implemented in 1st phase.
 - ▶ RRTS is first of its kind project in India, with design speed of 180 kmph. It will use state-of-the-art technologies for track structure, rolling stock and signalling system. RRTS corridors will significantly reduce travel time between important NCR towns.
208. ▶ India announced collaboration with Russia to build a nuclear plant in Bangladesh, as first initiative under Joint deal to undertake atomic energy projects in third-world nations. It is also India's first atomic energy venture abroad.
- ▶ Rooppur Nuclear project (capacity of 2*1200 MWs) is Bangladesh's first atomic energy project.
209. ▶ India approved granting long-term visa (LTV) to minorities from Afghanistan seeking refuge in India.
210. ▶ India became biggest importer of U.S. oil refinery by-product 'petcoke', by Importing 8 Million Tonnes of USA's total export of 20 Million Tonnes of Petcoke in 2016.
- ▶ Petroleum coke called as 'petcoke', a U.S. oil refinery by-product, is cheaper and burns hotter than coal. But it also contains more planet-warming carbon and heart and lung-damaging sulfur.
211. ▶ India become top borrower from Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) with USD 1.5 billion worth of loans in 2017.
- ▶ Indonesia is at second position with USD 600 million worth loans.
 - ▶ AIIB is headquartered in Beijing (China) and has authorized capital of 100 Billion USD. India is 2nd largest shared holder in AIIB (8.52%) after China (26%). AIIB is preferred lender as it charges only 1 to 1.5 % interest with long term repayment and 5 year grace period.
212. ▶ India contributed \$50,000 to United Nations (UN) Secretary General Antonio Guterres's Office of Envoy on Youth to help with its mission of involving young people in UNs goals.
213. ▶ 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.
214. ▶ India donated 500 metric tonnes of rice to Kingdom of Lesotho, in Southern Africa, which is facing acute food shortage due to famine.
215. ▶ India emerged as 5th most attractive market for investments and the optimism over global economic growth is at a record level, as per survey of CEOs by global consultancy PwC.

- ▶ USA remains as top spot for global investment with 46% global CEOs considering USA as most attractive market for investment, followed by China (33%) and Germany (20%).
- 216. ▶ India excluded Pakistan from list of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) member countries with which it will be connecting its National Knowledge Network (NKN), a multi-gigabit pan-India network aimed at providing a unified high speed network backbone for educational institutions in India. Researchers from different educational networks can collaborate with each other through NKN.
 - ▶ NKN will be connected from these countries either to Delhi, Mumbai or Kolkata, depending on the proximity.
- 217. ▶ India handed over *Varuna* off-shore patrol vessel to Sri Lanka as a part of stepping up co-operation between coast guards of 2 nations.
- 218. ▶ India has been awarded with Certificate of Commendation for its efforts in combating illegal wildlife trade. Award is conferred to Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) by Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) at its meeting in Geneva (Switzerland).
- 219. ▶ India initiated dumping probe on imports of 'Sodium Nitrite' from Russia, used in industries such as pharma and food processing.
 - ▶ If it is proved that dumping has caused material injury to domestic industry, DGAD would impose anti-dumping duty on Sodium Nitrite.
- 220. ▶ India is planning to launch major connectivity initiative, connecting Chennai with Russian port Vladivostok via sea route with an aim to harness natural resources from Northeast Asia and Western Pacific region. It will enable to transfer cargo between Chennai and Vladivostok in 24 days in comparison to over 40 days currently taken to transport goods from India to Far East Russia via Europe.
- 221. ▶ India is selected as Chair of Ad Hoc Committee on Review & Reforms to look into various issues pertaining to the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPSC) at KP Plenary Session in Brisbane (Australia), with Angola chosen as Vice Chair.
 - ▶ India was chosen KP Vice Chair for 2018 & Chair for 2019 in last plenary of KP in Dubai in November 2016.
 - ▶ Kimberley Process is joint initiative of governments, industry and civil societies to stem flow of 'conflict diamonds', rough diamonds used by rebel groups to finance wars against legitimate governments.
- 222. ▶ India joined *Australia Group*, an informal bloc (group) of countries that keeps a tight control over exports of substances used in making of chemical weapons. It is expected to strengthen India's bid to enter 48-member Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
 - ▶ India is now part of 3 of 4 key export control groups in world dealing with non-proliferation. Other 2 are -
 - ▶ Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) - an informal partnership among 35 countries that regulates trade in sensitive equipment and technologies to ensure there is no proliferation of missile and unmanned aerial vehicle technology capable of carrying payloads above 500kg for more than 300km.
 - ▶ Wassenaar Arrangement - An informal grouping of 42 countries, exercising control over the export of dual-use goods and technologies in December 2017.
- 223. ▶ 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.
- 224. ▶ India launched *Incredible India* campaign in Cairo (Egypt Capital) to woo Egyptian travellers and make them aware of magnificent holiday options in India.
- 225. ▶ India opened 2nd second Indian Workers' Resource Centre (IWRC) in Sharjah (UAE), To provide support and counseling to Indians in distress. It will help overseas Indian community in any matter. Indians may call 80046342 from anywhere in UAE to get help.
- 226. ▶ India pledged additional US \$100 million towards UN-India Partnership Fund to significantly scale up its support to sustainable development projects across developing world, in addition to US \$10 million already contributed by India to various UN programmes.
 - ▶ India-UN Development Partnership fund was set up as partnership between India and United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) on 9 June 2017 (World Oceans Day).
- 227. ▶ India provided financial assistance of USD 45.27 million to Sri Lanka for upgrading Kankesanthurai (KKS) Harbour (northern Sri Lanka) into a commercial port, through Export and Import Bank of India (Exim Bank).
- 228. ▶ India re-elected to Council of the International Maritime Organization [IMO] under Category "B" at 30th session of IMO Assembly in London.
 - ▶ IMO is headquartered in London (UK) with Kitack Lim as Current Chief.
- 229. ▶ India received its first High Horsepower Locomotive with bodyshell of 12000 HP loco from Alstom France at Kolkata port, to be used to haul freight trains at twice the existing speed by 2018 (120 KM/H)
 - ▶ It is first major FDI project in rail sector and each such locomotive costs approx INR 30 crores.


230. ▶ India refused to be a part of Bali Declaration adopted at conclusion of World Parliamentary Forum on Sustainable Development held in Bali (Indonesia), to show solidarity with Myanmar. It was not adopted because it carried inappropriate reference to violence in Rakhine State from where 1,25,000 Rohingya Muslims fled to Bangladesh.
231. ▶ India remained biggest importer of Ukraine's agriculture products in 2017 so far, importing 11.3 % of \$14.7 Billion worth of exports of Ukraine's Agricultural Produce.
232. ▶ India replaced China as the top retail destination in 2017 as part of global retail development index. Change in ranking was an outcome of four factors increased consumer spending beyond essentials, rising mobile and internet penetration, favorable foreign investment climate and bold action on cashless transaction and GST.
233. ▶ 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 %.
234. ▶ India will be guest of honour during 6th World Government Summit to be held in February 2018 in Dubai (UAE). The summit is first global forum for governments, countries, organizations and private sector leaders interested in industry of the future.
235. ▶ India will provide USD 2.87 million to Afghanistan for renovation of 350 buses that will help in strengthening the public transport system of Kabul (Afghanistan).
236. ▶ India will set up a Centre of Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT) at Al Azhar University (Egypt), to high-tech education and skills to youngsters of Egypt.
237. ▶ India's Numaligarh Refinery that supplies High Speed Diesel to Bangladesh, despatched first diesel consignment of 30 MT to Myanmar through NH 37. It is to enhance hydrocarbon synergy with neighbouring countries as well as promoting India's Act East Policy.
238. ▶ India's TCS (Tata Consultancy Services) ranked 30th in Fortune's annual list of Top 50 companies that are changing the world. TCS's mKRISHI@ App is one of important reasons that got TCS into list, that lets farmers to access customised expert advice, market information and weather data. Top 3 - JP Morgan Chase, DSM, Apple.
239. ▶ India's exposure to US government securities increased sharply to \$135.7 billion, with China at top with \$1.166 trillion, followed by Japan with exposure worth \$1.113 trillion. India is 12th largest holder of US government securities.
240. ▶ Indian Automobile Major Mahindra opened its new manufacturing plant with an investment of \$230 million in Detroit (USA), Known as world's car capital. It is Detroit's first automotive production facility in 25 years.
241. ▶ Indian IT Major HCL acquired automation driven data management platform *Datawave* (UK) to accelerate data integration and migration for clients.
242. ▶ Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) will set up a Centre of Excellence in Kochi (Kerala), to facilitate exchange of research findings and studies in field of fisheries and ocean studies among IORA member countries.
-  Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) is an international organisation consisting of 21 coastal states bordering Indian Ocean. Coordinating Secretariat of IORA is located at Ebene, Mauritius. India's K V Bhagirath is current Secretary General of IORA.
243. ▶ Indian Pharma Firm *Dr. Reddy's Laboratories* introduced anti cancer injection drug Melphalan Hydrochloride in USA. Melphalan hydrochloride for injection is indicated for the palliative treatment of patients with multiple myeloma for whom oral therapy is not appropriate.
244. ▶ Indian President Ram Nath Kovind visited African Nations Djibouti and Ethiopia as his first Foreign Visit.
245. ▶ Indian engineers launched a major project in South Sudan that would improve connectivity between two major cities of South Sudan - Malakal-Melut. It will facilitate UN humanitarian operations in area.
246. ▶ Indian software company Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) signed a pact with National University in Philippines to launch a comprehensive training programme aimed at enhancing the skills of university graduates for the job market.
247. ▶ Indian startup *Kheyti* won prestigious award in Israel for developing an affordable modular greenhouse that aims to give farmers steady & dependable income. It was chosen in MassChallenge Israel contest that saw participation from over 500 companies.
248. ▶ India's IndiGo is ranked 4th most *Punctual mega carrier* in world, ahead of British Airways and Lufthansa in a List by Aviation Analytics Company OAG. The list ranks Japan Airlines is at top.
249. ▶ 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.
250. ▶ India's first sovereign wealth fund National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and Dubai-based ports operator *DP World Pvt. Ltd* Jointly created an investment platform to invest up to \$3 billion in ports, terminals, transportation and logistics businesses in India. This is the first investment platform from NIIF.
251. ▶ Institute of Management and Technology (IMT) Ghaziabad announced as one of champions of United Nations' initiative on Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME), at World Economic Forum in Davos (Switzerland).


-  PRME Champions Group consists of B-Schools involved as PRME signatories, working on real-time implementation of sustainability principles from various part of world. It aims to create activities that focus on UN's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
252.  International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) launched IBM Blockchain as first international payments network of its kind to Help financial institutions in cross-border payments. IBM partnered with KlickEx Group and Stellar.org, a nonprofit organization that supports an open source blockchain network for financial services.
253.  International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) has released *The Paradise Papers* as global investigation that reveals offshore activities of some of most powerful people and companies.
-  Among 180 countries represented in data, India ranks 19th in terms of number of names. In all, 714 Indians have been figured in this largest ever black money data leak.
254.  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.
255.  International Labour Organisation (ILO) released World Social Protection Report 2017-2019, depicting that only 45 % of global population is effectively covered by at least one social benefit, while remaining 55 per cent that is 4 billion people are left unprotected.
256.  International Monetary Fund approved USD 88 billion credit line for Mexico, replacing existing line of credit.
257.  International Olympic Committee (IOC) suspended its Brazilian arm and Honorary Membership of head of Brazil's Olympic committee Carlos Nuzman, amid proven corruption allegations.
258.  International Solar Alliance (ISA) announced target to support setting up 1000GW of solar energy capacity by 2030 across its member countries, during a ceremony in Bonn (Germany). This target does not take into account renewable energy targets or projects that countries are pursuing on their own as part of their national efforts 16 countries have ratified framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and it will come into force on 6 December 2017.
259.  International Solar Alliance (ISA) became treaty-based international intergovernmental organization, nearly a Month after Guinea became 15th country to ratify it.
-  ISA is first treaty-based international government organisation to be based in India, with its secretariat in campus of National Institute of Solar Energy (NISE) in Gurgaon (Haryana).
-  So far, 46 countries have signed and 19 ratified Framework Agreement of ISA International Solar Alliance (ISA).
-  ISA was launched by India and France in November 2015 during COP-21 of UN Climate Conference in Paris (France).
-  ISA aims at addressing obstacles to deployment at scale of solar energy through better harmonization and aggregation of demand from solar rich countries by bringing standardization in solar technologies and fostering research and development.
-  Ministry of External Affairs has set aside US\$2 billion for solar projects in Africa out of India's US\$10 billion concessional Line of Credit (LOC) for Africa. France also pledged Euro 300 million soft loan for solar related projects in ISA member countries.
-  Australia also announced Joining ISA.
260.  Iran banned English from being taught in primary schools, amid suspected Western cultural invasion.
261.  Iran inaugurated first phase of Chabahar port located in Iran's southeastern Sistan-Baluchestan Province. Port will bypass Pakistan and will open new strategic transit route between Iran, India and Afghanistan. First phase is expected to increase its cargo handling capacity to 8.5 million tons annually, by over 3 three times from previous 2.5 million tons.
262.  Iran's key strategic port of Chabahar became operational with First shipment of wheat from India to Afghanistan, from Kandla port in Gujarat.
-  Its a major push for India's Afghan outreach as it completely bypasses Pakistan, under 2016 Indo-Afghan-Iran trilateral pact.
-  Chabahar port is strategically located in Sistan-Balochistan province on energy-rich Iran's southern coast and can be easily accessed from India's western coast.
263.  Iraq PM Haider al-Abadi declared victory in a 3year war by Iraqi forces against Islamic State jihadist group. He claimed that Iraqi forces are in complete control of the Iraqi-Syrian border.
264.  Israel Parliament passed a controversial law that limits police's ability to recommend charges following their investigations, after criticism that lawmakers were seeking to protect Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu The move was undertaken after widespread criticism and large protests against corruption.
265.  Israel formally withdrawn from UNESCO (*United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization*). Tensions began after UNESCO admitted Palestine as a member state in 2011.
-  Israel has been a UNESCO member since 1949, having 9 sites on UNESCO heritage list.


266. ▶ Israel's parliament passed a law requiring a supermajority to relinquish (*leave*) control over any part of Jerusalem, that could hamstring city's division in any future peace deal. It will bar the government from ceding Israeli sovereignty over any part of Jerusalem without approval of at least 80 of the legislature's 120 members.
267. ▶ JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) approved Official Development Assistance loan for Yen 45 billion for Bengaluru Water Supply and Sewerage Project (Phase 3) (I). People of this area will be provided with safe water supply and sewerage services.
268. ▶ Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) successfully launched Michibiki-4 satellite (QZSS-4) as 4th satellite in Michibiki series i.e. Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS), which is a satellite-based high-precision global positioning system similar to US operated GPS.
269. ▶ Japan approved Aid of Approx 73 Crores INR for Implementation of Advanced Traffic Information and Management System in Bengaluru (Karnataka).
270. ▶ Japan will offer grant of 8.4 million Yen (Approx 48 Lakh INR) for construction of a vocational training centre for poor women and youth in Rajasthan's Baran district.
271. ▶ Japanese Emperor Akihito will abdicate on April 30, 2019, becoming the first Japanese monarch to leave the post in 200 years. Afterwards, Crown Prince Naruhito will take the post of Japanese emperor.
272. ▶ Japanese PM Shinzo Abe Visited India, arriving in Ahmedabad (Gujarat).
- ▶ He participated in 12th India - Japan Annual Meeting.
 - ▶ 15 MOUs signed during Mr. Abe's Visit to India, Including -
 - ▶ Disaster Risk Management
 - ▶ Japanese Language Skills Development
 - ▶ India Japan Act East Forum will be established to enhance connectivity and promote developmental projects in northeastern region of India.
 - ▶ Arrangement between Postal departments for implementation of cool EMS service, through which fresh food can be sent from Japan to India in cool boxes for Japanese expatriates in India.
 - ▶ India-Japan Investment Promotion Road map to facilitate Japanese investments in India.
 - ▶ MoC between Japanese Trade Ministry and Gujarat State on *Japan-India special programme for Make In India* in Mandal Beachraj-Khoraj.
 - ▶ Civil Aviation
 - ▶ Science and technology
 - ▶ Life sciences and biotechnology.
 - ▶ Sports
 - ▶ India and Japan signed open sky arrangement to allow airlines from both countries to operate unlimited number of flights.
 - ▶ Foundation stone of India's first high-speed rail project (bullet train) project has been laid. This 508km-long Mumbai to Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR) Project will be built at cost of Rs 1.10 lakh crore. It is expected to be completed by 2022. (It was recently advanced by year from earlier deadline of 2023). An INR 600 Crores high-speed rail training centre for first bullet train project will be set up in Vadodara (Gujarat), to become operational by December 2020.
273. ▶ Japan's Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) launched *new Earth observation satellite ASNARO-2*. It will perform Earth-observation tasks for 5 years from its orbit at an altitude of about 500 km.
274. ▶ Jet Airways and Air France-KLM partnered to route more traffic through Europe and on to North America.
275. ▶ Johannesburg (South Africa) based Global Market Research Group New World Wealth Report 2017 -
- ▶ Based on Total wealth of countrymen, Top 10 wealthiest countries are (amount in USD Billion)-
 - ▶ USA - 64584
 - ▶ China - 24803
 - ▶ Japan - 19522
 - ▶ United Kingdom - 9919
 - ▶ Germany - 9660
 - ▶ **India - 8230**
 - ▶ France - 6649
 - ▶ Canada - 6393
 - ▶ Australia - 6142
 - ▶ Italy - 4276
 - ▶ Report in Context of India -
 - ▶ India is now 6th richest in terms of wealth held by its people.

 Since 2016, Indians' wealth increased 25% from 6584 to 8230 Billion USD in Just 1 year, which is more than china's 22 % increase over the period.

276. ▶ Joint Army Exercise of Pakistan and Russia, DRUZBA 2017 held in Russia.
277. ▶ Kazakhstan surpassed Iraq as biggest oil over-producer in among Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Nations. Kazakhstan's oil output in November and December 2017 was nearly 130000 barrels a day and Kazakhstan promised to pump out 20000 barrels a day less as per OPEC pact.
278. ▶ Lebanon approved country's first animal welfare bill into law, to ensure that domestic and wild animals will be legally protected from abuse.
279. ▶ Lebanon's parliament approved country's first budget in 12 years, to reform fragile economy and prevent rising debt.



 Political crisis gripped Lebanon since the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik al-Hariri in 2005, thereby preventing successive government from passing the budget.
280. ▶ Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd. signed MOU with Turkey's Armagan family for acquiring 100% of Erkunt Traktor Sanay (4th largest tractor manufacturer in Turkey) for approx \$70 Million.
281. ▶ Maldives Govt. declared a state of emergency deepening political crisis, after armed troops stormed country's top court.
282. ▶ Middle Asean Nation Kazakhstan will change its name to Qazaqstan, as part of a transition from Cyrillic to a Latin-based script. A national commission will oversee this transition and will complete it by 2025.
283. ▶ Middle asean Nation Tajikistan banned women from wearing veils and asked women to *stick to traditional national clothes and culture*.
284. ▶ Ministry of External Affairs started Operation Insaniyat to provided assistance to Bangladesh in response to humanitarian crisis being faced by it due to large influx of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar.
285. ▶ Morocco launched an earth observation satellite called 'Mohammed VI-A', aboard European consortium Arianespace's Vega rocket from French Guyana Space Centre.
286. ▶ Mount Agung, a volcano In Bali (Indonesia) erupted for the first time in over 54 years.
287. ▶ 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.
288. ▶ Myanmar will launch its own satellite system MyanmarSat-2 in June in 2019, with 6 C-band and 6 Ku-band transponders.

 Myanmar is currently using MyanmarSat-1 on lease system, whereas MyanmarSat-2, will be used on joint ownership system with an undisclosed partner.
289. ▶ National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) and China's Dalian Municipal People's Government signed agreement to create a platform called Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Plaza (SIDCOP) in Dalian.
290. ▶ National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) signed MoU with Finland's Fortum Oyj for developing electric vehicle charging infrastructure in upcoming development projects in India.
291. ▶ National Highway Authority of India awarded its first international project in Myanmar to a joint venture of Punj Lloyd-Varaha, for upgradation of Yagyi-Kalewa section in Myanmar.
292. ▶ National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog and International Road Federation (Geneva) signed Statement of Intent (SoI) to cooperate in Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS). ITS Policy will be covering Traffic Management, Parking Management, Electronic Enforcement of Traffic Rules and Regulations, Fleet Management and Monitoring, Innovation in field of ITS.
293. ▶ Nepal Electricity Authority signed a joint venture agreement with China Three Gorges Corporation (CTGC) to construct 750 MW West Seti Hydropower Project, with expenses estimated at 1.8 billion USD. CTGC will have 75% stake and NEA will hold remaining 25% in JV.
294. ▶ Nepal and India will conduct joint head tigers count in protected areas along border in November 2017, using a similar camera tapping method.
295. ▶ Nepal began its first-ever survey to remeasure Mount Everest to check if Its height was altered by 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck in 2015.

 Official Height of Mt. Everest is 8,848 metres (29,029 feet), first recorded by an Indian survey in 1954.
296. ▶ Nepal cancelled a \$2.5 billion deal with China's Gezhouba Group Corporation to build Nepal's biggest hydropower plant of 1200 MW Capacity - *Budhi Gandaki hydroelectric project*. The project has been reportedly cancelled amid delays and lack of transparency in processes.
297. ▶ Nepal signed USD 635 million UN assistance package for 2018-2022 to lay out country's development strategy for next 5 years. The package involves 26 individual UN agencies.
298. ▶ Nepal started accessing internet from China after commercial operations began at Nepal-China optical fibre link via Rasuwagadhi gateway across Himalayan Mountains. It ends Nepal's dependence on India for internet bandwidth, considered strategic loss for India. It is believed that initial speed by Chinese fibre link will be 1.5 Gigabit per second (gbps), less than 34 gbps provided by India.

299. ▶ 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.
300. ▶ 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.
301. ▶ New York Department of Financial Services (DFS) imposed fine of USD 225 million on Pakistan's Habib Bank Limited (HBL) for failure to comply with New York laws and regulations designed illicit financial transactions.
302. ▶ North African country Tunisia abolished decades-old ban on Muslim women marrying non-Muslims.
303. ▶ North Korea successfully launched nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) *Hwasong-15*, said to be North Korea's most powerful Missile Yet. It has operational range of over 5000 KMs.
304. ▶ North Korea successfully tested a hydrogen bomb, placable on an intercontinental ballistic missile. It triggered a 6.3 magnitude earthquake in area, marking it biggest test so far.
- ▶ In Response, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) passed new sanctions against North Korea over its sixth and most powerful nuclear test. It was 9th sanctions resolution adopted by UNSC since 2006 over North Korea's missile programs.
305. ▶ Norway became world's first country to shut down national broadcasts of its FM network by completing its transition to digital radio, to allow for better sound quality, a greater number of channels and more functions, at a cost eight times lower than FM radio.
306. ▶ Norway's sovereign wealth fund (Largest in world) just reached value of \$1 trillion for the first time. It means \$189,000 for everyone of 5.3 million Norwaighns. With stakes in over 9,000 companies, it owns 1.3 % of world's market capitalization and 2.3 % in Europe.
307. ▶ ONGC Videsh Ltd (overseas arm of ONGC) acquired 30 % interest in Namibian Petroleum Exploration License (PEL) 37, from UK's Tullow Oil.
308. ▶ Oman revised tourist visa for people from India, China and Russia in order to attract more tourists from these countries. Oman granted non-sponsored tourist visafor the citizens of India, China and Russia.
309. ▶ Oxford Dictionaries declared Youthquake as 2017's Word of the Year, reflecting what it calls a political awakening among millennial voters. Other Words of The year 2017 -
- ▶ *Populism* - Cambridge Dictionary.
- ▶ *Kwaussie* - Australian National Dictionary.
- ▶ *Feminism* - Merriam-Webster's.
310. ▶ Pakistan allowed Chinese currency Yuan for exports and financing transactions. Chinese Yuan is an approved foreign currency for denominating foreign currency transactions in Pakistan.
311. ▶ Pakistan allowed depreciation of its Currency (pakistani rupee), after talks with International Monetary Fund. It is believed to help shift foreign currency holdings from commercial banks back to official reserves.
312. ▶ Pakistan declared Mandarin as an official languages of Pakistan, along with Urdu and English.
313. ▶ Pakistan inaugurated It's 5th nuclear power plant (C-4 plant) in Mianwali (Punjab). This 340 MW Chasma – IV (C – 4) nuclear power plant is developed in collaboration with China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC).
314. ▶ Pakistan will up a new hydropower project on Jhelum River, of over 700 megawatts in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), named Azad Pattan Hydropower Project (APHP). Project cost of USD 1.51 billion will be procured from foreign entities.
315. ▶ Palestinian political parties Hamas and Fatah signed reconciliation deal to end a decade-long rift, brokered by Egypt. This was signed to implement a unity agreement that was signed in 2011 but was not put to action.
316. ▶ Passport Index developed by advisory firm Arton Capital -
- ▶ Singapore's passport become most powerful in world with Visa-Free Score of 159.
- ▶ India secured 75th rank in index with Visa-Free Score of 51.
- ▶ Afghanistan stayed at bottom position (94th) while Pakistan sexcond worst (93rd).
317. ▶ People's Bank of China (PBC) banned raising funds through initial coin offerings (ICO), where unregulated means of crowd funding for project are used via use of cryptocurrency such as Bitcoin etc. Ownership or royalties of project is offered to investors in form of digital coins. It allows entrepreneurs create their own digital currencies and selling "coins" on web under ICO route, allowing them to raise millions of dollars quickly.
318. ▶ Peru Government authorized medicinal and therapeutic use of cannabis (marijuana) in country, becoming sixth Latin American country to legalise cannabis.
319. ▶ Philippines expressed its displeasure over construction of an apparent airbase on a man-made island in the South China Sea by China.
- ▶ China reportedly uses cabbage strategy for militarization of large areas in disputed south china sea, which is protsetd by neighboring nations (inlcuding *India, Japan, Bhutan, Philippines, Japan, Malaysia and Brunei*) claiming control on various parts of mineral rich south china sea.

- ✎ Cabbage strategy is also called *salami-slicing* strateg, Under which a contested area is surrounded by multiple security layers to deny access to the rival nation and is claimed subsequently. As per the observers, China, for a long time, has been pursuing this strategy.
- 320. ▶ Poland will quit a precautionary Flexible Credit Line (FCL) from International Monetary Fund (IMF) worth \$9.2 billion, after Polish economy gaining strength recently. Polish budget reported a surplus for January - August 2017 amid rise in revenue from value-added tax.
- 321. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind will make his first foreign trip to African Nations Ethiopia and Djibouti in October 2017.
- 322. ▶ Qatar Airways became first in world to launch double beds in business class sections of Flights from London to Doha in Qatar, called Qsuites.
- 323. ▶ Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Asia University Rankings 2018 -
 - ✎ Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT Bombay) emerged as top-ranked Indian institute in List with rank 34th. Note that IIT Bombay was ranked 179th in QS World University Rankings. Other top 4 Indian Institutes in List are IIT Delhi (41st rank), IIT Madras (48th rank), Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore (51st rank).
 - ✎ Singapore's Nanyang Technology University has topped QS Asia University Rankings 2018.
- 324. ▶ Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) University Rankings : BRICS 2018 () -
 - ✎ Top 10 Universities in BRICS Nations -
 - ✎ Tsinghua University (China)
 - ✎ Peking University (China)
 - ✎ Fudan University (China)
 - ✎ University of Science and Technology of China (China)
 - ✎ Lomonosov Moscow State University (Russia)
 - ✎ Zhejiang University (China)
 - ✎ Shanghai Jiao Tong University (China)
 - ✎ Nanjing University (China)
 - ✎ **Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB)**
 - ✎ **Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore**
 - ✎ India Facts -
 - ✎ Top 10 Public Institutions in India
 - ✎ Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB)
 - ✎ Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bangalore
 - ✎ Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (IITD)
 - ✎ Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IITM)
 - ✎ Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK)
 - ✎ Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur (IITKGP)
 - ✎ University of Delhi
 - ✎ Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee (IITR)
 - ✎ Indian Institute of Technology Guwahati (IITG)
 - ✎ University of Calcutta
 - ✎ Private Universities in India
 - ✎ BITS Pilani, Thapar University and Symbiosis International University are Top 3 private universities in India.
 - ✎ O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) entered BRICS Universities list for the first time (ranked 251 - 300).
- 325. ▶ Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) is world's 3rd biggest energy company behind Russian gas firm Gazprom and German utility E.ON, according to Platts Top 250 Global Energy Company Rankings.
 - ✎ Indian Oil Corp (IOC) climbed to 7th position, Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) placed 11th and Coal India Ltd ranked 45.
- 326. ▶ Report by analyst firm Canalis -
 - ✎ India overtook USA to become world's second-largest smartphone market, trailing only China.
 - ✎ In the second quarter of 2017, India's smartphone market recovered quickly with shipments growing 23% year-on-year in third quarter to reach over 40 million units.
- 327. ▶ Royal Bank of Canada (RBC) become first Canadian bank to be added to Financial Stability Board's (FSB's) list of 30 global systemically important banks (G-SIB) deemed 'too big to fail'.
 - ✎ Financial Stability Board (FSB) is an international financial body based in Basel (Switzerland). Apart from adding RBC, FSB also removed French bank Groupe BPCE from the list.

328. ▶ 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.
329. ▶ Russia and Egypt signed an agreement under which Russia's Rosatom will construct Egypt's first nuclear plant as *Daba nuclear plant*. It will be completed by 2029 with cost of \$21bn.
330. ▶ Russia and Iraq restored commercial airline services for first time since 2004.
 Russia had suspended flights to Iraq after 2003 US-led invasion pushed Iraq into war.
331. ▶ Russia and USA space agencies (Roscosmos and NASA) will jointly build a *deep space gateway* as first astronaut-tended space station around Moon. It would help prepare for manned missions to deep space destinations including Mars.
332. ▶ Russia launched Angosat-1, first national telecoms satellite for Angola, onboard Zenit-2SB rocket.
333. ▶ Russia launched world's largest and most powerful icebreaker ship, Sibir. It is designed to transport cargo via Northern Sea Route in Arctic Ocean.
334. ▶ Russia liquidated last arsenals of its chemical weapons, 3 years ahead of schedule (2020).
335. ▶ Russia signed agreement with Northern African Nation Sudan to build its first nuclear power plant, to help Sudan solve its energy security problems.
336. ▶ Russia used its veto power to block a UN Security Council resolution to extend work of International inspectors to determine who was behind deadly chemical weapons attacks in Syria that took place on 4 April 2017 in Syria.
337. ▶ Russian government will develop an 'independent internet' for BRICS Nations, that would operate separately from Domain Name System used worldwide, that would continue services in the event of a global internet infrastructure collapse. It would be totally independent of international bodies and international infrastructure, yet still remaining linked to the global internet.
338. ▶ 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.
339. ▶ 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.
340. ▶ 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.
341. ▶ 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.
342. ▶ Saudi Arabia and Britain signed framework deal for military cooperation, as Britain seeks to explore lucrative trade deals outside Europe after leaving European Union.
343. ▶ Saudi Arabia and UAE became first countries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to introduce Value Added Tax (VAT) for first time to increase their revenue away from oil reserves.
344. ▶ Saudi Arabia became first country to give citizenship to a robot, after it named a robot *Sophia* as its Citizen during a business event named Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh.
345. ▶ Saudi Arabia issued a decree that allows women to drive cars. Women are now also allowed to enter national stadiums in national sports events.
346. ▶ Saudi Arabia lifted 35 year old ban on providing licenses to commercial movie theatres, aimed at economic growth and diversification.
347. ▶ Saudi Arabia lifted ban on voice and video calling apps such as WhatsApp and Skype and will make them widely available to users, to improve business confidence as reduce dependence on oil revenues.
348. ▶ Saudi Arabian Oil Firm *Saudi Aramcos* (Known as Aramco) Opened Its India Office named ARAMCO ASIA INDIA in Gurugram (Haryana).
 In 2016 Saudi Aramco established its formal business in India through its subsidiary ARAMCO Asia India (AAI). It will focus on crude oil and LPG marketing, engineering & technical services, and other business development activities.
349. ▶ Saudi Arabian government approved practice of yoga as a sports activity. Yoga can now be freely practiced as a sport in Saudi Arabia.
350. ▶ Scientists developed new military watch for Russian army kit, which is capable of resisting high impact and can even survive a nuclear explosion.
351. ▶ Scientists from New Zealand have developed world's first artificial intelligence politician named *SAM*, that can answer queries regarding local issues such as policies around housing, education and immigration.
352. ▶ 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.

353. ▶ Somalia Government and United Nations (UN) signed UN Strategic Framework for Somalia (UNSF), under which United Nations will support Somalia's development in priority areas over the next four years.
354. ▶ 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.
355. ▶ South Korea and Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (GCCCI) signed MoU for industrial co-operation, with a focus on automobile, defence and textiles sectors. It aims to help Gujarat-based small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to explore opportunities through joint ventures with South Korean firms.
356. ▶ South Korea banned its financial institutions from dealing in virtual currencies including Bitcoin, in wake of recent surge in Bitcoin price.
357. ▶ South Korean and USA air forces held *Vigilant Ace* joint exercises.
358. ▶ Spanish Colony Catalonia declared independence from Spain, following a parliamentary referendum. After this declaration, Spanish government dismissed Catalan President, allowing Spain to directly administer the region.
359. ▶ Sri Lanka became 163rd nation to accede to anti-personnel mine ban convention, as it agreed for Prohibition of use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction.
- ▶ Convention on Prohibition of Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, commonly referred to as the Mine Ban Treaty or Ottawa Treaty, was adopted on September 18, 1997.
360. ▶ Sri Lanka formally handed over its southern strategic port of Hambantota to Chinese firm *China Merchants Port Holdings Company (CM Port)* on a 99-year lease. Hambantota port is strategically located right in the middle of vital energy supply lines in the Indian Ocean, connecting the Middle East and East Asia.
361. ▶ Sri Lanka signed MoU with India to build 1,200 houses in strategically located southern port city of Hambantota. 600 will be constructed in Southern Province while remaining will be built across Sri Lanka, through one model village in each of country's 25 districts.
- ▶ Hambantota port is located right in middle of vital energy supply lines in Indian Ocean, connecting Middle East and East Asia. Hambantota gained significance recently after Sri Lanka decided to build deep-sea port and airport with huge Chinese loans.
 - ▶ India also provided equipment and vehicles worth USD 585,000 to University of Jaffna in Sri Lanka.
362. ▶ Sri Lankan Coast Guard commissioned Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) SURAKSHA gifted by India at Colombo port, as first OPV of Sri Lankan Coast Guard.
363. ▶ Sweden hosted large scale war exercise named *Aurora*, with NATO.
364. ▶ 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.
365. ▶ Switzerland unveiled world's steepest funicular railway link to alpine resort of Stoos. It rises 743 metres along gradients as steep as 110% and has a track length of 1720 metres. It has been built at cost of INR 333 crores.
366. ▶ 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.
367. ▶ Tata Steel and Thyssenkrupp of Germany signed MoU for creating 50:50 Joint Venture as one of Europe's largest steel companies.
368. ▶ 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.
369. ▶ Tech Firm Apple acquired music recognition app Shazam, for approx \$400 million.
370. ▶ Telecom services provider Bharti Airtel and SK Telecom of Korea partnered for leveraging the SK Telecom's expertise to build advanced telecom network in India.
371. ▶ Tencent became first Chinese company to be valued at more than \$500 billion in Asia. Alibaba is Asia's second-highest-valued firm at \$474 billion.
372. ▶ Term *Fake news* has been named the word of the year by Collins dictionary due to its widespread use around the world. Note that it has been heavily used and popularised by USA President Donald Trump.
373. ▶ Thomson Reuters Corp's First *Top 100 Global Technology Leaders* list 2018 -
- ▶ Top 3 - Microsoft (1), Intel (2), Cisco Systems (3)
 - ▶ 45 % of 100 tech companies are headquartered in USA. Japan and Taiwan are tied for second place with 13 companies each, followed by India with 5 tech firms (TCS, Infosys, Wipro, HCL Tech, Tech Mahindra).
374. ▶ Three Indian entrepreneurs - Ratan Tata, Lakshmi Mittal and Vinod Khosla have been included in Forbes's special list of world's '100 Greatest Living Business Minds.
375. ▶ Times World University Rankings 2018 -

Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru retained top position among Indian Universities, although its global position fell to IISc 251-300 band. IIT Delhi and IIT Kanpur are in 501-600 band, IIT Bombay in 351-400 club and IIT Kharagpur and IIT Roorkee retained their positions in 501-600 bracket.

Top 10 - Oxford University (UK), Cambridge University (UK), California institute of Technology (USA), Stanford University (USA), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA), Harvard University (USA), Princeton University (USA), Imperial College London (UK), University of Chicago (USA), ETH-Zurich (Switzerland).

376. ▶ To expedite skill development in North East region of India, Singapore will set up a Skill Development Centre in the region.

377. ▶ Top 150 universities on Global University Employability Ranking 2017 published by Times Higher Education -

1	California Institute of Technology	United States
2	Harvard University	United States
3	Columbia University	United States
4	Massachusetts Institute of Technology	United States
5	University of Cambridge	United Kingdom
6	Boston University	United States
7	Stanford University	United States
8	Technical University of Munich	Germany
9	University of Tokyo	Japan
10	Yale University	United States

Indian Universities in List -

Indian Institute of Science (IISc) Bengaluru (29th)

Indian Institute of Technology Delhi (145th)

Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (148th)

378. ▶ Travel guide company Lonely Planet ranked Chile as Most worth visiting country in 2018, followed by South Korea and Portugal. Seville of Spain was ranked as number one city in most visit worthy cities.

379. ▶ 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.

380. ▶ Turkey Approved a controversial legislation to let state - approved clerics (Muftis / Civil Servants) to conduct and register marriage ceremonies. It will pave way for child marriages.

381. ▶ Turkey opened its largest military base in Africa, in Mogadishu (capital of Somalia) to train Somali Soldiers.

382. ▶ Twitter officially increased number of characters in tweets from 140 to 280, except tweets in Japanese, Chinese and Korean languages that can convey more information in a single character.

383. ▶ Typhoon Tembin struck Philippines, causing huge human and financial losses.

384. ▶ UAE begun collecting new *sin* taxes on tobacco products, energy drinks and soft drinks, with tobacco and energy drinks taxed at 100 % and soft drinks at 50 %.

All six members of Gulf Cooperation Council have agreed to begin collecting so-called VAT taxes. GCC includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE.

385. ▶ UAE, UK, US and French armies participated in joint exercises in Abu Dhabi (UAE), named as *Flag 4*.

386. ▶ UK government extended a pilot student visa scheme to 23 more universities under which Indian and other non-EU students will get six months time to find a job after finishing their course (upto 13 months duation). Scheme was introduced last year on a pilot basis in four British universities - Oxford, Bath, Cambridge and Imperial College London.

387. ▶ UN announced end of 13 year old military peacekeeping mission in Haiti, that helped maintain order in Haiti through 13 years of political turmoil and disaster.

388. ▶ UN will mark 100th Birth anniversary of South African Social Reformer Nelson Mandela (July 18, 2018) with a high-level meeting on world peace, named as *Nelson Mandela Peace summit*.

389. ▶ UNESCO Included *bird language* of Black Sea villagers (in northern Turkey) in list of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This high pitch system of whistling to communicate in the rugged terrain in Black Sea Regions dates back to some 500 years ago.

390. ▶ UNICEF released its report *The State of the World's Children*, with theme *Children in a digital world*. Report states that India's girls and women are at risk of becoming further marginalised in society and at home if they remain digitally illiterate.

391. ▶ 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).
392. ▶ US Agency for International Development (USAID) announced USD 1 million support for Ending Tuberculosis (TB) Epidemic in India and to raise TB awareness to help India in its fight against TB.
- ▶ USAID also announced its first impact bond across globe by launching 'Rajasthan Development Impact Bond (Utkrisht Impact Bond)' aiming to reduce number of mother and baby deaths by improving quality of maternal care in Rajasthan's health infrastructure.
393. ▶ US Consulate General, Kolkata launched *Youth for Business-Y4BIZ*, a support programme for young entrepreneurs in eastern region of India.
394. ▶ US Trade and Development Agency signed MOU with Airports Authority of India, to support a 20-year master plan aimed at expansion of operational capacities of Kolkata and Lucknow international airports.
395. ▶ US and UAE Armies begun joint military exercise in Abu Dhabi, with name *Iron Union 5*.
396. ▶ US media company Meredith Corporation acquired US Based Publishing Brand *Time Inc.* for USD 2.8 billion. Time Inc. is a multinational mass media corporation owns over 100 magazine brands including *Time, Sports Illustrated, Travel + Leisure, Food & Wine, Fortune, People, InStyle, Life, Golf Magazine, Southern Living, Essence, Real Simple, and Entertainment Weekly*.
397. ▶ US-India Business Council (USIBC) launched a collaborative initiative for Women Entrepreneurs titled 'Women for Women Innovators, Social Leaders & Entrepreneurs' (WISE), launched during USIBC's Road to GES event 'Creating the Foundations of Innovation'.
- ▶ WISE will be led by Country Head of Intel, Nivruti Rai and will comprise prominent female business person like Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Vanitha Narayanan and Amita Vyas.
398. ▶ USA Army Opened Its First permanent base in Middle Eastern Nation Israel.
399. ▶ USA Congress authorised \$700 million in Coalition Support Fund (CSF) to reimburse Pakistan for activities carried out in support of US operations in Afghanistan.
400. ▶ USA President Donald Trump announced to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital despite intense Arab, Muslim and European opposition. USA became 1st country to recognise Jerusalem as Israel's capital, since foundation of Israel in 1948. USA will also move its Israel Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
- ▶ Israel has always regarded Jerusalem as its capital, while Palestinians claim East Jerusalem as capital of a future Palestinian state.
- ▶ Later, United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution that stated this US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital as 'null and void'. The resolution was moved by Turkey and Yemen.
401. ▶ USA President Donald Trump scrapped an amnesty programme introduced during Obama's term that granted work permits to immigrants who arrived in the country illegally as Children. It is likely to impact over 800,000 undocumented workers including more than 7000 Indian-Americans.
402. ▶ USA Space Firm *SpaceX* launched secret Zuma Mission for USA government, onboard Falcon 9 rocket.
- ▶ Zuma mission remains a secret as its nature or purpose and the agency behind it has not been made public.
403. ▶ USA Supreme Court ruled that travel ban imposed on six Muslim countries (*Chad, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen*) by Prez Donald Trump can now go fully into effect. New ban also bars travellers from North Korea and Venezuela.
404. ▶ USA and Israel withdrew from UNESCO, accusing UNESCO of "anti-Israel bias".
405. ▶ USA announced grant of nearly USD 500,000 for organisations that work to promote religious freedom in India and Sri Lanka.
406. ▶ USA approved sale of THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) anti-missile defence system to Saudi Arabia at an estimated cost of \$15 billion (Rs. 98,000 crore). It includes 44 THAAD launchers and 360 missiles along with fire control stations and radars.
407. ▶ USA central bank fined global banking giant HSBC \$175 million for failing to oversee foreign exchange traders who misused confidential client information and colluded with traders at competing banks. This action comes 2 months after Fed also fined BNP Paribas USD 246 million over similar violations.
408. ▶ USA lifted ban that it had imposed on refugees from 11 nations, which it termed as high-risk countries. The 11 Nations are - *Egypt, Iran, Libya, South Sudan, Yemen, Sudan, Iraq, Mali, North Korea, Somalia and Syria*.
409. ▶ USA lifted economic and trade sanctions against Sudan that were put in 1997, in response to Sudanese Govt's efforts to end hostilities in conflict areas, improve humanitarian access and maintain cooperation with USA in regional conflicts to tackle terrorism.
410. ▶ USA placed Pakistan on newly formed Special Watch List for *severe violations of religious freedom*, as Pakistan continues to harass its religious minorities, tolerates extra-judicial violence in the guise of opposing blasphemy.
- ▶ Moreover, USA also re-designated 10 countries as *Countries of Particular Concern* under International Religious Freedom (IRF) Act - Myanmar, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

411. ▶ USA will issue a 4 level travel advisory to its citizens from January 2018, based on a four- level classification system with clearly recommended actions. Four levels will be -
- ✏ Level one – exercise normal precautions
 - ✏ Level two – exercise increased caution
 - ✏ Level three – reconsider travel
 - ✏ Level four – do not travel
412. ▶ USA withdrawn itself from a United Nations pact to improve handling of migrant and refugee situations deeming it ‘inconsistent’ with policies.
413. ▶ USA's National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) will launch Wide Field Infrared Survey Telescope (WFIRST) in Mid-2020, as a next-generation space telescope to provide largest picture of universe ever seen, with same depth and clarity as Hubble Space Telescope.
414. ▶ United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Saudi Arabia formed new economic and partnership group named *Joint Cooperation Committee*, separate from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).
- ✏ JCC will coordinate between UAE and Saudi Arabia in all military, political, economic, trade, cultural and other interest of 2 countries.
 - ✏ It will be headed by *Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan*, crown prince of Abu Dhabi.
415. ▶ United Arab Emirates (UAE) launched its first space programme aimed at sending four Emirati astronauts to International Space Station within 5 years.
416. ▶ United Kingdom (UK) government formed a dedicated national security unit to counter fake news and disinformation. It will flag fake information on social media.
417. ▶ United Nations (UN) General Assembly passed a Pakistan-sponsored resolution that considers right of peoples to self-determination as a fundamental condition for the effective guarantee and observance of human rights.
418. ▶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) released Global Education Monitoring Report 2017-18, expressing concern over school textbooks in many countries glorifying war and military heroes rather than teaching peace and non-violence. As per the report, just 10% of the textbooks across the world explicitly teach the need for conflict prevention and resolution.
419. ▶ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and World Health Organisation (WHO) will collaborate to accelerate curbing environmental health risks.
420. ▶ United Nations General Assembly approved regular budget of \$5.397 billion for 2018-2019, marking 5% cut (286 million dollar) as compared to budget for 2016- 2017.
421. ▶ Valletta (capital of Malta), is officially named European Capital of Culture 2018, along with Netherlands' city Leeuwarden.
422. ▶ Vanuatu (South Pacific island nation) became first nation to accept bitcoin in exchange for citizenship. Vanuatu’s citizenship program costs \$200,000 USD, meaning that at current prices the residency program costs less than 42 bitcoins.
423. ▶ Venezuela Government announced 40 % increase to minimum wage, amid hyperinflation in oil-rich but crisis-stricken southern american nation.
424. ▶ 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).
425. ▶ 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.
426. ▶ Venezuela will launch a new virtual currency to ease country’s economic crisis, triggered by falling oil revenue and plummeting value of bolivar, its existing currency. New crypto-currency *Petro* will allow country to advance in issues of monetary sovereignty, to make financial transactions and overcome the financial blockade.
427. ▶ Victoria became first Australian state to legalise assisted dying (euthanasia), as lawmakers voted to allow terminally ill patients the right to request a lethal drug to end their lives from June 2019.
428. ▶ WHO released first tranche of emergency funding of \$175,000 to provide lifesaving healthcare to vulnerable Rohingya muslims population in Bangladesh.
429. ▶ Word ‘populism’ is announced as Cambridge Dictionary’s Word of the Year 2017. It is defined as *political ideas and activities that are intended to get the support of ordinary people by giving them what they want*.
430. ▶ World Bank allocated \$8 billion for infrastructure projects under China’s Silk Road initiative.
- ✏ Purpose of Silk Road initiative is to create an economic corridor connecting China with Asia, Europe and the rest of world.

- ✈ Silk Road project has two components - Silk Road Economic Belt (land-based connectivity) and Maritime Silk Road (ocean based connectivity).
- 431. ▶ World Bank announced \$1.15 billion development policy loan for Egypt to support its economic reform programme, with \$500 million from World Bank Group, \$150 million from Britain and \$500 million from African Development Bank.
 - ✈ Additionally, International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved \$ 44.5 million credit for Madagascar, to support the country's economic recovery.
- 432. ▶ World Bank will end its financial support for oil and gas exploration after 2019, in response to growing threat posed to climate change.
- 433. ▶ World Bank's 'Ease of Doing Business index' 2017 (190 Nations) -
 - ✈ India - India Improved 30 positions to rank 100th amongst 190 countries, Ranking India among top 10 improvers in 2017.
 - ✈ Top 5 - New Zealand (1), Singapore (2), Denmark (3), South Korea (4), Hong Kong (5)
 - ✈ Bottom 5 - Somalia (190th), Eritrea (189th), Venezuela (188th), South Sudan (187th), Yemen (186th)
 - ✈ Neighbours - Bangladesh (177), Nepal (105), Pakistan (147), Sri Lanka (111)
 - ✈ BRICS - Brazil (125), Russia (35), China (78), South Africa (82)
- 434. ▶ World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Inclusive Development Index 2018 -
 - ✈ India ranked at 62nd place. China is on 26th position, Pakistan is on 47th and Bangladesh is ranked 34th.
 - ✈ Top 5 Advanced Economies - Norway, Ireland, Luxembourg, Switzerland, Denmark.
 - ✈ Top 5 Emerging Economies - Lithuania, Hungary, Azerbaijan, Latvia, Poland
- 435. ▶ World Economic Forum's (WEF's) Global Risks Report 2018 -
 - ✈ On dimensions of Likelihood and impact, 5 environmental risks - *extreme weather, major natural disasters, biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse, man-made environmental disasters, and failure of climate-change mitigation and adaptation* are accorded highest weightage.
 - ✈ Top-ranking global risk on dimension of impact was *use of weapons of mass destruction* while on dimension of likelihood, *extreme weather events* ranked top.
- 436. ▶ World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) 2017-18 (137 Nations) -
 - ✈ Top 5 - Switzerland (1st), United States (2nd), Singapore (3rd), Netherlands (4th) and Germany (5th)
 - ✈ Bottom 5 - Mauritania (133), Liberia (134), Chad (135), Mozambique (136) Yemen (137)
 - ✈ BRICS - China (27th), Russia (38th), **India (40th)**, South Africa (61st) and Brazil (80th).
 - ✈ Neighbours - Bangladesh (99), Nepal (88), Pakistan (115), Sri Lanka (85)
- 437. ▶ World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap index 2017 (144 Nations) -
 - ✈ India - India came down 21 places to ranked **108** in 2017 List, due to less participation of women in economy and low wages.
 - ✈ Top 5 - Iceland (1), Norway(2), Finland (3), Rwanda (4), Sweden (5)
 - ✈ Bottom 5 - Iran (140), Chad (141), Syria (142), Pakistan (143), Yemen (144)
 - ✈ BRICS - Brazil (90), Russia (71), India (108), China (100), South Africa (19)
 - ✈ Neighbours - Bangladesh (47), Sri Lanka (109), Nepal (111), Pakistan (143)
- 438. ▶ World Health Organisation (WHO) for first time has formulated clinical guidelines on responding to children and adolescents who have been sexually abused. These guidelines provide first line support to child or adolescent in response to the disclosure of sexual abuse.
- 439. ▶ World Health Organisation (WHO) released report *Non-communicable Disease Progress Monitor 2017*, as a measure of status of implementation of 19 indicators of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) in WHO's 194 Member States.
 - ✈ Costa Rica and Iran are best performing countries, with each achieving 15 of 19 indicators. They are followed by Brazil, Bulgaria, Turkey and UK.
- 440. ▶ World Health Organisation Central African Nation Gabon as *Polio-free*.
- 441. ▶ World Inequality Report 2018 by World Inequality Lab based at the Paris School of Economics (France) -
 - ✈ Deregulation and related economic reforms in India since 1980s have led to significant increase in inequality. Inequality is increased to such an extent that In 2014, India's top 1% of earners grabbed 22% share of national income, while bottom 50% managed to get only 15% share.
 - ✈ Globally, since 1980, richest 1% earners have captured twice as much as the poorest 50% of world population.
- 442. ▶ World Migration Report 2018 by *UN International Organisation for Migration* -
 - ✈ Indian diaspora is the largest in world, with 1.5 crore Indians living abroad India also receives highest amount in remittances (\$68.91 billion last year).
 - ✈ Largest migration corridor is from India to UAE, where 3.5 million Indians were residing in 2015.
 - ✈ USA is top destination for migrants, with 46.6 million migrants moving to USA in 2015.

443. ▶ World Nuclear Industry Status Report 2017 -
✎ India is third in world in number of nuclear reactors being installed with 6 reactors. China is leading at 20. Total operational units across the world are 53 currently.
444. ▶ World Payments Report 2017 by Capgemini and BNP Paribas -
✎ China is ahead of India in digital payments space with 38 Billion Transactions in 2015, as compared to 4.5 Billion Digital Transactions in India in 2015. India had 25 billion non-cash transactions for 2017-18..
✎ China will have growth of 36 % in digital transactions during 2016-20 while India will grow at average 26.2 % during the period.
✎ Globally, Debit cards account for 46 percent of non-cash transactions followed by credit cards with 19.5 percent in 2015.
445. ▶ World Trade Organization (WTO) formed a panel to look into Qatar's complaint against measures imposed on it by UAE for Qatar's alleged financial support for militant groups.
446. ▶ World skills competition 2017 held in Abu Dhabi (UAE) -
✎ Indian team consisting of 28 competitors won 2 medals and 9 Medallions of Excellence in key skills. Mohit Dudeja won a silver for Patisserie and Confectionery and Kiran won a bronze for Prototype Modelling.
447. ▶ World trade in goods is estimated to grow at a higher 3.6 % in 2017, compared to earlier estimate of 2.4 %. This change was mainly due to intra-regional shipments picking up and a recovery in import demand in North America.
448. ▶ World's first camel hospital opened in Dubai (UAE).
449. ▶ World's 100 Most Powerful Women list 2017 by Forbes -
✎ CEO of ICICI Bank Chanda Kochhar is most powerful woman in India, 32nd globally.
✎ List is topped by German Chancellor Angela Merkel, making it her 7th consecutive year at top and 12th overall. She is followed by UK Prime Minister Theresa May (rank 2).
450. ▶ World's deepest lake - Lake Baikal (Russia) is reportedly undergoing its gravest crisis in recent history.
✎ It Holds 23 % of world's unfrozen fresh water. It is as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO and includes over 3,600 plant and animal species.
✎ Since past few years, it has been crippled by a series of damaging phenomena such as disappearance of the omul fish, rapid growth of putrid algae and death of endemic species of sponges across its vast 3.2 million-hectare area.
451. ▶ 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.
452. ▶ World's largest airplane (by wingspan) Stratolaunch successfully completed its initial engine tests in USA, designed for launching for sending satellite-carrying rockets into low-Earth orbit. Its wingspan measures 118 m between ends. It weighs about 227,000 kg and can carry nearly 250,000 kg between two fuselages. It has operational range of approximately 2,000 nautical miles.
453. ▶ World's longest glass bridge opened in Shijiazhuang (China). It lies 218 meters above hanging between the two cliffs in Hongyagu Scenic Area in Pingshan county, with 488 Meters length and capacity to hold 2000 people.
454. ▶ Zimbabwe's military seized control of nation by placing longtime leader Robert Mugabe under house arrest.
455. ▶ e-Commerce Major Amazon's CEO Jeff Bezos became richest person ever as his wealth has hit \$105.1 billion, according to Bloomberg Billionaires Index. He passed Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates' previous record from 1999 (Gates is now worth \$93.3 billion).

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