



Current Affairs - December 2017 to May 2018

Month Type



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(Showing **603** Important Ones)

National

1. ▶ Cabinet Approvals on Mar 28, 2018 -

- ✎ New Central scheme namely *Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS)* will be implemented during 2018-19 and 2019-20, aimed at bringing more transparency and efficiency in distribution of foodgrains as it will improve the mechanism to identify fake/duplicate ration cards.
- ✎ Approved restructuring of National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to strengthen governance, implementation and monitoring framework.
- ✎ CCEA Approvals -
 - ✎ Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved continuation of Credit Guarantee Fund for Education Loans Scheme and continuation and modification of Central Sector Interest Subsidy Scheme with outlay of INR 6600 crores for period from 2017-18 to 2019-20. This will provide education loans to 10 lakh students during this period. Modifications -
 - ✎ Ceiling on loan amount has been refixed at Rs. 7.5 lakhs.
 - ✎ Moratorium period would be course period + 1 year.
 - ✎ Department of School Education and Literacy's Proposal to formulate a Integrated Scheme on School Education by subsuming Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE) from 1st April, 2018 to 31st March, 2020, with allocation of INR 75000 crores. It aims to ensure inclusive quality education from nursery to senior secondary stage, with emphasis on 2 two T's - Teacher and Technology.
 - ✎ Enhancing scope of Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY). Govt will now contribute Employer's full admissible contribution for the first 3 years from the date of registration of new employee for all sectors including existing beneficiaries for their remaining period of 3 years.
 - ✎ Informal sector workers would get social safety net and there would be more job creation.
 - ✎ Continuation of Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) and City Compost Scheme beyond 12th Five Year plan till 2019-20, with expenditure INR 61972 crores. Subsidy on P&K fertilizers and Market Development Assistant (MDA) on City Compost will be provided on subsidy rates approved by CCEA on annual basis. Continuation of these schemes will ensure that adequate quantity of P&K is made available to farmers at statutory controlled price
 - ✎ Removal of prohibition on export of all varieties of edible oils except mustard oil.
- ✎ MOUs
 - ✎ With Zambia in the field of Judicial Cooperation.
 - ✎ With Canada to establish bilateral cooperation in field of Intellectual Property (IP).
 - ✎ With United Kingdom and Northern Ireland regarding cooperation and Exchange of Information for Combating International Criminality and Tackling Serious Organised Crime.
 - ✎ With South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) for cooperation on response to Oil and Chemical Pollution in the South Asian Seas Region (Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka). It aims at protection and preservation of marine environment in region.

2. ▶ Election Commission announced that State Assembly elections will be held for 3 North East states in Feb 2018 - Meghalaya and Nagaland (Feb 27) and Tripura (Feb 18).

3. ▶ Maharashtra government signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) worth Approx 35000 Crores Thrust Aircraft Pvt Ltd, company led by Amol Yadav who built six-seater aircraft. Under the MoU signed at *Magnetic Maharashtra* investors' summit, state will give Yadav's firm 157 acres of land in Palghar district.
 - ▶ During the summit, Reliance Industries announced to invest over 60000 crore in Maharashtra in 10 years for establishing an integrated digital industrial area.
 - ▶ Indian Railways signed MOU with Maharashtra government to set up a coach factory in Latur with an investment of INR 600 crores.
4. ▶ To make adventure sports safer, Minister of State for Tourism (IC) K. J. Alphons launched Government's newly formed Guidelines on Adventure Tourism, formulated along with Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI). Guidelines have been framed for 15 Land Based, 7 Air Based and 7 Water Based activities which cover entire portfolio of Adventure Tourism available in India.
5. ▶ Uttar Pradesh Government in association with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) launched 'DASTAK', a door to door campaign to eradicate deadly Acute Encephalitis (AE) Syndrome and Japanese Encephalitis (JES) disease from state, with tagline *Darwaja khatkhatao, AES aur JE ko bhagao*.
6. ▶ 10 Days long Traditional festival of Losar celebrated in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir to mark beginning of New Year in this Himalayan region.
7. ▶ 105th Indian Science Congress held in Imphal (Manipur) with theme *reaching the unreached through science and technology*. ISC is being held for second time in North-East. Earlier it was held at Shillong in 2009.
 - ▶ 106th Indian Science Congress will be held in Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) with theme *Future India: Science and Technology*.
 - ▶ 7TH Women Science Congress, Children's Science Congress and 11th Science Communicators' Meet were also held during this event.
 - ▶ Drdo Pavilion has been Adjudged As Most Informative at 105th Indian Science Congress.
8. ▶ 10th Global Forum for Food & Agriculture was held in Berlin (Germany) with theme *Shaping the future of livestock – sustainably, responsibly, efficiently*. India was represented by Minister of State (MoS) for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.
9. ▶ 11 days Dhanu Yatra festival held in Bargarh district of Odisha.
10. ▶ 12th International Film Festival on Art and Artist began in Bhubaneswar, organised by Bhubaneswar-based Jatin Das Centre of Art (JDCA).
11. ▶ 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will be held in Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh) in January 2019, with Mauritius PM Pravind Jugnauth as Chief Guest. Theme of 15th PBD will be *Role of Indian Diaspora in building a New India*.
 - ▶ Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is celebrated in India on 9 January, commemorating return of M K Gandhi from South Africa in Bombay on January 9, 1915.
12. ▶ 171st Araadhanai Music Festival started in Thiruvaiyaru (Tamil Nadu). Thyagaraja is one of Trinities of Carnatic music.
13. ▶ 21st Law Commission Recommendations (headed by former SC judge B.S. Chauhan) -
 - ▶ Declare Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) a public body and bring BCCI and its all member cricket associations under Right to Information (RTI) law regime.
 - ▶ Recommendations related to Elections -
 - ▶ Holding simultaneous elections to Lok Sabha and state assemblies. simultaneous elections were held after Independence up to 1967. Dissolution of certain Assemblies in 1968 and 1969 followed by dissolution of Lok Sabha led to disruption of conduct of simultaneous elections.
 - ▶ Issuance of Notification - Statutory limit of six months for issuance of notification of general elections.
 - ▶ No-confidence motion - Parties which introduce no-confidence motion should simultaneously give a suggestion for an alternative government as no-confidence motion and premature dissolution of House is major roadblocks to simultaneous elections.
 - ▶ Anti-defection law - The rigour of 'Anti-defection Law' must be removed as exception, to prevent stalemate (गतिरोध) in Lok Sabha/Assembly in case of Hung Parliament/Assembly.
 - ▶ Mid-term elections - In case of mid-term elections, new Lok Sabha or Assembly will only serve remainder of term of previous Lok Sabha/Assembly and not a fresh term of five years.
 - ▶ Prime minister/ CMs should be elected to lead Lok Sabha/Assembly, by full house like electing speaker of Lok Sabha. This will provide stability to government and in turn to Lok Sabha and state legislative assembly.
 - ▶ Centre should get Constitutional amendments, if agreed upon, to be ratified by all the States so as to avoid any challenge to them.
14. ▶ 23 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) will get largest portion of loans on offer under Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education (RISE) scheme.

- ▶ RISE Scheme was in Budget 2018-19, with a corpus of INR 100000 crores. Under this, all centrally-funded institutes (CFIs) can borrow funds over next 4 years to expand and build new infrastructure.
 - ▶ Out of allotted funds, INR 25000 crores will be set aside exclusively for 23 IITs.
 - ▶ Central Universities can borrow upto 20000 crores, National Institutes of Technology (NITs) can borrow INR 11300 crores.
 - ▶ All financing will be done through the Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA).
- ▶ 2nd India Mobile Congress (IMC-2018) will be held in New Delhi in October 25-27, 2018 with theme *NEW DIGITAL HORIZONS Connect, Create, innovate*. It will be organised by Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI).
 - ▶ 2nd Iranshah Udvada Utsav, a Parsi cultural festival organized in Gujarat.
 - ▶ 2nd edition of 'Nobel Prize Series India 2018' started in Panaji (Goa). Its a month-long Nobel Science Exhibition in which Nobel laureates interact with school children and teachers. Theme of Nobel Prize Series India 2018' is *Science Impacts Life*.
 - ▶ 3 Municipal Corporations of Delhi jointly brought out mobile application named *311*, to enhance engagement of citizens in the resolution of grievances and improvement of civic services in city. It aims to empower users by giving them locations of nearby police / metro stations / petrol pumps / toilets / parking / hospitals and other public places.
 - ▶ 3 day annual Flamingo Festival held at Pulicat lake and Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary in Sullurpet mandal (Andhra Pradesh). Somewhere between 9,000 to 12,000 Migratory birds from Siberia visit this place during winter season for breeding.
 - ▶ 3rd Science Film Festival of India will held in Goa, titled *SCI-FFI Goa*.
 - ▶ 4th India International Science Festival will be held in Lucknow, on dates to be decided later.
 - ▶ 5 day annual Konark dance festival started in Odisha, near famous Sun Temple of Konark.
 - ▶ 51 day long 8th Theatre Olympics Concluded in Mumbai. This edition of Theatre Olympics brought together around 25,000 artists under theme "Flag of Friendship". It witnessed 450 shows from more than 30 countries performed across 17 cities.
 - ▶ *Advantage Assam*, Assam's first Global Investors summit held in Guwahati. During this, Assam Government signed MoU with National Building Construction Corporation (India) Limited for setting up a twin tower trade centre in Guwahati with a project cost of INR 1950 crores.
 - ▶ During this, it was decided that Assam State Government would set up *Invest Assam*, as dedicated agency to look into all aspects of business and investment in state.
 - ▶ *Sammakka Saaralamma Maha Jathara* tribal festival began in Eturunagaram (Telangana). Tribal people from Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh would participate in this festival.
 - ▶ *TrackChild* and *Khoya-Paya* portals launched by Ministry of Women and Child Development to track missing and found children. Ministry also provides support for children in trouble through the dedicated toll free number - 1098.
 - ▶ A MoU was signed between National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation (NHIDCL) and *IL&FS Transportation Networks* for construction of over 14 km long 2-lane bi-directional Zojila Tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir.
 - ▶ This would be India's longest road tunnel and longest bi-directional tunnel in Asia. It will provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh.
 - ▶ Cost of project is INR 6808 crores and will completed in 7 years.
 - ▶ A Web portal (www.praapti.in) and an App namely PRAAPTI (Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators), has been launched by Govt. It is meant to bring transparency in power purchase transactions between Generators and Discoms. It will capture Invoicing and payment data for various long term PPAs from Generators. It will also help make transactions in the power Sector more transparent.
 - ▶ A recent Nipah Virus (NiV) infection has been reported in Kerala, with Its traces were found in samples of two persons who died of viral fever in Kozhikode region, and confirmed by National Institute of Virology Pune.
 - ▶ Fruit bats of Pteropodidae Family, Pteropus genus are natural host of this virus. Its first outbreak took place in Kampung Sungai Nipah, Malaysia in 1998.
 - ▶ Virus is believed to spread through direct contact with infected bats, or contaminated Fruits. Human to Human transmission from other NiV-infected people is also reported.
 - ▶ Symptoms Include breathing trouble, inflammation in brain, fever, headache, drowsiness, disorientation and delirium. It can be deadly too.
 - ▶ ASEAN India Film Festival held in New Delhi, organised by Ministry of External Affairs as part of series of events to commemorate 25 years of ASEAN and India relations. Its tagline was 'Friendship through Films'.
 - ▶ According to Minister of State for Rural Development, West Bengal is the best performing State in terms of allotting jobs and utilising funds under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

- WB so far spent over INR 7335 crores and generated over 28.21 crore work days under MGNREGA. West Bengal is followed by Tamil Nadu (TN) which spent INR 5981 crores and generated 22.17 crore work days during 2017-18. Goa is ranked at bottom.
32. ▶ According to report by green energy market tracker Mercom Capital, India has achieved 20 GW (Giga watt) cumulative solar power capacity, Out of which, utility-scale cumulative installations is 18.4 GW and rooftop solar is 1.6 GW.
- ▶ By 2022, India is targeting installation of 175GW of renewable energy capacity. It Includes 60GW of large and medium-scale gridconnected solar power projects, 60GW wind, 40GW solar rooftop projects, 10GW of bio-power and 5GW of small hydro.
33. ▶ Actor Kamal Haasan launched his political party Makkal Needhi Maiam (*People Justice Centre*) in Madurai (Tamil Nadu).
34. ▶ Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh launched 6 new features in National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) platform to make it more user-friendly -
- ▶ MIS dashboard for better analysis
 - ▶ BHIM payment facility by traders
 - ▶ Mobile payment facility by traders
 - ▶ Enhanced features on mobile app such as gate entry and payment through mobile
 - ▶ Integration of farmer's database
 - ▶ e-Learning module.
35. ▶ Airport Authority of India (AAI) signed MoU with Assam government for sustainable development of human settlements at villages in Kamrup district, under its Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) initiative. AAI will provide financial assistance of Rs. 4.58 crore for same. AAI also tied up with National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to develop a green corridor covering 16.55 km in Varanasi.
36. ▶ Airports Authority of India (AAI) allocated Rs 3400 crore for upgradation of airports in North East region.
- ▶ Assam - INR 1720 crores
 - ▶ Tripura - INR 525 crores
 - ▶ Manipur - INR 800 crores
 - ▶ Arunachal Pradesh - INR 211 crores
 - ▶ Mizoram - INR 60 crores
 - ▶ Nagaland - INR 42 crores
37. ▶ Airports Authority of India (AAI) announced construction Goa's 2nd Airport (after first at Dabolim) at Mopa, with Both Passenger and Cargo Hub Facilities. It will become functional in 2020, with annual capacity of 30 million passengers.
38. ▶ An MoU has been signed between Government of Bihar and NTPC Limited, aiming to improve performance of Power Sector in Bihar through transfer of Barauni Thermal Power Station (720 MW) and Bihar State Power Generation Company's (BSPGCL) equities in Kanti Bijlee Utpadan Nigam & Nabinagar Power Generating Company to NTPC. It will result in better performance of these units.
39. ▶ An important heritage attraction at National Rail Museum (New Delhi) - a 108 years old monorail became operational, that was used by Maharaja of Patiala *Bhupinder Singh*. The Museum takes visitors on an exciting journey into Railway history and heritage and depict their contribution to industrial and economic progress of country.
40. ▶ Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu laid foundation for *Universal Peace Retreat Center of Prajapita Brahmakumari Eswariya University* in Amravati. It will propagate and teach Raja yoga, Dhyana, Youth development, women empowerment, stress relief activities, child care, positive attitude, life skills and moral values.
41. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Government along with the UNESCO Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP) is planning to set up a gaming and e-learning hub, as first of its kind in Asia-Pacific region.
42. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Government launched multi-utility vehicle NAIPUNYA RATHAM (also called World on Wheels), under Smart village Smart Ward Programme. It will look to improve digital literacy and create awareness on various government schemes.As part of it, a 20-seater bus enabled digital facilities and learning lab equipped with smart technology gadgets as well as with e-learning tools.
43. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Government signed MoU with NITI Aayog to create an online dashboard for the 115 most backward districts of India, under *Transformation of Most Aspirational Districts* Scheme.
- ▶ Backward districts were selected based on education, health, nutrition, rural road connectivity, rural household electrification, access to potable water, individual toilets, etc.
 - ▶ Jharkhand has the highest number of the listed backward districts.
 - ▶ Note that West Bengal, Kerala and Odisha recently opted out of Central Government's *Transformation of Aspirational Districts* scheme. Bringing down number of districts to 102 (from 115).
44. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Govt. launched official 'NCBN' (Nara Chandrababu Naidu) App in Collector's conference in Amaravati, Aimed at implementing effective governance in Andhra Pradesh.

45. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Govt. providing pension of INR 1500 to transgenders (above 18 years age) in state. Among other states, Kerala and Odisha have already introduced pension schemes for transgenders.
46. ▶ Andhra Pradesh assembly passed Kapu reservation bill that will provide Kapu community with 5 % quota in education and employment in state. Kapu community has 27 % population in state. Now total Reservation in AP has passed 50%, triggering need for central govt nod.
47. ▶ Andhra Pradesh government Initiated its *Bhu Seva* project aimed at offering integrated services related with land. Each land parcel will be given an 11 Digit Bhudhar Number, to help in easy identification of details of land parcel. Ch Vijayamohan is Mission Director of Bhu Seva Mission.
48. ▶ Andhra Pradesh government signed MoU with Alphabet InC's X (Google X) to bring Free Space Optical Communication (FSOC) technology to India, to provide high quality & affordable digital services through internet under state government's Fiber grid project.
 - ✏ This association with X labs to implement FSOC in Andhra Pradesh is first in world to provide wireless internet connection at higher speed of up to 20 Gbps and to a distance of up to 20kms.
49. ▶ Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS) ranked Pune (Maharashtra) at top with a score of 5.1 and Karnataka Capaital Bengaluru at bottom with a score of 3.
 - ✏ Top 5 - Pune, Kolkata, Thiruvananthapuram, Bhubaneswar and Surat.
 - ✏ Bengaluru is at bottom, with Chandigarh as 2nd worst and Dehradun 3rd from botto in Urban governance.
50. ▶ Annual multicultural festival *Kala Ghoda Arts Festival* held in South Mumbai (Maharashtra). This year's theme is 'Hara Ghoda' (Green Horse), focusing on sustainability and environment-friendliness.
51. ▶ Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) has been removed completely from Meghalaya. AFSPA empowers security forces to conduct operations and arrest anyone anywhere without prior notice.
52. ▶ Arunachal CM Pema Khandu inaugurated State's biggest solar power plant in Itanagar, with capacity of 1 MW and cost accumulated is INR 8.50 crores.
53. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh Assembly passed Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill 2018 to remove Anchal Samiti, intermediate level of 3 tier panchayati raj system and set up a two-tier system in state.
 - ✏ It is being done under 73rd Amendment of Constitution that enables state having less than 20 lakh population not to have intermediate level (Arunachal has population of 13.84 lakh). 3 tier panchayati raj institutions were set up in state in 2003, 2008 and 2013.
 - ✏ Anchal Samiti (3rd Tier) is being removed to standardise use of limited financial resources and avoid delay in passing policies as they delayed at Anchal Samiti level (intermediate level).
 - ✏ In 2 tier panchayati raj system, execution of schemes will be faster as there will be direct connection between Gram Panchayats and Zilla Parishads.
54. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu inaugurated World War II Memorial Museum in Changlang district. It is located adjacent to historic Stilwell Road and is expected to boost tourist inflow especially from Southeast Asian countries.
55. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu launched LED Solar Street Lighting System in 4 Districts (*Tirap, Longding, Namsai and Tawang*), with assistance from Rural Infrastructure Development Fund of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD).
56. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh became 2nd Northeast state (after sikkim) to be officially declared Open Defecation Free (ODF). Overall, it is 5th to be declared ODF State, after Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Haryana.
57. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh would get its first (and India's 2nd) Film and Television Institute (FTII). First Film and Television Institute of India of India was set up in Pune in 1960.
58. ▶ As a landmark reform in field of Higher Education, University Grants Commission has approved UGC (Online Courses) Regulations 2018, allowing Higher Educational Institutions to offer Programmes in completely online mode.
 - ✏ It is appliaeble for disciplines in which institute has already been offering same or similar Courses at graduation level in regular mode or in Open and Distance Learning mode and from which at least one batch has been graduated and approved by statutory councils.
 - ✏ Online Programmes requiring Practical/ Laboratory Courses as a curricular requirement shall not be permitted.
 - ✏ Online learning shall have minimum four quadrants - video lectures, e- content, self-assessment and discussion forum to clarify doubts.
 - ✏ Higher Educational Institutions will be eligible to offer Online Programmes if they have been in existence for at least five years and are accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) with a valid minimum score of 3.26 on a 4-point scale. It should also be in top-100 in overall category in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) for at least 2 years in the previous 3 years.
 - ✏ Analytics of Learning Management System shall be used for ensuring the learner's participation at least for 2 hours every fortnight.
 - ✏ This initiative is a big step towards attaining the targeted GER (Gross enrolment ratio) of 30% by 2020.

59. ▶ As per *Rise of the Millennials: India's Most Valuable Celebrity Brands* report by Duff & Phelps -
▶ Cricketer Virat Kohli named as India's top-ranking celebrity brand in 2017, with brand value of \$144 million. He replaced actor Shah Rukh Khan.
60. ▶ As per *Airpocalypse II* report by environmental Non-governmental organization (NGO) Greenpeace India -
▶ *Airpocalypse II* analysed PM10 (*inhalable particles, with diameters that are generally 10 micrometers and smaller*) annual averages for 280 cities monitored by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) under its national air quality monitoring programme. Highlights of *Airpocalypse II* -
▶ 47% of population in India is living in areas where there is no air quality monitoring.
▶ Out of 63 crore million people living in 280 cities where air quality is monitored by CPCB, 55 crore live in areas exceeding national safe standards for PM10. CPCB has set 60 micrograms per cubic metres PM10 as safe standard.
- ▶ Top 5 Polluted Cities
▶ Delhi - 290
▶ Faridabad (Haryana) - 272
▶ Bhiwadi (Rajasthan) - 262
▶ Patna (Bihar) - 261
▶ Dehradun, (Uttarakhand) - 238
- ▶ Least Polluted Cities
▶ Hassan (Karnataka) - 26
▶ Pathanamthitta (Kerala) - 26
▶ Nongstoin (Meghalaya) - 26
▶ Darjeeling (West Bengal) - 29
▶ Tura (Meghalaya) - 30
61. ▶ As per Central Government's draft on Central Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Rules 2017, only BS-VI compliant vehicles will be registered After 30th June, 2020. It is in line with earlier order by Central Government for implementation of Bharat Standard-VI compliant cleaner transport fuels across India by April 2020 and in Delhi by April 2018.
62. ▶ As per Data by Census Directorate, 42 Indian languages are heading towards extinction as only few thousand people speak them.
▶ There are total 22 scheduled languages and 100 non-scheduled languages in India, spoken by one lakh or more people.
▶ Andaman and Nicobar Islands has most Number of Languages headed towards Extinction (11 Languages), followed by Manipur (11).
63. ▶ As per National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), Uttar Pradesh is at top in number of cyber crimes in India, followed by Maharashtra. 12,317 cases of cybercrimes were reported in India in 2016, annual increase of over 6 %.
64. ▶ As per data by Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Madhya Pradesh has highest number of 55770 fully covered tribal habitations with safe drinking water in country followed by Odisha and Jharkhand. Under *National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP)*, 10% of total allocation of funds is earmarked to be used for supply of drinking water to Scheduled Tribe (ST) dominated habitations.
65. ▶ Assam Assembly will introduce digital budget in its upcoming session, instead of conventional printed booklet. Apart from digital budget, new features to be introduced will be *Members Hour (tuesday)*, *a year-long calendar*, *Best Legislator Award*, *formation of Pay Commission for MLAs' salary and fellowships for research work on history of Assembly*.
66. ▶ Assam Government launched a special programme to build 1 lakh toilets across the state under Swachh Bharat Mission, named *Mission Sambavh* (Mission Possible), under which, construction works will be completed within 10 days.
67. ▶ Assam Government released a postage stamp in memory of eminent football player Talimeren Ao.
68. ▶ Assam Govt. launched *Chah Bagichar Dhan Puraskar Mela 2017-18*, that enables INR 2500 to be credited to accounts of people belonging to tea community, who opened bank accounts during demonetisation.
69. ▶ Assam Govt. launched skill development training centres across state, to carry forward central Govt.'s vision for skilling the youth of nation through 'Skill India' programme.
70. ▶ Assam State Government and Isha Foundation signed MOU for rejuvenation and conservation of rivers. Isha Foundation is led by spiritual leader Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev.
71. ▶ Assam become 4th state (1st in North East) to issue Right of Way (RoW) guidelines for telecom service providers.
▶ A legal right, established by usage or grant is referred to as Right of Way (RoW).
▶ These guidelines will regulate establishment of underground and overground telecom infrastructure in Assam.
72. ▶ Assam government launched a toll-free helpline for women, to tackle recent surge in crime in state. The helpline is called Sakhi and is available at 181.

73. ▶ Assam government will observe September 22 as Rhino Day (*On World Rhino Day*) to generate public awareness on protection of one-horned rhinoceros (pachyderm).
74. ▶ Assam government's new cashless health scheme, 'Atal Amrit Abhiyan' has been launched. It offers free medical care of up to Rs 2 lakh to every individual in state. It will cover 92 % of state's population with annual income below Rs 5 lakh, with INR 400 crores allocated in FY 2018-19.
75. ▶ Assembly Elections 2018 in North East States of Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland -
- ▶ Tripura -
 - ▶ BJP (Bharatiya Janata party) emerged as largest party with win over 35 seats (out of 60 seats). Communist Party of India (Marxist), that ruled Tripura for 25 years (led by Manik Sarkar), won 16 seats. Vote percentage - BJP (43%), CPI (M) - 42.7%.
 - ▶ Nagaland -
 - ▶ Naga Peoples Front (NPF) emerged as largest party with win over 27 seats (out of 59 seats), followed by Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (16 Seats) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with 12 Seats. Vote percentage - NPF (38.8%) NDPP (25.2%) BJP (15.3%).
 - ▶ Meghalaya -
 - ▶ Indian National Congress (INC) emerged as largest party with win over 21 seats (out of 59 seats), followed by National People's Party (19 Seats).
76. ▶ Bengal Global Business Summit 2018 held in Kolkata with *Japan, Italy, Poland, Germany, Republic of Korea, Czech Republic, Great Britain, France and UAE* as Partner countries and theme *Bengal Means Business*.
77. ▶ Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) bagged order worth INR 560 crores from National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) for setting up flue gas desulphurisation (FGD) system at National Capital Power Station (capacity 2×490 MW) at Dadri in Uttar Pradesh, aimed at controlling various harmful emissions.
78. ▶ Bhogali Bihu harvest festival, also called as *Magh Bihu* festival began in Assam.
79. ▶ Bhubaneswar (Odisha) became 4th National data centre of National Informatics Centre (NIC) after Delhi, Hyderabad and Pune. New cloud-enabled National Data Centre has ability to support 35000 virtual servers. NIC hosts nearly 10,000 websites of Government.
80. ▶ Bihar CM Nitish Kumar flagged off *Krishi Mahabhiyan-cum-Beej Vikas Vahan Rath*, to create awareness among farmers about government schemes during Kharif season (2 Rathes for each district). One is 'Kharif Mahabhiyan-cum-Mahotsav Rath' that would travel to villages AND other is 'Beej (Seed)Vahan Vikas Rath' which would have Kharif seeds and pesticides for treatment of kharif crop.
81. ▶ Bihar Government approved *Safe City Surveillance* scheme for curbing eve-teasing, harassment and other crimes against women at public places.
82. ▶ Bihar Government banned sale of loose cigarettes, to be deterrent to kids and youngsters who start smoking by buying loose cigarettes.
83. ▶ Bihar Govt. Requested Centre for granting Special Category Status for state, stating that It will act as catalyst for private investment and will boost employment generation.
- ▶ Concept of SCS was introduced in 1969 by 5th Finance Commission (Chaired by Mahavir Tyagi), for status was that were disadvantaged in contrast to others, because of their inherent features and low resource base. It is discretion of central govt. to give special favours to states.
 - ▶ Special Category States have special socio-economic, geographical problems, high cost of production with less availability of useful resources and hence low economic base for livelihood activities.
 - ▶ National Development Council accorded Special Category Status to 11 states - 7 North-East States (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura), Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.
84. ▶ Bikaner camel festival celebrated in Rajasthan to honour camels.
85. ▶ Brand Trust Report India Study 2017 ranked Patanjali as India's most trusted Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) brand and most attractive brand.
86. ▶ Buddhist Community of Itanagar celebrated silver jubilee of the Losar Festival in Arunachal Pradesh. This festival is termed as *New Year* according to their Buddhist calendar.
87. ▶ Business Info Provider *Dun & Bradstreet* released *Port Logistics: Issues & Challenges in India* report, looking into various roadblocks and suggests policy recommendations to resolve challenges across ports in India.
- ▶ Report proposes 60 policy measures to strengthen ports sector, that represents bulk of India's merchandise trade.
 - ▶ Report introduces a 'Port Performance Index' to benchmark performance of various ports by combining qualitative perception of stakeholders with quantitative outcome based data. It covers 13 ports that handle around 67 % of India's maritime trade.
 - ▶ Out of 13 major ports, 3 ports (*Jawaharlal Nehru Port (JNPT), Kamarajar Port, Visakhapatnam Port*) received 'Good' score.

88. ▶ Cab Aggregator Ola and Assam Government signed MoU to pilot an app-based river taxi service in Guwahati. River taxis will be machine-operated boats and users will be able to book rides through Ola app.

89. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Apr 11, 2018) -

✍ General Approvals -

✍ Increasing pay and allowances of Lieutenant Governors of Union Territories, from INR 80000 per month to 2.25 Lac Per Month.

✍ MOUs -

✍ With United Kingdom and Northern Ireland on return of Illegal Migrants.

✍ CCEA Approvals -

✍ Delegated powers to Finance and Petroleum Ministers to award oil and gas exploration blocks to successful bidders under Hydrocarbon Exploration Licensing Policy (HELP). Under HELP, exploration blocks awarded twice in a year and currently awarding of blocks requires CCEA's approval.

✍ Relaxed rules for Coal India Ltd (CIL) for extraction of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) lying below coal seams in its blocks in bid to quickly boost production. Till now, CIL had to apply to oil ministry for a licence to extract coal-bed methane (CBM) from its coal blocks.

90. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Apr 25, 2018) -

✍ MOUs -

✍ With Sao Tome and Principe for Cooperation in Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy, Medicinal Plants.

✍ With World Health Organisation (WHO) for Cooperation in Public Health.

✍ With BRICS countries on cooperation in regulation of medical products for human use amongst medicine regulatory agencies.

✍ Renewal Long Term Agreements (LTAs) for supply of iron ore (lumps and fines) of grade +64% Fe content to Japanese Steel Mills (JSMs) and POSCO, South Korea for 5 five years (till 31.3.2023) through MMTC Limited.

✍ Declaration of Extension in Scheduled Areas in Rajasthan under 5th Schedule of Constitution of India.

✍ CCEA Approvals-

✍ Approved increase in Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Raw Jute for 2018-19 season, at INR 3700 per quintal (compared to 3500 in 2017-18 season).

✍ Approved Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Bamboo Mission (NBM) under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) during remaining period of Fourteenth Finance Commission (2018-19 & 2019-20). Expenditure is estimated at INR 1290 crores.

91. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (May 01, 2018) -

✍ **General Approvals -**

✍ Approved doubling investment limit from INR 7.5 lakhs to 15 lakhs and extending time limits for subscription from May 4, 2018 to Mar 31, 2020 under Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY). It will enable upto Rs.10000 Pension per month for Senior Citizens.

✍ PMVVY is implemented through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) to provide social security during old age and protect elderly persons aged over 60 years . It provides assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8% per annum for 10 years.

✍ Approved construction of 100 bedded General Hospital at Rural Health Training Centre (RHTC) Najafgarh in New Delhi at cost INR 95 Crores.

✍ Approved Restructuring of Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) by abolition of certain posts of Joint Secretary-level and above, with cadre strength Unchanged.

✍ Approved Cadre review and formation of Group 'A' service of technical cadre of Petroleum & Safety Organization (PESO) in name *Indian Petroleum & Explosives Safety Service (IPESS)*, to enhance capacity of organization.

✍ Approved promulgation of Ordinance to amend a law for speedy disposal of commercial disputes, aimed at improving India's ranking in World Bank's ease of doing business index. It will bring down specified value of commercial dispute to INR 3 lakh from 1 crore. It also aims to bring down time taken from present 1,445 days in resolution of commercial disputes of lesser value.

✍ **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) Approvals -**

✍ Approved upgradation of infrastructure at Chennai, Guwahati and Lucknow airports at a total cost of INR 5,082 crores. Chennai airport would get max INR 2,467 crores, while Guwahati and Lucknow airports would get INR 1,383 and 1,232 crores.

- ✎ Approved to provide financial assistance @ of Rs. 5.50 per quintal (INR 55 per Ton) of cane crushed in sugar season 2017-18 to sugar mills to offset cost of cane, in order to help sugar mills to clear cane dues of farmers, which have accumulated upto 19000 Crores INR
- ✎ Approved Umbrella Scheme *Green Revolution – Krishonnati Yojana* for period 2017-18 to 2019-20 with Central Share of INR 33270 crores. It comprises of 11 Schemes.
 - ✎ Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) - Central share of INR 7533.04 crores, MIDH aims to promote holistic growth of horticulture sector.
 - ✎ National Food Security Mission (NFSM), including National Mission on Oil Seeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP) - Central share of INR 6893.38 crores. It aims to increase production of rice, wheat, pulses, coarse cereals and commercial crops, through area expansion and productivity enhancement.
 - ✎ National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) - Central share of Rs.3980.82 crore. It aims at promoting sustainable agriculture practices best suitable to specific agro-ecology.
 - ✎ Submission on Agriculture Extension (SMAE) - Central share of 2961.26 crores. SMAE aims to strengthen ongoing extension mechanism of State Governments, local bodies etc., achieving food and nutritional security and socio-economic empowerment of farmers.
 - ✎ Sub-Mission on Seeds and Planting Material (SMSP) - Central share of 920.6 crores. SMSP aims to increase production of certified seed, upgrade quality of farm saved seeds, strengthen seed multiplication chain and promote new technologies and methodologies in seed production.
 - ✎ Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanisation (SMAM) - Central share of 3250 crores. SMAM aims to increase reach of farm mechanization to small and marginal farmers and to regions where availability of farm power is low.
 - ✎ Sub Mission on Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine (SMPPQ) - Central share of 1022.67 crores. SMPPQ aims to minimize loss to quality and yield of agricultural crops from ravages of insect pests, diseases, weeds, nematodes, rodents, etc.
 - ✎ Integrated Scheme on Agriculture Census, Economics and Statistics (ISACES) - Central share of 730.58 crores. It aims to undertake agriculture census, study of cost of cultivation of principal crops, undertake research studies on agro-economic problems.
 - ✎ Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Cooperation (ISAC) - Central share of 1902.636 crores. It aims to provide financial assistance for improving economic conditions of cooperatives, remove regional imbalances and to speed up - cooperative development in agricultural marketing.
 - ✎ Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Marketing (ISAM) - Central share of 3863.93 crores. ISAM aims to develop agricultural marketing infrastructure, promote innovative and latest technologies and competitive alternatives in agriculture marketing.
 - ✎ National e-Governance Plan (NeGP-A) - Central share of 211.06 crores. It aims to bring farmer centricity & service orientation to programmes, to enhance reach & impact of extension services and improve access of farmers to information & services.
 - ✎ These sub schemes/missions were approved independently as separate scheme/mission. In 2017-18, it was decided to club all these under one umbrella scheme known as *Green Revolution - Krishonnati Yojana*.
- ✎ Approved Continuation of Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) beyond 12th Five Year Plan to 2019-20, with financial outlay of INR 14832 crores. Under this, new AIIMS are established and Government medical colleges are upgraded. It will lead to employment generation for nearly 3000 people in various faculty & non-faculty posts in each of AIIMS.
 - ✎ Under this extension, 20 new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) will be established and 73 medical colleges will be upgraded.
- ✎ Approved renaming and restructuring of Multi-sectoral Development Programme (MsDP) as Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJVK), along with continuation during remaining period of 14th Finance Commission (Till 2020).
 - ✎ PMJVK would provide better socio economic infrastructure facilities to minority communities, particularly in education, health & skill development.
 - ✎ Criteria for identification of Minority Concentration Towns have been rationalized by lowering population % criteria of Minority Communities (50 % to 25%) and fulfilment of parameters as Given -
 - ✎ Earlier Towns which were backward in terms of both in Basic Amenities and Socio-economic parameters were taken as MCTs. Now, Towns which were found backward in either or both of criteria have been taken up as MCT.

- ✎ Area to be covered under PMJVK would be 57% more as compared to MsDP. MsDP covered 196 districts, while PMJVK will cover 308 districts.
- ✎ Expenditure for continuation of programme as PMJVK will be INR 3972 crores.
- ✎ It aims to address development deficits in identified minority concentration areas. Inclusion of Minority Concentration District HQs with Minority Concentration Towns having population over 25000, Minority Concentration Blocks and Cluster of Villages as per Census, 2011 data, will extend coverage.
- ✎ PMJVK would cover 5 more States/UTs - Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Nagaland, Goa and Pondicherry.
- ✎ Minority Concentration Areas of 61 districts out of 115 Aspirational districts have been covered under PMJVK.
- ✎ Area covered under PMJVK will have 109 MCD Hqrs., 870 MCBs and 321 MCTs.

✎ MOUs and Foreign Approvals -

- ✎ Approved Mutual Recognition Agreement between Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and South African Institute of Chartered Accountants (SAICA).
- ✎ Approved to accede to Protocol under World Health Organization (WHO) Framework Convention on tobacco control to eliminate illicit trade in tobacco products.

92. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (May 16, 2018) -

✎ Foreign MOUs -

- ✎ France - Technical Cooperation in railways.
- ✎ Morocco - legal Matters, Mining and Geology.
- ✎ Swaziland - Health and Medicine
- ✎ Colombia - Traditional Systems of Medicine.
- ✎ Suriname - Electoral management and administration
- ✎ Equatorial Guinea - Traditional Systems of Medicine
- ✎ With Brunei Darussalam for Exchange of Information and Assistance in Collection with respect to Taxes.

✎ General Cabinet Approvals -

- ✎ Establishing a **New Central University in Andhra Pradesh**, named *Central University of Andhra Pradesh*, in Jantnaluru Village of Ananthapur District (Andhra Pradesh). INR 450 crores are approved for first phase expenditures.
 - ✎ Cabinet approved its operationalization initially by forming a society under Societies Registration Act 1860, till amendment to Central Universities Act 2009 is enacted and to enable commencement of academic activities from 2018-19.
- ✎ Setting up a **new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Deoghar (Jharkhand)**. INR 1103 crores have been approved for it and it will be set up under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).
- ✎ **Establishment of National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation (NIMHR)** at Bhopal (MP) as a Society under Societies Registration Act 1860, under Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. Estimated cost is Rs. 179.54 crore in first three years. NIMHR will provide rehabilitation services to persons with mental illnesses. It will have 9 Departments and will conduct 12 courses in area of mental health rehabilitation.
- ✎ Approved **strengthening of mechanism for resolution of commercial disputes** of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) -
 - ✎ New 2 tier mechanism will be put in place of existing Permanent Machinery of Arbitration (PMA) mechanism to resolve commercial disputes (excluding disputes concerning Railways, Income Tax, Custom & Excise Departments).
 - ✎ At First level, commercial disputes will be referred to a Committee comprising of Secretaries of administrative Ministries / Departments to which disputing CPSEs / Parties belong and Secretary in Deptt. of Legal Affairs. Max time at 1st Level is 3 Months.
 - ✎ If unresolved at 1st Tier, dispute will be referred to Cabinet Secretary, whose decision will be final.
- ✎ Approved **National Policy on Biofuels 2018**, to promote biofuels, that are more environment friendly and match up well with ongoing initiatives of Government like Make in India, Skill Development and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. Salient features Include -
 - ✎ Salient Features -
 - ✎ Categorises of biofuels -
 - ✎ Basic Biofuels - First Generation (1G) bioethanol and biodiesel.
 - ✎ Advanced Biofuels: Second Generation (2G) ethanol, Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) to drop-in fuels, Third Generation (3G) biofuels, bio-CNG etc.

- ✎ Expansion scope of raw material for ethanol production - It allows use of sugarcane juice, sugar containing materials like sweet sorghum, sugar beet, starch containing materials like corn, cassava, damaged food grains like broken rice, wheat, rotten potatoes, unfit for human consumption for ethanol production.
- ✎ Allows use of surplus food grains for production of ethanol for blending with petrol with approval of National Biofuel Coordination Committee.
- ✎ Viability gap funding scheme indicated for 2G ethanol Bio refineries of 5000 crores in 6 years for giving special emphasis to advanced biofuels.
- ✎ Encourages setting up of supply chain mechanisms for biodiesel production from non-edible oilseeds, used cooking oil, short gestation crops.
- ✎ Expected Benefits Of Policy -
 - ✎ Reduce Import Dependency.
 - ✎ Cleaner Environment - will reduce CO₂ emissions and Green House Gas emissions.
 - ✎ Health benefits - Using cooking oil as a potential feedstock for biodiesel will prevent diversion of used cooking oil in the food industry.
 - ✎ Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Management - One ton of such waste has potential to provide around 20% of drop in fuels.
 - ✎ Infrastructural Investment in Rural Areas - Addition of 2G bio refineries across country will spur infrastructural investment in rural areas.
 - ✎ Employment Generation - Setting up one 100klpd 2G bio refinery contributes to 1200 jobs in plant operations, village level entrepreneurs and supply chain management.
 - ✎ Additional Income to Farmers - Adopting 2G technologies for producing biofuels, agricultural residues and waste which otherwise are burnt by farmers can be converted to ethanol. Through this process farmers can fetch price for these waste.
- ✎ Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) Approvals -
 - ✎ Approved Development of Freight Village, an Integrated Multi Modal Logistics Hub (IMLH), Nangal Chaudhary (Haryana), in two phases. Sanction of 1029 crore for development of Phase I has been approved. Investment of 763 crore by National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT).
 - ✎ Approved **enhancement of budget by 11,330 crores for Network For Spectrum (NFS) project** for laying alternate communication network for Defence Services for release of spectrum over INR 13,334 crore already approved by Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure in July 2012. Project, being implemented by BSNL, will be completed in 24 months. NFS project will boost communication capabilities of Defence Forces.
 - ✎ Approved initial Corpus of INR 5000 crores for setting up of a dedicated **Micro Irrigation Fund (MIF) with NABARD** under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY).
 - ✎ Allocation of 2,000 crore and 3,000 crore will be utilised during 2018-19 and 2019-20 respectively. NABARD will extend loan to State Governments during this period, to be paid back in 7 years (with grace period of 2 years). Lending rate will be 3% lower than cost of raising fund by NABARD.
 - ✎ Dedicated MIF will supplement efforts of Per Drop More Crop Component (PDMC) of PMKSY.
 - ✎ Fund will facilitate States to mobilise resources for their initiatives, to achieve annual target of about 2 Million ha/year during remaining period of 14th Finance Commission under Per Drop More Crop Component of PMKSY.
 - ✎ Approved extension of Delhi Metro from Noida City Centre to Sector-62 (Noida - UP) covering 6.675 KM at cost INR 1967 crore.

93. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (May 23, 2018) -

- ✎ MOUs -
 - ✎ Angola - Electronics and Information Technology
 - ✎ France, Morocco - Renewable Energy
 - ✎ Denmark - Food Safety Cooperation
 - ✎ Singapore - Personnel Management and Public Administration
 - ✎ Turkey - Trade in poppy seeds to ensure quick and transparent processing for import of poppy seeds from Turkey
- ✎ General Cabinet Approvals -
 - ✎ Approved a Comprehensive Telecom Development Plan (CTDP) for North Eastern Region(NER) in Meghalaya, at cost of INR 3911 crores to be funded by Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF). Features Include Provision of 2G+4G mobile coverage

in uncovered areas and National Highways in Meghalaya. It will increase penetration of mobile connectivity in Meghalaya, resulting in equitable access of communication, information and governance.

- ✎ Approved *Universal Service Obligation Fund [USOF]* supported scheme to provide mobile services at 4072 tower locations identified by MHA in inhabited uncovered areas affected by Left Wing Extremism [LWE] of 96 districts in 10 States for Phase-II project, with cost approx 7330 Crores. It would be used by security personnel deployed in LWE affected areas and will also provide mobile services to residents in unconnected inhabited villages.
- ✎ Approved an ordinance to set up country's first national sports university in Imphal (Manipur), on lines of National Sports University Bill 2017 which is pending in Parliament. Proposed university is expected to bridge gap that exists in sports environment of country in various areas such as sports science, sports technology, high performance training.
- ✎ Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs Approvals (CCEA) -
 - ✎ Approved restructuring of balance sheet of Scooters India Limited Lucknow, by reducing equity of INR 85.21 crores in share capital of SIL held by Government, amid consistent accumulation of losses.
 - ✎ Approved amending Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016 (IBC), giving relief to homebuyers who invested in housing projects of real estate companies that have gone bankrupt -
 - ✎ Committee of creditors voting rights of resolution plans will be limited to 66 % from earlier threshold of 75 %, to speed up the resolution process.
 - ✎ Withdrawal of insolvency application will be allowed, if 90 % of creditors agree.
 - ✎ Promoters of companies with turnover of up to Rs 250 crore will be allowed to bid. Earlier, they were barred from bidding as government feared that they will walk away with stressed assets at a discount.
 - ✎ Waiving Penal Interest on Government Loans to -
 - ✎ Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT) - 250.89 crores of Penal Interest to be waived, although VPT will pay outstanding Principal of INR 44.69 crores. Visakhapatnam Port Trust (VPT) availed INR 110.41 crore of loan during 1970-71 to 1984-85. VPT could not pay interest during 1979-80 to 1989-90 due to revenue losses, accumulating huge amount of Penal Interest.
 - ✎ Paradip Port Trust (PPT) - 1076.59 crores of Penal Interest to be waived, although PPT will pay outstanding Principal of INR 387.74 crores. Paradip Port Trust (PPT) availed INR 642.69 crore of loan during 1967 to 2002. PPT could not pay start repayment on time due to revenue losses, accumulating huge amount of Penal Interest.

94. ▶ Cabinet Approvals -

- ✎ MoU with Cuba and Italy for cooperation in field of Health and Medicine.
- ✎ Establishing India's First National Rail and Transportation University at Vadodara , to skill its human resources and build capability.
- ✎ New skill development scheme named *Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector (SCBTS)*, covering entire value chain of the textile sector excluding Spinning & Weaving in organized Sector. It has outlay of INR 1300 crores from 2017-18 to 2019-20. It aims to provide demand driven, placement oriented skilling programme to incentivize the efforts of industry in creating jobs in organized textile and related sectors.
- ✎ MoU with Myanmar for developing Myanmar's Rakhine state. India will take up building prefabricated housing in Rakhine State, to meet immediate needs of returning people. India has pledged \$25 Million for this purpose.
- ✎ Railways Ministry planned to make all stations 100% LED lit by March 2018.
- ✎ Extension of term of Commission to examine issue of sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) by 12 weeks (upto 2 April, 2018). Commission is headed by G. Rohini.
- ✎ Auction of 683 private FM radio frequencies in 236 cities across country under Phase III of FM radio privatization. It aims at expanding FM reach in remote cities and generate over 10,000 jobs.

95. ▶ Cabinet Approvals -

- ✎ MOU with Iran in field of Traditional Systems of Medicine, agriculture and allied sectors.
- ✎ Agreement with Iran for Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on income.
- ✎ MoU with Sri Lanka for promoting cooperation in field of Information Technology and Electronics.
- ✎ Approved *Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts (Amendment) Bill 2018* for introduction in Parliament.
 - ✎ It brings down specified value of a commercial dispute to 3 Lakhs from the current 1 Crore. Hence, commercial disputes of a reasonable value can be decided by commercial courts. It reduce time taken (presently 1445 days) to resolve commercial disputes of lesser value and will improve India's ranking in the Ease of Doing Business.

- ✍ It provides for establishment of Commercial Courts at district Judge level for territories over which respective High Courts have ordinary original civil jurisdiction i.e. in Chennai, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and State of Himachal Pradesh.
- ✍ Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved continuing Urea Subsidy Scheme upto 2019-20 at a total estimated cost of 164935 crores and for disbursement of fertilizer subsidy.

96. ▶ Cabinet Approvals -

- ✍ MOUS / Agreements -
 - ✍ Approved signing of Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement between India and France. It represents major milestone in enhancing people-to-people contacts, fostering mobility of students, academics, researchers and skilled professionals and strengthening cooperation on issues related to irregular migration and human trafficking between two sides.
 - ✍ MoU with Hellenic on Cooperation in Renewable Energy.
 - ✍ MoU between India's Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) and Public Service Commission of Mauritius, for sharing expertise of both parties in area of recruitment.
 - ✍ Agreement with France to prevent illicit consumption and reduction of illicit traffic in Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Chemical Precursors and related offences.
- ✍ Introduction of Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill 2018 in Parliament -
 - ✍ It aims to encourage institutional arbitration for settlement of disputes and make India a centre of robust Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanism. It will amend Act of 1996 and will improve institutional arbitration by Creation of an independent body *Arbitration Council of India (ACI)* which will grade arbitral institution and accredit arbitrators by laying down norms and take steps to promote arbitration, conciliation, mediation and other ADR Mechanism.
- ✍ Release additional instalment of Dearness Allowance (DA) to Central Government employees and Dearness Relief (DR) to pensioners wef 01-01-2018, representing increase of 2% over existing rate of 5% of Basic Pay/Pension, for a period of 14 months from January 2018 to February 2019).
- ✍ Recommendations of Inter-Ministerial Group on Stressed Assets in Telecom Sector, Including -
 - ✍ Restructuring deferred payment liabilities of spectrum auction of telecom service providers and revising limit of the cap for spectrum holding for telecom service providers. It gives one-time opportunity to opt for higher number of instalment (max. 16 instalment) apart from currently permitted 10 instalments.
 - ✍ Revision of limits of cap for spectrum holding Based upon the recommendations of TRAI and Telecom Commission, from current limit of 25% to 35%.
- ✍ Shifting Headquarters of Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) from Chennai (Tamilnadu) to Ballabgarh (Haryana).
- ✍ CCEA approved INR 1151 crores Central Sector Scheme for in-situ management of crop residue in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. It will promote agricultural mechanization for upto 2020 to provide cost-effective solution to farmers to deal with stubble burning.

97. ▶ Cabinet Approvals -

- ✍ Cooperation Agreement with Morocco to develop long-term cooperation in railways.
- ✍ Agreement with Israel on Film Co-production.
- ✍ Cabinet approved Introducing 2 new Bills in Parliament, aimed at protecting savings of investors -
 - ✍ Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill 2018 - It aims to tackle menace of illicit deposit taking activities.
 - ✍ Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill 2018 - It aims at facilitating orderly growth of Chit Funds sector and remove bottlenecks being faced by Chit Funds industry. Amendments Proposed in Chit Funds Act 1982 Include Increasing ceiling of foreman's commission from a maximum of 5% to 7%, as rate has remained static since commencement of Act.
- ✍ CCEA approved construction of 4.531 km long 2-Lane Bi-Directional *Silkyara Bend - Barkot Tunnel* along NH-134 (old NH-94) in Uttarakhand, under Chardham Plan. It will be built over 4 years, at cost approx INR 1383 crores. Tunnel will provide all weather connectivity to Yamunotri (one of Chardhams).
- ✍ CCEA approved methodology for auction of coal blocks for sale of coal to private sector under Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act 2015 and Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957. It will open coal sector to commercial mining by private sector, ending 41 year old monopoly of Coal India Ltd (CIL). It will allow power cement and steel producers to source coal more efficiently.
 - ✍ SC in September 2014 cancelled 204 coal mines and blocks allocated to various Companies since 1993 under Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act 1973. After this, Parliament enacted Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act 2015 to bring transparency in allocation of coal mines by way of auction and allotment for the sale of coal.

- ✎ Approved setting up of tribunal for adjudication of long-pending dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over Mahanadi river waters. Tribunal was constituted under Inter-State River Disputes (ISRWD) Act 1956 on request of Odisha and is in line with SC's January 2018 order.
- ✎ Approved Setting up crèche facility in Parliament House premises, to establish inclusive and supportive work environment for women employees, in line with Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017. Creche Facility is *a nursery where babies and young children are cared for during the working day.*

98. ▶ Cabinet Approvals Mar 1, 2018 -

- ✎ Approved proposal for establishment of National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA), as an independent regulator for auditing profession which is one of key changes brought in by Companies Act 2013. It is expected to improve investments, globalisation of business by meeting international practices, and assist in development of audit profession. NFRA will be 15 members body, consisting of Chairperson, three full-time Members and one Secretary.
- ✎ Approved Introducing *Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill 2018* in Parliament, to lay down measures to deter economic offenders from evading process of Indian law by remaining outside jurisdiction of Indian courts. Cases with offences valued Over 100 crores will come under purview of this Bill.
 - ✎ It is expected to re-establish rule of law with respect to the fugitive economic offenders as they would be forced to return to India to face trial for scheduled offences.

99. ▶ Cabinet Approvals on 04-01-2018,

- ✎ Establishment of new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Bilaspur (Himachal Pradesh) under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).

✎ CCEA Approvals -

- ✎ Construction of 2-lane bi-directional Zojila Tunnel on Srinagar-Leh section connecting NH-1A in Jammu and Kashmir, to provide all-weather connectivity to Leh region. It will be Asia's largest 2-lane bi-directional tunnel (14.150 km long).
- ✎ Implementation of Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) for capacity augmentation of navigation on 1,380-km Haldia-Varanasi stretch of National Waterway-1 (NW1) on Ganga River, at cost of INR 5,370 crores. It will enable commercial navigation of at least 1500 tonne vessels on the Ganga river.
- ✎ Mandatory packaging of foodgrains and sugar in jute material for Jute Year 2017-18 (1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018). It aims at sustaining core demand for jute sector and supporting livelihood of workers and farmers dependent on Jute sector.
- ✎ Amendments in Model Concession Agreement (MCA) to make Port Projects more investor-friendly and make investments more attractive in Port Sector. It calls for setting up Society for Affordable Redressal of Disputes - Ports (SAROD-PORTS) as dispute resolution mechanism, similar to provision available in Highway Sector.

✎ MOUs Approved -

- ✎ With London's transportation authority *Transport for London* to improve public transport in India.
- ✎ With Italy for co-operation in Renewable Energy.
- ✎ With Israel for co-operation in Oil and Gas Sector.
- ✎ With Belgium for co-operation in ICT&E.
- ✎ With Myanmar on Land Border Crossing, as an enabling arrangement for movement of people across border of both countries.
- ✎ Will sign MOU with Sri Lanka for cooperation in traditional systems of medicine and homoeopathy.

100. ▶ Cabinet Approvals on 10-01-2018 -

✎ FDI Policy Changes -

- ✎ 100% FDI under automatic route for Single Brand Retail Trading
- ✎ 100% FDI under automatic route in Construction Development
- ✎ Foreign airlines allowed investing up to 49% under approval route in Air India
- ✎ FIIs/FPIs allowed investing in Power Exchanges through primary market

✎ CCEA Approvals-

- ✎ Fixed term of 3 years for Chairperson and Members of National Trust for the Welfare of Person with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities.
- ✎ Continuation of Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLADS) till term of 14th Finance Commission (31-03-2020). It will entail total allocation of INR 11850 crores over 3 years, with additional annual allocation of 5 crore for monitoring through independent agency(ies) and for capacity building/training to State/District officials.

✎ MOUs -

- ✎ With Canada for cooperation in Science & Technology.

101. ▶ Cabinet Approvals on Apr 04, 2018

MOUs -

- With Afghanistan for cooperation in field of food safety and related areas.
- With Iran on establishment of an expert group on trade remedy measures.
- With Canada to foster cross-border partnerships focused on research excellence and industry-academic collaboration.
- With UAE for Technical Co-operation in Railway Sector.

CCEA (Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs) -

- Approved closure of Burn Standard Company Ltd (BSCL) - a Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) under Ministry of Railways. It has been decided after continued poor physical and financial performance of company for over 10 years.
 - Government will provide one-time grant of INR 417.10 crores for clearing liabilities of company. 508 employees of BSCL will benefit from Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS). BSCL was incorporated in 1976 following nationalization and amalgamation of Burn and Company and Indian Standard Wagon Company Limited in 1987 under Department of Heavy Industries (DHI). It and was declared sick in the year 1995.
- Approved Revised Cost Estimates (RCE) of scheme of Updation of National Register of Citizens (NRC) 1951 in Assam at a cost of Rs. 1220 crores upto 31-12-2018. Scheme of NRC, 1951 is specific to state of Assam covering about 3.29 crore applicants.

Other Approvals -

- Approved rightsizing Competition Commission of India (CCI) from One Chairperson and Six Members (totalling seven) to One Chairperson and Three Members (totalling four), by not filling the existing vacancies of two Members and one more additional vacancy, expected in September 2018. It is being done in line with Government's objective of *Minimum Government - Maximum Governance*.

102. ▶ Cabinet Approvals on Feb 7, 2018 -

- MoU with Tunisia for cooperation on Youth matters.
- Protocol amending Agreement between with China for Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion.
- MOU with USA on Law Enforcement Training.
- MoU with UK on Cooperation in Skill Development, Vocational Education and Training.
- MoU for Secondment Programme with Australia.
- Ratification of Minamata Convention on Mercury, enabling India to become a Party of Convention. It gives flexibility for continued use of mercury-based products and processes involving mercury compound up to 2025. Minamata Convention was signed in October 2013 in Kumamoto (Japan), aimed to protect human health and environment from anthropogenic emissions and releases of mercury and mercury compounds.
- Government approved 2nd round of Discovered Small Field (DSF) auctions under Discovered Small Field Policy, to offer total 60 unmonetized discoveries with an estimated 194.65 Million Metric tonnes of oil.
 - Of these, 22 fields belong to Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC), 5 to Oil India Limited (OIL), 12 are relinquished discovered fields from New Exploration and Licensing Policy (NELP) blocks, and 21 fields that did not receive any investor interest in first round of DSF.
- Amendment to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act 2006 for classifying MSMEs from current *investment in plant and machinery* criteria to *annual turnover* criteria. It aims at encouraging ease of doing business, make MSME classification norms growth oriented and align them to new indirect tax regime revolving around Goods & Services Tax (GST). The amendment also empowers Central Government to vary turnover limits. New Classification Criteria -
 - Micro - It will be unit with annual turnover under INR 5 crores.
 - Small - It will be unit with annual turnover Between 5 - 75 crores.
 - Medium - It will be unit with annual turnover Between 75 - 250 crores.

103. ▶ Cabinet Approvals on Mar 21, 2018 -

- Approved launch of new Centrally Sponsored *Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM)*. Scheme has benefit cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year and will target over 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on SECC database. AB-NHPM will subsume on-going -Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS).
- Approved second and final extension of term of Commission constituted to examine issue of Sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes in Central List for upto June 2018. It was constituted under article 340 of Constitution in October 2017 and is headed by Justice (Retd.) G. Rohini.

- ✎ Approved formation of 100% owned C Corporation of Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd.(TCIL) in USA in the state of Texas. Its initial capital will be 5 Million USD.
- ✎ Approved closure of India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI) to enhance synergies in channelizing Diaspora's contributions to India's flagship programmes such as National Mission for clean Ganga and Swachh Bharat Mission.
 - ✎ IDF-OI was set in 2008 as an autonomous not-for-profit Trust, to facilitate Overseas Indian donate into social projects in India. As Foundation received only 36.80 Lakhs between December 2008 and March 2015 as donation from Indian community, it was reviewed in 2015.
 - ✎ After Review and adding Flagship programmes like National Mission for Clean Ganga and Swachh Bharat Mission etc. into mandate of IDF-OI, It received INR 10.16 crores in 3 years.
 - ✎ Now, to enhance synergies and improve efficiency, it was decided that Trust would be closed down by March 31, 2018.
- ✎ Approved North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS) 2017 with outlay of 3000 crores upto March, 2020. NEIDS is a combination of incentives covered under the earlier two schemes with a much larger outlay. Overall cap for benefits under all components of incentives will be of INR 200 crores per unit.
- ✎ Foreign Affairs -
 - ✎ Revision of the Agreement with Qatar for avoidance of double taxation and for the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income.
 - ✎ MoU with Guyana on cooperation in Renewable Energy.
 - ✎ Approved opening 18 new Indian Missions in Africa by 2021. It will increase number of Resident Indian Missions in Africa from 29 to 47.
- ✎ Approved inclusion of the communities namely *Parivara* and *Talawara* as synonym of *Nayaka*, in list of STs of Karnataka.
- ✎ Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approvals -
 - ✎ *Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry* for 2017-18 to 2019-20, with allocation of INR 2161.68 Crores. It will be implemented by the Ministry through Central Silk Board (CSB). It will focus on multidimensional development of Sericulture sector.
 - ✎ Continuation of Centrally Sponsored Scheme *Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)* from 1-04-2017 to 31-03-2020. It seeks to increase the Gross Enrolment Ratio of the country to 30% by 2020. Funds allocated for concerned period are 9604 Crores.
 - ✎ Funding ratio - Central and State Governments ratio of 90:10 for North-Eastern States, J&K, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, 60:40 for other States and UTs with Legislature and 100:0 for UTs without Legislature.

104. ▶ Cabinet Approvals -

- ✎ National -
 - ✎ Creation of one circle office of Commissioner of Metro Railway Safety (CMRS) for carrying out functions of Commission of Metro Railway Safety.
- ✎ Economy -
 - ✎ Merchant Discount Rate (MDR) applicable on all debit card/BHIM UPI/ Aadhaar enabled Payment System (AePS) transactions upto and including a value of 2000 will be borne by Government for 2 years starting 1st January 2018, by reimbursing it to banks.
 - ✎ Continuation of *Non Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR)* scheme with funding pattern of 90:10 till March 2020 with outlay of 5300 crores. It would enable completion of ongoing projects.
 - ✎ New Central Scheme *North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS)* also approved from 2017-18 with 100% funding from Central Government to fill up gaps in creation of infrastructure in specified sectors till March 2020. NESIDS will strengthen health care, education facilities, tourism and employment opportunities in region.
 - ✎ Approved special package for employment generation in leather and footwear sector, involving implementation of Central Scheme *Indian Footwear, Leather & Accessories Development Programme* with expenditure of INR 2600 Crores from 2017-18 to 2019-20.
 - ✎ Continuation of Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Ayush Mission (NAM) from 01-04-2017 to 31-03-2020 with outlay of 2400 crores over 3 year period.
 - ✎ Second Financial Restructuring of Konkan Railway Corporation Limited (KRCL) - Conversion of Non-Cumulative Redeemable Preference Shares (RPS) amounting INR 4079 crores held by President of India, into Compulsorily Convertible Non-Cumulative Preference Shares (CCPS). It will raise net worth of KRCL.

- ✎ Capital Investment Subsidy of Rs.264.67 crore to four industrial units located in North Eastern Region (NER) including Sikkim, under Central Capital Investment Subsidy Scheme (CCISS) 2007 of North East Industrial Investment and Promotion Policy (NEIIPP).
- ✎ Foreign -
 - ✎ MOU with Colombia in field of agriculture and fisheries.
 - ✎ Agreement with UNESCO on establishment of International Training Centre for Operational Oceanography in Hyderabad.
- 105. ▶ Cabinet has Introducing Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill 2018 in Parliament, to address issue of human trafficking.
 - ✎ Deals with confidentiality of victims and witnesses and complainants.
 - ✎ Time bound trial and repatriation of the victims, within 1 year from taking into cognizance.
 - ✎ Creates Rehabilitation Fund for the first time, to be used for well-being of victim including education, skill development, health care and psychological support, legal aid, accommodation etc.
 - ✎ Creates dedicated institutional mechanisms at District, State and Central level.
 - ✎ Punishment prescribed under it ranges from rigorous minimum 10 years to life and fine not less than Rs. 1 lakh.
- 106. ▶ Central Government approved establishment of Indian Institute of Information Technology (IIIT) at Raichur (Karnataka), as 2nd IIIT in Karnataka after one in Dharwad.
- 107. ▶ Central Government approved state Logo designed by West Bengal Government, highlighting the “Biswa Bangla” theme with Ashoka Pillars.
- 108. ▶ Central Government disapproved execution Karnataka Government's *Mukhya Mantri Anila Bhagya Yojane* that promises free LPG gas connections for Below Poverty Line families.
 - ✎ Central Govt wants State Govt to execute it through oil marketing companies (OMCs), unlikely current practice of directly going through the distributors' network.
- 109. ▶ Central Government sanctioned INR 75 crore for setting up Meghalaya's First Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) bottling plant, with annual capacity of 13000 metric tonnes.
- 110. ▶ Central Government sanctioned a special package to strengthen security in 3 eastern districts of Arunachal Pradesh - Tirap, Changlang and Longding.
- 111. ▶ Central Government started a Pilot Scheme for Procurement of Aggregate Power of 2500 MW on competitive basis for 3 years from generators with commissioned projects but without Power Purchase Agreement. It will revive power demand, which has affected generators who do not have Power Purchase Agreements. Maximum allotment to a single entity has been capped at 600 MW.
- 112. ▶ Central Government will set up 562 more Ekalavya Model Residential School (EMRS) in tribal areas, aimed at providing best quality education to tribal children in their own environment. Currently, 190 EMRSs are operational, with approx 56000 tribal students enrolled.
- 113. ▶ Chandigarh Administration launched smart city cards, in collaboration with Bank of India. It can be used to make payments for various government utilities and at retail merchants, fuel stations. It will also be a valid ID Proof.
- 114. ▶ Chennai based Geographical Indication Registry and Intellectual Property India awarded Geographical Indication (GI) Tag to Madhya Pradesh's Kadaknath chicken. It will ensure that no one else can use name Kadaknath Chicken while selling any other black chicken.
 - ✎ Kadaknath chicken breed is unique for its black colour due to its black-feathers. This breed of chicken is popular for its adaptability and flavourful good-tasting black meat, which is believed to have medicinal properties. It is native tribal districts of Jhabua, Alirajpur and parts of Dhar in Madhya Pradesh.
 - ✎ Kadaknath chicken contains 25-27% of protein in comparison with other breeds of chickens that contain 18% protein. It is also known for its high iron content.
- 115. ▶ Chennai based Geographical Indication Registry has awarded Geographical Indication (GI) Tag to two more craft forms from Telangana - Adilabad dokra and Warangal Dhurries.
 - ✎ Adilabad Dokra is an ancient bell metal craft and Warangal Dhurries is a popular traditional cotton rug. Adilabad Dokra It is form of ancient bell metal craft practiced by Woj community native to Adilabad district.
 - ✎ Warangal Dhurries is a popular traditional cotton rug in which weavers create beautiful patterns and dye them using vegetable colours, which are washed in flowing water after printing process. Currently, there are more than 2000 weaving community members present in Kothawada, Warangal in spinning Dhurrie.
- 116. ▶ Chhatrapati Shivaji International airport (Mumbai) created new world record for single-runway operations by handling 980 arrivals and take-offs in 24 hours. It has thus become world's busiest single-runway airport.
- 117. ▶ Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh launched Vikas Yatra from Dantewada district aimed at spreading awareness about the development the state has witnessed during current Govt's tenure. It will include distributing free pesticides to 5.5 lakh labourers and giving smartphones to

50 lakh families under Sanchar Kranti Yojna.

118. ▶ Chhattisgarh Government will start distributing free smartphones to over 50 lakh people across state under Sanchar Kranti Yojana (SKY), In a bid to reduce the digital divide. This will give phone connectivity to 13900 villages of Chhattisgarh.
119. ▶ Chhattisgarh High Court asked all trial courts in state to obtain Aadhaar Cards of accused persons and sureties before issuing release warrant of a prisoner/accused, to curb rampant practice of obtaining bail on the basis of forged revenue papers or by impersonating real surety.
120. ▶ Chhattisgarh will become first state to recruit transgenders in police force, To promote gender equality.
121. ▶ Chhattisgarh will soon get specialised anti-Naxal combat force called Black Panther, like Greyhounds unit of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. It Raised in 1989, Greyhounds is elite commando force force that specialises in anti-insurgency operations against Naxals and Maoists.
122. ▶ Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology adopted word '*AYUSH*' in Hindi and English languages for scientific and technical purposes. AYUSH is acronym for five traditional systems of medicine - *Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy*.
123. ▶ Committee of Governors submitted report titled *Rajyapal – Vikas Ke Rajdoot: Catalytic Role of Governors as Agents for Change in Society* to President Ram Nath Kovind. Committee of Governors was Formed in October 2017 during 48th Conference of Governors in New Delhi.
124. ▶ Committee set up for technical and safety standards of India's first pod taxi project or Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) invited fresh bids for strictest safety standards on lines of those prescribed in USA. It is meant for a 12.3-km stretch from Delhi-Haryana border on NH 8.
 - ▶ PRT or pod taxi is an advanced public transport using automated electric pod cars to provide taxi-like demand responsive feeder and shuttle services for small groups of travellers.
125. ▶ Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) signed MoU with Regional Centre for Science and Technology Transfer (RCSTT) of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) for designating Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants, Lucknow (CSIR-CIMAP) as Coordinating Centre on Medicinal Plants.
126. ▶ Council of Scientific and Industrial Research -National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL) and Department of Telecommunications (DoT) under Ministry of Communications signed an MOU on technical knowledge sharing for establishing a nationwide Time Stamping & Time Synchronization network and traceability of Time signal to UTC NPL Time.
 - ▶ Nationwide, Time Stamping & Time Synchronization network consisting of 22 numbers of Time Synchronization Centers (TSC's) will be set up by DoT with technical assistance from CSIR-NPL. This network will provide synchronizing pulse in Indian Standard Time(IST) to all Telecom & Internet Service providers in all the 22 LSA (Licensed Service Areas) in the country.
 - ▶ Purpose of synchronizing the telecom network with IST time stamp is to enable security agencies to overcome difficulty in analyzing cyber events in this era of greatly increasing network speed with advancement of telecom technology. It will also improve telecom network efficiency by reducing packet loss due to reduced slips in better synchronized digital network.
127. ▶ Dalmia Bharat Group adopted Gandikota Fort in Andhra Pradesh and Red Fort in Delhi, under government's 'Adopt A Heritage' scheme, for a period of five years.
128. ▶ Delhi Government launched a mobile application through which Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, Other Backward Classes, minorities, and handicapped persons can apply for employment loans. Action will be taken against officers who fail to take action on loan requests in stipulated time.
129. ▶ Delhi Govt. launched a common card for rides on public buses and metro, becoming first Indian city to have such common mobility card.
130. ▶ Delhi government and Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) launched *Clean Air Campaign*, to focus on improvement of air quality, with 70 teams formed as a part of the campaign.
131. ▶ Delhi government launched *Mission Buniyaad* for improving learning skills of children studying in state and municipal-run schools. It will run from April to June for Class 3 to 5 in MCD schools and for Class 6 to 8 in government's schools. Children will undergo a reading level assessment based on which they will be enrolled in specialised *Mission Buniyaad* classes.
132. ▶ Delhi government will establish State Sanskrit Education Council to improve formal education of Sanskrit in Delhi.
133. ▶ Delhi government will launch accident victim policy which will cover all hospital expenses of victims of road accidents, acid attacks or burns. There is no upper limit on the cost of treatment and all victims irrespective of residence, and even foreigners will get free treatment in any Delhi hospital, if accident happens in Delhi.
134. ▶ Delhi government will set up *Rogi Kalyan Samitis* in each Assembly constituency and *Jan Swasthaya Samitis* in state-run dispensaries, poly clinics and mohalla clinics, to provide support to health institutions. Each such entity will receive INR 3 lakh as grand-in aid every year.
135. ▶ Delhi-NCR region began supplying ultra-clean Bharat Stage VI grade fuel (both petrol and diesel), to combat the rising levels of air pollution. Delhi became first city in country to switch from BS-IV grade fuels to BS-VI.

136. ▶ Department of Agriculture released 3rd Advance Estimates of production of major crops for 2017-18. At 279.51 million tonnes, Record Foodgrains generation is expected in 2017-18.
137. ▶ Department of Biotechnology constituted Field Inspection and Scientific Evaluation Committee (FISEC) to investigate matter of illegal cultivation of Herbicide Tolerant (HT) or BG-III cotton in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Maharashtra, after several complaints regarding illegal cultivation of HT cotton.
- ▶ Cultivation of HT cotton (BG-III) is not approved by country's biotech regulator, Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of Ministry of Environment. HT Cotton (Herbicide-Tolerant (HT) Cotton / BG-III cotton) takes care of weeds problem at much lower cost as compared to physical labour required for weeding. It contains Round-up Ready and Round-up Flex (RRF) gene.
 - ▶ The herbicide-resistant gene in HT cotton can spread through pollen into biodiversity system leading to transformation of weeds into super weeds on large-scale. It will threaten growth and yields of all crops in future and also increase cultivation costs and lead to health hazards.
138. ▶ Department of Economic Affairs (Finance Ministry) signed loan agreement worth US \$ 375 million with World bank for Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP), JMVP for capacity augmentation of navigation on National Waterway-1(River Ganga) from Varanasi to Haldia.
- ▶ Total project cost is \$800 Million and is expected to be completed by March 2023. It will enable commercial navigation of vessels of capacity 1500-2,000 tons on NW-I and will lead to generation of upto 84000 jobs in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal.
139. ▶ Department of Heavy Industries (*Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises*) allowed Karnataka government to purchase electric vehicles (EVs) under FAME India scheme, at maximum of 60% subsidy.
- ▶ Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles (FAME) India was launched in 2015 under National Electric Mobility Mission (NEMM) aims at promoting eco-friendly vehicles in the country.
140. ▶ Department of Industrial and Management Engineering of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur has set up India's first Centre for Energy Regulation (CER) with help of United Kingdom Govt. It aims at providing independent advisory on matters related to power and energy sector.
- ▶ IIT-Kanpur also signed a 15-crore MoU with VTOL Aviation India to develop vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) craft prototypes, potentially to be used as flying taxis.
141. ▶ Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) provided quota to people with autism, mental illnesses, intellectual disability and victims of acid attacks in Central government jobs. In direct recruitment, 4% of vacancies (up from existing 3%) in groups A, B and C will be reserved for people with over 40% specified disability.
142. ▶ Department of Posts launched DIGITAL ADVANCEMENT OF RURAL POST OFFICE FOR A NEW INDIA (DARPAN) Project, aiming to connect all 1.29 lakh Rural Branch Post Offices, to enable them to do online Postal and Financial Transactions. Project cost is INR 1300 crores.
143. ▶ Department of Telecom (DoT) and IIT Chennai, will jointly set up a development centre for 5G technologies. It will help provide applications like Internet of Things and Machine-to-Machine internet. A similar tie up had already been made between Ericsson and IIT Delhi.
144. ▶ Department of Telecommunications (DoT) released draft of new Telecom policy – *National Digital Communications Policy 2018*.
- ▶ It Calls for Universal broadband coverage, creating 40 lakh jobs in digital communications sector, enhancing contribution of digital communications sector to 8% of India's GDP from 6% in 2017. These objectives are to be achieved by 2022. It also aims to hike India's rank in ITU's ICT development index to top 50, from 134 in 2017.
 - ▶ Improvement in regulatory framework - The policy recognises its importance for attracting investments and ensuring fair competition, to serve needs of people.
 - ▶ Rationalising spectrum regulatory regime - It recognises spectrum as key natural resource for public benefit to achieve socio-economic goals. It calls for simplifying process of obtaining permissions from various agencies, to promote efficiency.
 - ▶ National Broadband Mission - It will be established to secure universal broadband access for implementation of broadband initiatives, to be funded through Universal Services Obligation Fund (USOF) and Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). Its components include- BharatNet (10 to 10 Gbps to Gram Panchayats), GramNet (connecting key rural areas with 10 to 100 Mbps), NagarNet (establish one- million public Wi-Fi Hotspots in urban areas), JanWiFi (establishing two-million Wi-Fi Hotspots in rural areas) and Fibre First Initiative.
 - ▶ Satellite Communication Technologies - Government would develop an ecosystem for satellite communications in India.
 - ▶ USOF's scope and modalities will be reviewed by redesigning USOF and broadening its objectives to enable universal broadband access and strengthening institutional capacity.
 - ▶ Better Quality of services.

- ▶ Comprehensive data protection regime has been mandated for digital communications that safeguards the privacy, autonomy and choice of individuals.
- 145. ▶ Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) allowed Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) manufactured *Dornier 228* for civilian flights, the 19-seater aircraft that was till now used only by defence forces. It became first 'Made in India' plane to be used for commercial flights.
- 146. ▶ Diu Smart City become first city in India to run 100% on renewable energy during daytime setting a new benchmark for other cities to become clean and green. Diu had been importing 73% of its power from Gujarat until last year.
- 147. ▶ Diu become only Union Territory to be fully run on solar energy. It generates 13 megawatts (MW) of electricity from solar power generating facilities daily. 3 MW is generated by rooftop solar plants and 10 MW by its other solar power plants.
- 148. ▶ Election Commission of India will aunch mobile application called *Model Code of Conduct Violation Reporting App*, ahead of 2019 Lok Sabha polls, to empower people to share evidence of malpractices directly with ECI. It will allow instant sharing of photos, audio and video clips related to electoral malpractices.
- 149. ▶ Environment Minister Harshvardhan launched *Mihir*, a 2.8 PetaFlops capacity high-performance computer system in Noida (UP). It will help Meteorological department to predict climate based calamities and issue warnings for fishermen.
- 150. ▶ Environment Ministry accorded environmental clearance for Kaleshwaram Irrigation Project in Telangana.
 - ▶ Project is estimated to cost Approx INR 80499 crores and is proposed to be completed in three years.
 - ▶ Project aims to provide drinking water facility for Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Submergence area is estimated to be about 13706 hectares.
- 151. ▶ Environment Ministry notified Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules 2018, validating phasing out of Multilayered Plastic (MLP). MLP is non-recyclable, non-energy recoverable and has no alternate use. Other recommendations -
 - ▶ Central registration system for registration of producer, importer or brand owner is to be created by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
 - ▶ Producers with presence in over 2 states need to apply for national registry CPCB, while small producers require a state-level registration with State Pollution Control Board.
 - ▶ Rule 15 has been removed, that stated explicit pricing of carry bags.
- 152. ▶ Expert committee headed by HN Nagamohan Das, constituted by Karnataka Government to examine demand for a separate religion tag for Lingayats, has recommended *Religious Minority* status for Lingayat community. It concluded that there is enough evidence to show that Lingayat religion is different from Hindu religion.
- 153. ▶ External Affairs Ministry announced that Passports will no longer serve as a valid proof of address as Its last page will not printed from now onwards, that includes Names of father / guardian, and address.
 - ▶ Additionally, Passport holders with ECR (Emigration Check Required) status would be issued a passport with orange passport jacket and those with non-ECR status would continue to get a blue passport. As per Govt., This is meant to identify less educated (under 10th) labourers and prevent them from exploitation abroad.
 - ▶ Note that Indian passports have a blue cover, diplomatic and official passports have white and red jackets, respectively. Applicants who haven't cleared 10th standard are given a passport with ECR category (now with orange jackets).
- 154. ▶ FMCG Firm Patanjali tied up Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) to launch Swadeshi Samridhi SIM cards.
 - ▶ It can be recharged for INR 144, for which users will get unlimited calls throughout country, 2 GB data and 100 SMS daily.
 - ▶ After Roll Out, customers will get 10% discount on Patanjali products. SIM card also comes with medical insurance and life insurance covers. Medical insurance cover is for Rs 2.5 lakh, while life insurance costs Rs 5 lakh (in event of road accident).
 - ▶ Patanjali also launched a new swadeshi messaging application called 'Kimbho' to compete with WhatsApp, with tagline *Ab Bharat Bolega*.
- 155. ▶ FMCG major ITC tied up with NITI Aayog to train 2 lakh farmers to increase their income and raise productivity of major crops in 25 *aspirational districts* across 7 states by 2022. These districts are from *Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh*.
- 156. ▶ FY 2017 - 18 Winter Session passed Bills -
 - ▶ Lok Sabha Passed Central Road Fund (Amendment) Bill 2017, that seeks to amend Central Road Fund Act 2000.
 - ▶ Under CRF Act 2000, cess levied and collected on high speed petrol and diesel is distributed for development of rural roads, national highways, railways, state roads and border area roads.
 - ▶ CRF (Amendment) Bill 2017 seeks to allocate 2.5 % of funds collected to accelerate development and maintenance of national waterways by reducing equal percentage from share of national highways. It aims at generating INR 2300 crore revenue for national waterways.

- ✎ Parliament passed Companies (Amendment) Bill 2017 to strengthen corporate governance standards, initiate strict action against defaulting companies and help improve ease of doing business. Bill provides for over 40 amendments to Companies Act 2013.
- ✎ Indian Institutes of Management (IIM) Bill 2017, to declare IIMs as institutions of national importance and extend greater autonomy to them, by restricting government's role in their functioning.
- ✎ Lok Sabha passed Requisitioning and Acquisition of Immovable Property (Amendment) Bill 2017, to make it easier for government to acquire immovable property for "national security and defence purpose". It amends Requisitioning and Acquisition of Immovable Property Act 1952 and changes rules for payment of compensation.
- ✎ Rajya Sabha passed *Indian Institute of Petroleum and Energy (IIPE) Bill 2017*, to establish IIPE Vishakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) as an institution of national importance. It aims to provide high quality education and research focussing on all aspects and themes of petroleum, hydrocarbons and energy. The bill was passed by Lok Sabha Earlier.
- ✎ Lok Sabha passed Goods and Services Tax (Compensation to States) Amendment Bill 2017, amending GST (Compensation to States) Act 2017 and replaces an Ordinance promulgated in Sep 2017. The amendment increases maximum rate at which Compensation Cess can be levied from 15 to 25% on motor vehicle for transport of not more than 13 persons (mostly luxury vehicles).
- ✎ Parliament passed National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second Amendment Bill 2017, to amend National Capital Territory of Delhi Laws (Special Provisions) Second Act 2011. It extends deadline for relocating slum dwellers and Jhuggi-Jhopri clusters, regulating street vendors, unauthorised colonies in Delhi and calls for creating policy for farm houses constructed beyond permissible limits.
- ✎ Lok Sabha passed Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriages) Bill 2017 declaring instant triple talaq illegal and criminalises it with up to three years in jail for husband. Bill will now will be sent to Rajya Sabha for passage.
- ✎ Lok Sabha passed Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill 2017 to pave way for tightening loopholes in existing code and to make resolution process more effective. It Bill amends Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) 2016. Main Features Include -
 - ✎ It Bill prohibits certain persons from submitting a resolution plan in case of defaults.
 - ✎ A penalty of minimum Rs 1 lakh and maximum Rs 2 crore has been proposed for contravening any of the provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
 - ✎ It allows asset reconstruction companies, banks and alternative investment funds registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India to bid for insolvent companies.

157. ▶ FY 2017 - 18 Winter Session passed Bills in Jan 2018 -

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 - ✎ It allows asset reconstruction companies, banks and alternative investment funds registered with the Securities and Exchange Board of India to bid for insolvent companies.
- ✎ Parliament passed National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Amendment) Bill 2017, with approval of Rajya Sabha (Lok Sabha already passed it in August 2017). It amends NABARD Act 1981 and -
 - ✎ Allows Government to increase capital of NABARD from Rs. 5000 crore to Rs 30,000 crore (even beyond if required, upon Consultation with RBI).
 - ✎ Government must hold at least 51% capital share of NABARD, and share capital held by RBI valued at 20 crores (.4%) will be transferred to Government.
 - ✎ Bill replaces terms 'small-scale industry' and 'industry in tiny and decentralised sector' with terms 'micro enterprise', 'small enterprise' and 'medium enterprise' as defined in MSME Development Act 2006.
- ✎ Lok Sabha passed Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (Amendment) Bill 2017 to allow government to take up infrastructure projects within prohibited areas around protected monuments. It amends Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act 1958.
- ✎ Lok Sabha passed High Court and Supreme Court Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Amendment Bill 2017 to hike salaries of judges of Supreme Court (SC) and High Courts (HCs), with effect from January 1, 2016.
 - ✎ It amends HC Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act 1954 and SC Judges (Salaries and Conditions of Service) Act 1958.
 - ✎ Hiked Monthly Salaries will be (INR) -

- ▶ Chief Justice of India (CJI) - 2.80 lakh
- ▶ Judges of Supreme Court and Chief Justices of High Courts - 2.5 lakh
- ▶ Judges of High Courts - 2.25 lakh

158. ▶ Facebook and Andhra Pradesh government signed MOU to take up innovative pilot projects in state.
159. ▶ Feb 12 - National Productivity Day. 2018 theme is *Industry 4.0 Leapfrog Opportunity for India*.
160. ▶ Finance Ministry approved to provide Assistance for completion of 8 Irrigation projects and 83 Surface Minor Irrigation (SMI) projects in Vidarbha, Marathwada and drought prone areas of Maharashtra, with Estimated cost INR 13651 Crores. These projects are expected to be completed by 2022-23.
161. ▶ First Indian Sign Language Dictionary of 3000 words launched by Thaawarchand Gehlot, developed by Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre (ISLR&TC). It aims to remove communications barriers between deaf and hearing communities as it is focused on providing more information in Indian sign language. It consists words of five categories Everyday Terms, Legal Terms, Academic Terms, Medical Terms and Technical Terms.
162. ▶ First International Children's Film Festival of Kerala s held in Thiruvananthapuram. Chairman of organising committee is Mukesh.
163. ▶ First Mega Food Park in Maharashtra (10th in India) has been opened as *Satara Mega Food Park Pvt. Ltd* at Village Degaon in Satara District. Aim is to boost food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage at each stage of supply chain with particular focus on perishables.
 - ▶ Mega Food Parks create modern infrastructure facilities for food processing along the value chain from farm to market with strong forward and backward linkages through a cluster based approach.
164. ▶ First all-women staff (41 females) railway station in India, Matunga on Central Railway (CR) in Mumbai, entered Limca Book of Records.
165. ▶ First draft of National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam containing names of 1.9 crore Indians in state has been released, updated after 1951.
166. ▶ First high speed electric locomotive of Indian Railways, will be launched in March 2018, capable of running at of a maximum speed of 120 kmph.
 - ▶ It will be launched during French President Emmanuel Macron's Indian visit. It has capacity of 12000 horsepower and is produced in collaboration with French Firm Alstom. It has been assembled at Madhepura plant in Bihar.
167. ▶ First phase of 2000 MW Capacity *Shakti Sthala* solar park inaugurated in drought-prone Pavagada region of Tumkur district (Karnataka), claimed to be world's largest solar park.
 - ▶ It is in line with Central Government's plans to enhance solar power capacity to 100 gigawatts (GW) by 2020.
 - ▶ First phase of this INR 16500 crores Project will generate 600MW power, while balance 1,400MW will be commissioned in 2nd phase by of 2018.
168. ▶ Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched *Project Dhoop* to address rising incidence of Vitamin D deficiencies (VDD). It aims to encourage schools to shift their morning assembly to around noon-time, to ensure maximum absorption of Vitamin D in students through natural sunlight.
169. ▶ Forbes India Celebrity 100 list 2017 -
 - ▶ Actor Salman Khan topped the list, With earnings of INR 233 crores.
 - ▶ Shah Rukh Khan 2nd with earnings of 170 crores, cricketer Virat Kohli 3rd with 100.72 crore earnings.
170. ▶ Former footballer Bhaichung Bhutia launched his political party named "Hamro Sikkim".
171. ▶ Foundation of Rhodendron Park laid in Tawang (Arunachal Pradesh). Tawang has 50 plus species of Rhodendron (*a genus of 1,024 species of woody plants*). More than 30 species of rhododendrons would be planted and conserved in park.
172. ▶ Four States and 1 UT (*Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand and Chandigarh (UT)*) signed first MoU with Government's National Health Mission, for implementing Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Mission (PMRSSM).
 - ▶ MOUs were signed during Ayushman Bharat Northern Region's first workshop on PMRSSM at Shimla (Himachal Pradesh).
 - ▶ Ayushman Bharat is Centrally Sponsored health insurance scheme of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW).
 - ▶ It will target over 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC) database.
 - ▶ It will provide Rs. 5 lakh insurance cover per family per year.
 - ▶ Under it, government will set up 1.5 lakh wellness centres across the country by 2022 that will leverage on comprehensive primary health care for preventive, promotive and curative care.
173. ▶ GAIL India placed orders for 2,100 km of Jagdishpur-Haldia & Bokaro-Dhamra Natural Gas Pipeline (JHBDPL) project.

- ▶ *Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga* project (also known as JHBDPL project) originates at Jagdishpur (Uttar Pradesh). The main trunk of pipeline ends to Haldia (West Bengal) and Dhamra (Odisha).
 - ▶ Pipeline passes through Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha. Cost of project is Rs. 12,940 crore and is to be completed by 2019.
174. ▶ GAIL commissioned India's second largest rooftop solar power plant in Uttar Pradesh, as a 5.76 MWp (Mega Watt peak) solar plant at GAIL's petrochemical complex at Pata in UP, covering area of 65,000 square meters.
- ▶ Largest rooftop solar plant in India was commissioned in December 2015 by Tata Power Solar in Amritsar (Punjab) with 12 MWp capacity.
175. ▶ GAIL will set up *coal to synthesis gas* conversion plants in Odisha, with Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) as technology partner.
- ▶ Synthesis gas is expected to be cheaper than domestic gas as its a mixture comprising of hydrogen, carbon monoxide and carbon dioxide.
176. ▶ GE Aviation (USA) and Tata Advanced Systems Ltd (TASL) partnered to manufacture, assemble, integrate and test aircraft components in India, including CFM International LEAP engine (considered world's leading jet engine).
177. ▶ Gandhi Nagar railway station in Jaipur (Rajasthan) became railway station to be fully-managed by women, with 40 women staff at station.
178. ▶ General Conferences (Apr 11-20, 2018) -
- ▶ India's Largest Defence Expedition DefExpo-18 Held in Thiruvandanthai, Chennai (Tamilnadu). Third India-Russia Military Industrial Conference was also held alongwith. Theme of expo was *India: The Emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub*. During DEFEXPO 18 -
 - ▶ Boeing India, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) and Mahindra Defence Systems entered into agreement to manufacture fighter aircraft F/A-18 Super Hornet in India.
 - ▶ Mahindra Defence Systems also signed agreement with ShinMaywa Industries of Japan to manufacture amphibious aircraft ShinMaywa US-2 in India. It is only 'in-service' open sea-capable amphibian aircraft with advanced equipment suitable for rough sea operations.
 - ▶ India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) organized 2-day Consultative Workshop for Delegation from the Central Election Commission (CEC) of Kazakhstan in New Delhi.
 - ▶ India-Wiesbaden Conference 2018 held in New Delhi with theme *Securing Global Supply Chains through Government-Industry Partnerships towards Effective Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540*.
 - ▶ First regional conference of eastern states on Water Resources is held in Kolkata (West Bengal), to address outstanding water resources issues.
 - ▶ First meeting of National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges under POSHAN (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition) Abhiyaan held in New Delhi. It aims to ensure holistic development and adequate nutrition for pregnant women, mothers and children.
 - ▶ 7th Home Expo India 2018, organised by Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH) at India Expo Centre in Greater Noida (UP).
 - ▶ Biannual Indian army commanders' conference 2018 held in New Delhi.
 - ▶ 2-day Regional Conference on "Urban Development: Technological Solutions and Governance Challenges" held in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.
179. ▶ General Conferences (Apr 21 - 30, 2018) -
- ▶ Election Commission a Training and Certification Programme for State Level Master Trainers (SLMTs) at New Delhi. Certification course for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and Assistant Electoral Registration Officers (AEROs) was also conducted.
 - ▶ Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu chaired first meeting of think tank on Framework for National Policy on E-commerce held in New Delhi.
 - ▶ National Kharif Conference 2018 held in New Delhi.
 - ▶ 23rd meeting of Western Zonal Council held at Gandhinagar (Gujarat).
 - ▶ First International SME Convention organised by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises in New Delhi.
 - ▶ 29th Road Safety Week held at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi. Book named "Have a Safe Journey" was also released.
 - ▶ 3rd Annual 5G India Congress 2018 held in New Delhi.
 - ▶ 3rd meeting of Island Development Agency (IDA) held in Delhi.
 - ▶ Secure India Conclave, organised by Global Counter Terrorism Council held in New Delhi.
 - ▶ National Disaster Response Authority (NDMA) conducted its first ever mock exercise at Patna (Bihar), aimed at enhancing preparedness of Airport Emergency Handlers (AEHs) to respond to CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear)

emergencies at airports.

- ✎ A Cancer Screening Mela was organized in Mizoram, by state's Health Department with Public Foundation of India and National Health Mission under initiative of Swasth Purv.
- ✎ Odisha Govt. inaugurated 'Odisha Skills 2018', state-level chapter of India Skill competition organised by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in Cuttack (Odisha).
- ✎ Kerala hosted India Skills Kerala 2018 in Kochi, as part of World Skills India 2018, to help youngsters to show their vocational skills. It also helped training students for World Skills Competition Kazan 2019 (Russia).

180. ▶ General Conferences (April 1-10, 2018) -

- ✎ Second lead-up Conference to 3rd Annual Meeting of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) held in Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh). About AIIB -
 - ✎ Headquarters - Beijing (China).
 - ✎ 64 Members and Jin Liqun is current (President).
- ✎ First meeting of the newly constituted 'NITI Forum for North East held in Agartala (Tripura) today.
- ✎ 9th US-Japan-India held trilateral meeting in New Delhi.
- ✎ 2 Assam Spring Festival held at Manas National Park, organised by Indian Weavers' Association and Swankar Mithinga Onsai Afat, an association of reformed poachers in Manas who are engaged in wildlife conservation.
- ✎ Uttarakhand's second Mega Food Park- Himalayan Mega Food Park Private Ltd inaugurated at Mahuakhera Ganj in Kashipur in Udham Singh Nagar district. State's first Mega Food Park is operational at Haridwar.
- ✎ National Convention of Swachhagrahis held at Motihari (Bihar) with theme Satyagraha se Swachhagrah, organized as part of centenary celebrations of Champaran Satyagraha.
- ✎ 34th annual session of FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) held in New Delhi.

181. ▶ General Conferences (Dec 1 - 10, 2017) -

- ✎ 11th Annual MedTech Summit of Biodesign Programme (Department of Biotechnology) today in New Delhi.
- ✎ 6th International Tourism Mart held in Guwahati (Assam).
- ✎ 22nd conference of Asian Harmonization Working Party (AHWP) held at New Delhi.
- ✎ First International Conference on Sports Medicine and Sports Sciences SAICON 2017 held in Delhi. Minister of State (I/C) Youth Affairs and Sports Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore stated that -
 - ✎ Under *Khelo India*, national school games would be organised from January 31 to February 8 in 2018 for under 17 age group. Top 1,000 athletes from this event will be entitled to Rs 5 lakh scholarships for eight years. 1,000 more athletes will be added each year for creating a pool of young talent.
 - ✎ School Games will be followed by College Games for under the age group of 21 years.
 - ✎ Khelo India programme will be launched at cost of INR 1756 crore for 2017-18 to 2019-20.
- ✎ National Conference on PDS (Public Distribution System) Reforms held in Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh).
- ✎ Shared Value Summit 2017 held in New Delhi with theme *Equity and Empowerment*.
- ✎ 7th International Groundwater Conference held in Delhi, with theme Groundwater Vision 2030- Water Security, Challenges, and Climate Change Adaptation.
- ✎ First Meet of 15th Finance Commission held in New Delhi, under Chairmanship of N.K. Singh.
- ✎ India and Japan held first meeting under the newly established 'India-Japan Act East Forum' in New Delhi, aimed at identifying specific projects for economic development of the North-Eastern region of India.
- ✎ New Delhi Hosted *Bodhi Parva: BIMSTEC Festival of Buddhist Heritage*, as part of celebrations of 20th anniversary of BIMSTEC.
- ✎ UN Women and Facebook held an event in Mumbai named *We The Women* to empower and recognise magnificent contribution of women in our society

182. ▶ General Conferences (Dec 11 - 20, 2017)

- ✎ 19th International Workshop on Physics of Semiconductor Devices (IWPSD-2017) held in New Delhi.
- ✎ 14th Inclusive Finance India Summit held in New Delhi, aimed at building consensus on strategies and a unified vision for achieving universal financial inclusion in India.
- ✎ Three day media workshop on Climate Change Reporting in Himalayas organised in Kohima (Nagaland).
- ✎ 54th meeting of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) programming committee held at SAARC secretariat in Kathmandu (Nepal).
- ✎ CSR Summit for Pioneering Cochlear Implant Surgery held in New Delhi.
- ✎ 90th Annual General Meeting of FICCI held in New Delhi.

- 49th Annual Conference of the Society of Nuclear Medicine – India (SNMICON) held in New Delhi.
- World Conference on Vedas (Vishwa Ved Sammelan) held in New Delhi.
- 2nd edition of Serendipity Arts festival is held in Goa, bringing together 7 art forms.
- National Workshop on Role of Sakhi One Stop Centres (OSCs) in Strengthening Multi Sectoral Response to Violence held in New Delhi.
- 3rd World Telugu Conference held in Hyderabad (Telangana).
- International Herbal Fair held in Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh).
- Global Partnership Summit (GPS) 2017 held in New Delhi, organised by India Center Foundation (ICF).
- 1st national-level training of trainers programme to sensitise Central Ministries and Departments on utilisation of Sendai Framework for developing action plans for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) held in New Delhi, organised by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction-Global Education and Training Institute (UNISDR-GETI).

183. ▶ General Conferences (Feb 1 - 10, 2018) -

- Lalit Kala Akademi organized First International Kala Mela in New Delhi.
- International Conference on 'Demetrios Galanos and His Legacy' held in New Delhi.
- 17 day Surajkund International Crafts Mela (32nd) began in Faridabad (Haryana). Uttar Pradesh is theme state and Kyrgyzstan is Partner Nation this year.
- 7th India Energy Congress was held in New Delhi with theme *Energy 4.0: Energy Transition Towards 2030*. It is organized by World Energy Council India (WEC India).
- NITI Aayog organized Conference on Jobs and Livelihood opportunities in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industries in Delhi.
- 2 day International conference on Unani Medicine held at New Delhi.
- 5th South Asia Region Public Procurement Conference held in New Delhi, with theme *Public Procurement and Service Delivery*.
- 3 day International Conference on Operations and Maintenance - *Indian Power Stations 2018* held in Delhi.
- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated 88th Mahamastakabhisheka of Lord Gomateshwara at Shravanabelagola in Hassan (Karnataka).
- 4th meeting of Economic Advisory Council to Prime Minister (EAC-PM) held in New Delhi under chairmanship of Bibek Debroy.
- Institute Of Directors organised 12th International Conference on Corporate Social Responsibility in Bengaluru (Karnataka).
- National Informatics Centre (NIC) organized 3 day National Meet on Grassroot Informatics - *VIVID 2018* at India Habitat Centre in New Delhi, with Theme *Cyber Security and Innovation*.

184. ▶ General Conferences (Feb 11 - 20, 2018) -

- International Agricultural conference *Agricon 2018* and *Agriexpo 2018* held at Chandrashekhar Azad University of Agriculture & Technology (CSAUT) at Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh).
- Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare organized a National Conference *Agriculture 2022 – Doubling Farmers' Income* at National Agriculture Science Complex (NASC) in New Delhi.
- National Banana Festival 2018 held in Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala).
- India's biggest Global Conference on Pharma Industry and Medical Devices held in Bengaluru with theme *Driving NextGen Pharmaceuticals*.
- Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) organized Youth Exchange Programme *Watan Ko Jano*, with special focus on youth of Jammu and Kashmir.
- 3rd Global Procurement Summit in New Delhi, organized by All India Management Association (AIMA) and World Bank with Theme *New Frontiers faced in the Transformation process of Procurement Today*.
- 10th international plastics exhibition, *PlastIndia* held in Gandhinagar (Gujarat), organized by Plastindia Foundation.
- 12th International Conference on corporate social responsibility (CSR) held in Bengaluru (Karnataka).
- 3 day International Conference on Operations and Maintenance, *Indian Power Stations 2018* held in New Delhi with theme *Technological Challenges: Risks and Challenges in Power Generation*. It is hosted by NTPC to commemorate synchronization of its first Thermal plant at Singrauli Super Thermal Power Station on February 13, 1982.
- 54th annual Munich Security Conference held in Munich (Germany).
- 6th Conference of Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA) of India Region held in Patna (Bihar).
- Scientists observed *Darwin Week* in Kolkata, to effectively put an end to any confusion regarding Charles Darwin's 'Theory of Evolution'.

✎ *International R&D Conclave* 2 day conference on Emerging Opportunities and Challenges of R&D in Indian Power Sector organised by Central Electricity Authority (CEA) in Delhi.

✎ National Seminar on *Emerging Building Materials and Construction Technologies* held in New Delhi. During This, Hardeep Puri (Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs) launched Mobile App *Bamboo Housing & Construction. Technologies*.

185. ▶ General Conferences (Feb 21 - 28, 2018) -

✎ 3 day India International Textiles Expo (IITExpo) held in Sri Lanka capital of Colombo.

✎ Regional conference of southern states on water resources held in Hyderabad (Telangana).

✎ 44th Khajuraho Dance Festival 2018 held at Khajuraho temple (UNESCO world heritage site) in Chhatarpur district of Madhya Pradesh.

✎ Central Govt.'s Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology and Government Telangana organized 21st National Conference on e-Governance in Hyderabad.

✎ 2 day International Conference on Sustainable Biofuels organized by Department of Biotechnology at India Habitat Centre in New Delhi.

✎ Ministry of Culture organized a week long diversified cultural carnival 'Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav' in Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh).

✎ Economic Times Global Business Summit held in New Delhi with theme *New Economy – New Rules*.

✎ Andhra Pradesh Government Organized 3rd Partnership Summit 2018 in Vizag, aiming to facilitate investments, foster innovations in creating business models.

✎ 15th edition of BioAsia (*annual flagship event of Telangana Government*) held in Hyderabad (Telangana), with theme *Right Time, Right Now*. During it, Telangana government stated that it aims to double valuation of its life sciences ecosystem to \$100 billion in 10 years.

✎ 7th Youth Festival held in New Delhi organised by Sahitya Kala Parishad and Delhi Government with theme *Let Love Live*.

✎ 15th Vodafone Odeon Theatre Festival held in Kolkata, (West Bengal), to provide a platform for theatre artists to display their talent.

✎ *Aadi Mahotsava*, a tribal festival organized by Assam Government held in Guwahati (Assam).

186. ▶ General Conferences (Jan 01 - 10, 2018) -

✎ 8 day long New Delhi World Book Fair begun in New Delhi, with theme *Environment and Climate Change* and European union as Guest of Honour country.

✎ 18th All India Whips' Conference held at Udaipur (Rajasthan). During this, Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MoPA) proposed rolling out of e-Sansad in Parliament and e-Vidhan in State Legislatures to digitize and make their functioning paperless.

✎ Annual Conference of DGPs and IGPs held at BSF (Border Security Force) Academy in Tekanpur (Madhya Pradesh). It was attended by PM Narendra Modi.

✎ 4th International Conference on Dharma-Dhamma held at Rajgir (Bihar), organised by Nalanda University with an aim to provide an opportunity to academics and policy makers from India and abroad to share ideas.

✎ Conference on Transformation of Aspirational Districts held in New Delhi, organized by NITI Aayog. During This, NITI Aayog announced to issue a ranking of 115 aspirational districts by April 2018.

✎ Centre for Transportation Research and Management (CTRAM) organized a National Rail Transport Seminar with theme *Railways for Sustainable Development* in New Delhi.

187. ▶ General Conferences (Jan 11 - 20, 2018) -

✎ Ministry of Culture organized 7th *Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav* under *Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat* matrix in Karnataka.

✎ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated 'Economic Democracy Conclave at Thane (Maharashtra), organised by Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini (charitable organisation in domain of training of social-political activists).

✎ International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDRI) organized by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in Delhi.

✎ 65th Meeting of Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) held under Chairmanship of HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar in Delhi.

✎ 3rd geo-political conference *Raisina Dialogue* held in New Delhi, attended by Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu and jointly organised by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and Observer Research Foundation (ORF). 2018's theme is *Managing Disruptive Transitions: Ideas, Institutions and Idiom*'.

✎ Raisina Dialogue is an annual conference held in New Delhi, envisioned as India's flagship conference of geopolitics and geo-economics.

✎ Indian and Israeli PM duo also launched *I4Fund Call for Proposal*, that provisions establishing a 40 million USD Fund by India's Department of Science and Technology and National Innovation Authority of Israel.

- ✍ A single day Conclave called *Nirman Samvaad*, first ever interaction between Railways Ministry and Construction Industry held in Delhi, organized by Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd (RVNL).
- ✍ Lalit Kala Akademi's 59th National Exhibition of Art held in New Delhi, to exhibit brilliance of works of various artists.
- ✍ 60th India International Garment Fair (IIGF) held at Pragati Maidan (New Delhi).
- ✍ National Conference on Improving Accessibility held in New Delhi. During this, 100 accessible websites for Divyangs have been launched to empower Divyang persons.

188. ▶ General Conferences (Jan 21 - 31, 2018)

- ✍ Raipur Municipal Corporation (Chhattisgarh) organized *Kachra Mahotsav 2018* as India's first Garbage Festival. It aims to increase waste usage awareness.
- ✍ Election Commission of India (ECI) hosted International Conference on 'Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Election Process' in New Delhi.
- ✍ 21st India International Seafood Show (IISS) held in Margao (Goa). IISS is a biennial meeting point for various stakeholders of marine products sector such as producers, processing machinery manufacturers, processors, and technical experts.
- ✍ First *Khadi Haat* of India launched by Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) in New Delhi, to help artisans earn better.
- ✍ Axis Bank launched 4th edition of *Evolve*, its an annual multi-city knowledge series for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) customers, titled *Transform your Family Business into your dream company*.
- ✍ 19th India International Watch and Clock Fair *Samaya Bharati 2018* held in Mumbai (Maharashtra).
- ✍ Indian Coast Guard (ICG) conducted a 'Day at Sea' event for children of fishing hamlets at Frazerganj in South 24 Parganas district (West Bengal).

189. ▶ General Conferences (Mar 1 - 10, 2018) -

- ✍ 27th Technological Conference of Indian Jute Industries' Research Association (IJIRA) held in Kolkata.
- ✍ Cultural Festival *Shigmotsav* organized in Goa, with Shigmo parades offering glimpses of Goan life depicted through folk dance and music performances by locals.
- ✍ 46th Know India Programme (KIP) organized by Government in New Delhi, aiming to engage and make students and young professionals of Indian Diaspora, connected with their motherland.
- ✍ Conference on *Indian Metros: Collaborating for Excellence* held in New Delhi. During this, I-METROS, an association of all Indian Metro Rail companies was launched. It will be a forum for exchange of ideas, pooling of knowledge and sharing of experience, best practices, innovations etc.
- ✍ Biennial event *WINGS INDIA 2018* held in Hyderabad (Telangana) with theme *India-Global Aviation Hub*. During this, International Air Transport Association (IATA) signed MoU with Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) and National Aviation University (NAU) to enhance human resource availability in India's aviation industry.
- ✍ India International Institute for Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) Delhi conducted a training programme on 'Capacity Development for Election Management'.
- ✍ 29th International Yoga Festival (IYF) held at Rishikesh (Uttarakhand).
- ✍ Event named *Vision for Future* held in New Delhi to commemorate 70 years of Indo-Russia ties.
- ✍ Large scale Media & Entertainment Services Market - enTTech 2018 organized in Mumbai.
- ✍ National Legislators Conference held in New Delhi with theme *We For Development*'.
- ✍ World ATM Congress (WATMC) 2018 held in Spain as world's largest international air traffic management (ATM) exhibition.
- ✍ 4th India-Europe 29 Business Forum (IE29BF) held in New Delhi with theme *Synergising Economic Vision for Expanded Relations* and Czech Republic as *Focus Country*.
- ✍ *FICCI Frames 2018* Conference held in Mumbai and released FICCI-EY Media & Entertainment Report 2018 named *Re-imagining India's M&E Sector*.
- ✍ *End TB Summit* held in New Delhi, highlighting India's aim to be TB-Free by 2025. Member Countries of World Health Organization-Regional Office for South-East Asia (WHO-SEARO) adopted 'Delhi End TB Summit Statement of Action'.
- ✍ Executive Committee tasked with overlooking all Nutrition related activities under POSHAN Abhiyaan (*PM's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment*) held its first meeting in New Delhi.
- ✍ 2018 World Conference on Tobacco or Health held in Capetown (South Africa).

190. ▶ General Conferences (Mar 11 - 20, 2018)

- ✍ IARI's Annual Krishi Unnati Mela 2018 held in Pusa (Bihar) and New Delhi. Krishi Vigyan Mela (Agriculture Science Fair) is held since 1972 and is a highly important annual event of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). Objective is to create awareness among farmers about the latest agriculture-related technological developments.

- ✎ First Indo-French Knowledge Summit for university, scientific and technology cooperation held in New Delhi.
- ✎ National Conference on Counterfeiting and Role of Enforcement Agencies held in New Delhi, organised by Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) in collaboration with European Union (EU).
- ✎ 2 day Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) held in New Delhi with theme *Challenges to Policing in 2020*.
- ✎ First edition of *Soldierathon* held in New Delhi, as a special marathon aimed at raising funds for welfare of Indian soldiers and their families.
- ✎ First regional conference on *Mass Rapid Transport System (MRTS) for Urban Areas – Opportunities and Challenges* held in Kolkata.
- ✎ *Indian Images: People and Places*, a photo exhibition about India organized in Cairo (Egypt), as part of annual cultural festival *India by the Nile*.
- ✎ Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (FINE) held at Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi. On this occasion, President Ram Nath Kovind presented Gandhian Young Technological Innovation awards instituted by Society for Research and Initiatives for Sustainable Technologies and Institutions [SRISTI].
- ✎ First India-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction held in New Delhi.
- ✎ 3rd National Conclave on Mines and Minerals Held in New Delhi. During This, Ministry of Mines launched Sand Mining Framework to help states deal with the sand mining issues, including demand supply deficit and illegal extraction.
 - ✎ There have been various issues in mining activities related to sand like non availability of sand, environmental degradation, high sand prices, illegalities in sand mining etc.

191. ▶ General Conferences (Mar 21 - 31, 2018)

- ✎ An International Yoga Fest held in New Delhi, as a curtain raiser for International Yoga Day (IYD) to be held on 21st June 2018.
- ✎ First edition of Delhi Energy Dialogue (DED) 2018 organised by Ashden India Collective (AIC) in alliance with the Climate Parliament and The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI).
- ✎ 1st meeting of Working Group on making India a USD 5 Trillion Economy held in New Delhi, chaired by Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu.
- ✎ Rising India Summit organized by Network 18 held in New Delhi.
- ✎ 5th *Nadi Mahotsava* held at Bandrabhan in Hoshangabad (Madhya Pradesh).
- ✎ Bihar Govt. inaugurated first 'Startup hub' of Bihar in Patna.
- ✎ First National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement held in New Delhi.
- ✎ 5th India Maize Summit 2018 held in New Delhi, to harness the potential of maize and technological innovations.
- ✎ 46th All India Police Science Congress held in Shimla (Himachal Pradesh).
- ✎ 11th Rashtriya Rifles Biennial Conference is being conducted at Nagrota (J &K).
- ✎ National Conference on Down Syndrome organised by National Trust under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in New Delhi.
- ✎ 1st *International Print Biennale*, an International Exhibition of Graphic Prints held in New Delhi.
- ✎ 1st National Conclave on Psychological Trauma, Child Protection, and Mental Illnesses held in New Delhi.
- ✎ SARAS Aajeevika Mela 2018 organized in New Delhi under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM). It aims to provide to rural women producers a national platform and an opportunity to showcase their products and seek buyers, either individuals or bulk buyers for sale nationally/internationally.
- ✎ Smart India Hackathon Grand Finale 2018 (Software edition) held in New Delhi. 1 lakh students from 1200 colleges participated in this world's largest Hackathon.
- ✎ International Yachting Festival held in Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), conducted by the Andhra Pradesh government.

192. ▶ General Conferences (May 11 - 20, 2018)

- ✎ 6th US-India Aviation Summit held in Mumbai, jointly organised by Ministry of Civil Aviation and US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA). During this, Airports Authority of India (AAI) signed a Rs 945-crores 15 year deal with Harris Corporation of USA for development of its futuristic telecommunications infrastructure (FTI) programme.
- ✎ Customs and Department of India Posts held a first-ever Joint Conference in Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi, to deliberate on streamlining of imports and exports by post.
- ✎ 2 day North east Regional Conference on *Physical and Social Infrastructure for Regional Development* held in Guwahati (Assam).
- ✎ Stakeholder Meeting on Samarth (*Scheme for Capacity Building in Textile Sector under Skill India Mission*) held in New Delhi. This scheme was Launched in December 2017 and aims to provide placement oriented National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF),

by training 10 lakh persons (9 lakh in organised and 1 lakh in traditional sector) by 2020, with outlay of 1300 crores.

- ✎ First International Rail Coach Expo (IRCE) held in Chennai (Tamil Nadu), to focus on Rail Coaches and train sets, hosted by Integral Coach Factory (ICF) under Railways Ministry.
- ✎ National Conference of Fisheries Ministers of Coastal states held in New Delhi.
- ✎ NITI Aayog and Vision India Foundation organized Venture Capital Symposium 2018 to deepen economic relationships between France and India. 20 big French venture capital participated in event, to explore investment opportunities.

193. ▶ General Conferences (May 21 - 31, 2018) -

- ✎ A children's theatre and personality development workshop held in North Delhi, organized by Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA).
- ✎ Workshop on Challenges and Opportunities of Arbitration in SAARC region held in New Delhi.
- ✎ Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Krishan Pal Gurjar committed to provide govt financial assistance worth Rs 6 Lakh for cochlear implant of children with hearing impairment in economically weak sections of Sikkim.
- ✎ Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram launched an exhibition cum sale event, *the PANKHA (Hand-fans)*, created by TRIFED through its artisans from all over the country at its showroom Tribes India in New Delhi.
- ✎ Railways conducted a one day workshop "Mission Raftaar" aimed at raising average speed of freight trains and coaching trains in New Delhi. Mission Raftaar aims at doubling average speed of freight trains and increasing average speed of coaching trains by 25 kmph over 5 years.
- ✎ India and Pakistan held meeting of their coast guard officials in New Delhi.
- ✎ Actor Akshay Kumar launched twin pit toilet technology campaign in New Delhi, to spread awareness on issue and make cleanliness drive more effective.
- ✎ Smart Cities India 2018 Expo held in New Delhi, with a vision to help develop attractive and safe cities.
- ✎ 34th meeting of Central Sanctioning and Monitoring held in New Delhi. During it, Construction of new 1.5 lakh affordable houses (most in Andhra Pradesh was approved, under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (Urban). It has an investment of 7227 crores with central assistance of 2209 crores. It took number of houses under PMAY(U) to 47,52,751 houses.
- ✎ 1st biannual IAF Commander's conference held at Air headquarters in New Delhi.

194. ▶ German auto major Mercedes-Benz unveiled India's first BS-VI-compliant S Class car produced at its Pune facility.

- ✎ Government's deadline for switching to new BS-VI emission norms is of April 2020.
- ✎ BS-VI-compliant S Class can run on BS-IV fuel, which will bring down NOx emissions by 68% and PM by 82% and will lower CO2 burden by 13% and fuel demand by 10%.

195. ▶ Goa Government approved Solar Power Policy, under which State Government will look to generate 150 MW of solar power by 2021.

196. ▶ Goa government will launch its own app-based taxi service to few key tourist destinations of state. Taxi operators would be required to follow online queuing system, based on which a ride will be confirmed or assigned to them. It is expected to solve state's problematic tourist taxi issue that has been plaguing its tourism sector for several years.

197. ▶ Google and Tata Trusts extended their *Internet Saathi* programme to 4,000 villages in six districts of Tamil Nadu, aimed at *Bridging the online gender divide in rural India*.

198. ▶ Google's philanthropic arm Google.org announced \$3 million in grants for teacher training and educational content creation in India.

- ✎ Google will also facilitate all Gram Panchayats in Andhra Pradesh with internet access, by installing 25000 Wi-Fi hotspots by December 2018.

199. ▶ Government announced completion of 1st phase of BharatNet project, after laying 254895 km of optical fibre cables (OFC) covering 1,09,926 GPs out of which 1,01,370 GPs are service ready.

- ✎ BharatNet project forms backbone for Digital India initiative. It aims to bring high speed broadband to all 2.5 lakh gram panchayats (GPs) through optical fibre by March 2019. It approved in 2011 as National Optical Fibre Network.

200. ▶ Government announced names of 9 new cities selected under Smart Cities Mission, with proposed investment of INR 12824 crores. After four rounds of selection, 99 cities have been selected for Smart Cities Mission so far.


201. ▶ Government announced that installation of bio-toilets in all passenger trains will be completed by March 2019.

202. ▶ Government approved 2018 as *National Year of Millets* to boost production of the nutrient-rich millets and the sunrise agri industry involved in it.

203. ▶ Government approved National Medical Commission Bill 2017, to replace Medical Council Act 1956 and bringing reforms in medical education sector. It will replace existing apex medical education regulator Medical Council of India (MCI) with 25-member National Medical Council (NMC).

204. ▶ Government approved creating Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Police Investigation, aimed to promote high professional Investigation of Crime in State/UT Police and Central Investigating Agencies (CIAs).
- ▶ Officers from rank of Sub-Inspector to Superintendent of Police will be eligible for this honour.
 - ▶ Names of awardees will be declared every year on 15th August.
 - ▶ Based on the average crime data for last three years, total 162 medals will be awarded every year, of these, 137 will be for States/UTs and 25 for CIAs viz. National Investigation Agency (NIA), Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Narcotic Control Bureau (NCB).
205. ▶ Government approved setting up National Nutrition Mission (NNM) with 3 year budget of INR 9046 crores -
- ▶ It will monitor, supervise, fix targets and guide nutrition related interventions across Ministries.
 - ▶ All districts will be covered in a phased manner - 315 districts in 2017-18, 235 districts in 2018-19 and remaining districts in 2019-20.
 - ▶ Outlay of INR 9046 crores will be funded by Government Budgetary Support (50%) and 50% by IBRD or other MDB. Government support would be 60:40 between Centre and States/UTs, 90:10 for NER and Himalayan States and 100% for UTs.
 - ▶ NNM targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.
 - ▶ NNM would strive to achieve reduction in Stunting from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 25% by 2022 (Mission 25 by 2022).
 - ▶ Govt. also launched a contest inviting people to design a logo and suggest a tagline for *National Nutrition Mission*, with a prize money of INR 1 lakh to winner of contest.
206. ▶ Government approved setting up an exclusive *Brahmaputra Study Centre* at Gauhati University (Assam), with funds approx INR 28 crores. It will offer an opportunity for research in different aspects of river Brahmaputra in physics, hydrology, waterways, environment, disaster/flood management, hydro-power production etc.
207. ▶ Government approved setting up of a Plastic Park in Deoghar District (Jharkhand), at a cost of Rs. 120 crores in an area of 150 acres and a range of polymer products including woven sacks, moulded furniture, water tanks, bottles, pipes mosquito nets, etc would be manufactured. It will provide direct employment to about 6000 people and indirect employment to over 30000 people.
208. ▶ Government decided to end Haj subsidy from this year, as a part of its policy to 'empower minorities without appeasement'.
- ▶ Note that despite withdrawal of subsidy, record number of 1.75 lakh Muslims would be Haj undertaking pilgrimage this year from India after Saudi Arabia increased India's quota by 5,000.
209. ▶ Government formulated water conservation scheme Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABY) to tackle ever-deepening crisis of depleting groundwater level, with allocation of INR 6000 crores. It aims to create sufficient water storage for agricultural purposes. It will cover 78 districts, 193 blocks and more than 8,300 gram panchayats across Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
210. ▶ Government is developing tool named *soft power matrix*, aimed at calibrating effectiveness of India's soft power outreach. It will help in dealings with neighbouring countries and serve better as operational instrument in India's broader diplomatic doctrine.
- ▶ Currently, articulation of India's soft power abroad is done through Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR), with some 36 foreign cultural centres working to promote artistic and cultural traditions through range of activities such as Festivals of India abroad.
 - ▶ Standing Committee on External Affairs recommended that MEA should formulate comprehensive and well-structured policy delineating India's soft power resources and their articulation abroad.
211. ▶ Government launched 3rd version of its National Procurement Portal, Government e Marketplace (GeM).
- ▶ GeM 3.0 will offer several features as standardised and enriched catalogue management, search engine, real time price comparison, template-based Bid and RA creation, demand aggregation, e-EMD, e-PBG, user rating, advanced MIS and analytics and more.
212. ▶ Government launched GOBARdhan Yojna nationally from National Dairy Research Institute (NDRI) in Karnal district of Haryana. GOBAR is acronym for Galvanising Organic Bio Agro Resources. This scheme focuses on managing and converting cattle dung and solid waste from farms and fields to useful compost, biogas and bio-CNG. It will also help in keeping villages clean and generate energy while increasing income of farmers and cattle herders.
- ▶ Central and state governments will provide funds in the ratio of 60:40, depending upon number of households in village.
 - ▶ It will be beneficial as India is home to highest cattle population in world (around 30 crores) and produces around 3 million tonnes of dung. It will encourage farmers to consider dung and other waste not just as waste but as source of income.
213. ▶ Government launched a 15 days door-to-door campaign for for early diagnosis, detection and treatment of tuberculosis. Through this, health department workers, ASHAs (Accredited Social Health Activists) and TB supervisors will make door-to-door visits to find TB patients and give them free medical treatment till they are cured.
214. ▶ Government launched a ASH TRACK Web based and mobile application based Fly Ash monitoring System. It will enable better management of the ash produced by thermal power plants by providing an interface between fly ash producers (Thermal Power Plants) and

potential ash users such as – road contractors, cement plants etc.

 ASH TRACK Mobile App will manage 200 million tonnes of fly ash by tracking coal based power plants situated within 100 km and 300 km from given location and availability of fly ash, along with prospective users within same radius.


215. ▶ Government preponed national development target date for completion of PMGSY-I (Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana), from 2022 to 2019. Since its inception in 2000, PMGSY provided connectivity to 152124 habitations (from 178184 eligible habitations). Target is to Provide connectivity to 166012 habitations by March 2019.


 Construction of PMGSY roads reached record high of 134 kms per day in 2017-18 as against average of 73 kms during 2011 - 2014.

216. ▶ Government sanctioned INR 1500 crore to promote organic farming in Uttarakhand, to be disbursed over 3 years.

217. ▶ Government sanctioned a new project to control pollution in River Sal at Navelim town (Goa), under National River Conservation Plan. It will be completed at cost of INR 61.74 crores (to be borne by Centre and State on 60:40 basis), scheduled for completion by January 2021.

218. ▶ Government will club phase I and phase II of Ken-Betwa inter linking river (ILR) project, upon demands raised by Madhya Pradesh Govt.


 Cost will now be revised, which was initially 18,000 crore (Phase 1), and 8000 crore (Phase 2).

 Ken-Betwa Inter Linking project aims to transfer surplus water from Ken River to the Betwa basin through concrete canal to irrigate India's worst drought-prone Bundelkhand region.

 It will benefit Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh in terms of meeting irrigation, drinking water and electricity needs of people across 6 districts in the MP & UP.


219. ▶ Government will link additional 200 wholesale mandis to online trading platform eNAM (electronic National Agriculture Market) in 2018-19 and will encourage inter-mandi transactions. At present, 585 regulated mandis in 14 states are linked with the eNAM, with 73.50 lakh farmers, 53,163 commission agents and over 1 lakh traders registered on it.

 eNAM is pan-India electronic trading portal for farm produce which aims creates unified national market for agricultural commodities by integrating existing Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) markets.

 It provides single window service for all APMC related services, including commodity arrivals and prices, provision for responding to trade offers, buy and sell trade offers, among other services.

220. ▶ Government will set up an international educational institution for minorities in Rajasthan's Alwar city, as 1 of 5 such institutes that Government is planning to set up across India. This plan was prepared in 2016 by a committee headed by Afzal Amanullah.

221. ▶ Government's Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) scheme (implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Ltd) has so far distributed over 30 crore light emitting diode (LED) bulbs across country.

 It has led to energy savings worth INR 15581 crores, increased penetration of LED in domestic market to 10% from mere 0.4% earlier.

 It has increased India's share in global LED market to 12% from a mere 0.1%.

222. ▶ Govt. launched *National E-Mobility Programme* aimed boosting e-mobility ecosystem including vehicle manufacturers, charging infrastructure companies, fleet operators, service providers etc, to be implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL). EESL will procure electric vehicles in bulk to get economies of scale, to replace existing petrol and diesel vehicles. With 20000 Procured electric cars, India is expected to save over 5 crore litres of fuel every year, and reduction of over 5.6 lakh tonnes of annual CO2 emission.

223. ▶ Gujarat Govt. approved setting up a 5,000 MW capacity solar park at Dholera Special Investment Region (SIR), as largest Solar Park in world. It would be set up in 11,000 hectares of land with an investment of INR 25000 crores.

224. ▶ Gujarat Pradesh Legislative Assembly Elections 2017 -

 Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won Majority by winning 99 of Gujarat's 182 seats. Rival party Congress got 77 seats. BJP got 49.1 % Votes while Congress got 41.4%.

 BJP will form Government in Gujarat for 6th Straight Term.

225. ▶ Gujarat government signed an MoU with Poland government, regarding centenary celebrations to mark independence of Poland in Delhi and other regions of world.

226. ▶ Gujarat government unveiled its *Reuse of Treated Waste Water Policy*, that aims to reduce state's dependence on freshwater sources like Narmada river. It will promote use of treated wastewater and will see setting up of sewage treatment plants (STP) across Gujarat.

227. ▶ Gujarat government will launch free treatment scheme for road accident victims, by bearing medical expenses of up to 50,000 rupees for each victim of a road accident in for first 48 hours.

228. ▶ Gujarat police unveiled *Pocket Cop* project, which will enable quicker verification of passport applicants, and search of accused persons. Under this, smartphones with data connectivity will be given to 4,900 police personnel.

229. ▶ Gujarat topped Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) index released at 3rd meeting of Council for Trade Development and Promotion.

- ▶ LEADS Index is about mobility of goods and efficiency of logistics chain, developed by Commerce and Industry Ministry along with Deloitte.
 - ▶ Gujarat is followed by Punjab and Andhra Pradesh. Among UTs, Daman & Diu topped, followed by Delhi and Chandigarh.
230. ▶ HRD Ministry launched *Study in India* portal at URL www.studyinindia.gov.in, as a single window to cover all aspects relating to studying in India for foreign students. Students across world will now be able to pursue the education in prominent Indian Educational Institutions. Integration of e-SANAD portal and NAD – National Academic Depository (of HRD Ministry), was also launched on the occasion.
- ▶ e-Sanad is aimed at online submission and verification of documents with ultimate object to extend contact less, cashless, faceless and paperless document attestation service. Using it, any type of document viz personal, educational or commercial can be authenticated and apostilled.
 - ▶ National Academic Depository (NAD) is 24X7 online store house of all academic awards viz. diplomas certificates, degrees, mark-sheets etc. duly digitised and lodged by academic boards, institutions, eligibility assessment bodies. It ensures easy access to and retrieval of academic award and validates and guarantees its authenticity and safe storage.
231. ▶ Haryana Government approved an affordable housing policy *Housing for all-2018* for core areas of municipalities in state. Town and Country Planning Department would be delegating power to Urban Local Bodies Department for implementation. Key Highlights -
- ▶ For core areas, projects would be allowed in core areas of municipal towns with an area 1 - 5 acres, while floor area ratio (FAR) should be 250 and for 2.5 to 5 acres, it should be 275.
 - ▶ Allotment rate is 4000 per sq ft in hyper potential zones, Rs 3,000 per sq ft in high potential zones, Rs 2,500 for medium potential zones and Rs 2,100 per sq ft in low potential zones.
 - ▶ Beneficiaries would be provided financial assistance of Rs 2.5 lakh.
232. ▶ Haryana Govt. launched *Parivartan* scheme, to address 10 issues in 46 developmental blocks of state.
233. ▶ Haryana Govt. launched Bhavantar Bharpayee Yojana from Karnal district. Under this, farmers will be compensated by state government, whenever market prices of the stipulated produce go below mentioned prices (applicable for tomato, onion, potato and cauliflower).
234. ▶ Haryana Govt. will launch *Chatra Parivahan Suraksha Yojana*, developed for safety of girl students in Haryana.
235. ▶ Haryana State Government will establish *Kisan Kalyan Pradhikaran* as farmers' welfare department which will look to make agriculture remunerative by enhancing productivity and mitigate distress of farming households.
236. ▶ Haryana became first state to launch High-Risk Pregnancy (HRP) Portal, to help in early identification of high-risk pregnant cases and ensure their timely referral to civil hospital. This portal is designed to track every high-risk pregnant woman till 42 days after delivery.
237. ▶ Haryana government mandated installation of Solar Photovoltaic Power plant in new buildings as per specified norms, aimed at conserving electricity and use it efficiently.
238. ▶ Haryana government opened subsidised canteens in 4 districts (Faridabad, Gurugram, Hisar and Yamunanagar) under *Antyodaya Aahaar Yojana* to provide hygienic food at affordable prices to poor and needy persons. These canteens will serve food to concerned people at INR 10, having 4 chapattis, rice, dal, cooked seasonal vegetables, curd or raita, green chutney and gur.
239. ▶ Haryana government will establish an organ and tissue transplant organisation (SOTTO) at Bhagwat Dayal Sharma Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (PGIMS) in Rohtak.
240. ▶ Haryana government will implement integrated solar based micro irrigation scheme (ISBMI) in all districts and formed a Committee to chalk out a plan in this regard.
- ▶ ISBMI will focus on saving electricity and water, and will also be economical for farmers as they will not be required to install tubewells at their own level instead they just have to pay a nominal amount for water according the crops.
241. ▶ Haryana topped preliminary rankings of Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) for this year with score of 69 %, followed by Telangana (68.46 %). Commerce and Industry Ministry will release final rankings in January-February 2018.
242. ▶ Health Ministry approved proposal of Medical Council of India (MCI) to amend Screening Test Regulations 2002, making it mandatory to qualify National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) to pursue foreign medical course.
- ▶ A common National Entrance Exam, National Eligibility cum Entrance Test has been made mandatory for admission to all medical courses in the country.
 - ▶ Indian students can also pursue medical education abroad, however, they need to qualify *Foreign Medical Graduates Exam (FMGE)* for practicing in India after obtaining MBBS overseas.
 - ▶ Overseas Citizen of India shall have to mandatorily qualify NEET for admission to MBBS course abroad, from May 2018. Result of NEET will be treated as the Eligibility Certificate for such persons.
243. ▶ Health Ministry launched India's first digital Online Oncology Tutorial Series designed by Tata Memorial Center, to train doctors for early detection, prevention, palliation, rehabilitation and treatment of various cancers.

244. ▶ High-speed interceptor boat ICG C-162 has been commissioned into service by Indian Coast Guard (ICG), built by Bharati Defence and Infrastructure Ltd (BDIL).
245. ▶ Himachal Pradesh Food, civil supplies and Consumer Affairs department launched an app for ration card holders, called ePDS (electronic public distribution system). Beneficiaries can use digital ration card in ration shops. HP government also recently started Himachal Grihni Suidha Yojna, which will provide 1 lakh women with gas cylinders and stoves free of cost.
246. ▶ Himachal Pradesh Government launched women's safety app named *Shakti*. It comes with a panic button and would not require internet connectivity.
- ▶ Once triggered, app would send a message to nearest police control room and start recording audio and video after 20 seconds.
 - ▶ *GUDDIYA* helpline number 1515 and *Hoshiyar Singh* helpline number 1090 were also launched, to fight crimes against women in state.
247. ▶ Himachal Pradesh Government approved setting up of a regional-cum-facilitation centre of National Medicinal Plants Board of Ministry of Ayush, in Jogindernagar town in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh.
248. ▶ Himachal Pradesh Government launched *Prakritik Kheti Khushhaal Kissan Yojana*, to promote Zero Budget Natural Farming System. It would increase soil productivity, decrease use of fertilizers and harmful chemicals and increase water infiltration. State Govt. also Launched a week long *Polythene Hatao, Paryavaran Bachao* Campaign.
249. ▶ Himachal Pradesh Government launched Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) project to promote organic farming, aimed at doubling income of farmers by the 2022. In ZBNF natural farming methods, cost of growing and harvesting plants is zero as no fertilizers and pesticides are added. It requires almost no monetary investment and envisages use of 'Jeevamrutha' and 'Beejamrutha'.
250. ▶ Himachal Pradesh Government will introduce free Heli-ambulance services in order to help patients in far flung and inaccessible areas . Free Heli-ambulance services will be operated by Heli-mission Switzerland with the assistance of Lady Willingdon Hospital (Kullu District).
- ▶ State Govt. inaugurated Kanda Pattan-Sarkaghat Water Supply Scheme in Mandi district. It will benefit more than 31,000 people of region. State gov. also decreased age criteria for getting old age pension to 70 years from 80 years.
251. ▶ Himachal Pradesh Govt. launched Mother's Absolute Affection (MAA) programme with an aim to promote breastfeeding, strengthening inter-personal communication through ASHA workers, skilled support for breastfeeding at delivery points.
252. ▶ Himachal Pradesh Legislative Assembly Elections 2017 -
- ▶ Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won Majority by winning 44 of Himachal Pradesh's 68 seats. Rival party Congress got 21 seats. BJP got 48.8 % Votes while Congress got 41.7%.
253. ▶ Himachal Pradesh government will spend 25 crore rupees on renovating historic British Raj 'Bantony Castle Estate' as a major tourist attraction. It was acquired by government for over 27 crores two years ago, from a Business family.
254. ▶ Himachal Pradesh govt will set up 24X7 'Gudiya helpline' for reporting crimes against women. Under which, three special crime cells would be set up (one each at Mandi, Shimla and Kangra).
255. ▶ Hindon Elevated Road, India's longest elevated road inaugurated in Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh) by UP CM Yogi Adityanath. It will make it easier to commute between Delhi and Ghaziabad, saving approx 40 minutes of travel. It is 10.5KMs long, built on 227 single pillars. It was built at a cost of about Rs 11,000 crores.
256. ▶ Home Ministry approved Central Assistance of INR 1161 Crores to Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Lakshadweep (UT) and Rajasthan -
- ▶ Assam (480 Crores), Himachal Pradesh(84 Crores), Sikkim (67 Crores) were affected by floods/ landslides during 2017-18.
 - ▶ Lakshadweep (2.6 Crores) was affected by cyclone Ockhi.
 - ▶ Rajasthan (526 Crores) affected by kharif drought during 2017.
257. ▶ Home Ministry declared Nagaland as *disturbed area* for 6 more months (till June 2018) under Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act – AFSPA.
- ▶ Under AFSPA, armed forces attain several overriding powers including authority to open fire and use force against any person acting against the law.
258. ▶ Home Ministry will set up Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) as an apex centre to deal with cyber crimes such as financial frauds, circulation of pornographic and communal contents. I4C will be located in Delhi. It will coordinate with state governments in matters of cyber crimes and will monitor cyber space and social media.
- ▶ Information and Broadcasting Ministry will also set up a social media communication (SMC) hub for keeping a tab on trending news in districts and gather feedback on Government's flagship schemes, with investment of INR 17 crores for setting up 707 SMC hubs.
259. ▶ Human Resource Development Ministry launched 2nd edition of Unnat Bharat Abhiyan in New Delhi. Under this, students from 750 higher educational institutions from across country will adopt nearby villages and visit them to get acquainted with regular lifestyle of village people and problems faced by them. Main objective is to enable higher education institutions to work with people of rural India in

identifying development challenges and evolving appropriate solutions for accelerating sustainable development in rural areas.

260. ▶ Human Resource Development Ministry released NIRF India Rankings 2018 of higher educational institutions -

✍ Top 10 (Overall) -

- ✍ Indian Institute of Science Bengaluru
- ✍ Indian Institute of Technology Madras
- ✍ Indian Institute of Technology Bombay
- ✍ Indian Institute of Technology Delhi
- ✍ Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur
- ✍ Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi
- ✍ Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur
- ✍ Indian Institute of Technology, Roorkee
- ✍ Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi
- ✍ Anna University, Chennai

✍ Top 5 Universities -

- ✍ Indian Institute of Science Bangalore
- ✍ Jawaharlal Nehru University New Delhi
- ✍ Banaras Hindu University Varanasi
- ✍ Anna University Chennai
- ✍ University of Hyderabad

✍ Top 5 Medical Institutes -

- ✍ All India Institute of Medical Sciences New Delhi
- ✍ Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh
- ✍ Christian Medical College, Vellore
- ✍ Kasturba Medical College, Manipal
- ✍ King George`s Medical University, Lucknow

✍ Top 5 Colleges -

- ✍ Miranda House, Delhi University
- ✍ St, Stephens, Delhi University
- ✍ Bishop Heber College, Tiruchirappalli
- ✍ Hindu College, Delhi
- ✍ Presidency College, Chennai

✍ Top 5 Engineering Institutes -

- ✍ IIT Madras
- ✍ IIT Bombay
- ✍ IIT Delhi
- ✍ IIT Kharagpur
- ✍ IIT Kanpur

✍ Top 5 Management Institutes -

- ✍ Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad
- ✍ Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Bangalore
- ✍ Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Calcutta
- ✍ Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Lucknow
- ✍ Indian Institute of Management, Kozhikode

261. ▶ Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar Minister launched *Samagra Shiksha* - an integrated Scheme for school education extending support to States from pre-school to senior secondary levels for first time It will treat *school* holistically as a continuum from pre-school, primary, upper primary, secondary and senior secondary levels.

- ✍ It focuses on improving quality of education at all levels by integrating two T's – Teachers and Technology.
- ✍ Earlier budget on 3 education schemes (SSA, RMSA and Teacher Education) was 28,000 crores in 2017-18. But, budget outlay on new scheme will be 34,000 crore in 2018-19 and 41,000 crores in 2019-20.
- ✍ 10 Lakh schools will get library grant of 5,000 to 20,000 to strengthen libraries.

- ✎ Every school will get sports equipment under *Samagra Shiksha* - 5000 for Primary, 10,000 for Upper Primary & up to 25,000 for SSC & HSC schools.
 - ✎ Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) will be expanded from Class 6-8 to Class 6-12 with 4385.60 crores in 2018-19 & 4553.10 crores in 2019-20.
 - ✎ *DIKSHA* - national digital platform for teachers would put high quality teaching learning resources for ready use of teachers. *Samagra Shiksha* Scheme will support 'Operation Digital Board' in all secondary schools over a period of 5 years, so as to enhance use of digital technology through smart classrooms. Digital initiatives like ShaalaKosh, Shagun, ShaalaSaarthi will be strengthened.
262. ▶ Human Resources Development ministry will set up an innovation cell to develop new ideas and encourage innovation in India.
263. ▶ ISRO signed Technology Transfer Agreement (TTA) with Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL), to transfer technology for manufacture of space grade Li-Ion cells.
- ✎ ISRO uses Li-Ion batteries as power sources for satellite and launch vehicle applications due to their high energy density, reliability and long cycle life.
 - ✎ This Technology Transfer will enable BHEL to produce space grade Li-Ion cells which can meet country's space programme requirements.
264. ▶ India Meteorological Department (IMD) teamed up with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) to send extreme weather alerts to people. BSNL and IMD will send area-specific alerts to users if they happen to be at place likely to experience extreme weather conditions, even if their phone numbers do not belong to that particular telecom circle.
265. ▶ India Meteorological Department (IMD) will add 30 more doppler radars in 2 years, with 14 in northeast, 4 in Jammu and Kashmir and 3 each will be Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.
- ✎ Doppler radar is an observational tool used for precisely monitoring and predicting severe weather events such as hailstorms, thunder storms, cyclones and tornados.
 - ✎ It uses Doppler effect by bouncing microwave signal off desired target to produce velocity data.
 - ✎ It mainly gives information about wind velocity and precipitation. Doppler radar has radius of 250 km and helps in issuing forecasts two-three hours prior to severe weather conditions.
 - ✎ First Doppler radar in India was installed in Chennai, Tamil Nadu in 2002. There are currently 27 Doppler radars in country.
266. ▶ India missed December 2017 deadline announced for elimination of Kala Azar (black fever) in 2017-18 Budget by Government.
- ✎ Elimination is defined as reducing annual incidence of disease to less than 1 case per 10,000 people at sub-district level.
 - ✎ Kala-azar (visceral leishmaniasis), also known as black fever and Dumdum fever is most severe form of leishmaniasis. It is slow progressing indigenous disease caused by single-celled parasite of Leishmania family.
267. ▶ India signed \$ 84 Million Loan Agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Improvement and Expansion of Water Supply in Bihar.
268. ▶ India started nationwide tiger census 2018, as largest survey of wildlife anywhere in world. India will now use more technology, including mobile app *MSTrIPES*, with higher focus on northeast to determine number of tigers in India.
- ✎ Tiger census 2018 by National Tiger Conservation Authority will be INR 10 crores exercise, which will involve 40,000 forest guards traversing 4,00,000 sq. km. of forests.
269. ▶ India will get its first runway on a 'sea bridge', as Airports Authority of India (AAI) will extend Lakshadweep's Agatti Airport by building an RCC platform on the beach and shallow area which will allow bigger ATRs to operate on island.
270. ▶ India will have its own automated ocean pollution observation system called *automated moorings* from April 2018, to help monitor ocean pollution levels besides offering insights on changes in marine system. It will do away with present practice of collecting water samples from the sea and studying their pollution levels thereafter.
271. ▶ India will host Its 1st (overall 8th edition) of Theatre Olympics 2018 in February - April 2018. This 51 day event will be organized by National School of Drama under Ministry of Culture, with budget of INR 51.81 crores, with theme *Flag of Friendship*.
- ✎ It will witness performances in 30 different Indian languages, 15 foreign languages as well as in non-verbal languages. Artists from 30 nations will participate.
272. ▶ India's *Taj Mahal* is ranked 2nd best UNESCO world heritage site in world, by travel portal TripAdvisor, after Cambodia's Angkor Wat.
273. ▶ India's First Madame Tussauds Wax Museum opened in Delhi with 50 wax models of Indian and international celebrities. Delhi centre is 23rd museum for Madame Tussauds which has centres in major cities across globe.
274. ▶ India's first food testing lab in IITs opened in IIT Kharagpur campus, after National Accreditation Board for Calibration and Testing Laboratories (NABL) approved it for certifying food items based on nutritional value and perform adulteration checks.
275. ▶ India's largest floating solar power plant inaugurated at Banasura Sagar dam in Wayanad (Kerala), with capacity of 500 kilowatts (KW).
- ✎ It consists of 1,938 solar panels with a capacity of 260 watts, a 500 kilo volt ampere (KVA) transformer and 17 inverters.

- Unique feature of this plant is anchoring mechanism to maintain plant with alteration of water level.
- 276. ▶ Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and American pharmaceutical firm Pfizer signed MoU to establish a 'Centre to Combat Antimicrobial Resistance' in New Delhi, to help combat growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in India.
- 277. ▶ Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission (IPC) approved animal-free tests for drug manufacturers. It replaces pyrogen test carried out on rabbits and abnormal toxicity test carried out on guinea pigs and mice with tests that can be done in test tubes. These guidelines will come into effect from July 1, 2018.
 - Pyrogen test will be replaced by bacterial endotoxin test or monocyte activation test which can be carried out in test tubes.
 - It is carried out to check impurity that can cause adverse side-effects. Drug is injected into rabbit and it is closely observed for feverish symptoms.
 - For abnormal toxicity test, Vaccine manufacturers can apply for waiver by getting compliance certificate from National Control Laboratory.
 - This test is carried out to check hazardous biological contamination in vaccine formulations. In this, mice or guinea pigs are injected with vaccine. The scientists observe if there is death of any animal.
- 278. ▶ Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Limited (IRSDC) Launched Idea Competition called *SRIJAN* (*Station Rejuvenation through Joint Action*) at MyGov portal, under redevelopment of 635 major Railway stations across country. Last date for submission of entries in competition is 26-03-2018, with winner for logo competition to get cash prize of INR 75000.
- 279. ▶ Indian Railways and General Electric (GE) Jointly inducted 2 wholly designed in India Digitally Enabled Locomotives based on Insulated-gate bipolar transistor (IGBT) technology.
 - IGBT Technology has 3 terminal power semiconductor device primarily used as electronic switch. It offers greater power gain than standard bipolar type transistor combined with higher voltage operation and lower input losses.
 - GE is providing locomotive technology to Indian Railway and by 2025, through JV (Indian Railways has 26% stake), it will manufacture 1000 fuel-efficient locomotives (100 per year) for freight traffic hauling. 40 fuel efficient diesel locomotives will be manufactured in GE facility at Erie in US and rest 960 diesel locomotives will be manufactured in Marhaura (Bihar).
- 280. ▶ Indian Railways inducted three 09-3x Dynamic Tamping Express machines for improved mechanised Track Maintenance, manufactured in India under Make in India initiative with imported components. This technology is available in five countries including India.
 - Railways plans to induct 42 more such machines in its maintenance fleet over next 3 years.
 - These Machines can perform several track maintenance tasks which are currently performed manually / through several machines.
 - Railways has planned complete mechanisation of inspection, monitoring, relaying and maintenance of track by 2024. Induction of such new machines will further help to improve safety, reliability and economy in maintenance of tracks over Indian Railways.
- 281. ▶ Indian Railways launched *Voluntary Safety Reporting* website for its employees to anonymously report internal safety issues and hazards. It allows employees to report issues anonymously OR to mention their contact details for confidential feedback.
- 282. ▶ Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) and Rewa Ultra Mega Solar Limited (RUMSL) signed agreement worth 210 Crores INR for financing shared infrastructure of 2 large Solar Parks in Madhya Pradesh.
 - It is under recent US\$ 100 Million agreement between Ministry of New & Renewable Energy (MNRE), World Bank & IREDA for creating common infrastructure for ultra-mega solar parks in India to achieve 100 GW solar capacity addition target by 2022.
- 283. ▶ India's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education increased from 24.5% in 2015-16 to 25.2% in 2016-17, according to All India Higher Education Survey (AIHES) 2016-17. Tamil Nadu has highest GER at 46.9%, while Bihar has least with GER of 14.9%.
- 284. ▶ India's first Aviation Multi Skill Development Centre (MSDC) is launched at Chandigarh Airport's old terminal, as a CSR initiative of Airports Authority of India (AAI). It will train about 2,400 youth and women in 8 aviation job roles over next 3 years.
- 285. ▶ India's first Electronic Manufacturing Cluster (EMC) will be built in Andhra Pradesh, aimed at for providing facilities and amenities for manufacturing mobiles and allied products.
- 286. ▶ India's first and only design university - *World University of Design* opened at Sonapat (Haryana). WUD is India's first university dedicated to education in creative domain.
- 287. ▶ India's first artificial intelligence (AI) research institute inaugurated in Mumbai as *Wadhvani AI*. It will focus on researching ways to harness power of AI to solve deep rooted problems in India. Indian-American tech entrepreneurs Romesh Wadhvani and Sunil Wadhvani are committing \$30 million to institute over first 10 years.
- 288. ▶ India's first automatic Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS) will be launched in March 2018 in Odisha, under *National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project*.
 - It will provide Odisha's entire population residing on 480 km length coastline a pre-warning siren in event of occurrence of natural disasters like tsunami or cyclone.


289. ▶ India's first insect museum with state-of-the-art amenities is unveiled at Tamil Nadu Agricultural University campus in Coimbatore. It will display insects preserved as specimens as also live ones depicting their different developmental stages.
290. ▶ India's first national coastal policing academy, National Academy of Coastal Policing (NACP) to train police forces in effectively safeguarding country's shoreline will start functioning from April 2018. It will be launched from campus of Gujarat's Fisheries Research Centre in coastal Okha town in Devbhumi Dwarka district of Gujarat.
291. ▶ India's first-ever broad gauge air-conditioned AC EMU suburban train flagged off by western railway (from Mumbai's Borivali station).
292. ▶ India's longest Rail and Road bridge *Bogibeel bridge*, linking Dibrugarh in Assam to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh will be inaugurated in 2018. It is 4.94 km long and stays 32 metres above waters of Brahmaputra River. At present, travel from Dibrugarh to Arunachal Pradesh by train takes over 500 km detour. This bridge will bring travel length under 100 km.
293. ▶ India's 'first' mobile food testing laboratory enabling on-the-spot food safety tests is launched in Goa, as first ever 'Food Safety on Wheel' mobile laboratory in India. The vehicle is equipped to conduct on-the-spot tests to check food quality and curb adulteration.
294. ▶ Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)'s National Cultural Audiovisual Archives (NCAA) project has been certified as the world's first Trusted Digital Repository as per ISO 16363:2012 standard, granted by Primary Trustworthy Digital Repository Authorisation Body Ltd. (PTAB), United Kingdom.
- ▶ Primary objective of NCAA is to preserve cultural heritage of India available in audiovisual form through a process of digitization and making it accessible to people.
295. ▶ Institute of Bioresources and Sustainable Laboratory (IBSD) Imphal has set up a floating laboratory in northeast India's largest freshwater lake, Loktak to constantly monitor its water quality and improve it.
296. ▶ International Kite Festival held at Sabarmati River Front in Ahmedabad (Gujarat).
297. ▶ International poetry festival *Mystic Kalinga* organized in Bhubaneswar Odisha.
298. ▶ Jackfruit (कटहल) has been named as official fruit of State of Kerala.
299. ▶ Jammu & Kashmir State Government constituted State Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (SCPUL), for promotion of Urdu.
300. ▶ Jammu & Kashmir Student Exchange programme 'Maitreyi Yatra' held in New Delhi. It is organized by Ministry of Human Resource development with an objective to acquaint youth of Jammu & Kashmir with culture, language and development of different parts of India.
301. ▶ Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Government launched *Muhafiz* (meaning *Guardian* in English) scheme, for providing institutionalized socio-economic security to workers in unorganised sector. Registered workers will also be offered Micro Credit facility with a credit limit of INR 10000.
302. ▶ Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) cabinet approved adopting Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) for horticulture crops such as apple and saffron in state. Under RWBCIS, farmers will be provided insurance coverage and financial support in event of failure of any of notified crops due to adverse weather incidences. RWBCIS will be in addition to Central Government's Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana.
303. ▶ Jammu and Kashmir government formed a committee to study scope and definition of horticulture, headed by chief secretary of Jammu Kashmir Bharat Bhushan Vyas. Study will help in improving and assessing growth of horticulture in Jammu and Kashmir.
304. ▶ Jammu and Kashmir government launched central govt's SAUBHAGYA (Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojna) with an aim to provide free electricity connections to poor people in state. SAUBHAGYA initiative was launched by Central Govt in Sep 2017 to provide electricity to 4 crore families across India by December 2018.
305. ▶ Jammu and Kashmir will host its first international martial arts games event in Srinagar in October 2018, named *Asian Martial Arts Games*.
306. ▶ Jharkhand Govt. launched *Saubhagya Yojana*, aimed at providing 24*7 electricity to approx 30000 villages across state by December 2018. Under this, above poverty line (APL) families would get electricity connection by paying Rs 500 (Rs 50 each month for 10 months).
307. ▶ Kacheguda Railway Station in Hyderabad (Telangana) is named first Energy Efficient 'A1 Category' Railway Station of Indian Railways, as it achieved 100% energy efficiency by replacing conventional lights with light-emitting diode (LED) lighting and other measures.
308. ▶ Karnataka Assembly Election Results 2018 -
- ▶ Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) emerged as largest party by winning 104 out of 222 Seats. INC (Indian National Congress) won 78 seats and Janata Dal (Secular) won 40 Seats.
- ▶ Votes Percentage - BJP (36.2%), INC (38%), JDS (18.3%)
- ▶ Karnataka Election witnessed maximum expenditure by candidates and parties ever, estimated at 9500 - 10500 crores.
309. ▶ Karnataka Government accepted state flag as official flag in place of an unofficial red and yellow flag currently used in state to signify local pride. New tricolour having yellow (at top), white (in middle) and red (at bottom) colorus, with state's emblem Gandaberunda (a two-headed mythological bird) in centre. Karnataka is 2nd state after J&K to have its own state flag.


310. ▶ Karnataka Govt. recognised Lingayats as a 'religious minority' and included Veerashaivas who follow Basavanna as a group within community, approving recommendations of HN Nagamohan Das Committee.
311. ▶ Karnataka Govt. unveiled healthcare scheme *Arogya Karnataka* aimed at benefitting about 1.43 crore households in state. It will provide quality primary, secondary and tertiary treatment to both below-poverty-line (BPL) and above-poverty-line (APL) families in state.
312. ▶ Karnataka High Court struck down rules laid out by central govt in 2014 that mandated pictorial health warnings to cover 85% of tobacco product packaging space, holding that they violated Constitutional norms.
- ▶ However, 40% pictorial health warning rule, which existed prior to amendment rules, will remain in force.
313. ▶ Karnataka's capital Bengaluru has become first Indian city to have its own logo. The with red and black logo is part English and part Kannada.
314. ▶ Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan launched M-Kerala app, at #Future, Kerala's first-ever global digital summit held in Kochi. It will help citizens to avail nearly 100 government services using their mobile phones. Theme of the Summit was *Towards a Digital Future*.
315. ▶ Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan launched Pravasi pension scheme, offering pension of INR 2000 a month to state's Non Resident Citizens of over 60 years age. To avail this scheme, person has to pay Rs 100 per month for 5 years.
316. ▶ Kerala Government approved setting up of *Kerala Fibre Optic Network Limited*, to offer free internet to over 20 lakh poor families. A Joint Venture company will be launched by *IT Infrastructure Limited, State Electricity Board and state government* to get this task done.
317. ▶ Kerala Government will start a 'community radio' to update farmers about latest developments, as first such community radio in India. It will start broadcast from Kuttanad in Alappuzha district, known as *rice bowl of Kerala*.
318. ▶ Kerala government made vaccination compulsory for school admissions from next academic year onwards.
319. ▶ Kerala government raised minimum age for liquor consumption from 21 to 23 years.
320. ▶ Kerala government will soon be utilising services of robots called *Bandicoot*, to clean sewer holes in state, developed by startup *Genrobotics*. Services of robots will be initially utilised in Kerala's capital Thiruvananthapuram, which has over 5000 manholes.
321. ▶ Kolkata Police imposed ban on public display of weapons in Kolkata, till 1 January 2019.
322. ▶ Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport became 5th in India having CAT III B landing system runway, enabling flights to land even when visibility is 50 metres with decision height of 15 meters.
323. ▶ Law ministry will file a review petition against Supreme Court's ruling on the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, that puts a stop to immediate arrests in complaints filed under its provisions.
- ▶ Previously, to curb misuse of SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989) and protect honest public servants, Supreme Court stated that
 - ▶ An arrest is not mandatory under the SC/ST Act, and automatic arrest has been scrapped.
 - ▶ SC directed that public servants can only be arrested with written permission of their appointing authority.
 - ▶ Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was enacted in 1989. It is a comprehensive law which not only defines atrocities against SCs and STs but also make several rules and regulations. One provision states that public servant (non SC/ST) neglecting his duties related to SCs/STs will be punished with imprisonment for a term of 6 months to 1 year.
324. ▶ Leaders of 10 ASEAN Nations will be chief guests for Republic Day 2018 of India.
- ▶ AESAN Nations (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) - Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Laos, Brunei.
325. ▶ Linguist Panchanan Mohanty from University of Hyderabad discovered 2 endangered languages Walmiki and Malhar predominantly spoken in remote regions of Odisha.
- ▶ Walmiki - Spoken in district of Koraput of Odisha and on bordering districts of Andhra Pradesh.
 - ▶ Malhar - Spoken in a remote and isolated hamlet about 165 km away from Bhubaneswar. It is spoken by community consisting of about 75 speakers including children.
326. ▶ Madhya Pradesh Animal Husbandry Department signed MoU with Bharat Financial Inclusion Ltd (BFIL) to launch *Pashu Dhan Sanjeevani – 1962* Programme. It offers range of veterinary services, available on toll-free helpline number 1962. Services include emergency treatment, artificial insemination, vaccination and deworming etc. It will be monitored through 'Bharat Sanjeevani' software.
327. ▶ Madhya Pradesh Assembly passed Dand Vidhi (Madhya Pradesh Sanshodhan) Vidheyak 2017 that will enable death sentence for rapists of girls 12 years or below. Madhya Pradesh became first state to legalise death sentence for rapists.
328. ▶ Madhya Pradesh Govt. increased retirement age of Madhya Pradesh government employees from 60 to 62 years.
329. ▶ Madhya Pradesh State Government approved INR 7546-crore project for linking Narmada River with Parvati River, aimed at create irrigation facilities on 2 lakh hectares of agriculture land in Malwa region of Madhya Pradesh.
330. ▶ Madhya Pradesh became first state to completely implement door-to-door garbage collection in all urban areas, using measures like solid waste management at landfill sites and processing through Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode.

331. ▶ Madhya Pradesh government imposed 50 paise per litre cess on petrol and diesel, to be used for strengthening road infrastructure across state and laying metro railroad in Bhopal and Indore.
332. ▶ Madhya Pradesh government initiated *Mission One Click scheme* to distribute 30 types of scholarship in schools, through Samagra Education Portal.
333. ▶ Madhya Pradesh government launched a mobile application *pollution metre* to spread awareness against pollution in western part of state.
334. ▶ Maharashtra Government approved 1% reservation for orphans in government jobs and education.
✎ It is termed as *parallel reservation* as It will be provided under general category. It means that government does not need to increase its caste reservation quota that has already reached 52%. Out of total jobs available under general category, 1% will be only for orphans.
335. ▶ Maharashtra Government approved Ghodazari in Chandrapur district as new wildlife sanctuary in state. Located in North East of Tadoba, it will include 159 sq km of Brahmapuri forest.
336. ▶ Maharashtra Government approved Industrial Policy for Women Entrepreneurs, considering a woman or a group of women who have financed 100% for project and hired minimum 50% women employees as women entrepreneurs.
✎ Under this, a woman entrepreneur would get financial assistance from state government in the range of Rs 15 lakh up to Rs 1 crore for capital investment in project at subsidized rate of interest up to 5%.
✎ For projects headed by women entrepreneurs, electricity will be supplied at a subsidized rate of Rs 1-2 per unit instead of Rs 7-8 per unit charges for industries.
✎ Maharashtra is first state to have such policy exclusively for women entrepreneurs.
337. ▶ Maharashtra Government became first state to set up a Transgender Welfare Board, to look after education, employment, housing, and health schemes for transgenders and protect their Constitutional and human rights.
338. ▶ Maharashtra Government framed helipad policy that lays down strict guidelines for helipads, their location and other procedures to be followed. Need for such policy was felt owing to a series of near-mishaps during last year.
339. ▶ Maharashtra Government launched 4 schemes aimed at promoting entrepreneurship in agriculture and allied sectors among economically backward segments (Beneficiaries in 18 – 41 years age group) -
✎ 1st scheme is about extending loan along with interest subsidy
✎ 2nd is for promoting group farming.
✎ 3rd scheme is for group projects related to agro-industries and small and medium scale entrepreneurs
✎ 4th scheme relates to skill development training in agriculture under which, training will be imparted to 2.5 lakh rural youths.
✎ *Annasaheb Patil Arthik Backward Development Corporation (APABDC)* will be nodal entity for implementation of these schemes.
340. ▶ Maharashtra Government launched a new scheme to help the landless labourers from the Scheduled Castes to acquire agricultural land, paying only 5 % of cost. The rest up to 8 lakh rupees will be borne by Maharashtra government. This is a modified version of Dadasaheb Gaikwad empowerment scheme for landless labourers scheme, that offered 50 % subsidy.
341. ▶ Maharashtra Government proposed a 100 point Performance-linked marking system for 7.5 lakh state government employees. Out of 100 marks, 60 marks will be assigned for performance on objective parameters (*speed of completion of task, punctuality, attentiveness*), while 40 marks will be given for subjective parameters (*quality of file notings, contribution in policy making, articulation of thought*).
342. ▶ Maharashtra Government will adopt Clinical establishment (Registration and Regulation) Act, to ensure minimum standards of facilities and services provided by them.
343. ▶ Maharashtra Government will form an education board for non-English medium schools, that will prepare syllabus for non-English medium schools in Maharashtra.
344. ▶ Maharashtra Government will provide Rs 3 subsidy for every litre of milk to co-operative and private producers to manufacture milk powder, aimed at encouraging production of milk powder from surplus milk. Milk producers in Maharashtra will get Minimum Support Price (MSP) of INR 27 per litre.
345. ▶ Maharashtra Govt. launched QUEST (*Quality Evaluation for Sustainable Transformation*), a centre to evaluate and quantify special development budget allocations and their impact on tribal development, to bring greater accountability in management of funds allocated for tribal welfare.
346. ▶ Maharashtra Health department and Johnson and Johnson signed MoU to train rural midwives and social health activists regarding tuberculosis and maternal and infant mortality. Nearly 10,000 auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) and 60,000 Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHAs) in Maharashtra will be trained by Johnson and Johnson at district level.
347. ▶ Maharashtra State Government became first state to sign a MoU with Centre's Green Rating for Integrated Habitat Assessment (GRIHA) Council to train state's Public Works Department (PWD) officials to rate government buildings. Objective is to encourage environment

friendly buildings, that are designed using environmentally responsible processes.










348. ▶ Maharashtra became first State to adopt a fintech (Financial Technology) policy for fostering an environment for fintech startups. Under this, State Government will provide infrastructure and financial support to facilitate 300 startups over 3 years, with INR 200 crores allotted for it.
349. ▶ Maharashtra became first state to provide digitally-signed land record receipts (also known as 7/12 receipts), to check irregularities and bring in transparency.
350. ▶ Maharashtra became first state to unveil Public Cloud Policy that virtually mandates state government departments to shift their data storage onto cloud.
351. ▶ Maharashtra government announced that cancer patients would be provided with free chemotherapy treatment at district hospitals, starting June 2018. It aims to ease travelling and lodging problems of cancer patients who come to Mumbai's Tata Memorial Hospital in Parel, which is one of the country's premier cancer treatment facilities.
352. ▶ Maharashtra government approved to provide sanitary napkins at a subsidised rate of Rs 5 to women living in rural areas.
353. ▶ Maharashtra government banned sale of tobacco in shops selling Fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) items in state, to ensure that youngsters do not get addicted to tobacco products.
354. ▶ Maharashtra government launched *Balasaheb Thackeray Shaheed Sanmaan scheme*, under which family members of martyrs would be provided jobs with Maharashtra State road Transport Corporation (MSRTC). Apart from jobs, wives of martyrs would also be provided with lifetime free bus passes.
355. ▶ Maharashtra government partnered with Wikipedia, to spread Marathi language and enhance its online usage. It was announcement on Marathi language day (Feb 27).
356. ▶ Maharashtra government will offer cash rewards to gram panchayats and urban local bodies for making their respective areas plastic-free, with First prize being INR 5 lakh.
357. ▶ Maharashtra government will rename Jalgaon-based North Maharashtra University after Bahinabai Chaudhari, renowned poetess of 19th century.
358. ▶ Maharashtra government will roll out *Asmita Yojana* on International Women's Day (March 8, 2018) to provide affordable (subsidised) sanitary pads to school girls and women. Under this, schoolgirls studying in Zilla Parishad schools will get sanitary napkin packet at Rs 5 while rural women can avail it at subsidised rate of INR 24 and INR 29. State government appointed *Umed*, Maharashtra State Rural Livelihood Mission, as a nodal agency for effective implementation.
359. ▶ Manipur CM N.Biren Singh launched *Go to Village* mission throughout, aimed at identifying eligible beneficiaries across state and delivering government services at their doorstep. The mission has been launched in 60 villages of all 60 Assembly constituencies.
360. ▶ Manipur's Shirui Lily Festival 2018 has been concluded at Ukhrul district, to spread awareness about conservation of endangered Shirui Lily.
361. ▶ Mankidia tribe in Odisha has been denied habitat rights in Similipal Tiger Reserve (Odisha) amid possibilities of tribals being attacked by wild animals (especially tigers). It is notified under historic Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2006.
 - ▶ Mankidia is one of 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) and depends on making rope with siali fibre that's richly available in Similipal.
362. ▶ Meghalaya Governor Ganga Prasad inaugurated *Friendship Gate* for Indian and Bangladesh border guards, aimed to have a Wagah-like beating retreat ceremony for India's Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guards Bangladesh.
363. ▶ Meghalaya became first state to operationalize a *Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act 2017*, a law that makes social audit of government programmes and schemes a part of government practice.
364. ▶ Meghalaya government launched 'Mission Lakadong' to achieve a five-fold increase in production of Lakadong turmeric, an organic variety of turmeric grown in Meghalaya, to at least 50,000 metric tonne per year in 5 years. Jaintia Hills District is home to Lakadong turmeric.
365. ▶ Minimum Wages (Delhi) Amendment Act 2017 has been officially notified after of President's Approval. It amends Minimum Wages Act 1948, and was passed by Delhi Assembly in August 2017.
 - ▶ As per new rules, employers violating labour rules in Delhi will now face fine ranging from Rs 20000 to 50000 and jail term of one to three years.
 - ▶ Courts will be required to dispose it off within a month from the date of filing.
 - ▶ Delhi Government hiked minimum wages of unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers by 37 %. Minimum Wages are -
 - ▶ Unskilled worker - 13350
 - ▶ Semi-skilled - 14698

 Skilled persons is Rs 16182 in Delhi.

366. ▶ Minister for Railways and Coal Piyush Goyal launched UTTAM App for Coal Quality Monitoring. UTTAM stands for – Unlocking Transparency by Third Party Assessment of Mined Coal (uttam.coalindia.in). It aims to provide an App for all citizens and coal consumers to monitor Third Party Sampling of coal across CIL subsidiaries. It provides a platform for monitoring of sampling and coal dispatches and aims to make citizens a stakeholder in coal ecosystem.
367. ▶ Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Radha Mohan Singh laid foundation stone of frozen semen station in Maranga, Purnea (Bihar), being set up at a cost of Rs 64 crore under Rashtriya Gokul Mission (100% contribution from Central Government). It aims at increasing milk production through artificial insemination techniques used by CMOFED (Sudha) in Bihar.
-  Rashtriya Gokul Mission was initiated in December 2014 with an aim to conserve and develop indigenous breeds.
368. ▶ Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu launched Intellectual Property (IP) mascot – IP Nani, at conference on National Intellectual Property Rights Policy in New Delhi.
-  Mascot IP Nani is a tech-savvy grandmother who helps the government and enforcement agencies in combating IP crimes with the help of her grandson “Chhotu” aka Aditya. IP mascot will spread awareness about the importance of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).
-  National IPR Policy is a vision document that aims to create synergies between all forms of intellectual property (IP), concerned statutes and agencies. It aims to adapt global best practices to Indian scenario. In this regard, Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) was created in 2016 under DIPP.
369. ▶ Minister of Communications Manoj Sinha launched DARPAN *Digital Advancement of Rural Post Office for A New India* Project to improve quality of service, add value to services and achieve “financial inclusion” of un-banked rural population. It aims of financial inclusion for rural population and it is targeted to complete the project by March 2018.
370. ▶ Minister of Health and Family Welfare JP Nadda launched *Viral Load testing* for all People Living with HIV/AIDS, to provide free of cost viral load testing to 12 lakh PLHIV for treatment in India at least once a year. It will empower medical officers to detect failure on first line treatment and therefore save PLHIV from developing resistance to drugs.
371. ▶ Minister of Information & Broadcasting Smriti Zubin Irani Launched a scholarship of INR 25000 in commemoration of Deen Dayal Upadhyay, for people who did exemplary work in development of journalism.
372. ▶ Minister of Women & Child Development, Maneka Gandhi launched NARI portal, aimed at providing women citizens with easy access to information on government schemes and initiatives for women.
-  e-Samvad portal is also developed which will be inaugurated soon. It will be a platform for NGOs and Civil Societies to interact with Ministry of Women & Child Development.
373. ▶ Ministries of Railways, Human Resource Development and Department of Science & Technology signed an MoU for joint funding of Technology Mission for Indian Railways, worth approx 300 Crores INR. Funding percentage is - Railways (30%), Human Resource Development (25%) AND Department of Science & Technology (25%).
374. ▶ Ministry for Development of North-East Region (DoNER) will set up *NITI Forum for North-East* to recommend suitable interventions for sustainable growth in North East Region (NER). It will be co-chaired by Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog (Rajiv Kumar Currently) and Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region (DoNER).
375. ▶ Ministry of *Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation* signed A MOU with Bihar and Jharkhand state governments for completion of balance works of North Koel reservoir project at an estimated cost of INR 1622 crores.
-  North Koel project was started in 1972 but was later halted in 1993. It is situated on North Koel river (a tributary of Sone river), that will provide irrigation to 1,11,521 hectares of land annually in most drought prone areas of Palamu and Garhwa districts in Jharkhand and Aurangabad and Gaya districts in Bihar.
-  Out of cost of balance works of INR 1622 crores, component of INR 1013 crores shall be borne by central Govt. as a grant from LTIF under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY).
376. ▶ Ministry of Agriculture and Famers Welfare unveiled Model Agriculture Produce and Livestock Contract Farming and Services (Promotion & Facilitation) Act 2018, to ensure better price to farmers and encouraging investment from agribusiness and food processing industries.
-  Under contract farming, agricultural production can be carried out based on pre-harvest agreement between buyers and producers (farmers or farmer organisations). It reduces risk of fluctuating market price and demand.
-  Model Act seeks to create regulatory and policy framework for contract farming and services. It covers contract farming in agriculture crops, livestock, dairy and poultry products. It lays special emphasis on protecting interests of farmers, considering them as weaker of two parties entering into a contract.

- ✎ It makes mandatory for covering contracted produce under crop and livestock insurance in operation. Under it, no permanent structure can be developed on farmers' land or premises.
 - ✎ It establishes Contract Farming Facilitation Group (CFFG) for promoting contract farming and services at village or panchayat at level.
377. ▶ Ministry of Civil Aviation awarded 325 air routes under 2nd phase of government's flagship UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam naagrik) regional connectivity scheme.
- ✎ Government announced that 73 underserved airports and helipads will be connected under phase 2 of UDAN Scheme. Interglobe Aviation (parent firm of IndiGo) was awarded a maximum of 20 proposals, followed by SpiceJet that won 17 proposals.
 - ✎ Around 40% or 129 of 325 air routes were awarded to newly created category of 'priority areas' that include Jammu and Kashmir, Northeastern and hill states, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands.
 - ✎ UDAN 2 will provide over 26 lakh seats per annum that will be covered with airfare cap of INR 2500 per hour of flying.
 - ✎ Funding for UDAN 2 will be INR 617 crores, significantly more than 213 crores in First Phase.
378. ▶ Ministry of Culture organized 9th Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav under *Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat*, in Tehri (Uttarakhand), also subsuming Tehri Lake Festival (where one can explore water sports) within itself.
- ✎ Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav (RSM) presents rich diversity and uniqueness of Indian culture and promotes cultural inter-linkages amongst states to strengthen National integration.
 - ✎ Paired state for Uttarakhand under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat matrix is Karnataka, giving special emphasis to Karnataka in the event.
379. ▶ Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY) launched *Stree Swabhiman* Initiative aimed at creating sustainable model for providing adolescent girls and women an access to affordable sanitary products by leveraging Common Service Centres (CSCs). CSCs will provide access to affordable, reliable and modern (eco-friendly) sanitary napkins (menstrual pads) to adolescent girls and women in rural areas.
380. ▶ Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY) launched Digital India Internship Scheme along with its website.
- ✎ Under this, 25 interns will be inducted for period of three months. These interns will be paid a stipend of Rs. 10, 000 per month.
 - ✎ Eligibility - Indian students from recognized universities who secured over 60% marks in last held degree. Students pursuing B.E/B.Tech or M.E/M.Tech or dual degrees can apply for internships on the portal.
 - ✎ Internship will be offered two times in year - summer Internship during May and June and winter Internship during December and January.
 - ✎ Proposed broad areas for Internship are Cyber Security, e-Governance, Digital Literacy (HRD), International Cooperation & Industrial Promotion, Hardware Industry and Digital Payments and Electronic Testing.
381. ▶ Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) launched *Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative* to strengthen cybersecurity ecosystem in India, in association with National e-Governance Division (NeGD). It will leverage expertise of the IT industry in cybersecurity and will be operated on principles of awareness, education and enablement.
382. ▶ Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF's) gave environmental clearance to India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) project to be set up in Bodi West hills in Tamil Nadu.
- ✎ MoEF's Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) showed there will be no impact of blasting on any habitation in vicinity, along with no scope for radioactivity and leaching of water.
 - ✎ INO) Project aims at building a world-class underground laboratory with a rock cover of approximately 1200 meter. Its mandate is to conduct basic research on elementary particle called neutrino. Underground Observatory will provide shielding to neutrino detector from cosmic background radiation.
 - ✎ The non-accelerator based high energy and nuclear physics underground research complex will be approached by a 2-kms long tunnel. It also envisages construction of 50,000 tonne magnetised iron calorimeter detector (ICAL).
383. ▶ Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) refused captive breeding of Chiru (Tibetan antelope), whose underfur is used for making famous shahtoosh shawls.
- ✎ Chiru have been for long time for their underfur, which is renowned for its quality which is traditionally woven into an extremely fine fabric to make Shahtoosh shawls.
384. ▶ Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) launched Green Skill Development Programme (GSDP), to train over 5.5 lakh workers in environment and forest sectors through 30 courses by 2021 for sustainable conservation of natural resources.
- ✎ GSDP-ENVIS mobile application was also launched to provide more information and applying to courses under GSDP programme.
 - ✎ GSDP was launched in 2017 by MoEFCC in partnership with National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) to develop green skilled workers having technical knowledge and commitment to sustainable development.

385. ▶ Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) released 15th India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2017 (by Forest Survey of India (FSI)) -
- ✍ Total forest and tree cover in India increased over 8,021 sq km (80.20 million hectare), which is 1 % increase from 2015. Forest cover increased by 6778 sq km and tree cover increased 1243 sq km. Total forest and tree cover is 24.39% of geographical area of country.
 - ✍ Globally, India is ranked 10th in terms of forest and tree cover.
 - ✍ State-wise break-up -
 - ✍ 7 States/UTs have more than 75% forest cover - Mizoram, Lakshadweep, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya and Manipur.
 - ✍ 8 States/UTs have forest cover between 33% to 75% - Tripura, Goa, Sikkim, Kerala, Uttarakhand, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Chhattisgarh and Assam.
 - ✍ Top 5 States with maximum Forest cover - Madhya Pradesh (77,414 sq km) Arunachal Pradesh (66,964 sq km) and Chhattisgarh (55,547 sq km).
 - ✍ States with highest Forest cover in terms of percentage geographical area - Lakshadweep (90.33%), Mizoram (86.27%) and Andaman & Nicobar Islands (81.73%).
 - ✍ Mangrove cover is 4,921 sq km and has increased by 181 sq kms.
 - ✍ Water bodies inside forests have increased by 2,647 sq kms during last decade. Maharashtra leads with 432 sq kms, followed by Gujarat (428 sq kms).
386. ▶ Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) rolled out 'Gaj Yatra', an awareness campaign to protect elephants from Tura in Garo Hills of Meghalaya. Under this, elephant mascot will be taken across districts frequented by jumbo herds for generating awareness.
387. ▶ Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) launched *Green Good Deeds* campaign to sensitise people and students about climate change and global warming.
388. ▶ Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) launched *Videsh Aaya Pradesh ke Dwaar* engagement programme with regional media in Hyderabad, Telangana. It aims at enhancing public diplomacy outreach of MEA and its commitment to take objectives of foreign policy to people at grassroot-level.
389. ▶ Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) launched SAMEEP (Students and MEA Engagement Program), as an outreach mission that aims to take Indian foreign policy and its global engagements to students across country and also to look at diplomacy as a career option. SAMEEP aims to familiarise school and college students in India about functioning of MEA.
390. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare announced to increase number of AMRIT pharmacy stores by 4 times by end of 2018 from existing 111.
- ✍ So far, over 50 lakh patients bought discounted drugs (60 to 90% less than market price) from AMRIT (Affordable medicine and reliable implants for treatment) stores and saved over INR 267 crores.
391. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare approved amending regulation for admission to PG medical courses in order to expand scope of persons with disabilities getting the benefit of reservation. Now, seats reserved for people with disabilities for admission to postgraduate medical courses will be increased from 3 to 5 %.
392. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched *LaQshya* Program aimed at improving quality of care in labour room and maternity Operation Theatre (OT).
- ✍ Under this, Quality Improvement in labour room and maternity OT will be assessed through NQAS (National Quality Assurance Standards). Facilities with 70% score on NQAS will be certified as LaQshya certified facility. Facilities scoring more than 90%, 80% and 70% will be given Platinum, Gold and Silver badge accordingly.
393. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched Allied and Health care Professional Database portal to make data repository robust to ensure better systems and frameworks for healthcare workforce in country, to help tracking number of professionals and streams of allied and health care professions.
394. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will launch *National Programme for Control of Viral Hepatitis*, as a new scheme free treatment of Hepatitis C from 2018-19, with focus on free anti-viral treatment of Hepatitis C. For this, budget of INR 600 crores is marked for 3 years.
395. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare will roll out 'Integrated initiative for prevention & control of viral hepatitis' under National Health Mission (NHM) for prevention and control of viral hepatitis. It will have budgetary support of over 517 crores for three years. India aims to eliminate viral hepatitis by 2030.
396. ▶ Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises has extended Phase-1 of FAME India (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles) Scheme to provide financial support to electric and hybrid vehicles by another six months till 30 September 2018 or till launch of phase-II.

-  FAME-India scheme was launched in 2015 under National Electric Mobility Mission (NEMM). It aims at promoting eco-friendly vehicles in the country.
397. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) exempted cruise tourists arriving with e-visa from the requirement of biometric enrolment for a period of three years (till 2020), to promote cruise tourism in India.
398. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) extended Anti-Narcotics Scheme for 3 more years to combat illicit trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances, with an estimated budget of INR 21 crores. It was launched in October 2004 for 5 years and has been extended twice since then.
399. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) launched web-based application e-FRRO (e-Foreigners Regional Registration Office) to allow foreign tourists and travellers to avail of paperless and cashless visa-related services.
400. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) relaxed six-decade-old protected area permit (PAP) regime to allow foreign tourists to access border areas of Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur for 5 years effect from April 1, 2018. However, citizens from Pakistan, China and Afghanistan will still be banned from all PAP areas.
401. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) will set up Cyber Warrior Police Force (CWPF) and Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) to tackle internet-related crimes such as cyber threats, child pornography and online stalking, under MHA's new Cyber & Information Security (CIS) Division.
402. ▶ Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) launched *Protocol for Star Rating of Garbage-Free Cities* in Goa, under Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban. It has 7-star rating system for cities, based on multiple cleanliness indicators for solid waste management. City will be given rating of 3 star or above only after it is declared ODF (Open Defecation Free).
403. ▶ Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs approved construction of 1.87 more affordable houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), that aims at building 2 Crore Houses for urban poor by 2022. This round has taken number of houses approved under PMAY to 39.25 lakh. Haryana has been sanctioned maximum number of houses in this round.
404. ▶ Ministry of Housing and Urban affairs (MoHUA) launched Liveability index to rate 116 Indian cities, funded by World Bank.
 It aims to measure quality of life in 99 smart cities, capital cities and those with a population of over one million.
 Index will rank cities based on set of 79 parameters related to various aspects.
405. ▶ Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) launched initiative for development of 1.5 million higher education faculty using massive open online course (MOOC) platform SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active – Learning for Young Aspiring Minds). Under first phase, 75 discipline-specific National Resource Centres (NRCs) have been identified.
 NRCs includes varied institutions under Ministry's Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya National Mission on Teachers and Teaching (PMMNMTT), in Central Universities, IISc, IUCAA, IITs, IISERs, NITs, State Universities, UGC's Human Resource Development Centres (HRDCs), National Institutes for Technical Teachers Training (NITTTRs), IIITs, Open Universities.
406. ▶ Ministry of Human Resources Development (HRD) approved *Study in India* programme to attract foreign students to pursue higher education in India, with expenditure of INR 150 crores for 2018-19 and 2019-20. It aims to double India's market share of global education exports from less than 1% to 2%.
 Under it, 100% waiver of tuition fees will be only for the top 25% students, 50% waiver of tuition fees only for the next 25% students, 25% waiver of tuition fees only for next 25% students and no waiver of tuition fee for remaining 25% of students.
407. ▶ Ministry of New and Renewable Energy issued National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy, aiming at promotion of large grid connected wind-solar PV hybrid system for efficient utilization of transmission infrastructure and land. It provides for integration of both energy sources (wind and solar) at AC and DC level.
 It also provides for flexibility in share of wind and solar components in hybrid project, subject to condition that, rated power capacity of one resource be at least 25 % of rated power capacity of other resource for it to be recognised as a hybrid project.
 Policy permits use of battery storage in hybrid project for optimising output and further reduce variability.
 With significant capacity additions in renewables, and Hybrid Policy aiming at better utilisation of resources, it is envisaged that Hybrid Policy will open-up a new area for availability of renewable power at competitive prices.
 A scheme for new hybrid projects under the policy is also expected shortly.
408. ▶ Ministry of New and Renewable Energy under *Development of Solar Cities* scheme approved 60 Cities including 13 Pilot and 5 Model Cities up to 12th Five-year Plan period.
409. ▶ Ministry of Power partnered with Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship to train manpower in six states for speedy implementation of its Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojna (Saubhagya Scheme). States - Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh. Under this, 47,000 Distribution Lineman-Multi Skills and 8,500 Technical Helpers will be trained to meet requirement of power sector projects under Saubhagya scheme.

410. ▶ Ministry of Railways has launched new user interface of its Next Generation e-Ticketing (NGeT) System on Indian Railway's ([url - www.irctc.co.in/nget](http://www.irctc.co.in/nget)).
- ✎ Using it, user can enquire trains and check availability of seats without logging in to system, saving time of users.
 - ✎ It will provide enhanced class-wise, train-wise, destination-wise, departure and arrival time wise and quota-wise filters for facilitating customer while planning their journeys.
 - ✎ It also has waitlist prediction which will allow user to get probability of wait-listed or RAC tickets getting confirmed.
 - ✎ User can find out availability for entire Advance Reservation Period (of 120 days), except for few trains in improvised page.
411. ▶ Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has released India's first ever Highway Capacity Manual named Indo-HCM, to guide road engineers and policy makers about road expansion. It lays down guidelines for when and how to expand or manage different types of roads and their intersections and level of services to be put in place.
412. ▶ Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) approved green licence plates bearing numbers in white fonts for private e-vehicles and yellow for taxis to promote electric vehicles. It aims at easy identification of electric vehicles for preferential treatment in parking, free entry in congested zones besides other proposed benefits like concessional toll.
- ✎ India presently has approx 1 to 1.5 lakh electric vehicles. It is projected to grow to about 5% of total vehicles in next five years.
413. ▶ Ministry of Science & Technology announced 4 new schemes to promote young scientists and researchers in country - Teacher Associateship for Research Excellence (TARE), Overseas Visiting Doctoral Fellowship (OVDF), Distinguished Investigator Award (DIA) and AWSAR (Augmenting Writing Skills for Articulating Research). These schemes aim at early recognition and reward to young talent in field of science.
414. ▶ Ministry of Shipping and IIT Chennai signed MoU to set up of a National Technology Centre for Ports, Waterways and Coasts (NTCPWC) at IIT Chennai, under Shipping Ministry *Sagarmala Programme*. It will act as a technology arm of Ministry of Shipping for providing technological inputs and support for Ports, Inland Waterways Authority of India and other institutions.
415. ▶ Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Maruti Suzuki India signed MoU to support Skill India Mission in automobile industry, to provide high employment potential trades related to automobile and manufacturing industry to youth under Skill India Mission.
416. ▶ Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs will introduce first ever ranking system for National Sports Federations (NSFs), to build healthy competition between sports bodies. Sports federations will be ranked on the basis of administrative capability, transparency, talent-spotting ability, and medal count of athletes etc.
417. ▶ Ministry of Tourism expanded Buddhist tourism circuit under Swadesh Darshan Scheme to 21 more states to make it India's first transnational tourist circuit. Earlier it was envisaged only to 7 major Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
418. ▶ Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) launched Adopt a Heritage Project. Under it, tourist amenities will be developed at selected heritage sites. Engaged Entities will be called as *Monument Mitra* and adopt sites essentially under their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activity.
419. ▶ Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) will expand Van Dhan Vikas Kendras in tribal districts, with 3000 such kendras proposed to be set up in 2 years. Initially, it will be taken up in 39 districts with over 50% tribal population and then will be expanded to other Tribal Districts.
- ✎ Van Dhan Yojana aims at mainstreaming tribal community by promoting primary level value addition to Non Timber Minor Forest Produce (MFP) at grassroots level. It also aims to promote MFPs-centric livelihood development of tribal gatherers and artisans.
 - ✎ Through this, share of tribals in value chain of Non-Timber Forest Produce is expected to rise from 20% to around 60%.
420. ▶ Ministry of Tribal affairs approved establishment of first multipurpose "Van Dhan Vikas Kendra" in Bijapur District of Chhattisgarh for value addition of Forest Produce, as part of Government's scheme of Mechanism for marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support price (MSP) and development of Value chain for MFP.
421. ▶ Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation constituted Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal for adjudication of longstanding disputes between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over sharing of Mahanadi river water. It will have 3 members with A M Khanwilkar nominated as chairman. Other members are Ravi Ranjan and Indwermeet Kaur Kochar.
422. ▶ Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) launched Management Information System (MIS) portal for Anganwadi Services Training Programme. It enables submission of applications and estimates by NGOs for carrying out Anganwadi Services (ICDS) Training through Anganwadi Workers Training Centres (AWTC) and Middle-Level Training Centres (MLTC).
423. ▶ Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) launched beneficiary module of Rapid Reporting System (RRS), a monitoring system for Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG). It will facilitate monitoring of SAG and take corrective measures by ensuring faster flow of information, accurate targeting of beneficiaries and reduction of leakages. URL for the portal is 'sag-rrs.nic.in.'
424. ▶ Ministry of Women and Child Development will establish National Women Entrepreneurship Council (NWEC) as an umbrella organization for socio-economic gender parity, financial inclusion and economic empowerment of women in India and to promote

entrepreneurship among women.

425. ▶ NITI Aayog and ABB India signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) to government realise its vision of 'Make in India' through advanced manufacturing technologies that incorporate latest developments in robotics and artificial intelligence. NITI Aayog will work with ABB across various sectors, to suggest solutions for digitalisation, incorporating Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) technologies.
426. ▶ NITI Aayog and Actor Sushant Singh Rajput collaborated to promote 2 major initiatives of NITI Aayog - promotion of BHIM and Women Entrepreneurship Platform.
427. ▶ NITI Aayog and IBM signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) to develop a crop yield prediction model using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to provide real-time advisory to farmers in aspirational districts. Aim is to enable cooperation in the use of technology to provide insights to farmers to improve crop productivity, soil yield, control agricultural inputs with the overarching goal of improving farmers' incomes.
428. ▶ NITI Aayog launched baseline ranking for the Aspirational Districts based on published data of 49 indicators across 5 developmental areas of Education, Health and Nutrition, Agriculture and Water Resources, Basic Infrastructure and Financial Inclusion and Skill Development.
- ▶ Additionally, *Champions of Change* Dashboard (created by NITI Aayog in partnership with Government of Andhra Pradesh) for real-time data collection and monitoring will be open for public viewing from April 1, 2018. District Collectors of aspirational districts will be able to input latest available data of their respective districts through this Dashboard.
429. ▶ NITI Aayog launched first course on Sustainable Urban planning using remote sensing and Geographic Information System (GIS) at IIT Kanpur's outreach centre in Noida (UP). This is first course under Global Initiative on Academic Network (GIAN) Program of HRD Ministry, that aims to boost quality of higher education through international collaboration.
- ▶ Course aims to impart high level remote sensing and GIS skills to allow them managing rapidly changing urban environment, with focus on water related activities.
430. ▶ NITI Aayog released a comprehensive 'Healthy States, Progressive India' report in New Delhi.
- ▶ Health Index is a weighted composite Index, which for larger States, is based on indicators in three domains - Health Outcomes (70%), Governance and Information (12%), Key Inputs and Processes (18%).
 - ▶ Large States -
 - ▶ Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu are top 3 states in overall performance.
 - ▶ Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir, and Uttar Pradesh are top 3 ranking larger States in terms of annual incremental performance.
 - ▶ Smaller States -
 - ▶ Mizoram ranked first, followed by Manipur in Overall performance.
 - ▶ Manipur and Goa are top 2 in terms of annual incremental performance.
431. ▶ NITI Aayog released comprehensive roadmaps and detailed timelines for its initiative 'Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E)' project.
- ▶ NITI Aayog Launched SATH program with a vision to initiate transformation in education and health sectors. SATH identifies 3 states in each of Health and Education Sectors.
 - ▶ Health - Uttar Pradesh, Assam, and Karnataka, Education - Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and Jharkhand.
432. ▶ NITI Aayog will build National Data & Analytics Platform (NDAP) to host and analyse huge amount of data which shall be helpful for citizens to understand spend patterns of government, consumption trends and success of various government policies.
433. ▶ NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (*government's flagship program to promote innovation and entrepreneurship nationwide in schools, universities and industry*), has selected additional 1500 Schools for establishment of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs), taking number of schools under mission to 2441 across India.
- ▶ ATLs aims to be innovative play workspaces for students between Grade VI to Grade XII, which stimulate innovations combining science & technology.
434. ▶ NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) signed Statement of Intent (SOI) with German tech company SAP to promote culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across 100 Atal Tinkering Labs across India. SAP will adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATL) in 2018 for five years to nurture science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning among secondary school children across India.
- ▶ Atal Innovation Mission (AIM)AIM is flagship initiative to promote culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in country. Its mandated is to create umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of country and revolutionize innovation eco-system.
435. ▶ Nagaland Assembly passed a resolution revoking provisions of 33 % reservation for women in urban local bodies.
436. ▶ National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) is creating a national registry of crimes against women, amid growing concern over incidents of sexual assaults. Records will be sourced from the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS).


437. ▶ National Green Tribunal (NGT) declared Amarnath Shrine as *silence zone* and prohibited religious offerings like chanting of hymns, and ringing bells beyond the entry point. It is aimed at protecting eco-sensitive Amarnath cave shrine.
- ▶ NGT also imposed complete ban on plastic items like carry bags, plates and cutlery in towns located on banks of the River Ganga in Haridwar and Rishikesh.
438. ▶ National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) launched ranking system for over 300 toll plazas, on the basis of cleanliness, staff behaviour, availability of ambulance and cranes in case of any emergency on highways. Every quarter, 3 best toll plazas will be identified.
439. ▶ National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) will launch pilot project *Pay as you use tolling* on Delhi Mumbai national highway.
- ▶ It involves implementing a satellite based electronic toll collection system running on GPS/GSM technology for selected commercial vehicles on a national highway for 1 year.
 - ▶ This tolling system will work on combination of mobile telecommunications technology (GSM) and satellite-based Global Positioning System (GPS). It will deduct money from vehicle account, credit money to concessionaire within a day and open toll gate.
440. ▶ National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) retained its 'A' status of accreditation of Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) for fourth consecutive term.
- ▶ NHRC was awarded 'A' status for first time in 1999 which it retained in 2006 and 2011 reviews.
 - ▶ The 'A' accreditation is given to those human rights institutions, which are found fully compliant with UN-mandated Paris Principles.
441. ▶ National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) New Delhi will conduct *INDIASize* as a National Sizing Survey to develop a comprehensive size chart for ready-to-wear industry based on body measurements of 25000 Indians in age group 15 - 65 years. India will be 15th Nation to complete a national sizing survey.
- ▶ Findings of study will impact various other sectors like automotive, aerospace, fitness and sport, art and computer gaming where insights from this data can produce ergonomically designed products suited for Indian population.
442. ▶ National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) under Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) issued Expression of Interest (EoI) for first offshore wind energy project of India in Gulf of Khambat off the coast of Gujarat, with 1000 MW (1 GW) capacity. MNRE is planning to install at least 5 GW of offshore wind capacity by 2022.
443. ▶ Navratna CPSE National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO) signed MoU with Ministry of Mines, setting highest ever target of Rs 9350 crore revenue from operations for FY 2018-19, 15% higher than last year.
- ▶ It aims at production of 2.1 million tons Alumina with 100% capacity utilisation & an optimum Aluminium production target of 4.15 lakh tonnes.
444. ▶ Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF) launched India's internationally benchmarked Forest Management Certification Standard (FMCS). FMCS enlists measures to be taken for responsible utilisation of natural resources and trade of forest products.
445. ▶ New train between Naharlagun (Arunachal Pradesh) and Anand Vihar Terminal (Delhi) named Arunachal Express has been flagged off, as 2nd direct train for Arunachal Pradesh and overall 14th for North East to connect with Delhi. Its route is 2013 kilometres long.
446. ▶ Nine member committee constituted by Karnataka government recommended separate state flag, discounting any constitutional / legal hurdles for it.
447. ▶ Niti Aayog announced to set up a special women cell, to extend support to women start-ups and entrepreneurs.
448. ▶ Niti Aayog will set up a Methanol Economy Fund worth Rs 4,000-5,000 crore to promote production and use of clean fuel, by converting high ash content coal into methanol and such a plant is expected to be set up by Coal India. Methanol can be used as an energy producing fuel, transportation fuel and cooking fuel.
449. ▶ Nobel laureate and noted economist Muhammad Yunus (Bangladesh) has been honoured with 11th KISS Humanitarian Award 2018 in Odisha.
450. ▶ North Korea and South Korea will march together under a single unified Korean flag at Winter Olympics 2018 in Pyeongchang (South Korea). They agreed to field a joint women's ice hockey team after rare peace talks. These are first high-level talks between 2 Koreas in over 2 years.
451. ▶ Northeast Frontier Railway started operating one lease Parcel Cargo Express Train (PCET) on fortnightly basis, connecting Northeast to West Coast, Connecting New Guwahati in Assam to Kalyan in Maharashtra with stoppages at New Jalpaiguri, Kalumna Goods Shed.
- ▶ It would enable farmers in North east to market their products like tea, betel nuts, pineapple, jute, horticulture products, cane furniture etc. at the retail markets in Mumbai, Bengaluru, Nagpur, Pune etc.
 - ▶ A single PCET can carry consignment equivalent to 52 trucks. This will ensure less Carbon Emission which will contribute for Green India & saving of foreign exchange on account of purchasing of fuel.
452. ▶ Northeast India's first regional Centre for Agriculture with collaboration of Israel will be inaugurated in Mizoram in March 2018. It will be first such centre in North East region of India being established with Israeli collaboration.






453. ▶ Odisha Government inaugurated Purvasha Folk and Tribal Art Museum at Barkul near Chilika, to promote the cultural heritage of Odisha.
454. ▶ Odisha Government launched *Odisha e-Hospital Management Information System (OeHMIS)* online platform that hosts all clinical parameters of patients and reporting of performance criteria of hospitals. It also enables viewing and downloading individual electronic health records.
455. ▶ Odisha Government signed MoU with British Council for cooperation in several areas including education, skills and culture. British Council will support Odisha State governments *Mo School (My School)* initiative by contributing to development of English language skills for learners and teachers.
456. ▶ Odisha State Government announced 'Mukshyamantri Kalakar Sahayata Jojana' (MMKSJ), under which artists from across the state will get a monthly assistance of Rs 1200, to benefit approx 50000 artists from across state.
- ▶ Odisha government also changed eligibility criteria as compared to previous artist assistance scheme, under which only 4000 artists were being given Rs 1000 per month. As per new criteria, any male artist can avail assistance under scheme after attaining the age of 50 years (earlier 60 years), while females have relaxation of 10 years.
457. ▶ Odisha approved long-term bauxite linkage policy that would help Vedanta's Lanjigarh alumina refinery to source bauxite from government-owned Odisha Mining Corporation (OMC). Now, 70 % of total production by OMC will now be available for long-term linkage.
458. ▶ Odisha government and Tata Trusts signed MoU for implementing state's decision on land rights settlement for slum dwellers in urban areas. Recently, Odisha Government discontinued evicting slum dwellers in urban areas (by treating them as encroachers), and granted them land rights.
459. ▶ Odisha government launched KHUSHI scheme to provide free sanitary napkins to school girls across state. Under this, govt. will provide free sanitary napkins to 17 lakh girls studying in Classes 6 to 12 in government and government-aided schools.
460. ▶ Odisha government launched programme named *Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas* to reach out to people in rural areas and involve themselves in developmental activities.
461. ▶ Odisha government signed agreement with Software Technology Park of India (STPI), to set up an incubator at IIT Bhubaneswar for promoting research, named *Centre of Excellence for Virtual & Augmented Reality (VARCoE)*.
462. ▶ Odisha government will collaborate with Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for strengthening its early warning services and enhancing preparedness for management of hazards in state.
463. ▶ Odisha police will go digital from January 1 2018, as routine work in police stations will be computerised under Criminal Tracking and Networking System (CCTNS), under national e-governance initiative.
464. ▶ Odisha state Govt. splitted tourism and culture departments, renaming cultural wing as *Odia Language, Literature and Culture Department*. It was also decided to set up a 'Heritage Cabinet' to protect the monuments and ancient temples.
465. ▶ Oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated eastern India's first compressed natural gas (CNG) stations in Bhubaneswar (Odisha).
- ▶ Mr Pradhan Also Stated that for Period of April - Oct of FY 2017-18, Iraq has overtaken Saudi Arabia to become India's top crude oil supplier. Iraq Suplied 25.8 million tonnes (MT) of oil to India in concerned Period, compared to Saudi Arabia's 21.9 MT.
466. ▶ Orange Festival of Music and Adventure held in Dambuk village of Arunachal Pradesh.
467. ▶ Oxford Dictionaries declared 'Aadhaar' as Hindi Word of the Year for 2017, during Jaipur Literature Festival 2018.
468. ▶ PM Narendra Modi Launched 60MW Tuirial Hydroelectric Power Project in Mizoram. It has been constructed by North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (Neepco).
469. ▶ PM Narendra Modi announced investing 90000 crore for building a network of highways and roads in North Eastern region over 2 - 3 years. Out of this, 60000 crore would be spent under Special Accelerated Road Development Programme and 30000 crore will be spent under Bharatmala project.
470. ▶ PM Narendra Modi announced that April 28 will be remembered as a historic day as on this day, every single village of India was electrified, few days before deadline of May 10, 2018.
- ▶ Leisang, a village in central Manipur's Senapati district, was last one to receive electricity on April 29, 2018 under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY).
 - ▶ Out of 18,452 villages that were without electricity in 2015, 17,181 have been electrified. Others are either uninhabited or classified as grazing reserves.
 - ▶ Still, 3.2 crore homes are still not electrified as government considers a village electrified, if it has basic electrical infrastructure; and 10 % of its places including schools, local administrative offices and health centres have power.
 - ▶ PM Modi in his speech on August 15, 2015 promised electrification all un-electrified villages within 1000 days. For this, government launched Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY).

471. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated 4th Container Terminal (FCT) of Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) in Mumbai, as India's Largest Container Terminal. It has been developed at estimated cost of INR 7915 crores.
- ▶ New FCT will add capacity of 24 lakh containers per year in Phase-I and after completion of Phase-II in 2022, capacity of JNPT will be 100 lakh containers per year.
472. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Dr.BR Ambedkar International Centre (DAIC) in New Delhi, constructed at cost of INR 195 crores.
473. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first smart and green highway-135 km long Kundli-Ghaziabad-Palwal (KGP) Expressway also known as Eastern Peripheral Expressway (EPE).
- ▶ It has been completed in about 500 days, as against target of 910 days with cost INR 11000 crores. PM also inaugurated first phase of Delhi-Meerut Expressway, India's first 14 lane expressway and spans from Nizamuddin Bridge to Uttar Pradesh border.
 - ▶ Several Features of Expressway Include Solar power Plants, Rainwater harvesting, Closed tolling system, Weigh-in-Motion (WIMs) equipment, Auto Challans, Intelligent Traffic management AND Green cover.
474. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project and laid Foundation Stone of Pakal Dul Power Project in J & K -
- ▶ Kishanganga Hydroelectric Project -
 - ▶ With capacity of 330 MW, This project in Bandipora District of Jammu and Kashmir is a run of river scheme, that is designed to divert water from the Kishanganga River to a power plant in Jhelum River basin.
 - ▶ It has been completed at cost of INR 5882 crores. Kishanganga H.E. Project will provide free power of 13 % to J & K, of approx 133 crores per year.
 - ▶ Pakal Dul -
 - ▶ With 1000 MW capacity, it will be largest Hydro Power Project in J & K on completion. To be built on Marusadar River (a right bank tributary of Chenab), It is also first storage Project in state. Its sanctioned cost is INR 8112 crores.
 - ▶ As it is a storage project, it shall improve water availability during lean season.
 - ▶ It will employ Around 3000 persons during construction and 500 persons shall be employed during operation phase.
 - ▶ J&K will get 12 % free power after 10 years of commissioning of Project.
475. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Zojila tunnel project, to provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh. Its Length will be 14.2 km, making it country's longest road tunnel. It will cut down time taken to cross Zojila pass from 3.5 hours to 15 minutes. It will also be Asia's longest bi-directional tunnel and will be built at a cost of INR 6,809 crores.
476. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated a unique world-class hospital at Swaminarayan Gurukul Vidyapeeth Pratisthanam in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. It is an integration of Yoga, Ayurveda, and Allopathy with world-class facilities in all the 3 streams.
477. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated newly constructed Dorjee Khandu State Convention Centre in Itanagar (Arunachal Pradesh).
478. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated project commencement of Rajasthan oil refinery at Pachpadra in Barmer district, as first one to be set up in Rajasthan. It is as a joint venture of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) and Rajasthan government, with budget of INR 43000 crores and expected to be operational in 4 years.
479. ▶ PM Narendra Modi laid foundation stone today for 2400MW first phase of NTPC's Patratu Super Thermal Power Project in Jharkhand, as a 74: 26 Joint Venture between Government of Jharkhand (GoJ) and NTPC Owned Patratu Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Ltd. (PVUN). PVUNL will develop it in two phases: 2,400 MW (3x800MW) in Phase-I and 1,600 MW (2x800 MW) in Phase-II.
- ▶ It will allocate 85 % of power to Jharkhand. Under Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana (Saubhagya) scheme, it will ensure 24x7 power availability to households.
 - ▶ Engineering, Procurement & Construction contract of the project has been awarded to BHEL. Commissioning of first unit is envisaged in 2022.
480. ▶ PM Narendra Modi launched *Amma two-wheeler Scheme* meant to provide scooters at subsidised rates to working women on occasion of former Tamilnadu CM Jayalalithaa's 70th birth anniversary.
- ▶ Under this Scheme, beneficiary will be given 50% of cost of a two-wheeler or grant of INR 25000, covering 1 lakh working women annually.
481. ▶ PM Narendra Modi launched India's first 12,000 horsepower electric locomotive with transport capacity of 6000 tonnes from Madhepura locomotive factory of Bihar, made with help of French company Alstom.
- ▶ India Joins Russia, China, Germany and Sweden that have successfully run over 12000 horsepower capacity electric Locomotives.
 - ▶ Alstom will deliver 800 high horsepower locomotives over 11 years to India. First five locomotives will be imported while remaining 795 will be manufactured in India.
482. ▶ PM Narendra Modi launched development schemes worth Rs 1,000 crore for UT of Daman and Diu, Including a flight connecting Ahmedabad to coastal town of Diu. PM Modi also flagged off *Run for New India* marathon in Surat (Gujarat).

483. ▶ Pakyong airport in Sikkim will be 100th operational airport in country, after its commissioning in June 2018. Post commissioning, Airline SpiceJet will be operating flights to Pakyong in Sikkim from Kolkata under UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik).
484. ▶ Passed Bills in March 2018 -
- ✎ Parliament passed Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill 2017 to empower government to fix period of maternity leave and tax-free gratuity amount.
 - ✎ It seeks to amend Payment of Gratuity Act 1972 that allows for payment of gratuity to employees in any establishment, factory, mine, oilfield, plantation, port, railways, company, or shop employing 10 or more workers. Employees are paid gratuity if they have provided at least 5 years of continuous service at time of termination.
 - ✎ Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill 2017 empowers government to notify period of maternity leave eligible for qualifying as continuous service and determine amount of gratuity available to employees. Bill removes reference to 12 weeks in Maternity Benefit Act 1961 and empowers central government to notify maximum maternity leave. Maximum maternity leave was changed from 12 to 26 weeks by Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act 2017. Bill removes ceiling of INR 10 lakh amount of gratuity payable to an employee and ceiling may be notified by central government.
 - ✎ After implementation of 7th Central Pay Commission recommendations, ceiling of tax-free gratuity amount for central government employees was increased from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 20 lakh.
 - ✎ Lok Sabha passed Specific Relief (Amendment) Bill 2017 to further ease procedures for doing business by amending Specific Relief Act 1963.
 - ✎ This bill sets out remedies available to parties whose contractual or civil rights have been violated. It also provides a remedy that aims at fulfilment of an obligation or specific performance of contract rather than a general relief or compensation or damages.
 - ✎ Lok Sabha passed a bill (Without debate) that will exempt political parties from the scrutiny of funds they have received from abroad since 1976. It included amendment to Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act 2010 that bans overseas corporations from funding political parties.
485. ▶ Pelican Bird Festival-2018 is held for first in Atapaka Bird Sanctuary on at Kolleru lake in Andhra Pradesh. Recently, Atapaka Bird Sanctuary was recognised as one of the largest pelicanry in the world.
486. ▶ Power Ministry extended waiver of inter-state power transmission charges and losses for solar and wind power projects commissioned till 31 March 2022, to promote clean energy sources. Waiver will be available to solar and wind projects for 25 years from date of commissioning.
 - ✎ It holds significance in view of India's ambitious target of having 175GW of renewable energy capacities (100GW of solar, 60GW of wind energy, 10GW energy from Biomass and 5 GW from Hydel).
 - ✎ Earlier, waiver was available to solar and wind power projects commissioned till 31 December 2019, and 31 March 2019 respectively.
487. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind dedicated 4 Launched projects in Andhra Pradesh - Andhra Pradesh Fibregrid, Andhra Pradesh Surveillance Project, Drone Project and Free Space Optical Communication or FSOC system.
 - ✎ Fibregrid - It aims at providing affordable high-speed internet service to every household in state at nominal rates, also termed as Triple Play2.
488. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated Integrated Centre for Crisis Management (ICCM) at Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) Mumbai. It will help respond more effectively to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) emergencies, monitoring radiological data from 504 radiation sensors across country. Other launches Include -
 - ✎ Multi-leaf collimator system - It enables gamma radiation to be exposed only on cancer-affected organs.
 - ✎ Trombay Chhattisgarh Dubraj Mutant-1 - High-yielding dwarf variety of Dubraj mutant rice.
 - ✎ Metal fuel pin fabrication facility - Will help increase plutonium production in fast breeder reactors.
 - ✎ High-power electron beam melting furnace - To be used for nuclear and strategic applications.
 - ✎ Integrated enriched boron tri-fluoride gas generation facility - It was developed by Heavy-water Board in Odisha. It will be used in neutron detectors.
489. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated Naval Maritime Aircraft Museum in Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh), featuring maritime patrol aircraft Tupolev-142M.
490. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind launched three public welfare schemes in Rajasthan - Sundar Singh Bhandari EBC Swarozgar Yojana, Bhairon Singh Shekhawat Antyodaya Swarozgar Yojana and loan and interest waiver scheme for SCs/STs/OBCs, sanitation workers, physically challenged -
 - ✎ Sundar Singh Bhandari EBC Swarozgar Yojana - Government will provide loans of up to Rs 50000 to members of economically backward classes (EBC) from around 50,000 families at 4 % interest rate.

- ✎ Bhairon Singh Shekhawat Antyodaya Swarozgar Yojana - State government would provide loans worth up to Rs 50000 at 4 % interest rate to about 50,000 families from the scheduled castes and tribes and other backward classes for self-employment.
- ✎ Loan waiver scheme - State government would provide 2 lakh worth interest-free loans to people belonging to SC/ ST community and other backward classes for skill development and create employment resources.
491. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind released INR 1000 and INR 10 commemorative coins on occasion of Nabakalebar festival in Puri (Odisha), marking festival which is a symbolic recreation of sibling deities — Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra.
492. ▶ Press Council of India Chairman C.K Prasad rejected Reporters Without Borders (RWB)'s World Press Freedom Index report 2018 that was recently released and ranked India 138th among 180 Nations in terms of level of freedom for media. PCI stated that the report had *lack of clarity*.
493. ▶ Puducherry government launched a special police force to safeguard tourists, provided with special blue colour head gears.
494. ▶ Punjab & Haryana High Court banned bursting of crackers on New Year's Eve & on Jan 1, as well as during weddings or other celebratory functions in Punjab, Haryana & Chandigarh.
495. ▶ Punjab Government discontinued sale of 20 pesticides (insecticides) including Endosulfan harmful to health of humans and environment.
496. ▶ Punjab Government launched Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Vikas Yojna (MGSVY) for welfare of downtrodden citizen across state, on lines of Antyodaya principles (means *rise of the last person*) and will be implemented in rural areas.
497. ▶ Punjab Government signed MOU with Nandan Nilekani's e-Governments Foundation (e-Gov) for managing of electronic governance of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) across state.
498. ▶ Punjab Government signed MoU with Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to set up bio-gas and bio-CNG plants in state, to find sustainable solutions to paddy straw burning. Total 400 such plants will become operational in 3-4 years with investment of INR 5000 crores.
499. ▶ Punjab Government signed MoU with United Kingdom (UK) for setting up of bio-gas and bio- Compressed natural gas (CNG) plants in state. It aims to find a sustainable solutions to paddy straw burning, which is a major concern in Punjab and surrounding region.
500. ▶ Punjab government along with WWF-India will conduct first organised census of Indus Dolphins, one of world's rarest mammals. Dolphins are found only in India and Pakistan, confined to 185 km stretch between Talwara and Harike Barrage in India's Beas River in Punjab.
501. ▶ Punjab government formed 6 member Revenue Commission with an aim to bring greater efficiency and accountability in functioning of Revenue Department. It will be headed by Justice SS Saron.
502. ▶ R K Singh (Minister of Power (IC)) laid foundation stone for 60 MW Naitwar Mori Hydro Electric Project in Uttarkashi (Uttarakhand), on Tons River (a tributary of Yamuna). It will give 265.5 Million Units of renewable energy to grid and cut CO2 emissions by 0.21 Million Tons annually.
503. ▶ RS Puram Police station in Coimbatore (Tamil Nadu) is named best in India in SMART Police Stations initiative of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). SMART stands for *Sensitive and Strict, Modern with mobility, Alert and Accountable, Reliable and Responsive and Trained and Techno-savvy*.
504. ▶ Railways launched SFOORTI (*Smart Freight Operation Optimisation & Real Time Information*) App for Freight Managers which provides features for monitoring and managing freight business using Geographic Information System (GIS) Views and Dashboard. Features Include -
- ✎ *Freight Operation Information System Map View* provides Layered views of freight trains on Railways, that can help plan traffic flows and optimize freight operations.
 - ✎ *Forecasted Rakes Awaiting Interchange* enables Monitoring of all loads, which have been forecasted for the divisional interchange, but the same interchange has not yet reported.
 - ✎ *Stock Specific / Commodity specific Rake Position* can be viewed. Loaded and Empty Rakes of specific Rake Types are plotted on Railways network map in Different colours.
 - ✎ Monitoring of New Origination-Destination Added in Railways.
 - ✎ Loading Trends for Major Commodities during a period.
 - ✎ Performance of Freight Trains can be monitored
505. ▶ Railways will set up of a rail coach factory in Latur district (Maharashtra), to help generate employment opportunities and bring economic development in this backward Marathwada region. Plant will manufacture Electric Multiple Units for suburban trains and coaches for metros.
506. ▶ Railways will standardize trains in terms of number of coaches so that all trains can run on all routes. Soon, all trains would have 22 coaches, making them suitable for running on any route.

 Currently, coaches are of two kinds (ICF and LHB) and number of coaches in a train could be 12, 16, 18, 22 or 26, depending on its demand, making it difficult for the railways to substitute one with the other.

507. ▶ Raja Ramanna Centre for Advanced Technology (RRCAT), an Indore-based unit of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has developed an instrument called Fluorimeter, to measure traces of uranium in water, capable of examining traces of uranium in sample of water from 0.1 PPB (Parts-per-billion) unit to 100 PPB. DAE has transferred its technology to its Electronics Corporation of India Ltd (ECIL) for mass production. It will be especially helpful in states like Punjab where uranium traces in water sources have been found to be at dangerous levels.
508. ▶ Rajasthan Government launched *Nidaan* software, for diseases monitoring and strengthening tele-medicine services in government hospitals. It will help in providing presumptive monitoring of seasonal and non-communicable diseases as well as trends of ailments found in specific areas.
509. ▶ Rajasthan become first state to launch free email addresses in Hindi (in Devanagari script) for its residents, to ensure maximum participation of people towards e-governance and that maximum facilities are available in vernacular language.
510. ▶ Rajasthan government announced 1 % reservation for Gujjars (retaining their Other Backward Classes status) and 4 other communities (Banjara, Gadia-Lohar, Rebari and Gadaria).
511. ▶ Rajasthan government will digitise administrative and historical records of Rajputana's princely states (10000 Pages/day), to protect old and fragile documents.
-  Rajasthan State Archive consists of 30-40 crore administrative and historical records of 22 princely states, and will digitise 3-4 crore documents considered important.
512. ▶ Rajasthan government will introduce 'Guru-Shishya' (student-teacher dialogue) programme to address problems faced by students in various colleges in all districts. It will college students to an discuss their issues and problems related to their institutes, with their teachers.
513. ▶ Rajasthan government will recognise political prisoners held in jails during emergency period (1975 - 1977) as 'Loktantra Sainani', by changing name of Rajasthan MISA and DIR Bandi Pension Rules 2008 to Rajasthan Loktantra Sainani samman Nidhi 2008.
514. ▶ Rajasthan govt. increased age limit for applying for government jobs from 35 to 40 years.
515. ▶ Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Law & Justice AND Electronics & Information Technology inaugurated *NIC-CERT* of National Informatics Centre, aimed at checking enhancing threats and vulnerabilities that are inherent part of increasing cyberspace. It was needed as in recent years, exponential growth in cyber attacks leading to concerns of data theft has been observed by Government.
516. ▶ Reliance Industries commissioned and achieved design throughput of world's largest refinery off-gas cracker at Jamnagar (Gujarat). Refinery will have a capacity of 1.5 million tonnes per annum along with downstream plants and utilities.
517. ▶ Road Transport & Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari launched a mobile App and Toll-free Emergency number for Highway users.
-  Sukhad Yatra mobile application is prepared by National Highways Authority of India to allow Highway users to enter road quality-related information or report any accident or pothole on highway, and several other related info.
-  Toll-free number 1033 will enable users to report an emergency condition, or highway-related feedback, across highway.
518. ▶ Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari announced development of a new Expressway between Delhi and Mumbai, at a cost of 1 Lakh Crore Rupees. Minister also disclosed plans for a Chambal Expressway which would be connected to Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, and is likely to benefit states like Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.
519. ▶ Rural Development Ministry and State Governments have completed ranking of 50000 Gram Panchayats (selected under 'Mission Antyodaya') on three broad parameters of physical infrastructure, human development and economic activities.
-  Mission Antyodaya aims to create 50000 poverty-free gram panchayats.
-  Gram Panchayats have been selected by State Governments on the basis of social capital and have been grouped under 5000 clusters.
520. ▶ Search engine Google is most trusted Internet brand in India as per TRA Brand Trust Report 2018, With 1.2 trillion searches per year. Google is followed by Facebook, Amazon and eBay. Biggest falls was seen by Snapdeal(fell by 142 ranks) and best trust gainer is Netflix (up 506 ranks).
521. ▶ Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari flagged off cargo movement on Pandu-Dhubri route (on National Waterway 2) along Brahmaputra River in Assam, reducing logistics cost and save 300 km road travel. Central Government has sanctioned Rs 1250 crore for overall development of inland water transport of Assam.
522. ▶ Sikkim Government allowed people to forge fraternal ties with trees, under *Sikkim Forest Tree (Amity & Reverence) Rules 2017*. Purpose is to preserve trees by encouraging people to forge relationship of brotherhood with trees through tradition locally known as Mitini / Mith.
523. ▶ Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) is named as Nodal Agency to set up 2.5 GW Wind-Solar hybrid Project by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, aiming to Build Hybrid Projects with Transparent Bidding Process limited from 200 MW to 500 MW, with atleast 1 project site with capacity of 50 MW. As of now, we have only 20 GW of renewable energy produced through wind-solar hybrid power projects.

Govt aims for 175 GW Renewable energy capacity by 2022. As of now, India has over 20 GW of Solar Power And approx 354 GW of Wind power Installed Capacity.

524. ▶ South Central Railway (SCR) became first railway zone to complete 100% LED lighting at all 733 stations under its jurisdiction.
525. ▶ SpiceJet became first airline to operate a commercial flight from Kolkata to Pakyong Airport near Gangtok in Sikkim, becoming first passenger plane to land in Sikkim. Pakyong Airport is 32 km away from Gangtok.
526. ▶ Supreme Court approved Centre's draft Cauvery Management Scheme for smooth distribution of water among Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry (UT). SC raised Karnataka's share of Cauvery water by 14.75 tmcft saying that issue of drinking water of Southern Karnataka region is of higher priority. Tamil Nadu's share is reduced, compensated by allowing TN to extract 10 tmcft more groundwater from river basin.
- ▶ Cauvery Management Scheme deals with release of water from Karnataka to Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Puducherry, implemented by Cauvery Management Authority (CMA).
527. ▶ Supreme Court asked Uttar Pradesh Sunni Waqf Board to show documents signed by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan to prove its ownership on Taj Mahal. SC Bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra asked Waqf board counsel to authenticate that Shah Jahan executed a 'Waqfnama' in favour of Waqf board, a document through which a person conveys intention to donate a property to Waqf for charitable purpose.
- ▶ SC also raised a question for Waqf board that how Shah Jahan could sign a document when he was imprisoned by his son Aurangzeb after war of succession at Agra Fort in 1658 and Mughal emperor died in fort itself in 1666. SC also told council that Taj Mahal and other heritage structures were built by Mughals and were taken over by Britishers after end of Mughal rule.
- ▶ SC ruled this when he Waqf board counsel told court that Shah Jahan had himself declared Taj Mahal a Waqf property. Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) filled an appeal in SC against waqf board's declaring Taj Mahal as its property.
528. ▶ Supreme Court ruled that courts can look into Parliamentary Standing Committee reports while deciding on an issue. However, parliamentary reports cannot be challenged in Courts. It will help NGOs, which frequently file PILs in the SC, to rely on Parliamentary Standing Committee reports.
529. ▶ Supreme Court stayed Karnataka High Court's order to reduce size of pictorial warnings on packages of tobacco products to 40% of package space from earlier 85%.
- ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) in 2014 prescribed mandatory 85% statutory warnings space on both sides of tobacco packaging telling consumers that cigarette smoking and tobacco chewing were harmful to health.
- ▶ In December 2017, Karnataka HC quashed MoHFW rules related to 85% statutory warnings on packaging of tobacco products, holding that they violated Constitutional norms. This order is now stayed by Supreme Court.
- ▶ Supreme Court also ruled that playing national anthem before screening movies in cinema halls is not mandatory. Government has formed a committee to finalize on the same and committee will submit report in 6 months. Committee is headed by B.R. Sharma (Additional Secretary in MHA).
530. ▶ Supreme Court struck down a legislation that allowed former Uttar Pradesh Chief Ministers to continue occupying government accommodation even after demitting office, terming it as *arbitrary and discriminatory*.
531. ▶ Supreme Court's Verdict on Cauvery Water Dispute -
- ▶ SC stated that Karnataka government will release 177.25 tmcft of Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu from its inter-state Biligundlu dam, down from state's earlier allocation of 192 TMC water. Karnataka will now have an enhanced share of 14.75 tmcft water per year.
- ▶ Earlier, Cauvery Water Tribunal's order in 2007 stated Karnataka to have share of 270 tmcft of Cauvery water. Now it will go up to 284.75 tmcft.
- ▶ Verdict stayed 30 tmcft water to Kerala and 7 tmcft water to Puducherry as per Tribunal's 2007 Order. SC also allowed Tamil Nadu to draw an additional 10 tmcft 'groundwater' from a total of 20 tmcft beneath Cauvery basin.
- ▶ SC order on Cauvery water allocation will continue to hold for next 15 years.
- ▶ Cauvery Water Dispute -
- ▶ Water sharing of Cauvery River has been a major source of conflict between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka. Its origin is traced back to two agreements in 1892 and 1924, which had taken place between the then Madras Presidency and Kingdom of Mysore.
- ▶ 802 km long Cauvery River has 44,000 km² basin area in Tamil Nadu and 32,000 km² basin area in Karnataka.
- ▶ Cauvery Water Tribunal, in its ruling in 2007, allocated 192 TMC water to Tamil Nadu, 270 TMC water to Karnataka, 30 tmcft to Kerala and 7 tmcft to Puducherry per year.
532. ▶ Surat (Gujarat) become first district in country to have 100% solar powered Primary Health Centers (PHCs), with All its 52 PHCs now powered by solar system. Surat has set an example by developing villages that use sustainable forms of energy, when global warming is mounting.

533. ▶ Surat railway station (Gujarat) will be third in India to be developed as a world-class facility under Railway's station redevelopment programme, After Habibganj (Bhopal) and Gandhinagar (Gujarat), which will both be ready by 2019. It is being done Railway Ministry's 1 lakh crore station redevelopment programme.
534. ▶ Swachh Survekshan 2018 Results -
- ▶ Top 3 cleanest Cities - Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), Chandigarh.
 - ▶ Stats -
 - ▶ Organized by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) Under Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), It Assessed 4203 Urban Local Bodies, compared to 434 cities covered in 2017 and 73 cities in 2016.
 - ▶ Record 37.66 lakh citizen feedbacks were collected during Swachh Survekshan 2018.
 - ▶ In ranking cities, 35% weightage given to each of citizen feedback & service level progress, 30% weightage given to direct observation. In 2017, it was 25 % to direct observation, 30 % to citizen feedback and 45 % to service level progress.
 - ▶ Cleanest cities in various categories -
 - ▶ Big City - Vijaywada (Andhra Pradesh)
 - ▶ Medium City - Mysuru (Karnataka)
 - ▶ Small City - New Delhi Municipal Council
 - ▶ State Capital / UT - Greater Mumbai (Maharashtra)
535. ▶ Swedish-Swiss Firm ABB announced commissioning of India's first industrial solar microgrid in Vadodara (Gujarat). Microgrid is a localized electricity source which can function autonomously as well as by connecting and being synced with traditional centralized electrical grid (macrogrid). Microgrids with integrated battery energy storage are setup to ensure continuity of work during power outages.
536. ▶ Tamil Nadu Government launched 24-hour helpline number 14417, claiming to be the first in India, to offer information and guidance on education to students.
537. ▶ Tamil Nadu Government launched bi-lingual (*Tamil and English*) Uzhavan (farmer) mobile application in a bid to use technology for benefit of farmers. It will allow farmers to access nine types of services, including crop insurance, farm subsidies, farm equipments and related infrastructure.
538. ▶ Tamil Nadu Government launched e-governance policy to help public, government and commercial establishments avail all services through digital medium. It lets government to allocate 0.5 % of annual funds for digital initiatives and further increase it to 3 % in 5 years.
539. ▶ Tamil Nadu government demanded permanent closure of controversial Vedanta Group's Sterlite Copper factory in Thoothukudi / Tuticorin, which was centre of violent protests recently that led to killing of 13 people in Police Firing. Locals had been protesting for closure of the factory for 100 days. The actions of police has been highly criticised.
- ▶ Protests intensified after Sterlite Copper recently applied for to double capacity of plant to 800,000 metric tonnes per annum.
 - ▶ Residents of nearby villages claimed that smelter caused huge level air and water pollution and is the reason behind unnaturally high cancer rates in surrounding villages.
540. ▶ Tamil Nadu government launched Amma Free Wi-Fi zones in 5 cities of Tamil Nadu, under which Wi-Fi zones will be set up in 50 spots. Users will be offered 20 minutes of free internet service per day. After that users will be charged Rs 10 per hour.
541. ▶ Tamil Nadu government signed an agreement with IT Major Microsoft to improve integration of technology in teaching and learning in state, to reform education sector, build tech capacity and enhance digital literacy across all levels.
542. ▶ Tata Motors and Maharashtra Government signed MoU to deploy 1,000 Electric Vehicles across a range of passenger and commercial vehicles in Maharashtra. Also, Mahindra & Mahindra signed two MoUs with Maharashtra Government to advance its next phase of expansion in electric vehicles (EVs) and achieve its goal to become completely electric ready.
543. ▶ Tata Trusts signed MoU with Government to provide development support in eight worst Naxal-affected districts in Chhattisgarh, covered under Transformation of aspirational districts Programme of NITI Aayog. Districts are - Kanker, Rajnandgaon, Bijapur, Bastar, Kondagaon, Dantewada, Narayanpur and Sukma.
544. ▶ Telangana Government announced a health-cum-life insurance scheme worth INR 5 lakh for farmers in state, with allocation of INR 500 crores.
545. ▶ Telangana Government constituted a task force on urban mobility to study feasibility of the monorail model and other modes of transport for IT corridor in Hyderabad. Arvind Kumar is Member Convenor of task force.
546. ▶ Telangana Government has set up 'We-Hub' on the lines of T-Hub for promoting women entrepreneurs in state, funded under Atal Innovation Mission. T-Hub is partnership between Telangana govt with 3 premier academic institutes and private sector leaders.
547. ▶ Telangana Government inaugurated India's first National Park for differently abled people in Hyderabad. It has speech therapist, vocational training instructors and physiotherapist for differently-abled children.
548. ▶ Telangana Govt. announced 2 % reservation in state government jobs for sportspersons.

549. ▶ Telangana Govt. mandated teaching Telugu as a compulsory subject in all public and private schools of state. Telugu University and Sahitya Academy will decide the Telugu syllabus for various standards.
550. ▶ Telangana government developed a mobile application named 'Urban Genie' that will help urban citizens in finding certified technicians and workers to provide household services.
551. ▶ Telangana government launched *T App Folio* mobile governance application for delivery of government to citizen (G2C) and business to citizen (B2C) services efficiently. Telangana is 2nd state to launch a mobile governance application in place for provision of G2C services, After Karnataka.
552. ▶ Telangana government launched Rythu Bandhu (friend of farmers) Scheme, an investment support scheme to support livelihood of farmers. It is first such investment support scheme for farmers to be launched by any state in India.
- ✎ Farmers will directly get financial support twice every year to maximise agricultural production. They will get support of 8,000 per acre every year (Rs. 4000 each for monsoon and Rabi season) as crop investment support.
 - ✎ State government has set aside Rs 12,000 crore in 2018-19 budget exclusively for this scheme.
 - ✎ State government also announced to provide life insurance cover to all farmers in state for Rs five lakh each, from August 15, 2018 Onwards.
553. ▶ Telangana government launched Women Entrepreneurship Hub (WE-Hub), India's first state-led incubator for women entrepreneurs, to help women entrepreneurs establish their own enterprises by providing services including seed funding, mentoring, and business guidance.
554. ▶ Telangana government signed MoU with *Clean Authority of Tokyo (Japan)*, for municipal solid waste incineration facilities.
555. ▶ Telangana government signed a MoU with Safran Electrical and Power SAS for establishing an aerospace unit in Telangana.
556. ▶ Telangana govt. reduced Value Added Tax (VAT) on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) to 1 % from 16 %, to boost air traffic at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport located near Hyderabad.
557. ▶ Telecom Commission approved voice and data in-flight connectivity, permitting Internet and Mobile Communication on Aircraft (MCA) in Indian airspace. It is recommended to permit MCA services with minimum height restriction of 3000 meters in airspace.
558. ▶ Telecom Firm Bharti Airtel and Chinese telecom equipment maker Huawei successfully conducted India's first 5G (fifth generation) network trial, achieving over 3 gigabit per second (Gbps) data speed.
- ✎ 5G is wireless communication technology based on third-generation partnership project (3GPP). It is next generation mobile networks technology after 4G LTE networks. It is expected to offer enhanced mobile broadband (eMBB) through R15 repeaters that can cater to coverage requirements. India aims to roll out 5G Services by 2020.
559. ▶ Telecom Minister Manoj Sinha launched India's first locally developed 4G/LTE (*Long-Term Evolution*) telecom system, developed by telecom equipment manufacturer VNL Ltd. It ensures seamless connectivity at affordable prices and reduces import dependence for such equipments.
560. ▶ Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) proposed use of blockchain technology to check menace of Unsolicited Commercial Communication (UCC) or spam calls / messages. Blockchain technology based norms will record all communication between subscribers and entities, capturing customer consent for information and authorised telemarketing agencies. Subscriber will be now able to revoke consent given to entities through TRAI app and other mechanism that will be provided under regulation.
561. ▶ Tendu Leaf Bonus Festival organized in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh. During it, approx 247 crores of bonus has been distributed to tendu leaf collectors of Bastar and Bijapur.
562. ▶ To Address Privacy Concerns, Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) introduced a new concept of Virtual ID which Aadhaar-card holder can generate from its website and give for various purposes, wherever Aadhaar number is necessary to provide.
- ✎ Virtual would be a random 16-digit number and a user can generate as many Virtual IDs (Older ones will be cancelled when generating new).
 - ✎ It will give limited details (like name, address and photograph), which are sufficient for verification by any authorised agency .
 - ✎ Aadhaar-issuing body will start accepting virtual ID from March 1, 2018 and From June 1, it will be obligatory for all agencies that undertake authentication to accept Virtual ID from their users.
563. ▶ To save environment from air pollution caused by stubble burning, Punjab government made attachment of super straw management system with harvester machines mandatory for harvesting paddy (rice) crop.
564. ▶ Tribal Sports Meet 2017 held in Odisha as a first-of-its kind event in country to promote sports among tribals in Odisha, with *Olly* as official mascot.
565. ▶ Tripura Government announced 10% of all police force will be reserved for women, to encourage women to participate and deal more efficiently with crimes related to them.
566. ▶ Tripura Government has introduced Child Care Leave (CCL) for women employees with minor children for 730 days in their entire service life.

567. ▶ Tripura Horticulture Corporation Limited (THCL) signed an MoU with Spicejet Merchandise Pvt Ltd, To provide pineapples to majority of country and help farmers earn profit.
568. ▶ Tripura became first North East state to launch state component of Pradhanmantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY) in Agartala, aiming to train over 1.16 lakh youths by 2020.
569. ▶ Tripura government will set up a well-equipped crime branch under state police to deal with unlawful activities in state such as drug and narcotics peddling.
570. ▶ UIDAI unveiled beta version of 'Virtual ID', which will soon be accepted by service providers in place of Aadhaar numbers. An Aadhaar holder can generate VID from UIDAI's website is a random 16-digit number mapped to a person's Aadhaar number and biometrics. VID would give any authorised agency like a mobile company, limited details for verification purpose.
- ✎ It will do away with sneed of disclosing 12-digit Aadhaar number for authentication or verification purposes.
571. ▶ UNESCO inscribed India's *Kumbh Mela* on its List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity, as 14th intangible cultural heritage from India to be listed in UNESCO's list.
572. ▶ UNICEF (United Nations Children's Emergency Fund) launched Data Visualisation App to provide user-friendly visual representation of complex analytics of education scenario in India, developed with technical inputs from UNICEF, NCERT and National Institute of Education Planning and Administration (NIEPA).
- ✎ It uses UDISE (Unified District Information System for Education), NAS (National Assessment survey) and demographic data. It can be used as visual tool by policy makers, academia and researchers to address gaps and monitor programs in education.
573. ▶ UP Investors Summit 2018 Lucknow -
- ✎ Government will establish India's 2nd defence industrial production corridor in Uttar Pradesh, at approx INR 20000 crores and will generate about 250000 jobs. It will link Agra, Aligarh, Lucknow, Kanpur, Jhansi and Chitrakoot. 1st of 2 defense industrial production corridors proposed in Budget 2018 will link Chennai & Bengaluru.
 - ✎ UP's Khadi and Village Industries Board signed pact with Amazon India to facilitate online selling of Khadi products.
 - ✎ Uttar Pradesh (UP) became first state to clear business and investment projects digitally, without any human interface. This became possible with launch of 'Nivesh Mitra' digital platform. It will serve as a single-window clearance system.
 - ✎ UP government signed 1045 Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) worth INR 4.28 lakh crores at UP Investors Summit 2018.
574. ▶ Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) introduced face authentication as an additional means of Aadhaar authentication along with fingerprint and iris scan, to enable easy authentication for those who face difficulties in other biometric authentication such as fingerprint and iris scan. It will be available by 1 July, 2018.
575. ▶ Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) introduced updated 'QR code' for offline Aadhaar verification to strengthen its privacy measures during usage, aimed at adding an extra layer of privacy to Aadhaar after recently introducing concept of virtual identification.
576. ▶ Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) rolled Under 5 years age version of Aadhaar Card, named *Bal Aadhaar*. It will have blue colour and will be linked with one of parent's Aadhaar card. No biometric details (Iris scan / fingerprint scans) will be captured as Biometrics are not developed for children before 5 years of age.
577. ▶ United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) will set up a skill development centre for clients of Bharosa, an integrated support centre for distressed women and children in Hyderabad (Telangana). It aims at empowering marginalised women by imparting skills training.
578. ▶ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) recognised Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL) in Kerala as world's first fully solar energy powered airport. CIAL is India's first airport to be constructed in public-private-partnership (PPP) model in 1999.
- ✎ It has 15 MWp solar power plant, comprising 46,150 solar panels laid across 45 acres. Plant generates 50,000 units of electricity daily.
579. ▶ University Grants Commission (UGC) has so far granted full autonomy to 62 higher educational institutions that have maintained high standards of excellence under Autonomous Colleges Regulation. These include 5 central universities, 21 state universities, 26 private universities and 10 other colleges.
- ✎ Complete autonomy will allow these institutions to start new courses, new departments, new programmes, skill courses, research parks, appoint foreign faculty, take foreign students etc.
580. ▶ Uttar Pradesh Government approved draft of Uttar Pradesh Control of Organised Crime Act (UPCOCA) to fight land mafia, mining mafia and organised crime in state, on lines of Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA).
581. ▶ Uttar Pradesh Government has launched Ganga Hariteema Yojana (also known as Ganga Greenery scheme) in 27 districts of the state located on bank of river Ganga. It aims at enhancing green cover in catchment areas of river Ganga and control land erosion. Under it, tree plantation will be carried out in 1 Km areas from banks of river.

582. ▶ Uttar Pradesh Govt. passed Uttar Pradesh Control of Organised Crime Bill (UPCOCB), a stringent bill to curb organised crime and deal strictly with those trying to fuel terror. It seeks to curb organised crime and deal strictly with those trying to foment terror or dislodge government forcibly or through violent means.
583. ▶ Uttar Pradesh Govt. will Set up a Research Institute on *Shrimad Bhagvat Gita* in Mathura.
584. ▶ Uttar Pradesh State Government inaugurated state's first ever butterfly park in Kanpur, as pollution-free spaces which do not have chemicals/pesticides and play an important role in conserving endangered butterfly species.
✍ Further, Madhya Pradesh's first butterfly park opened in Raisen district.
585. ▶ Uttar Pradesh State Government scrapped *Shravan Yatra* scheme under which elderly citizens could undertake pilgrimage free of cost, started in 2015 by Samajwadi Party government.
✍ State government also announced setting up of Cow Protection Committees (Gau Sanrakshan Samitis) in all districts of Uttar Pradesh, to make sure that cow sheds (gaushalas) are operated efficiently.
586. ▶ Uttar Pradesh assembly passed UP Excise (Amendment) Bill 2017, to award death penalty and life imprisonment for spurious liquor dealers.
587. ▶ Uttar Pradesh became first State to endorse Central government's draft bill that makes instant triple talaq a cognisable and non-bailable offence. The draft law provides for 3 year imprisonment and a fine to a man trying to divorce his wife by uttering "talaq" three times.
588. ▶ Uttar Pradesh government launched a mass marriage policy for poor girls, under which financial assistance worth INR 35000 will be provided. It aims to discourage practice of dowry.
589. ▶ Uttar Pradesh government signed an MoU with South Korea to enhance cooperation in the field of tourism, skill development, culture and farming.
590. ▶ Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district has been included in National Capital Region (NCR), taking total number of districts in the NCR to 23.
✍ NCR Cities get funds at attractive interest rates from National Capital Region Planning Board (NCRPB) for infrastructure development.
591. ▶ Uttarakhand Government signed MoU with HP (Hewlett Packard) to provide tele-medicine facilities in remote areas of state.
✍ Usage of telecommunication and information technology to provide clinical health care from a distance is referred to as tele-medicine.
592. ▶ Uttarakhand Govt inaugurated state's first (and India's 8th) City Gas Distribution (CGD) network at Rudrapur in Udham Singh Nagar district, comprising 500 km long pipeline and 10 CNG stations.
593. ▶ Uttarakhand government made it compulsory for all government offices to install LED bulbs, to reduce consumption of electricity.
594. ▶ Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu launched New Delhi Edition of Marathi daily 'Lokmat'.
595. ▶ Virgin Group (USA) signed agreement with Maharashtra Government to build world's first hyperloop transportation system between Mumbai and Pune, during Magnetic Maharashtra investor summit in Mumbai. It aims to reduce travel time between two mega cities to 20 minutes from three hours at present, with capability of travelling up to 1000 km per hour.
✍ Hyperloop Technology is dubbed as fifth mode of transportation. It is system of magnetically levitating capsules (pods) that are sent at high speeds through low-pressure tubes. It uses linear Induction motors in it to control speed of pods.
✍ Hyperloop is two-to-three times faster than fastest high-speed rail and has speeds even greater than commercial air travel.
✍ Hyperloop departures could happen with a low frequency of a pod every 20 seconds which is not possible in railways.
596. ▶ Waste management system in Kerala's Alappuzha has been recognized by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as one of best 5 models across the world for fighting pollution menace, as per UNEP report *Solid approach to waste: how five cities are beating pollution*.
597. ▶ West Bengal Assembly passed *Green University Bill 2017*, to set up an environmental studies university at Hooghly district, making West Bengal the first state to have a university dedicated to environmental studies.
598. ▶ West Bengal State Government announced life insurance cover amounting to Rs 5 lakh for each of pilgrims coming to upcoming Gangasagar fair, which is held annually on the occasion of Makar Sankranti at confluence of Ganges at Sagra Islands in South 24 Parganas district.
599. ▶ West Bengal became first state to opt out of Central Govt's proposed NHPS (National Health Protection Scheme, informally called *Modicare*), Claiming that Bengal government had already enrolled 50 lakh people under its own Swasthya Sathi programme.
600. ▶ West Bengal government introduced a new scheme called *Rupashree*, to provide marriage assistance to girls coming from economically weaker families with a budgetary allocation of Rs 1500 crores. It proposes financial assistance of INR 25000 to family of girl whose annual income is up to Rs 1.5 lakh.
601. ▶ West Bengal, Kerala and Odisha opted out of Central Government's *Transformation of Aspirational Districts* scheme.

- ✎ Aspirational districts refer to selected 115 backward districts that are lagging on specific development parameters. Central Government undertook a major policy initiative for rapid transformation of these districts. With exit of 3 states, total districts under this scheme is now reduced to 102.
- ✎ These states objected that criteria for identifying backward districts was fixed without taking respective State Governments into confidence.
- ✎ Transformation of Aspirational Districts' conference was held in New Delhi in recently, in which NITI Aayog said it will come out with a ranking of 115 aspirational districts by April 2018.

602. ▶ Western Railways introduced modern Optical Character Recognition (OCR) Kiosk Machines for fast and easy printing of tickets booked through UTS App, in Mumbai. Additionally, Bhopal became first railway station to have Sanitary napkin Vending Machine.
603. ▶ World Malaria Day (WMD) is being observed every year on 25 April across the world to recognise the global efforts to control preventable vector borne disease malaria. The theme of 2018 WMD is "Ready to beat malaria"

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