



Current Affairs - May to october2018

Month Type



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

(Showing **608** Important Ones)

National

1. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (June 27, 2018) -

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs Approvals -

- Contribution of 1040 crores to National Export Insurance Account Trust (NEIA), to be utilised till 2019-20. Corpus would strengthen NEIA to support project exports from the country that are of strategic and national importance.
- Capital infusion of 2000 crores for strengthening of Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC). It would enhance insurance coverage to MSME exports and strengthen India's exports to emerging and challenging markets like Africa, CIS and Latin American countries.
- Hiked price of ethanol, used for doping in petrol, by almost INR 2.85 per litre to Rs 43.70 in a bid to cut India's oil import dependence as well as give higher price for sugarcane.

General Approvals -

- Establishment of additional 6.5 Million Metric Tonne (MMT) Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) facilities at Chandikhol in Odisha (4 MMT) and Padur in Karnataka (2.5 MMT), including construction of SPMs (Single Point Mooring) for 2 SPRs.
 - ISPRL has already constructed underground rock caverns for storage of 5.33MMT of crude oil at 2 locations - Vishakhapatnam (1.33 MMT), Mangalore (1.5 MMT) and Padur (2.5 MMT).

MOUs -

- Singapore - Planning
- Denmark - Science, Technology and Innovation, Animal Husbandry and Dairying
- Germany - Civil Aviation
- France - Maritime Awareness Mission
- Indonesia - Technical Cooperation in Railways sector
- Bahrain - Healthcare

2. ▶ Government declared 6 educational 'Institutions of Eminence', out of 114 applications (74 from public sector & 40 from private sector) -

- Public Sector - Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore Karnataka, Indian Institute of Technology Bombay, Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi.
- Private Sector - Jio Institute (Reliance Foundation), Pune under Green Field Category, Birla Institute of Technology & Sciences Pilani, Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal (Karnataka).
- Each 'Public Institution' selected as 'Institution of Eminence' will get financial assistance up to 1000 Crore over 5 years, to help them become World Class Educational Institutions.
- To achieve top world ranking Institutions shall be provided with
 - Greater autonomy to admit foreign students up to 30% of admitted students
 - Recruit foreign faculty upto 25% of faculty strength
 - Offer online courses upto 20% of its programmes and
 - Enter academic collaboration with top 500 in world ranking Institutions without permission of UGC
 - Freedom to fix and charge fees from foreign students without restriction
 - Flexibility of course structure in terms of number of credit hours and years to take a degree

3. ▶ Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) signed 2 MoUs with Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), to launch the programme “PRAKRITI” with objective to promote awareness about forests and environment.
 - ✍ Through this collaboration, knowledge will be imparted to students/teachers of NVS and KVS on environment, forest, environmental services and contemporary areas of forestry research by way of lectures and interactive sessions by scientists of ICFRE institutes.
 - ✍ MoUs are signed for period of 10 years are expected to make youth sensitive about issues of environment and forests and help them to become responsible citizens.
4. ▶ Nitin Gadkari (*Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation*) Signed MoUs with 6 States - Uttarakhand, UP, HP, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi for construction of Lakhwar Multipurpose Project on Yamuna near Dehradun, with cost approx INR 3966 Crores.
 - ✍ It was initially approved in 1976 but work was suspended in 1992. It envisages construction of a 204 m high concrete dam across river Yamuna near Lohari village in Dehradun district of Uttarakhand with a storage capacity of 330.66 MCM.
 - ✍ It will provide irrigation for 33,780 hectares land and availability of 78.83 MCM water for use in the 6 basin states. The project will also generate 300 MW of power.
 - ✍ Besides Lakhwar Multi-Purpose project, there are two other major projects being envisaged in the Upper Yamuna reaches which are Kishau Multi-Purpose project and Renukaji Multi-Purpose project. A fourth project is the Vyasi project, a run-of-the-river scheme under which a concrete dam across River Yamuna is being constructed near Vyasi village in Dehradun district.
5. ▶ Odisha Government tied up with Japan for its mega investment Conclave 2018 to take place in November 2018, called *Make in Odisha*.
6. ▶ 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.
7. ▶ 12th Plan Document has fixed targets of 25.2 % Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) by 2017-18 and 30% GER by 2020-21. As per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2017-18, GER in higher education has increased from 24.5% in 2015-16 to 25.8% in 2017-18.
8. ▶ 13 Indian beaches will soon get the Blue Flag certification, for being Environment-friendly, clean and equipped with amenities of international standards. These beaches of Odisha, Maharashtra and other coastal states will be the first in Asia, to get Blue Flag certification. Blue Blue Flag beach standards are conferred by Copenhagen (Denmark) based Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE).
9. ▶ 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.
10. ▶ 17.86 KM long Trilokpuri Sanjay Lake to Shiv Vihar section of Delhi Metro Pink Line has been flagged off, taking Delhi Metro to league of top metro networks with operational length over 300 km (like London, Beijing, Shanghai and New York). Delhi Metro Network has now become 314 kilometres long with 229 metro stations.
11. ▶ 2 new projects of Punjab and Tripura got sanctioned under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
 - ✍ In Punjab, project covers sites of Anandpur Sahib, Fatehgarh Sahib, Chamkaur Sahib, Ferozpur, Amritsar, Khatkar Kalan Kalanour Patiala at the cost of Rs 100 crore.
 - ✍ In Tripura, sites of Surma Cherra- Unakoti- Jampui Hills- Gunabati-Bhunaneshwari- Matabari- Neermahal- Boxanagar- Chotta khola- Pilak- Avangchaarra have been covered. It has planned cost of 65 Crores.
12. ▶ 220 MW Unit-1 of Karnataka's Kaiga Generating Systems (KGS-1) has set a new record of the continuous operation of 766 days, surpassing earlier record of 765 days set by the Unit-5 of Rajasthan Atomic Power Station (RAPS-5) in 2014. With this, KGS-1 stands second in world among Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) and fourth among all nuclear power reactors in terms of continuous operation.
13. ▶ 3 day annual Sindhu Darshan Festival celebrations on bank of Indus River in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir.
14. ▶ 4 day international dance festival titled "Udbhav Utsav" held in Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh).
15. ▶ 4-day annual Meghalaya Annual Cultural Festival *Behdienkhlam* held in Jowai (Meghalaya).
16. ▶ 4th International Film Festival of Shimla “IFFS 2018” concluded in Shimla (Himachal Pradesh). Best Feature Film award was given to *Sinjar* by Sandeep Pampally.
17. ▶ 578 metre long Theng tunnel inaugurated in Sikkim, as state's longest tunnel. It is constructed on Gangtok-Chungthang Highway.
18. ▶ 6th India International Silk Fair (IISF) held at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi, organised by Indian Silk Export Promotion Council (ISEPC).
 - ✍ India is 2nd largest producer of silk after China.

19. ▶ A 126 MW capacity wind power project has been commissioned in Bhuj (Gujarat), as part of India's first ISTS auction which was conducted by state-run Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) in February 2017.
- ▶ Bid was for projects to be connected on ISTS wherein power generated from one state (renewable resource rich state) can be transmitted to other renewable deficient states. Energy generated from this project is being purchased by Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.
 - ▶ It marks beginning of capacity additions in wind power based on market discovered tariffs, in line with Government's plan of having 175 GW renewable energy by 2022.
20. ▶ 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.
21. ▶ 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.
22. ▶ 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'.
23. ▶ AYUSH Ministry introduced new Central Sector scheme for promoting pharmacovigilance of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy (ASU&H) Drugs. It aims to develop culture of documenting adverse effects, monitoring and surveillance of misleading advertisements of drugs.
- ▶ Government has sanctioned grant of Rs 10.60 Crore for the establishment of 3 pharmacovigilance network, which will consist of National Pharmacovigilance Centre (NPvCC), Intermediary Pharmacovigilance Centres (IPvCCs) and Peripheral Pharmacovigilance Centres (PPvCC).
 - ▶ All India Institute of Ayurveda New Delhi has been designated as National Pharmacovigilance Centre. It received the grant from the government.
 - ▶ Government aims to achieve the target of 100 peripheral pharmacovigilance centres by 2020.
24. ▶ According to Recently Released SRS bulletin (2016) -
- ▶ India registered significant decline in Maternal Mortality Ratio, with 22% reduction in since 2013. MMR declined from 167 in 2011-2013 to 130 in 2014-2016, against UN MDG (Millennium Development Goals) target of Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of 139 by 2015. Total maternal deaths for first time are reduced to 32000.
 - ▶ Uttar Pradesh with 30% decline topped in reduction of Maternal Deaths. Three states (*Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu*) have already met SDG target for MMR of 70 per 100000.
 - ▶ WHO commended India's progress in reducing the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) by 77 %, from 556 per one lac live births in 1990 to 130 per one lac live births in 2016. This puts India country on track towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal target of MMR below 70 by 2030.
25. ▶ According to recently released language data of Census 2011, Hindi is most spoken in India with it being mother tongue of 43.63% Indians, followed by Bengali. Marathi replaced Telugu as 3rd most spoken language in nation. Sanskrit is least spoken in India (Sanskrit by approx 25000 people).
- ▶ More than 19,500 languages or dialects are spoken in India as mother tongue.
 - ▶ There are 121 languages which are spoken by 10,000 or more people in India.
26. ▶ According to recently released language data of Census 2011, Hindi is most spoken in India with it being mother tongue of 43.63% Indians, followed by Bengali. Marathi replaced Telugu as 3rd most spoken language in nation. Sanskrit is least spoken in India.
27. ▶ According to report by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), maximum (35 %) of cyber-attacks on official Indian websites are from China, followed by US (17 %) and Russia (15 %). It is followed by Pakistan (9%), Canada (7%) and Germany (5%).
28. ▶ Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh launched Meghalaya Milk Mission in Shillong, to promote Milk revolution in State, along with sanctioning projects 215 crores through National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).

- Project consists of 2000 dairy farm units, in one unit there is provision for purchase of 5 cows, shed constructions, storage room construction, animal insurance, 79 bulk milk coolers of 500 litre capacity, 13 milk tankers of 3000 litre capacity etc.
29. ▶ 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.
30. ▶ Airports Authority of India (AAI) will set up Civil Aviation Research Organization (CARO) at Hyderabad's Begumpet Airport, with cost of 1200 crores to be spent over 12 years. Its focus will be on pursuing inter-disciplinary solutions to improve the civil aviation sector. CARO will find indigenous solutions to meet challenges posed by growing air traffic and for enhancing safety and efficiency of aircraft operations.
31. ▶ All India Council for Technical Education will establish country's first AICTE Training and Learning (ATAL) Academy in Jaipur (Rajasthan), with 3 more ATAL academies to come at Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), Guwahati (Assam) and Baroda (Gujarat) by 2019.
- ▶ These will provide upgraded teaching methods and modules to make technical education more effective and accountable. Faculties will be trained on the eight-module course in these academies in five months.
- ▶ The training will be mandatory for new teachers from 2019 and it will be necessary for existing teachers and assistant teachers while applying for promotions.
32. ▶ Alphonso Mango from Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Palghar, Thane and Raigad districts of Maharashtra has been registered as Geographical Indication (GI).
- ▶ GI is an indication used on products with a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. GI products can benefit the rural economy in remote areas, by supplementing the incomes of artisans, farmers, weavers and craftsmen.
- ▶ King of mangoes, Alphonso, better known as 'Hapus' in Maharashtra, is in demand in domestic and international markets not only for its taste but also for pleasant fragrance and vibrant colour.
33. ▶ 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.
34. ▶ An innovative cost-effective drinking water project in Bihar will provide safe drinking water at price of 50 Paise / Litre, termed as *Sulabh Jal*. It is cheapest safe drinking water solution in world, launched in Darbhanga by Sulabh International.
35. ▶ Andhra Pradesh CM Minister Chandrababu Naidu flagged off 'Swachh Dhara' programme at Amravati, To provide clean drinking water across state.
36. ▶ Andhra Pradesh CM N Chandrababu Naidu laid foundation stone of Amaravati International Sports Complex in Vijayawada. He also launched 'Project Gandiva'. Under it, government will choose students aged between 10-16 years and offer them international level facilities and coaching with an aim to secure medals in Olympic Games in a period of 10 years.
37. ▶ Andhra Pradesh CM N. Chandrababu Naidu launched 'e-Pragati core platform', aimed at connecting citizens to various Govt departments, autonomous organisations and 745-plus services.
38. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Government approved Mukhyamantri Yuva Nestam, an unemployment allowance scheme to provide Rs 1000 per month unemployed youth in state. It will benefit 12 lakh youth in the 22-35 years age group from state.
39. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Government launched 60 Anna Canteens across state in first phase to provide subsidised food to urban poor. They will offer breakfast, lunch and dinner at Rs 5 a meal, to be run by Akshaya Patra Foundation. State Government plans to set up 203 *Anna Canteens*.
- ▶ Other States having subsidised food canteens - Amma canteens (Tamil Nadu (1st)).Tamilnadu Inspired other states - Rajasthan (Annapurna Rasoi Yojana), Madhya Pradesh (Deendayal canteens), Delhi (Aam Aadmi canteens), Aahar (Odisha), Indira Canteens (Karnataka).
40. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Government launched a Zero Based Natural Farming (ZBNF) scheme for benefitting farmers, aiming 100% chemical-free agriculture by 2024. It has provisioned investment of INR 16134 crores by 2024. It makes Andhra Pradesh as India's first 100 % natural farming state.
41. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Government signed an MoU with electronics company Holytech, to set up Holytech' plant in 75 acres land in Tirupati and Chittoor districts. This first-of-its-kind facility in India will create 6000 direct job opportunities.
42. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Govt. launched official 'NCBN' (Nara Chandrababu Naidu) App in Collector's conference in Amaravati, Aimed at implementing effective governance in Andhra Pradesh.
43. ▶ Andhra Pradesh government announced monthly allowance of INR 1,000 each to unemployed graduate youths in state with an upper age limit of 35 years.
44. ▶ Andhra Pradesh government started unemployment allowance as part of Yuva Nestam scheme for state's youth from October 2018, launching a website at yuvanestham.ap.gov.in. It is aimed for unemployed youth between 25 - 35 years. It would give candidates an

allowance of INR 1000 along with free of cost skill development training.

45. ▶ Andhra Pradesh will become first state to use auto-disable syringes for all clinical purposes to prevent infection, from World Hepatitis Day on July 28.
46. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Government launched 3rd year of insurance scheme Chandranna Bima Yojana, aimed to benefit over 2.5 crores labourers in unorganised sector (with monthly income under INR 15000). Beneficiaries need to pay only 15 per year to get -
 - ▶ Insurance of 5 lakh for accidental death / permanent disability and up to 2.50 lakh for temporary disability due to accident.
 - ▶ Those in 18 - 50 years age will receive 2 lakh and those aged between 51 - 59 years will receive 30000 in case of natural death.
47. ▶ Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) allowed photography within premises of all centrally protected monuments/sites except at Ajanta Caves, Leh Palace and Taj Mahal. It has been ruled after PM Narendra Modi questioned logic behind existing restrictions.
48. ▶ Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) discovered collection of 254 Copper Coins in premises of Khirki Mosque (Delhi). The mosque was built by Khan-i-Jahan Juman Shah, Prime Minister of Firoz Shah Tughluq (1351-88) and is believed to be one of 7 mosques built by him.
49. ▶ 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.
50. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu dedicated Arunachal Pradesh's first Sainik School at Niglok in East Siang district to people of Arunachal Pradesh. It started its first academic session from 27th August 2018 with 60 students.
51. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu inaugurated 6 MW Shaikangchu small hydro electric project at Gongkhar village in Arunachal Pradesh.
52. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu launched *Arunachal Rising* Campaign, to create awareness among people about government programmes. It will highlight positive works of government and involve feedback services covering all sections of people.
53. ▶ 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).
54. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh Government signed MOU with Andhra Pradesh-based Smart Village Movement (SVM), To facilitate technology innovations, research and development in selected villages of state. 100 villages spread over 60 constituencies would be selected in consultation with government for SVM project.
55. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh assembly approved creation of three new districts - Pakke-Kesang, Lepa Rada and Shi Yomi. It will take number of districts in state up to up to 25 districts.
 - ▶ Pakke-Kesang - To be carved out of East Kameng district.
 - ▶ Lepa Rada - To be created by bifurcating Lower Siang district.
 - ▶ Shi-Yomi - To be created by bifurcating West Siang district.
56. ▶ As a first of its kind ruling in India, Uttarakhand High Court invoked 'parens patriae' doctrine and declared itself as a legal guardian of members of bovine (cow) family across state. It grants court inherent power and authority to act as guardian for those who are unable to take care of themselves.
57. ▶ As a first such Initiative in Country, Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) will launch India's first public sector hotel run entirely by women for women in capital Thiruvananthapuram, named *Hostess*.
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 applicable 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 Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry -
 - ▶ 19 of 25 dirtiest cities in India are from West Bengal. Jharkhand is the cleanest state in India, followed by Maharashtra and Chattisgarh.

- ▶ Among cities, Indore is cleanest for 2nd year in a row, followed by Bhopal and Chandigarh. While, Bhadrachal in Gujarat is at bottom of 500 cities.
- 60. ▶ As per State of India's Environment (SoE) 2018 in Figures that has been released recently by Down To Earth magazine -
 - ▶ India ranked 177 out of 180 countries in Global Environment Performance Index (EPI) rankings 2017, India slipped from 141st place in 2016.
 - ▶ India scored 5.75 out of 100 in air quality.
 - ▶ Through Swachh Bharat scheme, 72.1 million individual household toilets have been constructed. But funds allocated for spreading awareness on this to rural people remains unused.
 - ▶ Central government's target of installing 175 gigawatt (GW) of renewable energy by 2022, is not seeing expected progress, with only 9 % of the roof-top solar target achieved so far.
 - ▶ There is a 146 per cent increase in forestland diversion for non-forest activities in the last one year with maximum diversions recorded in Madhya Pradesh, Telangana and Odisha. Forest fires have increased by 125 per cent in just two years (2015-2017).
- 61. ▶ As per US-based Institute for Energy Economics & Financial Analysis (IEEFA), Karnataka is new national leader in renewable energy generation, overtaking Tamil Nadu.
- 62. ▶ As per a recent Law Ministry report, India has 19.49 judges per 10 lakh people on an average. Subordinate courts have a shortage of 5748 judicial officers, and 24 high courts have a total of 406 vacancies. Working strength of lower judiciary is 16726, while approved strength is 22474.
- 63. ▶ Assam Employees PRANAM Act would be implemented in state from October 02, 2018 (Gandhi Jayanti), To not let employee neglect their loved ones. The Act will deduct 10% of an employee's pay and transfer it to the account of relatives concerned. Another 5% would be deductible if the employee has a differently abled sibling.
- 64. ▶ Assam Government become first Indian state to offer a Wage Compensation Scheme for pregnant women working in tea gardens of state -
 - ▶ INR 12000 will be given to pregnant women in 4 instalments - 2000 in 1st trimester, 4000 in 2nd trimester, 3000 for institutional delivery and 3000 for registration of child's birth. Women will also get maternity leaves, ranging 3 months before delivery to 3 months after delivery.
- 65. ▶ Assam celebrated its 3rd Bihu festival known as Kati Bihu' festival across state. Name of the other 2 Bihu festivals is: Rongali and Bohagi Bihu.
- 66. ▶ Assam government will introduce awareness programme called 'Sanskar' in all its development blocks and panchayats, after incidents triggered by superstition and ignorance including lynching of two people in Karbi Anglong district.
- 67. ▶ Assam released final draft of National Register of Citizens (NRC), after first draft released in January 2018 that included 1.9 crore names out of total 3.29 crore applicants. It has left out 40.07 lakh people wherein 2.89 crore people were found eligible.
 - ▶ NRC was prepared in 1951.
 - ▶ Out of 40.07 lakh applicants left out of final draft, 2.48 lakh applicants have been kept on hold including D-Voters (doubtful voters), descendants of D-voters and persons whose cases are pending before foreigners tribunal.
- 68. ▶ Assamese movie 'Village Rockstars' selected as India's official entry to Oscars 2019 (91st Academy Awards) under Foreign Language Film category. It was selected by 12-member jury of Film Federation of India (FFI), led by Kannada producer-director SV Rajendra Singh Babu.
- 69. ▶ Ayushman Bharat Yojana under Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Mission will be implemented in Madhya Pradesh from August 15 this year. Under it, annual health security cover worth Rs 5 lakh will be provided to each family. Expenditure for implementation of yojana is INR 1200 per family.
- 70. ▶ BJP led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government won its 1st No Confidence motion moved in Lok Sabha, as moved by a former NDA ally Telugu Desam Party (TDP). In this trust vote, NDA bagged 325 votes against motion, while 126 members voted in favour.
 - ▶ Constitutional rule allows any Lok Sabha MP who can garner support of 50 colleagues, to introduce motion of no-confidence against Council of Ministers. If there are 50 MPs in favour, motion is admitted and speaker allots date for discussion on motion. If government loses trust vote, it has to resign.
 - ▶ Rajya Sabha does not have procedure for moving of no-confidence motion against Government and also adjournment motion, censure motion.
- 71. ▶ Badminton player PV Sindhu is only sportsperson featuring in Forbes India's 1st 'tycoons of tomorrow' list of 22 young achievers in the fields of business, acting and sports.
- 72. ▶ Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) will become first airport in Asia to introduce face recognition based passage system technology from 2019. For this, Bengaluru International Airport Ltd. (BIAL), which operates KIA has signed agreement with Portuguese software firm Vision Box. It will allow passengers to board flights and move across different sections of the airport using automatic biometric boarding procedure instead of manual boarding passes verification.

73. ▶ Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) is setting up a joint venture (JV) in India with Zorya Mashproekt, to overhaul turbines in India. The navy will soon have 34 warships driven by Zorya turbines, with four turbines per vessel, adding up to 136 in-service turbines. A turbine is overhauled after running 30,000 hours. This is costly and time-consuming process as it involves sending turbine back to Ukraine.
74. ▶ Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) launched its first Internet telephony service Wings, to be on complete roll out from August 1, 2018. It also launched prepaid initiative in its landline offerings and a rent free landline connection for existing subscribers
- ✎ To use Internet telephony through Wings, customer needs to install soft app on any of its smart devices, having internet to make and receive calls from anywhere in India and abroad with any party (mobile/landline). Through wings, customer can make or receive calls by using internet service of any operator.
 - ✎ This service will use mobile numbering scheme, provided using IP based access network of IMS NGN Core switches to allow users to make and receive calls over the Internet via their landline or mobile phone.
75. ▶ Bharti Airtel will provide optical fibre network in Tamil Nadu, to add 3000 KM of fibre network to Taminadu's 14000 km fibre Network. Airtel will open 12,000 new mobile sites across the State to add to network capacity and take high-speed data services deeper into rural areas.
76. ▶ Bhitarkanika national park in Odisha became largest habitat of endangered estuarine crocodiles in India with a record number of 101 nesting sites.
77. ▶ 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.
78. ▶ 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 Raths 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.
79. ▶ 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.
80. ▶ Bihar Govt. launched girl child welfare scheme *Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana*. It will provide 54100 for a girl child from her birth until she graduates. It will be run by three departments namely education, health and social welfare. Also, State Govt. raised amount under Bicycle Yojna from 2500 to 3000.
81. ▶ Bihar government launched new crop insurance scheme named *Bihar State Crop Assistance scheme*, to be effective from Kharif season 2018. Under this, farmers would get compensation of INR 7500 per hectare if less than 20% of crop is damaged. And if more than 20% of crop is damaged, INR 10000 would per hectare would be given as compensation.
82. ▶ Bihar's Shahi litchi got Geographical Indication (GI) tag, making it an exclusive brand. Shahi litchi is famous for its sweet, juicy, unique flavour and aroma, is mostly grown in Muzaffarpur and neighbouring districts including East Champaran, Vaishali, Samastipur and Begusarai.
83. ▶ Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) will start operating its first regional centre or avifauna observatory on the campus of Wetland Research and Training Centre near Chilika Lake (Asia's largest brackish water lagoon), Odisha. Avifauna observatory will carry out research on avian disease by collecting samples and monitor Nalabana Bird Sanctuary.
84. ▶ Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) secured image trademark for its iconic building, Phiroze Jeejeebhoy Towers located on Dalal Street in Mumbai, under Trade Marks Act 1999. Henceforth no one can use images of the Phiroze Jeejeebhoy Towers for commercial purposes without consent from BSE or paying it licensing fee. BSE's Phiroze Jeejeebhoy Towers serves as barometer of Indian economy.
85. ▶ Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) and NITI Aayog released *State Energy Efficiency Preparedness Index* -
- ✎ It will serve as a standard reference document for energy intensive industries and help them achieve high operational efficiency of energy consuming utilities.
 - ✎ States are categorised based on their efforts and achievements towards energy efficiency implementation, as 'Front Runner', 'Achiever', 'Contender' and 'Aspirant'.
 - ✎ Front Runner States are Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Rajasthan.

- While most states have implemented national programmes designed by BEE and EESL, the 'Front Runner' and 'Achiever' states have several individual initiatives as well.
86. ▶ CBSE affiliated schools in Kerala, whose board exam documents such as mark sheets/ migration certificates/ pass certificates have got lost or damaged in the state's floods, CBSE will provide them with digital mark sheets, migration certificates and pass certificates through the 'Parinam Manjusha' portal/ DigiLocker.
- CBSE with National E-Governance Division (NEGD) has developed the first-of-its-kind digital academic repository called 'Parinam Manjusha'. The academic repository will be integrated with DigiLocker.
87. ▶ CSIR has developed Less Polluting Firecrackers named – safe water releaser (SWAS), safe minimal aluminium (SAFAL) and safe thermite cracker (STAR), which are environment friendly and are 15-20 % cheaper than conventional ones. E-crackers also being developed with products like E-Ladi, E-Anar, E-cracker.
88. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Aug 01, 2018) -
- General Approvals -
 - Raising funds up to 15,000 crores as Extra Budgetary Resources (EBR) for Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) during 2018-19 through NABARD.
 - Expansion of scope of work of *International Centre for Drinking Water Quality* to authorise it for receiving EBR funds for SBM(G), disbursement of same to States/UTs implementing agencies, and its repayment.
 - Change name of Society to "National Centre for Drinking Water, Sanitation and Quality" in place of "International Centre for Drinking Water Quality".
 - Permit exploration of unconventional hydrocarbons such as Shale oil/gas, Coal Bed Methane (CBM) etc. It will enable realization of prospective hydrocarbon reserves in existing Contract Areas. New investment activities and chances of finding new hydrocarbon discoveries and resultant increased domestic production thereof is expected.
 - Restructuring Agricultural Scientists' Recruitment Board (ASRB), making it 4 Member body (up from 3 Members). Tenure of ASRB member will be for 3 years or till 65 years of age. Functioning ASRB shall be delinked from ICAR and to be attached with Deptt. of Agricultural Research & Education (DARE) under Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare.
 - Approved first extension of Concessional Financing Scheme (CFS) to support Indian Entities bidding for strategically important infrastructure projects abroad. It is proposed to extend the Scheme for another five years from 2018 to 2023.
 - Approved death penalty or life imprisonment to those involved in piracy at sea, to have a domestic anti-piracy legislation to provide necessary legal framework for prosecution of those involved in piracy-related crimes.
 - Approved introducing a Bill to restore original provisions of SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, that was ruled out by Supreme Court in March 2018. It introduces three new clauses after Section 18 of original Act.
 - Preliminary enquiry shall not be required for registration of a First Information Report against any person.
 - Arrest of a person accused of having committed an offence under Act would not require any approval.
 - Provisions of Section 438 of Code of Criminal Procedure, which deals with anticipatory bail, shall not apply to a case under this Act, in spite of any judgment or order of any Court.
 - CCEA Approvals -
 - Approved Interest Free Loan (IFL) equivalent to interest during construction (IDC) component of 422 crores, 415 crores and 419 crores for Gorakhpur, Sindri and Barauni projects respectively to Hindustan Urvarak and Rasayan Limited (HURL) fertilizer projects.
 - Approved issue of fresh equity shares to extent of 15% of paid up equity capital efface value of Rs. 5 each by Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) through Qualified Institutions Placement (QIP) route. Govt shareholding will come down from 76.05% to 66.13%.
 - Approved opening of 13 new Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) in 7 States and 2nd Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) in Alot in Ratlam (Madhya Pradesh). Presently, KVs are imparting quality education to more than 12 lakh students and JNVs are providing modern education free of cost to nearly 2.50 lakh students across country.
89. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Aug 09, 2018) -
- General Approvals -
 - Approved extension of term of Commission to examine issue of Sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes in Central List till November 2018.
 - Approved raising 4 additional battalions of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), at estimated cost of 637 crores. These will initially be raised as 2 battalions in Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and 1 battalion each in Border Security Force (BSF)

and Assam Rifles (ARs). Later these battalions will be converted into NDRF battalions and will be placed in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Delhi National Capital Region.

MOUs -

- Indonesia - cooperation in health and Science sector.
- MoU between Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada (CPA Canada).
- Korea - Trade Remedy Cooperation.
- Approved Joint issue of Postage Stamps on India-South Africa on theme *20 Years of Strategic Partnership*.

CCEA Approvals -

- Approved release of pulses to States/UTs at discounted rate to be utilized for various Welfare Schemes from stock of pulses procured under Price Support Schemes (PSS), to enable States/UTs to use pulses in various Welfare Schemes like PDS, Mid-Day Meal Scheme etc.
 - States/UT can lift 34.88 lakh MT of Tur, Chana, Masoor, Moong and Urad at discount of 15 per Kg over prevailing wholesale market price of sourcing state. Government will spend 5237 crores for its implementation.
- Approved construction of 6.930 km long 4-lane bridge at Kosi River in Phulaut (Bihar), to be completed by June 2022. It will fill 10 km long missing link between Phulaut and Bihpur on NH-106, to bring down journey between 2 places to 12 KM, from 72 KM Currently.
- Approved revision of *Post Matric Scholarship for Other Backward Classes Students for studying in India* scheme for upto 2019-20. Revisions include - Annual parental income will be increased from Rs. One Lakh to Rs. 1.5 lakh, 30% of funds allocated earmarked for girl students and 5% for students with disabilities.
- Approved continuation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) beyond 12th Five Year Plan period ((2012-2017)). It will help in connecting 38,412 habitations at estimated cost of Rs. 84,934 crore.
 - Initially targets of PMGSY were to be achieved by March 2022, however, sunset date of achievement of PMGSY-I was pre-poned to March 2019, with changed funding pattern in ratio of 60:40 between Centre and States (90:10 for 8 North Eastern and 3 Himalayan States)
 - PMGSY-II and habitations under identified LWE blocks (100-249 population) covered by March 2020. Under, PMGSY-II, against target length of 50,000 km works of upgradation almost 32,100 km road length have been sanctioned in 13 states, which have transited to PMGSY-II. 12,000 km road length has been completed up to March, 2018 against the sanctions issued.

90. Cabinet Approvals (Aug 29, 2018) -

MOUs -

- Bulgaria - tourism
- South Korea - railways
- United Kingdom and Northern Ireland - Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries
- Morocco - signing of Air Services Agreement
- Rwanda - Trade Cooperation Framework
- USA - insurance regulatory sector

General Approvals -

- Revision of project outlay for setting up of India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) from Rs. 800 crore to Rs. 1,435 crore, to make up for enhanced Technology Costs and Human Resource Costs.
 - IPPB services shall be available at 650 IPPB branches and 3250 Access Points from 1st September 2018 and in all 1.55 lakh post offices (Access Points) by December 2018.
- Approved release an additional instalment of Dearness Allowance (DA) to Central Government employees and Dearness Relief (DR) to pensioners w.e.f. 01.07.2018 representing an increase of 2% over the existing rate of 7% of the Basic Pay/Pension.

CCEA Approvals -

- Approved umbrella scheme "Ocean Services, Technology, Observations, Resources Modelling and Science (O-SMART)", for implementation during 2017-18 to 2019-20 at an overall cost of INR 1623 crores. It encompasses a total of 16 sub-projects addressing ocean development activities such as Services, Technology, Resources, Observations and Science.
 - Implementation of O-SMART will help in addressing issues relating to Sustainable Development Goal-14, which aims to conserve use of oceans, marine resources for sustainable development. This scheme (O-SMART) also provide necessary scientific and technological background required for implementation of various aspects of Blue Economy.

91. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (July 18, 2018) -

✍ General Approvals -

- ✍ Approved to make district magistrates (DMs), instead of courts, as final authority for approving adoptions. Courts are overburdened and take long time to approve adoptions. Since, DMs have information about adoption cases and have access to all departments, it is easier for DMs to take the process ahead faster.
- ✍ Approved to grant Special Remission to Prisoners as part of commemoration of 150th birth anniversary of M K Gandhi to be observed in 2019. Prisoners to be considered for special remission are Male convicts of over 60 years of age (55 for Women and Transgender convicts) and who have completed 50% of their actual sentence period, Physically disabled convicts (70% disability) and more and who have completed 50% of their sentence period AND Terminally ill convicts.

✍ Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) Approvals -

- ✍ To protect interest of sugarcane farmers, Approved Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of sugarcane for 2018-19 at 275 per quintal for a basic recovery rate of 10% and premium of 2.75 / qtl for each 0.1 % increase in recovery above 10%. Cost of production of is INR 155 per quintal. Remittances to sugarcane farmers will be over 83000 crores. Updated FRP will be w.e.f. 1st October, 2018.
- ✍ Approved establishment of new medical college at Deoria at a cost of INR 250 crores under Phase-II of Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- ✍ Approved proposal for Continuation of Pre-Matric, Post Matric and Merit-cum-Means based Scholarship Schemes for the students belonging to the six notified Minority Communities at a total cost of Rs. 5338.32 crore for period up to 2019-20. This will benefit 70 lakh students annually.
- ✍ Approved policy framework for streamlining operations of Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) for increased domestic production of hydrocarbon resources. Framework includes -
 - ✍ Special dispensation for E&P activities in North Eastern Region (NER), Based on recommendations in 'Hydrocarbon Vision 2030 for North East'.
 - ✍ Sharing of Royalty and Cess in Pre-NELP Exploration Blocks, to benefit Pre-NELP Exploration Blocks in which fresh investment for additional development activities is expected as sharing of royalty and cess, and cost recoverability of same will help in making additional investment commercially viable for Licensee company; ONGC/OIL.
 - ✍ Extending tax benefits under Section 42 of Income Tax, 1961 prospectively to operational blocks under Pre-NELP discovered fields for extended period of contract under PSC extension policy.
 - ✍ Relaxing timeline from 7 days to 15 days for giving written notice to notify the occurrence of a Force Majeure event in PSCs.
- ✍ Approved completion of 83 minor irrigation projects and 8 major / medium irrigation projects in Maharashtra's drought prone Vidharbha and Marathawada regions. Cost of projects is approx 13651 crores, with Central Assistance of 3831 crores under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana- Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (PMKSY-AIBP).

✍ MOUs -

- ✍ MoU amongst BRICS Nations (*Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa*) on Regional Aviation Partnership Cooperation.
- ✍ Cuba - Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy.
- ✍ Indonesia - Pharmaceutical products, pharmaceutical substances, biological product and cosmetics regulatory functions.
- ✍ Approved Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) agreements -
 - ✍ *Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA)* (signed in 2010) with Institute of Certified Public Accountants (CPA) of Ireland.
 - ✍ MoU with Bahrain Institute of Banking and Finance (BIBF).
 - ✍ MoU with National Board of Accountants and Auditors, Tanzania.

92. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (July 4, 2018) -

✍ MOUs -

- ✍ With United Kingdom - Law & Justice and to set up a Joint Consultative Committee.

✍ General Approvals -

- ✍ Approved creation of 1 post each of Vice-Chairperson and Member in National Commission for Safai Karmacharis.
- ✍ Approved renaming Agartala Airport in Tripura as *Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore Airport*, Agartala.
 - ✍ Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore, who ascended throne of the erstwhile Tripura Princely State in 1923, was an enlightened ruler. Agartala Airport was constructed in 1942 on land donated by Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore.
- ✍ Approved continuance of 8 existing schemes of Ministry of Home Affairs upto March 2020 for relief and rehabilitation of migrants and repatriates under the Umbrella scheme "Relief and Rehabilitation of Migrants and Repatriates", with financial

implication of 3183 crores for 2017-18 to 2019-20. Schemes are -

- ✎ Central Assistance for one-time settlement of displaced families from Pak Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) and Chhamb settled in Jammu & Kashmir.
- ✎ Rehabilitation Package and up-gradation of infrastructure of Bangladeshi Enclaves and Cooch Behar District after transfer of enclaves between India and Bangladesh under Land Boundary Agreement.
- ✎ Relief assistance to Sri Lankan refugees staying in camps in Tamil Nadu and Odisha.
- ✎ Grant-in-Aid to Central Tibetan Relief Committee (CTRC) for five years for administrative and social welfare expenses of Tibetan settlements.
- ✎ Grant-in-Aid to Government of Tripura for maintenance of Brus lodged in relief camps of Tripura.
- ✎ Rehabilitation of Bru/Reang families from Tripura to Mizoram.
- ✎ Grant of enhanced relief of Rs. 5.00 lakh per deceased person, who died during 1984 Anti-Sikh Riots.
- ✎ Central Scheme for Assistance to Civilian Victims/Family of Victims of Terrorist/Communal/LWE Violence and Cross Border Firing and Mine/IED blasts on Indian Territory'.
- ✎ Approved DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill 2018, aimed at expanding application of DNA-based forensic technologies to strengthen justice delivery system of country.
 - ✎ By providing for the mandatory accreditation and regulation of DNA laboratories, Bill ensures that with proposed expanded use of this technology in country, there is also assurance that DNA test results are reliable and data remain protected from misuse or abuse in terms of the privacy rights of our citizens.
- ✎ Approved India's accession to WIPO Copyright Treaty, 1996 and WIPO Performers and Phonograms Treaty, 1996 which extends coverage of copyright to the internet and digital environment. These treaties will help India to enable creative right-holders enjoy fruit of their labour, through international copyright system that can be used to secure return on investment made in producing and distributing creative works.

✎ Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) Approvals -

- ✎ Approved expanding scope of Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) by enhancing its capital base to 10000 crores and asking it to mobilise 100000 crores for Revitalizing Infrastructure and Systems in Education (RISE) by 2022. CCEA also approved infusing additional Government equity of 5,000 crore (in addition to 1,000 crore already provided) in HEFA. This would enable addressing the needs of all educational institutions with differing financial capacity in an inclusive manner
- ✎ Approved increase in Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for all 14 kharif crops for 2018-19 Season, ensuring minimum 50 % profit for farmers. Crops are - Paddy, Jowar, Bajra, Ragi, Maize, Arhar(Tur), Moong, Urad, Groundnut, Sunflower Seed, Soyabean, Sesamum, Nigerseed and Cotton. It will cost INR 15000 Crores to the Government.

✎ Updated MSPs for Kharif Crops are -

Crop	Earlier MSP	New MSP	% Rise
Paddy	1550	1750	12.90
Jowar	1700	2430	42.94
Bajra	1425	1950	36.84
Ragi	1900	2897	52.47 (Most Increase)
Maize	1425	1700	19.30
Arhar(Tur) -	5450	5675	4.13
Moong	5575	6975	25.11
Urad	5400	5600	3.70
Groundnut	4450	4890	9.89
Sunflower Seed	4100	5388	31.42
Soyabean	3050	3399	11.44
Sesamum	5300	6249	17.91
Nigerseed	4050	5877	45.11
Cotton	4020	5150	28.11

✎ Several Farmer Friendly Initiatives taken by govt. are -

- ✎ Premium rates to be paid by farmers are very low - 2 % of sum insured for all kharif crops, 1.5% for all rabi crops and 5 % for commercial and horticulture crops. Government launched Mobile App *Crop Insurance*, to help farmers to find out details about insurance cover available in their area and to calculate insurance premium for notified crops
- ✎ Government launched a scheme to develop a pan India electronic trading platform under 'National Agriculture Market' (NAM) aiming to integrate 585 regulated markets with common e-market platform in order to facilitate

better price discovery and ensure remunerative prices to farmers.

- ✎ Government formulated a new model Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing (Promotion & Facilitation) Act, 2017 to provide farmers market options beyond the existing APMC regulated market yards.
- ✎ Soil Health Cards are being issued to farmers, renewed every 2 years. SHC provides information on fertility status of soil and a soil test based advisory on use of fertilizers. Over 15 crore Soil Health Cards have been distributed.
- ✎ Under Paramparagat KrishiVikasYojana (PKVY), Government is promoting organic farming and development of potential market for organic products.
- ✎ Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana is being implemented to extend coverage of irrigation 'HarKhetkoPani' and improving water use efficiency 'Per Drop More Crop ' in a focused manner.
- ✎ Government is focusing on improving productivity of crops such as rice, wheat, coarse grains and pulses under National Food Security Mission.
- ✎ A dedicated online interface e-KrishiSamvad provides direct and effective solutions to problems faced by farmers.
- ✎ Government is encouraging formation of Farmer Producer Organisations. Budget for 2018-19 has extended a favourable taxation treatment to Farmer Producers Organisations (FPOs) for helping farmers aggregate their needs of inputs, farm services, processing and sale operations.
- ✎ Government has set up a buffer stock of pulses and domestic procurement of pulses is also being done under Price Stabilization Fund (PSF), mainly to protect consumers. It aims to ensure that farmers should get full benefit of increased MSPs. For this, it is essential that if price of agriculture produce market is less than MSP, Government should purchase either at MSP or work in a manner to provide MSP for farmers through some other mechanism.
- ✎ A handbook for women farmers 'Farm Women Friendly Hand Book' containing special provisions and package of assistance which women farmers can claim under various ongoing Schemes has been brought out.
- ✎ With above measures taken, Government has set a target to double the farmers' Income by 2022.
- ✎ Approved extension of scheme of recapitalization of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) for upto 2019-20. It will enable RRBs to maintain minimum prescribed Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of 9 %.
- ✎ 56 RRBs are functioning in the country. As on 31st March, 2017, credit given by RRBs is 2,28,599 crores.
- ✎ Scheme of Recapitalization of RRBs started in FY 2010-11 and was extended twice in 2012-13 and 2015-16. Amount of 342.80 crores will be utilized to provide recapitalization support to RRBs whose CRAR is below 9%.
- ✎ First regional rural bank was 'Prathama Bank' that was established on 2nd October, 1975 in Moradabad (UP). RRBs are jointly owned by Government of India, concerned State Government and Sponsor Banks with capital shared in proportion of 50%, 15% and 35% respectively.

93. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (June 06, 2018) -

✎ CCEA (Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs) Approvals -

- ✎ Approved construction of 9.9 km long new 6 - lane bridge across river Ganga on NH - 96 at Phaphamau in Allahabad with total cost of INR 1948 crores, to be completed by December 2021. It will resolve the traffic congestion on existing old 2 - lane Phaphamau bridge on NH-96 at Allahabad. This will also boost pilgrimage and local economy of Holy city of Prayag.
- ✎ Implementation of Phase-3 of Off-grid and Decentralised Solar PV (Photo Voltaic) Application Programme to achieve additional 118 MWp(Mega Watt peak) off-grid solar PV capacity by 2020. Off-grid solar systems will also open better livelihood opportunities for beneficiaries in remote areas, increasing self-employment. Implementation of Phase-III is likely to generate employment opportunity equivalent to 8.67 lakh man-days. It will Cover -
 - ✎ 300000 solar street lights will be installed across country.
 - ✎ Solar power plants of individual size up to 25 kWp(kilo Watt peak) will be promoted in areas where grid power has not reached or is not reliable. Aggregated capacity of solar power plants would be 100 MWp.
 - ✎ 2500000 solar study lamps will be provided in North Eastern States and LWE affected districts.
 - ✎ Total project of the three components included under the phase 3 is INR 1895 crores of which INR 637 crores will be provided as central financial assistance.

✎ General Approvals -

- ✎ Release of Joint Stamps between with Russia, to establish postal cooperation.
- ✎ Approved revision in wage structure of Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS), with expenditure of INR 1258 crores during 2018-19, benefitting . 3.07 lakh Gramin Dak Sevaks. GDSs have been brought under two categories - Branch Postmasters (BPMs) and Assistant Branch Postmaster (ABPMs). Present 11 TRCA slabs will be merged into 3 TRCA Slabs with two levels each for BPMs and other than BPMs. Introduction of new Time Related Continuity Allowance (TRCA).

- ✎ Approved Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) Continuation Programme (Phase 6) and funding of thirty PSLV operational flights under the Programme, with total fund requirement of INR 6131 Crores.
 - ✎ PSLV Continuation Programme was sanctioned in 2008, with four phases completed and fifth phase to be completed by Q2 of 2019-20. Phase 6 approval will cater to launch of satellite missions during Q3 of 2019-20 to Q1 of 2023-2, with frequency of up to 8 launches per year.
- ✎ Approved Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark-III (GSLV Mk-III) continuation programme (Phase-I) consisting of ten (10) GSLV (Mk-III) flights, at a total estimated cost of Rs. 4338 crores.
 - ✎ The GSLV Mk-III continuation Programme – Phase 1 is first phase of operational flights that will enable launch of 4 tonne class of communication satellites to meet country's satellite communication requirements, during 2019-2024.
 - ✎ It will meet launch requirement of communication satellites to meet national demand for High Throughput Satellites for rural broadband connectivity, increase and sustain the availability of transponders for DTH, VSAT and Television broadcasters.
- ✎ Approved several measures worth approx INR 8500 crores, to improve liquidity of sugar mills resulting in accumulation of huge cane price arrears of farmers.
 - ✎ Creation of buffer stock of 30 LMT of sugar for 1 year and to incur estimated expenditure of 1175 crores.
 - ✎ To fix minimum selling price of white / refined sugar at mill gate below which no white / refined sugar can be sold by a sugar mill in domestic market. Minimum selling price of white/refined sugar shall be initially fixed at Rs.29/kg which can be revised by DFPD based on revision of FRP etc.
 - ✎ To up-grade existing distilleries attached to sugar mills by installing incineration boilers and setting up new distilleries in sugar mills. Government will bear interest subvention of maximum 1332 crores over 5 years on bank loans amounting 4440 crores to be sanctioned to sugar mills by banks.

✎ MOUs -

- ✎ With Netherlands on technical cooperation in Spatial Planning, Water Management and Mobility Management.
- ✎ With Denmark on technical cooperation in Sustainable and Smart Urban Development.
- ✎ With United Kingdom, France on technical cooperation in Sustainable Urban Development.
- ✎ With Oman on Cooperation in peaceful uses of outer space.

94. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (June 13, 2018) -

✎ MOUs -

- ✎ Joint issue of a postage stamp between Department of Posts of India and Vietnam.
- ✎ MoU signed between Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Institut National de la Santeet de la Recherche Medicale (INSERM) of France. It aims at cooperation in areas of common interest within medical, life sciences and health research fields.

✎ General Approvals -

- ✎ Permitted HDFC Bank to raise additional share capital of up to a maximum of 24000 crores, over previous approved limit of 10000 crores. Provided that Composite foreign shareholding in Bank shall not exceed 74% of paid-up equity share capital.
- ✎ Approved continuation of 3 Year Action Plan (2017-2020) of scheme for Agricultural Education Division and ICAR Institutes with outlay of INR 2225 crores. It is aimed to generate quality human resources from the institutions of higher agricultural education. It comprises of -
 - ✎ Strengthening and Development of Higher Agricultural Education in India - 2050 crores
 - ✎ ICAR-National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM) - 24 crores
 - ✎ ICAR - Central Institute of Women in Agriculture (CIWA) including All India Coordinated Research Project on Home Science (AICRP-HS) - 151 crores.
- ✎ Approved withdrawal of Nalanda University (Amendment) Bill 2013 (pending in Rajya Sabha). Nalanda University was established after a Joint Press Statement at 4th East Asia Summit in Thailand in October 2009. Present proposal is for withdrawing Nalanda University (Amendment) Bill 2013, which is aimed at amending certain existing provisions of Nalanda University Act 2010.
- ✎ Approved introduction of Dam Safety Bill 2018 in Parliament. It will help States and UTs to adopt uniform dam safety procedures which shall ensure safety of dams and safeguard benefits from such dams. The Bill provides for -
 - ✎ Constitution of a National Committee on Dam Safety which shall evolve dam safety policies and recommend regulations.
 - ✎ Establishment of National Dam Safety Authority as a regulatory body which shall implement guidelines and standards for dam safety.

✍ Constitution of a State Committee on Dam Safety by State Governments.

✍ Approved nomination of Home Minister as Chairman of North Eastern Council (NEC), and Minister of State (Independent Charge) in Ministry of DoNER as Vice Chairman of NEC. NEC has Governors and CMs of all 8 North Eastern State as its members. Presently, Rajnath Singh is Home Minister and Jitendra Singh is Minister of State (IC) in Ministry of DoNER.

95. ▶ 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.

96. ▶ 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.

97. ▶ 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.

98. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Oct 03, 2018) -

✎ General Approvals -

- ✎ Approved implementation of Indore Metro Rail Project (MP), with Ring Line of length 31.55 Km, to connect major public nodes.
 - ✎ Length of the Ring Line is 31.55 km, with 30 Stations on Ring Line
 - ✎ Estimated cost is INR 7500 crores and it will be completed in four years.
- ✎ Approved implementation of Bhopal Metro Rail Project (MP), comprising two corridors of total length 27.87 Km - Karond Circle to AIIMS (14.99 Km) and Bhadbhada Square to Ratnagiri Tiraha (12.88 Km) -
 - ✎ Estimated cost is INR 6941 crores and project will be completed in 4 years.
- ✎ Approved 2nd Protocol amending Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) with Singapore.
- ✎ Approved Redevelopment of Railway Stations by IRSDC as Nodal Agency, through simplified procedures and longer lease tenure (upto 99 years). Multiple sub leasing, simplified bid procedures Redevelopment will create smart stations that will function as mini smart cities.
- ✎ Approved establishment of National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation(NIMHR) in Sehore District (Bhopal-Sehore highway) instead of Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh, as decided earlier.

✎ MOUs -

- ✎ Russia - Road Transport, MSME.

✎ CCEA Approvals -

- ✎ Approved providing a package of 469 crores for Revival and Mill Development Plan (RMDP) of PSU NEPA Limited, in Nepanagar (Madhya Pradesh).
- ✎ To boost farmers' income, CCEA approved increase in Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for all Rabi crops for 2018-19 to be marketed in 2019-20 season. It will give additional return to farmers of INR 62635 crores to at least 50 % return over cost of production and will aid in doubling farmers' income.
 - ✎ Increase in MSPs of wheat has been raised by 105 per quintal, safflower by 845 per quintal, barley by 30 per quintal, masur (lentil) by 225 per quintal, gram by 220 per quintal and rapeseed & mustard by 200 per quintal.

99. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Oct 10, 2018)

✎ General Approvals -

- ✎ Approved closure of National Jute Manufactures Corporation Ltd. (NJMC) and its subsidiary Birds Jute & Exports Ltd. (BJEL).
 - ✎ NJMC has been incurring losses for several years and was under reference to BIFR since 1993. Its primary product was hessian jute bags used for packaging of food grain used by various State Governments.
- ✎ Approved establishment of permanent campuses of 2 new Indian Institutes of Science Education & Research (IISERs) at Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh) and Berhampur (Odisha). Cost is INR 3074 crores.
- ✎ Approved merger of skills space regulatory institutions National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) and National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) into *National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET)*.
 - ✎ NCVET will regulate entities engaged in vocational education and training, and establish minimum standards for their functioning.
- ✎ Approved Productivity Linked Bonus for Railway Employees Productivity Linked Bonus (PLB) equivalent to 78 days' wages for the financial year 2017-18 for About 11.91 lakh non-gazetted Railway employees.

✎ MOUs -







- ✎ Lebanon - agriculture and allied sectors.
- ✎ Romania - Tourism.
- ✎ Finland - Environmental Cooperation.

✎ CCEA Approvals -





- ✎ Approved closure of Bienco Lawrie Limited (BLL) including giving Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS) to its employees.
 - ✎ BLL is a Schedule 'C' CPSE with 67.33% and 32.33% equity share held by Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB) and Government of India respectively. It operates in four segments - Switchgear Manufacturing, Electrical Repair, Projects Division and Lube blending & filling facility.
 - ✎ BLL has been making losses for several years. Net worth of Company stood - 78.88 crores at end of FY 2017-18 and accumulated loss during 2017-18 were - 153.95 crores.

100. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Oct 24, 2018) -





General Approvals -

-  Approved setting up of Indian Institute of Skills(IISs) across the country in Public Private Partnership (PPP), to augment global competitiveness of key sectors of Indian economy by providing high quality skill training and applied research education.
-  Approved appointment of Adjudicating Authority and establishment of Appellate Tribunal under Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act (PBPT) 1988. It is aimed at better administration of cases referred to Adjudicating Authority and speedy disposal of appeals filed against order of the Adjudicating Authority before Appellate Tribunal.
-  Approved constitution of a High Level Steering Committee for periodically reviewing and refining the National Indicator Framework (NIF) for monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with associated targets. It will be chaired by Chief Statistician of India and Secretary in Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI, Currently Pravin Srivastava).
 -  SDGs with 17 Goals and 169 Targets intend for promotion of sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion, promoting integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems.
 -  NIF will help in outcome-based monitoring & reporting on progress on SDGs at National level.
-  Creation of 1 post of Director in basic pay of Rs. 2,25,000/- (fixed) plus NPA (under 237500) each for new AIIMS at Rae Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh), Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh), Bathinda (Punjab), Guwahati (Assam), Bilaspur (Himachal Pradesh) and Deoghar (Jharkhand).

MOUs -


-  Approved signing and ratification of Extradition Treaty with Malawi (East Africa).
-  MoU among BRICS Nations for Cooperation in Social and Labour Sphere, Environment.
-  MoU with Singapore on constitution of a Joint Working Group (JWG) on FinTech.
-  MoU between Institute of Chartered Accountants of India and Certified Professional Accountants Afghanistan (CPA Afghanistan)

CCEA Approvals -





-  Creation of special Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF), with size 7522 crores, comprising 5,266 crores to be raised by Nodal Loaning Entities (NLEs), 1316 crores beneficiaries contribution and 939 crores budgetary support from Government. NABARD, National Cooperatives Development Corporation (NCDC) and Banks shall be NLEs.
 -  It aims to achieve fish production of 15 million tonnes by 2020 and 20 million tonnes by 2022-23, up from current production of 11.4 million tonnes.
-  Increase in supervisory visit charges for ASHA Facilitators from 250 per visit to 300 per visit for 2018-2019 to 2019- 2020. ASHA Facilitator will undertake about 20 supervisory visits per month.
-  New Railway Between Bahraich and Khalilabad in Uttar Pradesh, to serve 5 districts of Uttar Pradesh including 4 aspirational districts (Bahraich, Balrampur, Shravasti and Siddharth Nagar) and Sant Kabirnagar. It will cost approx 4939 crores and will be completed by 2024-25.

101. Cabinet Approvals (Sep 05, 2018) -

General Approvals -


-  Approved establishment of permanent campus of 7 new Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) at Amritsar, Bodh Gaya, Nagpur, Sambalpur, Sirmaur, Vishakhapatnam and Jammu, and their recurring expenditure at a total cost of Rs 3775 crores.

Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) -

-  Approved continuation of the Centrally Sponsored Umbrella Scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (CSS-IDWH) beyond 12th Plan period from 2017-18 to 2019-20. It consists of Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger (CSS-PT), Development of Wildlife Habitats (CSS-DWH) and Project Elephant (CSS-PE). Outlay is INR 1731 crores.
 -  Total 18 tiger range States in 5 landscapes of country would be benefitted under Project Tiger scheme.
 -  Similarly, for other two schemes, the coverage is entire country in case of Development of Wildlife Habitats (DWH) and 23 elephant range States for Project Elephant.
 -  It will generate direct employment of about 30 lakh mandays annually which shall include many local tribes besides non-tribal local workforce.

102. Cabinet Approvals (Sep 12, 2018) -

General Approvals -

-  Approved introduction of Bill in Parliament for amendment of NID Act 2014 to include four new National Institutes of Design (NID) viz. Amaravati/Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), Jorhat (Assam) and Kurukshetra (Haryana)

- within ambit of NID Act 2014 and declare them as Institutions of National Importance (INIs) at par with NID Ahmedabad.
- ✎ Approved Policy framework to promote and incentivize Enhanced Recovery (ER)/ Improved Recovery (IR)/ Unconventional Hydrocarbon (UHC) production Methods/ to improve recovery factor of existing hydrocarbons reserves for augmenting domestic production of oil and gas.
 - ✎ It will be applicable to all contractual regimes and Nomination fields. It is expected to spur new investment, provide impetus to economic activities and generate additional employment opportunities.
 - ✎ Cabinet approved new Umbrella Scheme *Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan' (PM-AASHA)*, aimed at ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce, as announced in Budget for 2018.
 - ✎ PM-AASHA includes mechanism of ensuring remunerative prices to farmers and is comprised of -
 - ✎ Price Support Scheme (PSS),
 - ✎ Physical procurement of pulses, oilseeds and Copra will be done by Central Nodal Agencies with proactive role of State governments. In addition to NAFED, Food Cooperation of India (FCI) will take up PSS operations in states /districts.
 - ✎ Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS)
 - ✎ It is proposed to cover all oilseeds for which MSP is notified. In this direct payment of difference between the MSP and selling price will be made to pre-registered farmers selling his produce in the notified market yard through a transparent auction process. All payment will be done directly into registered bank account of farmer.
 - ✎ This scheme does not involve any physical procurement of crops as farmers are paid difference between the MSP price and Sale price on disposal in notified market.
 - ✎ Pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PPPS).
 - ✎ Procurement Stats -
 - ✎ During 2010-14, procurement was INR 3500 crores whereas during 2014-18, it has risen to INR 34000 crores.
 - ✎ For procurement of these agri-commodities during 2010-14, Government Guarantee of 2500 crore was provided with expenditure of only 300 crores. During 2014-18, Guarantee has been increased to 29000 crores with expenditure of 1000 crores.
 - ✎ Now, Cabinet has increased government guarantee by INR 16550 crores, making it 45550 crore in total. INR 15053 crores is sanctioned for PM-AASHA implementation.
 - ✎ MOUs -
 - ✎ Brunei Darussalam - Cooperation in Space Research, Science and Applications. Operation of Telemetry Tracking and Telecommand station for satellite and launch vehicles.
 - ✎ Collaborative Research on Distributed Ledger and Block chain Technology in context of Development of digital economy by Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) with participating member banks, under BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism.
 - ✎ Participating banks are - Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Economico e Social (BNDES, of Brazil), China Development Bank (CDB), State Corporation Bank for Development and Foreign Economic Affairs (Vnesheconombank, of Russia) and Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).
 - ✎ South Africa - exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes.
 - ✎ Egypt - Agriculture & allied sectors.
 - ✎ Malta - Tourism.
 - ✎ CCEA Approvals -
 - ✎ Approved revising price of ethanol derived from B heavy molasses / partial sugarcane juice and fix a higher price for 100% sugarcane juice based ethanol for ethanol supply year from 1st December 2018 to 30th November 2019.
 - ✎ Fix ex-mill price of ethanol derived out of B heavy molasses / partial sugarcane juice to INR 52.43 per litre (earlier 47.13 / litre).
 - ✎ Fix the ex-mill price of ethanol derived from 100% sugarcane juice at 59.13 per litre (earlier from prevailing price of Rs.47.13 per litre).
 - ✎ OMCs are advised to prioritise ethanol from 100 % sugarcane juice, B heavy molasses / partial sugarcane juice, C heavy molasses and Damaged Food grains/other sources, in that order.
 - ✎ Approved continuation of Capacity Development Scheme for 2017-18 to 2019-20 with outlay of INR 2250 crores.
 - ✎ CDS is an Ongoing Central Sector Scheme of MoSPI, aimed at augmenting infrastructural, technical as well as manpower resources for making available credible and timely Official Statistics for policy makers and public.
 - ✎ It has 2 Sub-schemes - Economic Census and Support for Statistical Strengthening (SSS).

- Under Economic Census -listing of all non-agricultural establishments is undertaken periodically, which forms the basis for conducting detailed socio-economic surveys.
- SSS Sub-scheme is to strengthen State/ Sub-State level statistical systems/ infrastructure to facilitate development of a robust national system.

103. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Sep 16, 2018) -

CCEA Approvals -

- Approved equity investment of INR 1033.54 crores ($\pm 29.67\%$) of project cost for setting up a Coal Gasification based fertilizer project in Talcher Fertilizer Ltd. (TFL) by Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilizers Limited (RCF). Revival of Talcher project will ensure huge investment in the fertilizer sector from Government through PSUs.
- Approved enhancement of honorarium to Anganwadi Workers/Anganwadi Helpers (AWWs/AWHs) and performance linked incentive to AWHs with total cost of INR 10649 crores, till 31-03-2020.

Name of Functionary	Old Rates p.m.	Revised Rates p.m.
Anganwadi Worker	3000	4500
Anganwadi Worker at Mini-AWC	2250	3500
Anganwadi Helper	1500	2250

- Approved to construct new line between Budni to Indore (Mangaliyagaon) with approximate length of 205.5 Km, with cost 3261 crores.
- Approved ASHA Benefit Package w.e.f. October 2018, with 2 components -
 - Eligible ASHAs and ASHA facilitators to be enrolled in social security schemes - Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana.
 - Increase in amount of routine and recurring incentives under National Health Mission for ASHAs under NHM from Rs. 1000 to 2000 per month.
 - The package entails an expenditure (Central funding) to Rs.1224.97 crore for two years 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- Approved Revised Cost Estimate of Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) at the revised cost of Rs 3466 crore with the financial assistance of World Bank to improve safety and operational performance of 198 Dams. CCEA also approved 2 year time extension till 30th June, 2020.

104. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Sep 26, 2018) -

CCEA Approvals -

- New BG Electrified Line of 294.53 route Kms from Katghora to Dongargarh will provide rail connectivity to unserved areas of Chhattisgarh, with approx cost of 5950 crores.
- Construction of New Domestic Terminal Building and other allied structures at Patna airport at an estimated cost of 1216 crores, to enhance passenger handling capacity of airport to 4.5 Million Passengers Per Annum (MPPA), from 0.7 MPPA.
- Due to excess stocks and indication of similar excess production in sugar season 2018-19, cane price arrears of sugarcane farmers may also peak at unprecedented high level. To check this, CCEA approved assistance over 5500 crores to support sugar sector -
 - Assistance to sugar mills by towards transport and other costs -
 - Rs. 1000/MT for mills located within 100 kms from ports
 - 2500/MT for mills located beyond 100 kms from port in coastal states
 - 3000/MT for mills located in other than coastal states or actual expenditure, whichever is lower.
 - Total expenditure on this account would be about Rs.1375 crore which will be borne by Government.
 - To help sugar mills to clear cane dues of farmers, Government will provide assistance @ of Rs. 13.88 per quintal of cane crushed in sugar season 2018-19 to sugar mills to offset cost of cane. Total expenditure on this account would be about 4163 crores.

General Approvals -

- Increasing of Government ownership in Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) and change in existing structure -
 - Acquisition of 51% equity held by the -Government Institutions in GSTN, and Restructure GSTN, with 100% government ownership shall have equity structure between the Centre (50%) and the States (50%).
 - Allow change in the existing composition of the Board of GSTN inducting three directors from Centre and States and three other independent directors to be nominated by Board of Directors and one Chairman and the CEO. Thus total

number of Directors is 11.

- Central Assistance of INR 620 Crores and 206 Crores for implementation of relining of Rajasthan Feeder Canal and Sirhind Feeder Canal respectively over five years (2018-19 to 2022-23).
- Approved National Digital Communications Policy-2018 and re-designation of the Telecom Commission as the *Digital Communications Commission*.

It aims to -

- Enhancing contribution of Digital Communications sector to 8% of India's GDP from 6% in 2017
- Provide universal broadband connectivity at 50 Mbps to every citizen;
- Provide 1 Gbps connectivity to all Gram Panchayats by 2020 and 10 Gbps by 2022
- Attract investments of USD 100 billion in the Digital Communications Sector;
- Expand IoT ecosystem to 5 billion connected devices.
- Secure digital communications infrastructure and services

Strategy Includes -

- Establishment of a National Digital Grid by creating a National Fibre Authority.
- Creating a collaborative institutional mechanism between Centre, States and Local Bodies for Common Rights of Way, standardization of costs and timelines.
- Facilitating development of Open Access Next Generation Networks.

MOUs -

With Uzbekistan -

- Tourism
- Law & Justice
- Combating Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics, Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors
- For establishment of the Uzbek-Indian Free Pharmaceutical Zone in the Andijan Region of Uzbekistan. The MoU will be signed during the visit of President of Uzbekistan to India on 1st October 2018.
- Agriculture and Allied sectors
- Pharmaceutical sector


South Korea - Applied Science and Industrial Technology









Co-operation MoU between Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK).

MoU between NITI Aayog, and Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation (MEDRF) in the field of social, economic, industrial and regional development programs.

105. ▶ Cabinet cleared ordinance to make instant triple talaq penal offence, after It was signed by President Ram Nath Kovind later as per Article 123 of Constitution. Compelling reason cited by Government for promulgation of this ordinance was that practice of triple talaq continues unabated even after annulled by Supreme Court due to absence of legal framework.
106. ▶ Census 2021 for first time in independent India will collect data on Other Backwards Castes (OBCs), after over 25 years after implementation of 27% reservation for OBCs based on Mandal Commission's recommendations on basis of last castes data collected in 1931 census.
- In 1953, President under Article 340 had set up first Backward Classes Commission under chairmanship of Kaka Kelkar to identify backward classes other than SCs and STs at national level. Its conclusions were rejected later.
 - Later in January 1979, 2nd Backward Classes Commission headed by B P Mandal was appointed to consider reservations, to redress caste discrimination. It reported that OBC population at 52% and classified 1,257 communities as backward. It also recommended increasing existing quotas, which were only for SC/ST, from 22.5% to 49.5% to include OBCs. Its recommendations were implemented in 1990.
 - UPA government (under Manmohan Singh) accepted demand for caste-based enumeration and undertaken Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) in 2011. However, SECC-2011 data was not made public for certain errors identified by Registrar General of India.
107. ▶ Central Government launch Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences (IMPRESS) scheme to promote research in Social Sciences.
- Government support would be funding of 414 crore on 1500 projects for policy themes in the social sciences at cost of 20-25 Lakh per project.
 - 11 Thematic Areas - State and Democracy Urban transformation, Media, Culture and Society Employment, Skills and Rural transformation Governance, Innovation and Public Policy Growth, Macro-trade and Economic Policy Agriculture and Rural

Development Health and Environment Science and Education Social Media and Technology Politics, Law and Economics.

 Indian Council of Social Science and Research (ICSSR) will be the project implementing agency.

108. ▶ Central Government notified that it has withdrawn proposal for setting up 'Social Media Communication Hub', after Supreme Court termed it like *creating a surveillance state*. Social Media Communications Hub was a proposed platform to allow government to keep eye on all social media platforms, to track any individual's public posts across these online platforms.
109. ▶ Central Information Commission (CIC) brought Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) under the RTI (Right to Information) Act, after concluded that characteristics of BCCI fulfil required conditions of Section 2(h) of RTI Act.
110. ▶ Central Oil PSUs IOCL, ONGC, GAIL, OIL, and NRL signed agreement for executing 1500 Km North-East Natural Gas Pipeline Grid, to connect all North-East States to National Gas Grid, under Urja Ganga Gas Pipeline Project. JV will have equal equity contribution from all partners. Expenditure is INR 6000 crores and is scheduled to complete by 2022 in three phases.
 -  Urja Ganga Gas Pipeline Project was launched in October 2016 with an aim to provide piped cooking (PNG) gas to residents of eastern region of country and CNG gas for vehicles. It envisaged laying 2,050-km pipeline connecting Jagdishpur (UP) to Haldia (West Bengal) by 2018, covering UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Odisha.
111. ▶ Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) launched *Saathi* mobile help centre to reach out to people undertaking annual pilgrimage to 3,880-metre high holy cave shrine of Amarnath.
112. ▶ Central Reserve Police Force launched 'Madadgaar Helpline', a distress helpline for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, with helpline number 14411.
113. ▶ Central Water Commission (CWC) signed agreement with Google for flood forecasting and dissemination of flood related information to masses, to help crisis management agencies to better handle extreme hydrological events, under National Hydrology Project (NHP).
 -  CWC will use technological advances made by Google in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning and geo-spatial mapping for effective management of water resources.
 -  Google also rolled out an offline mode for Android users, to enable surfing web with Chrome even without a constant internet connection. Users who are signed into Chrome can also access relevant articles, based on browsing history.
114. ▶ Centre and state governments of Tripura and Mizoram signed agreement for repatriation of thousands of people belonging to Bru community from Tripura to Mizoram. Over 3200 people living in refugee camps in Jampui Hills of Tripura for two decades are being replaced to Mizoram before October 2018.
115. ▶ Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) developed a mobile based application *utsonmobile*, with features -
 -  It enables booking of unreserved tickets, issue and renewal of season and platform tickets, check and load R-wallet balance and helps maintain user profile management and booking history.
 -  Upon registration, Railway Wallet (R-Wallet) will be created. R-Wallet can be recharged online (<https://www.utsonmobile.indianrail.gov.in>) or at any of UTS counters.
 -  No advance ticket booking is allowed (Journey date will always be current date).
 -  No need to carry hardcopy of ticket.
116. ▶ 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.
117. ▶ Chhattisgarh Government approved merger of *shikshakarmi* with state school education department., wef July 2018. It is expected to benefit around 1.50 lakh shikshakarmi who are currently working under Panchayats and urban local bodies. For merger, a shikshakarmi must have completed 8 years of service.
 -  Merged teachers would from now onwards be known as Teacher (LB) cadre and their management as well as control would be with School Education Department instead of Panchayat Department.
118. ▶ Chhattisgarh Government renamed Naya Raipur smart city as *Atal Nagar*, in honour of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who passed away recently. Also, Madhya Pradesh Govt. named 3 awards after former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Awards are for poets, journalists and administration.
119. ▶ Chhattisgarh Govt. launched a smartphone distribution scheme called 'Mobile Tihar' under Sanchar Kranti Yojna. It includes distribution of smartphones to 45 lakh women and 5 lakh children and setting up of 556 new mobile towers.
120. ▶ Chhattisgarh became first state to provide Right to Skills' Development to the youth, flagging off 15 Skill Chariots to launch government's 'Skills on Wheels' project.
121. ▶ Chhattisgarh government launched a new *Aabhar Aapki Sevaon Ka* Pensioners Portal, enabling a central mechanism for pension database and making payment in a unified manner to benefit 80,000 pensioners. All pensioners can access portal at ekoshonline.cg.nic.in/aabhar/.

122. ▶ Chhattisgarh will become first state to recruit transgenders in police force, To promote gender equality.
123. ▶ 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.
124. ▶ Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra launched three applications for benefit of litigants and lawyers - e-Filing, e-Pay, and National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP); created under eCourts project Phase II and led by Justice MB Lokur.
- ✍ e-Filing - Available at efiling.ecourts.gov.in, it is meant for online registration of lawyers and litigants.
 - ✍ e-Pay - Available at pay.ecourts.gov.in, It is a unified portal wherein facility to pay online court fees is provided.
 - ✍ NSTEP - It is a transparent and secure system for transmission of process from one location to another and will address delays in process.
125. ▶ Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu unveiled a new transaction structure for future greenfield airports proposed under NABH Nirmaan 2018, aimed at boosting investment in Indian aviation sector.
- ✍ *Maximum Blended Aeronautical Yield (MBAY)* in terms of INR per passenger shall be pre-determined by Concessioning Authority at beginning of Concession Period. It shall undergo adjustments to account for inflation and certain eventualities over Concession Period. MBAY for greenfield airports for FY 18-19 is proposed to be INR 400 per passenger.
 - ✍ Concession Period is proposed to be 40 years. Base rate of MBAY and Concession Fee shall be indexed to 50% of inflation.
 - ✍ Once in 5 years, Concessionaire shall propose base rate of MBAY for the next 5 years.
 - ✍ Quality assurance -
 - ✍ Regulator may formulate the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for greenfield airports and modify them once every 5 years.
 - ✍ Every greenfield airport shall constitute a Airport User Consultative Committee (AUCC).
 - ✍ AUCC may recommend change in MBAY to Regulator (limited to 10%) based on Concessionaire's performance.
 - ✍ Benefits of new approach -
 - ✍ Future airports will be simple and cost-efficient. There will be no incentive to enhance Capex and Opex to demand higher tariffs. The era of high revenue share (30-50%) for Concessioning Authority may end. It will bring down cost to passengers. It will attract more investors and funding institutions into airports.
126. ▶ Civil Aviation Ministry approved setting up water aerodromes in Odisha, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Assam. In first phase of the project, Chilka Lake (Odisha), Sabarmati River Front and Sardar Sarovar Dam (Gujarat) have been identified for the development of such facilities.
- ✍ Airdrome is location from which aircraft flight operations take place, regardless of whether they involve air cargo, passengers. The development of aerodromes projects in India will pave way for operation of amphibian planes (both in land and water) to enhance air connectivity.
127. ▶ Coal India and NLC India (formerly Neyveli Lignite Corporation) will jointly set up 5000 MW of power generation capacity of which 3000 MW would be solar powered while the rest 2000 MW would be coal-fuelled.
- ✍ Coal India has been tasked to become a net zero emission energy company by the ministry of coal, a move which requires it to generate 3,000 MW of solar power.
128. ▶ 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*.
129. ▶ Common Service Center (CSC) and National Health Accounts (NHA) signed MoU to implement Ayushman Bharat scheme (NHPS) through 3 lakh Common Service Centers (CSCs) across country.
- ✍ NHPS aims to cover over 10 crore poor vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) providing coverage of up to Rs. 5 lakh (per family per year) for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.
 - ✍ CSCs will help beneficiary to identify his name in Health Ministry database and his entitlement for the scheme. It will also help beneficiary to scan and upload his KYC documents for verification of his identity and claim his entitlement.
130. ▶ 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.
131. ▶ Delhi Government will introduce a "happiness curriculum" in Delhi's government schools from coming academic session, for students from nursery up to Class VIII.
132. ▶ Delhi Govt. approved a scheme under which farmers will be able to lease out a part of their agricultural land for setting up of solar panels to get additional income, called *Mukhyamantri Kisan Aaye Badhotri Solar Yojana*.
- ✍ Any farmer can rent out not more than one-third of his land to a private firm to set up solar panels at a rate of 1 lakh per annum per acre.

- ▶ Panels will be set up at a height of 3.5 metres, so that the land can also be used for agriculture.
 - ▶ Farmers will also get 1,000 units of free solar power without any investment.
133. ▶ Delhi Police inducted India's first all-woman Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team for anti-terrorist operations.
134. ▶ Delhi government launched Chief Minister's Urban Leaders Fellowship Programme that seeks to attract young leaders across the country to work with it on addressing some of the most pressing urban challenges. Fellows will be assigned to work with ministers or senior officials and will be paid remuneration of Rs 1.25 lakh per month (75,000 per month to Associate Fellows).
135. ▶ Delhi government launched doorstep delivery of 40 essential government services such as caste and marriage certificates, driving license and new water connections in the first phase. The services will be provided for an extra fee of Rs 50. Delivery would be completed with help of assigned *Mobile sahayaks*.
136. ▶ Delhi has been ranked last among 14 cities on basis of vehicular emissions in a survey conducted by Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a Delhi-based research organisation to assess transport-related emissions from urban commuting.
- ▶ It classified Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai as megacities and Bhopal, Vijaywada, Lucknow, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Kochi, Pune, Ahmedabad as metro cities.
 - ▶ Bhopal ranked best for its lowest overall vehicular emission and fuel consumption, followed by Vijaywada and Chandigarh.
 - ▶ In terms of Per-travel trip emissions & energy consumption - Kolkata (1), Mumbai and Bhopal.
137. ▶ 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.
138. ▶ Department of Biotechnology (DBT) signed MOU with International Energy Agency (IEA). It seeks to deepen co-operation in clean energy innovations to accelerate development of clean energy technologies in India and will support generation of data for policymaking and improve knowledge of good policy practices for innovation in India and around world.
139. ▶ Department of Biotechnology (Ministry of Science and Technology) signed MoU with International Energy Agency (IEA) for enhancing innovation for Clean Energy Transition, to support clean energy technologies in India.
- ▶ It will be coordinated for Ministry of Science & Technology by Mission Innovation India Unit set up by DBT and for IEA it will be coordinated by its International Partnership and Initiatives Unit (IPI). It will be initially valid for three years.
140. ▶ Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) released final rankings of States in Ease of Doing Business.
- ▶ Top 5 - Andhra Pradesh (1), Telangana (2), Haryana (3), Jharkhand (4), Gujarat (5).
 - ▶ DIPP (Ministry of Commerce and Industry) in collaboration with World Bank conducted an annual reform exercise for all States / UTs under Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP). It aims to improve delivery of various Government services in an efficient manner.
 - ▶ DIPP for first time introduced taking feedback to ensure that reforms have actually reached ground level. 78 reforms out of 372 were identified for survey. More than 5,000 private sector users in 23 States and UTs shared their experience.
141. ▶ Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (Ministry of Commerce and Industry) unveiled tricolour logo for geographical indication (GI) certified products, with tagline *Invaluable Treasures of Incredible India*. As per a contest, winning logo was designed by Adri Chatterjee and winning tagline was coined by Akancha Tripathi.
- ▶ GI tag is used on certain products which correspond to specific geographical location or origin. The goods and products having tag are recognised for their origin, quality and reputation and gives it required edge in global market.
142. ▶ 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.
143. ▶ Department of Telecom (DoT) exempted wireless devices that operate in low frequency range like bluetooth, wireless chargers, internet-of-things (IoT) products, medical devices etc. from licensing requirement. It is aimed at facilitating ease of doing business for adoption of new technologies like IoT, machine-to-machine (M2M) communications.
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. ▶ Dharmendra Pradhan (Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship) launched SATAT (Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation) as an innovative initiative to make available Compressed Bio-Gas CBG in market for use in automotive fuels.
 - ✎ Under it, with PSU Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are inviting Expression of Interest (EoI) to set up CBG production plants, by 31st March, 2019.
 - ✎ Government is keen to set up 5000 CBG plants in next 5 years. Government will incur 75,000 Crore capital expenditure for setting up infrastructure for City Gas distribution network.
 - ✎ SATAT initiative promises efficient municipal solid waste management and tackling problem of polluted urban air due to farm stubble-burning and carbon emissions.
- 146. ▶ Directorate General of Civil Aviation issued Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) or regulations for civil use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) commonly known as *Drones*, to be effective from December 1, 2018.
 - ✎ Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu said Drone Regulations 1.0 are intended to enable visual line-of-sight daytime-only and a maximum of 400 feet altitude operations of drones.
 - ✎ Unmanned Aircraft Operator Permit (UAOP) will be required for drone operators except for nano drones operating below 50 ft.; micro drones operating below 200 ft; and those owned by NTRO, ARC and Central Intelligence Agencies.
 - ✎ Digital Sky Platform is the first-of-its-kind national Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM) platform that implements “No Permission, No Takeoff” (NPNT).
 - ✎ Users will be required to do a one-time registration of their drones, pilots and owners.
 - ✎ For every flight, users will be required to ask for permission to fly on a mobile app. This requirement is exempted for the nano category of drones. Once the user puts forward his request to fly, an automated process permits or denies the request instantly.
- 147. ▶ Draft national disaster risk index prepared by home ministry with support from United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has ranked Maharashtra at top, followed by West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, while Delhi is most at risk among Union territories (UTs).
- 148. ▶ Election Commission announced Schedule for General Elections to Legislative Assemblies of Chhattisgarh Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Mizoram & Telangana (To be held in November - December 2018).
- 149. ▶ Election Commission launched its online RTI Portal at URL (<http://rti.eci.nic.in>), to facilitate applicants seeking information under Right to Information Act.
- 150. ▶ Election Commission of India (EC) removed NOTA (None of the Above) option from ballot papers of Rajya Sabha, Legislative Council elections following directive of Supreme Court.
 - ✎ In August 2018, Supreme Court had said that NOTA will not be applicable as ballot option in Rajya Sabha polls. It will only continue to be option in direct elections such as Lok Sabha and state assemblies, quashing June 2014 notification of EC that allowed use of NOTA option in Rajya Sabha elections.
- 151. ▶ Election Commission of India launched a mobile app called *Cvigil*, for citizens to report any violation of the model code of conduct during elections. It will be operational only where elections are announced, beginning from coming elections in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram and Rajasthan. Vigilant citizen has to take a picture / video of upto 2 minutes duration of scene of violations of model code.
- 152. ▶ 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.
- 153. ▶ Environment Ministry has set noise standards for all airports across country, excluding defence aircrafts. Civil airportS with over 50000 aircraft movements per year should not exceed noise levels beyond 75 dB(A) during daytime (till 10pm) and 65 dBA during night. All other

airports should not exceed levels beyond 65 dBA during day and 60 dBA during night.

154. ▶ Environment Ministry launched *Harit Diwali, Swasth Diwali* campaign, which was initiated in 2017-18, aiming to minimize bursting of crackers. This campaign is now merged with “Green Good Deed” movement, initiated as a social mobilization for protection of environment.
155. ▶ FCI Aravali Gypsum and Minerals India Limited (FAGMIL), a CPSU under Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers received approval from Government of Himachal Pradesh for setting up of White Cement Plant to cater to demand of white cement in North India. It will be first PSU white cement plant in India. Installed capacity of Plant will be 1000 TPD.
156. ▶ FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO), women’s wing of Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) launched WOW (Wellness of Women) mobile application aimed at creating awareness on preventive healthcare for women across country, backed by Apollo Hospitals Group.
157. ▶ 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*.
158. ▶ Finance Ministry hiked threshold monetary limit for tax departments to file appeals all three levels of appeal — Appellate Tribunals, High Courts, and Supreme Court, to decrease taxpayer greivances.
159. ▶ First India-Israel Innovation Centre (IIIC) entrepreneurial technology hub launched in Bengaluru (Karnataka), to forge local partnerships and joint ventures between companies from two countries.
160. ▶ First International Children’s Film Festival of Kerala s held in Thiruvananthapuram. Chairman of organising committee is Mukesh.
161. ▶ Food Ministry allowed sugar mills to manufacture ethanol directly from sugarcane juice or an intermediate product called B-molasses, amending Sugarcane Control Order 1966. It would help mills divert cane juice for ethanol manufacturing during surplus years.
 - ▶ Now, in case of production of ethanol directly from sugarcane juice or B-molasses, recovery rate of sugarcane factory will be determined by considering every 600 liters so produced as equivalent to one tonne of production of sugar.
 - ▶ Earlier, sugar mills were allowed to manufacture ethanol from by-product called C-molasses, after sugar was taken out while processing raw sugarcane juice.
162. ▶ Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) notified food safety standards for honey and its products in bid to curb adulteration, to help farmers to fetch better prices for their products.
 - ▶ Honey products should comply with 18 parameters like that of sucrose content, glucose ratio, pollen count, foreign oligosaccharides etc.
 - ▶ These products should contain fixed maximum 5% limit for sucrose, 10% for carvia callosa and honeydew honey. The moisture percentage should be maximum 20% and pollen count should be 25,000 per gram.
163. ▶ Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil) initiative to enable collection and conversion of used cooking oil to biodiesel. According to FSSAI, maximum permissible limits for Total Polar Compounds (TPC) have been set at 25%, beyond which cooking oil is unsafe for consumption.
164. ▶ Former President Pranab Mukherjee launched National Electoral Transformation (NETA) mobile application that allows voters to rate and review their political representatives, developed by Pratham Mittal. It is first of its kind platform in India that allows voters to rate and review the political representatives in their constituencies.
 - ▶ It aims to foster political accountability and transparency among leaders., inspired by US’ approval system. Using it, voters can review and rate their elected representatives (MLAs, MPs and ministers) and hold them accountable as well.
 - ▶ It is also seen as instrument to gauge voter sentiment across constituencie, available in 16 languages.
165. ▶ Foundation stone for Second Generation (2G) Ethanol Bio-refinery of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited laid at Baulasingha village in Bargarh ditrict of Odisha.
 - ▶ The Bio-refinery, the first of its kind to be set up, will have a capacity to produce 3 crore litres of fuel grade Ethanol annually using Rice straw as feedstock. Ethanol produced from this plant will be blended with Petrol. The cost is around 100 Crores.
 - ▶ India has surplus biomass availability of about 120-160 MMT annually which if converted, has potential to yield 3000 crore litres of ethanol. National Biofuel Policy of India 2018 targets 20% Ethanol blending to Petrol by 2030. However, due to non-availability of Ethanol, current Ethanol blending in Petrol is about 3 to 4%.
 - ▶ Setting up of 2G Ethanol plants will help achieve target of Ethanol blending in Petrol. Bargarh Bio-Refinery will utilize about 2 lakh tonnes of Rice straw annually as feedstock which will be sourced from nearby locations.

166. ▶ 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.
167. ▶ French power utility EDF and American conglomerate General Electric (GE) signed strategic cooperation agreement with State-run Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) for construction of 6 EPR (European Pressurized Reactors) type nuclear reactors of capacity 1,650 megawatt (MW) each at Jaitapur nuclear plant in Ratnagiri district (Maharashtra).
- ▶ Agreement is for construction of conventional island on each of 6 reactor units of Jaitapur nuclear plant. GE Power will design conventional islands for plant and EDF will supply EPR technology and will be responsible for building and coordinating industrial partners.
 - ▶ Jaitapur Nuclear Power Plant is proposed 9900 MW nuclear power project to come at Madban village of Ratnagiri district in Maharashtra. It will be built under Indo-France Civil Nuclear Deal signed in December 2010. Estimated cost of this project was around US \$15 billion (Rs. 1 Lakh Crores).
 - ▶ World's First third generation European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) reactor recently started working in Taishan (China).
168. ▶ General Conferences (Aug 1 - 10, 2018) -
- ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated *One District One Product* Summit in Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh). Amazon partnered with UP government to provide support MSME entrepreneurs across nine districts, under ODOP Scheme. This will be a part of Amazon India's Kala Haat programme which aims to help traditional industries to enter in to ecommerce business.
 - ▶ NITI Aayog's International Conference on "Sustainable Growth through Material Recycling: Policy Prescriptions" Held in New Delhi.
 - ▶ 17th Indo-US Military Cooperation Meeting held in New Delhi
 - ▶ 51st ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Foreign Ministers meeting Held in Singapore.
 - ▶ Telangana Govt. signed MoU with It Firm Tech Mahindra to launch India's first Blockchain district, during International Blockchain Congress 2018 in Hyderabad. It will be centre of excellence, incubator and process development for emerging technology with innovative infrastructure and facilities to foster growth of Indian blockchain start-ups and companies.
 - ▶ Startup India Yatra launched in Raipur (capital of Chattisgarh), to travel to other cities of state over coming month.
 - ▶ *Bridging Japan and India by Bamboo* event held in Tripura, with Japan committing to assist in Bamboo handicraft sector of Tripura.
 - ▶ 5th *Act East Business Show -2018* held in Shillong (Meghalaya).
 - ▶ First-ever festival for insects that help maintain ecosystem is organized jointly by WWF (World Wide Fund) India and Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS).
 - ▶ Govt. inaugurated an exhibition entitled *Pratibandhit Sahitya mein Swatantrata Sangram* (Freedom Movement through Prescribed Literature) in National Archives of India (New Delhi).
 - ▶ NITI Aayog hosted an Investors' Conference in New Delhi, for Holistic Development of Islands. It will attract investment for sustainable development of eco-tourism projects in Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands.
 - ▶ Hardeep S Puri, Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs launched official trailer for film *Halkaa*, under Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) in partnership with New Delhi Municipal Council, set to release on Sep 05.
 - ▶ All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) signed MoU with IIT Delhi to boost research in traditional medicine and streamline hospital care facilities. It was signed at two-day conference of heads of AYUSH National Institutes organised by All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) in New Delhi, aimed at upgrading national institutes of traditional medicine at par with IITs and IIMs.
169. ▶ General Conferences (Aug 11 - 20, 2018) -
- ▶ Jatayu sculpture inaugurated at Jatayu Earth Center (JEC) at Chadayamangalam in Kollam district (Kerala), as world's largest bird sculpture.
 - ▶ Meeting of Senior Officials of the Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) held in Kathmandu (Nepal) today.
 - ▶ Nepal-India Literature Festival 2018 held in Birgunj (Nepal).

170. ▶ General Conferences (Aug 21 - 31, 2018) -

- Indian Council of Agricultural Research organized 2 day conference on Motivating and Attracting Youth in Agriculture (MAYA) held in New Delhi, In order to meet the challenge of providing sustainable livelihoods for a rapidly growing population and to motivate and attract youth in agriculture.
- India Banking Conclave (IBC) 2018 held in New Delhi, organised by Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) along with NITI Aayog.
- 5 day International water colour festival held in Ranchi at Audrey House, to promote the rich art and culture of Jharkhand.

171. ▶ General Conferences (July 01 - 10, 2018) -

- National Workshop on Skill Development for Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) in New Delhi.
- Election Commission organized a two-day “National Consultation on Accessible Elections,” in New Delhi.
- A conference of Ministers for Power, New & Renewable Energy of States & Union Territories held in Shimla (Himachal Pradesh).
- Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare held special meet on *Marine Fisheries - Mariculture in India* in Rameswaram (Tamil Nadu).
- 2 Day National Level Consultations on Accessible Elections held in New Delhi. During This, Election Commission Announced several Measures to improve Participation of Persons With Disabilities in Election Process. It Includes Issuing Electoral Photo Identity Cards with Braille Features for Visually Impaired, Auxiliary Polling Stations to be Established, Mobile APP to be Developed by ECI for PWD.
- 9th and final meeting of Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on Nepal-India Relations concluded in Kathmandu (Nepal).
- 9th Heads of Mission Conference held in New Delhi, with theme *Unprecedented Outreach: Unparalleled Outcomes*.
- Govt. Aims to link 22000 rural markets with Electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM) by 2020, as announced at *AgriVikas 2018* conclave on agriculture and allied sectors in Bhubaneswar (Odisha). It will enable farmers sale directly to potential buyers.
- Exhibition titled *Arth - art for earth* held at IGNC (New Delhi). IGNC introduced 5 PG diploma courses and 6 new Certificate Courses in art and culture and related subjects.
 - PG Diploma -
 - Cultural Informatics, Preventive Conservation, Buddhist Studies, Digital Library and Data Management, Manuscriptology and Palaeography
 - Certificate Courses -
 - Academic Integrity and Research Ethics, Open Access for Library and Information Science Professionals, Open Access for Researchers, Digital Library and Information Management, Research Methodology, Cinema Studies and Cultural Documentation.
- Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) organized 2 day International Round Table Conference at New Delhi, called *Data for New India*. It aims to identify innovative ideas for improving the statistical system in India, taking cue from best practices followed in advanced countries.
- 22nd International Conference on Non-Ferrous Minerals and Metals 2018 held at Ranchi (Jharkhand). During this meet, Tapan Kumar Chand, (CMD of NALCO), received Knowledge Excellence Award for Outstanding Contribution in Aluminium Knowledge domain.
- First meeting of Task Force on e-commerce held in New Delhi. Task Force was formed under chairmanship of Suresh Prabhu (Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation). It is divided into nine sub-groups.
- 2nd meeting of joint working group on tourism cooperation between India and Nepal concluded in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- 67th plenary meeting of North Eastern Council (NEC) held in Shillong (Meghalaya).
- PM Narendra Modi inaugurated *Dharohar Bhawan*, new Headquarters building of Archaeological Survey of India, in New Delhi.
- India International Institute of Democracy and Election Management (IIIDEM) organized a Capacity Development programme for Media Officials from Bhutan, in New Delhi.
- Minister for Chemicals & Fertilizers and Parliamentary Affairs, Ananth kumar laid foundation stone of new (32nd) Central Institute of Plastics Engineering & Technology (CIPET) Building at Dehradun (Uttarakhand). He also allocated 40 crores for establishing a plastic park in Uttarakhand, to generate employment for over 5000 people.

172. ▶ General Conferences (July 11 - 20, 2018)

- First meeting of India-Bangladesh Joint Committee on Border Haats held in Agartala (Tripura).
- 10th Delhi Dialogue (DD X) held in New Delhi , with theme *Strengthening India-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation*. It is an important platform for engagement with ASEAN on political, security and economic issues.

- ✎ All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) and IIT (Indian Institute of Technology)-Delhi signed MoU to enhance research in field of Ayurveda, during 2 day conference on 'Raising towards Excellence' held in New Delhi.
- ✎ Ratha Yatra (Festival of Chariot of Lord Jagannath) celebrated every year at Puri in Odisha. It is celebrated on 2nd day of shukla pakshya (waxing cycle of moon) of Ashadh Maas (3rd month in Lunar Calendar).
- ✎ 2nd India-China Maritime Affairs Dialogue was held in Beijing, China. 4th India-Japan Maritime affairs dialogue also held in Japan.
- ✎ 7th Indo US Defence Technology and Trade Initiative (DTTI) held in New Delhi.
- ✎ 1st meeting of Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on coordination between Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and agriculture held at NITI Aayog (New Delhi). It was chaired by Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan.
- ✎ 1 day meeting of directors of 59 institutes of higher learning held in Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.
- ✎ Conference of Intra-ocular Implant & Refractive Society of India held in Chennai (TN).
- ✎ 4th National Conclave on Mines & Minerals held at Indore (Madhya Pradesh).
- ✎ Top Nuke Powers USA and Russia's current Presidents Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin held their first-ever one-to-one talks in Helsinki (Finland).
- ✎ Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) joined National Day event of Montenegro in India on July 13, 2018 in New Delhi, named *Trendy Montenegro with Indian Khadi*.
- ✎ SBI organized a Kisan Mela at its rural and semi-urban branches across country to impart financial literacy to farmers.

173. ▶ General Conferences (July 21 - 31, 2018)

- ✎ 1st Nepal-India Think Tank Summit held in Kathmandu, to foster greater collaboration and knowledge-sharing among the think tanks of two countries.
- ✎ 11th state-level pineapple festival cum Sellers & Buyers Meet and Youth Festival 2018, held in Thoubal district of Manipur.
- ✎ 2 day Air Defence India 2018 Seminar & Exhibition held in New Delhi.
- ✎ From 1st August 2018, *Gaj Yatra* exhibition will be conducted to raise awareness about conservation of elephants in Delhi. It will be conducted for 2 months. It is conducted as part of India Habitat Centre year-long multi-media festival on sustainable development named *Habitat Photosphere*.
- ✎ 2nd Young Superintendent of Police Conference held in New Delhi.
- ✎ 3 day National Traders' Conclave held at Constitution Club of India in New Delhi.
- ✎ 2nd meeting of National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges under POSHAN Abhiyan in New Delhi.
 - ✎ Government launched POSHAN Abhiyaan (PM's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment) from Jhunjhunu (Rajasthan). It aims to use a targeted approach to reduce level of malnutrition across Nation. More Info is available at <http://www.icds-wcd.nic.in/nnm/home.htm>.
- ✎ International conference on "Empowering Women: Fostering Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Sustainability" organized by NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) in New Delhi.
- ✎ International conference on India-Vietnam economic ties held in New Delhi.
- ✎ 7 day *Kharchi Puja* held at Pura Habeli in Tripura, as an annual festival to cleanse sins of mortal souls.
- ✎ The tourism department of Rajasthan announced that The 2nd National Tourism Conclave was organised in Jaipur.
- ✎ World-class permanent exhibition on four eminent personalities of Bengal – Rabindranath Tagore, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay and Syama Prasad Mukherjee, held at National Library in Kolkata.
- ✎ On occasion of Guru Purnima, Ministry of Human Resource Development organized a National Conference of Vice Chancellors & Directors of Higher Education Institutions of India in New Delhi, with theme *Research and innovation in Higher Education*.
- ✎ A conference for Indian Languages Technology Industry 'Bhashantar' held in New Delhi. During this, IT ministry launched a desktop software e-Aksharaya.

174. ▶ General Conferences (June 1 - 10, 2018) -

- ✎ India and South Centre (an inter-governmental organisation based in Geneva (Switzerland)) organized an International Conference on TRIPS- CBD Linkage in Geneva, aiming to revive WTO discussions on issues related to preventing theft of traditional knowledge.
- ✎ 49th Conference of Governors Held in New Delhi.
- ✎ 3rd National Health Editors' Conference on Yoga held at Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY) in New Delhi.
- ✎ Oxford University Press South Asia Conclave 2018 held in New Delhi.
- ✎ State Environment Ministers Conference as a run-up to World Environment Day held in New Delhi.
 - ✎ In this event, Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan released 'Status of Environment Report, India 2015'.
 - ✎ India's forest cover was 21.34 % in 2015, and non forest trees area is 2.82%. Mizoram with 89 % has highest forest cover, followed by Lakshadweep (84.56 %), Andaman and Nicobar Islands (82 %), Arunachal Pradesh (80 %).

- ✍ Assam has lowest forest cover with 35 % among 15 states / UTs with over 33 % forest cover.
- ✍ Madhya Pradesh has maximum forest cover of 72,462 sq km, out of total approx 7 Lakh Sq Km forest cover in India.
- ✍ 11th GeoIntelligence Asia 2018 organised at Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi with theme *GeoSpatial : A Force Multiplier for Defence and Industrial Security*.
- ✍ India's Sanjana Ramesh was awarded 'Most Valuable Player' (MVP) even as compatriot Vaishnavi Yadav won the 'Girls Grit Award', during Basketball Without Borders Asia 2018 event held in New Delhi.
- ✍ Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) organised National Consultation on Child Protection in New Delhi.
- ✍ Ministry of Shipping in association with Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY), Ministry of Rural Development conducted a workshop on "Skill Development in the Port and Maritime Sector" in New Delhi.

175. ▶ General Conferences (June 11 - 20, 2018) -

- ✍ 15th annual Asia and Oceania Region Intergovernmental Ministerial meeting on anti-doping held in Colombo.
- ✍ 2 day National Consultation on 'Making Agriculture Sustainable and Profitable' held at Pune (Maharashtra).
- ✍ 4th Governing Council Meeting of NITI Aayog held in New Delhi.
 - ✍ Rajiv Kumar is Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog and Amitabh Kant is Its CEO.
- ✍ Kerala government organized promotion programme *Yoga Ambassadors Tour*, as a specialized trip for yoga professionals.
- ✍ 1 day thematic Seminar on "Private Sector Participation and Innovation in Resource Mobilisation" hosted in Mumbai by Ministry of Finance and Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS) as knowledge partner.
- ✍ Conference on Implementation of National Pension System (NPS) by Central Autonomous Bodies (CABs) organized by Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) in Delhi.
- ✍ J P Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare exchanged MOUs with State Health Ministers of 20 States marking their commitment towards launch of the Ayushman Bharat – National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM) at a Health Ministers conclave in Delhi.
 - ✍ Also, government proposed to impose penalty on insurance companies for delay in payment to hospitals for settlement of claims under its Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS). If an insurance company delays claim payment beyond 15 days, then it would have to pay a penalty of 1 % interest on claimed amount per week till it finally settles the claim.
 - ✍ About NHPM -
 - ✍ NHPS aims to provide a cover of Rs 5 lakh per family annually to 10 crore vulnerable families.
 - ✍ Indu Bhushan is CEO of NHPM.
- ✍ 3rd Meeting of National Council of Senior Citizens(NCSrC) held in Delhi.
- ✍ IIT Kharagpur hosted Grand Finale of Smart India Hackathon 2018 – Hardware edition, in association with Ministry of HRD, AICTE, Persistent Systems and i4C.
 - ✍ SIH2018 – Hardware edition is first of its kind innovative initiative to provide platform to young technical minds to showcase their innovations which can bring out revolutionary changes in crucial sectors like agriculture, health, clean water, waste management, automotive, smart communication.
- ✍ 2nd India-US colloquium on Earth Observations and Sciences for Society and Economy was inaugurated at CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography (CSIR-NIO) at Dona Paula (Goa).
- ✍ International Conference on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) held in Kathmandu (capital of Nepal) with Theme *Sustainable Development Goals for Smart Society*.
- ✍ 10th Meeting of Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GAELF) held in New Delhi.
- ✍ Workshop on Cyber Security Framework for Department of Defence organised by Ministry of Defence in New Delhi.
- ✍ 5th National Standards Conclave with theme *Implementing the Indian National Strategy for Standardization* held in New Delhi.

176. ▶ General Conferences (June 21 - 30, 2018) -

- ✍ National Seminar on Conservation of Particularly Vulnerable Tribes of Andaman & Nicobar Islands (*The Way Forward*) held in New Delhi.
- ✍ Students from KCJ College of Engineering, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, have won first prize at the Smart India Hackathon 2018 Hardware Edition under the 'Smart Communication' category conducted at the CSIR-CEERI in Pilani, Rajasthan.
- ✍ 2 day National Consultation on 'Making Agriculture Sustainable and Profitable' held at Pune (Maharashtra).
- ✍ A turmeric workshop on 'Production and export promotion of turmeric' held in Telangana. Commerce Ministry announced to set up a special cell for turmeric in Nizamabad (Telangana).
- ✍ 19th All India Conference of Directors of Finger Prints Bureau in Hyderabad (Telangana).
- ✍ 7th India Minerals and Metals forum organized in New Delhi.

- ✍ 4th National Review and Consultation on Swachh Iconic Places began in Hyderabad.
- ✍ PM Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Vanija Bhawan, a new office complex in New Delhi for Department of Commerce. PM also laid foundation stone for National Centre for Ageing at All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) New Delhi. It will be completed by February 2020.
- ✍ Pilot Training of Trainers (ToT) Course on Civilian Protection and the Responsibility to Protect (R2P) held at Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi.
- ✍ Ministry of Women and Child Development organized a Seminar on Technology Partnerships 'TECH-THON' for steering POSHAN Abhiyaan at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi.
- ✍ Conference on Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan 'IPledgefor9' Achievers and MMR Reduction Awards held in New Delhi.
- ✍ 500th death anniversary of noted saint Kabir observed at Maghar in Sant Kabir Nagar district of Uttar Pradesh.
- ✍ Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) organized Renewable Energy Dialogue 2018 in New Delhi. India has set a fresh target of achieving 100 GW of solar power by 2022 (up from 20 GW earlier). India also aims to achieve 40% of its total electricity generation from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.
- ✍ 4th National Consultation Meeting of Ministers of States & UTs, in-charge of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs held in New Delhi.
- ✍ J P Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare inaugurated NIMHANS Digital Academy (Bengaluru).

177. ▶ 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.

178. ▶ 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.

179. ▶ General Conferences (Oct 1-10, 2018) -

- ✎ Workshop on 'Best Practices in International Arbitration' held in New Delhi by NITI Aayog in collaboration with ICC International Court of Arbitration.
- ✎ 2-day First ever Regional Conference on 'Women in Detention and Access to Justice' held at Shimla (Himachal Pradesh), by Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D).
- ✎ First Uttarakhand Investors Summit held in Dehradun, attracting investments over 125000 Crores.
- ✎ Exhibition "Revisiting Gandhi: The Art of Shelly Jyoti" held at IGNC (New Delhi).
- ✎ *India Chem 2018*, 10th Biennial International Exhibition & Conference held in Mumbai, as largest event of Chemicals and Petrochemical Industry in India.
- ✎ PM Narendra Modi has unveiled a 64-foot-tall statue of peasant leader Sir Chhotu Ram at his native village Sampla in Rohtak district of Haryana, sculpted by renowned sculptor and Padma Bhushan-recipient Ram Vanji Sutar.
- ✎ International Conference on Technological Advancements in Railway and Metro Projects (IC-TRAM 2018) held in New Delhi.
- ✎ Women Health for Women Empowerment Conference held in Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh).
- ✎ Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference of India Region held in Guwahati (Assam).
- ✎ 14th Hospitality India and Explore the World Annual International Travel Awards 2018 held in New Delhi. Nepal won tourism award. Also, Chandragiri Hills Limited of Nepal got the best tourism destination of Nepal award in hospitality and tourism sector.
- ✎ Actor Ruhaan Rajput received the Mid-day Young Achiever Icons Award for 2018 recently in Mumbai, in film and television category for his work in industry in short time.

180. ▶ General Conferences (Oct 11-20, 2018) -

- ✎ 6th UAE-India High-Level Joint Task Force meeting held in Mumbai. During this, Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu announced setting up of a special UAE desk to facilitate investments and resolve any business issues between two nations.
- ✎ 8th European Congress on SMEs held in Katowice, Poland, with theme *Science- Business-Self Government TOGETHER FOR ECONOMY*.
- ✎ Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi unfurled India's highest tricolour on the terrace of the majestic Haj House in Mumbai. It measured 20×30 feet and stood 350 feet.
- ✎ 46th world's largest IHGF-Delhi Fair held at India Expo Centre & Mart at Greater Noida (UP). It has played a vital role in increasing exports of handicrafts from country and has special importance for handicrafts sector.
- ✎ Turkey will host a summit for Turkey, France, Germany and Russia in Istanbul, to discuss conflict in Syria and efforts for a lasting solution to end war in Syria.
- ✎ Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare has released 12th Analytical Report of the National Health Profile 2018, prepared by Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI) since 2005.
- ✎ inaugural 'Workshop on Best Practices in International Arbitration' organised by NITI Aayog and ICC International Court of Arbitration in New Delhi.
- ✎ 6th Interregional Ministerial Meeting of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) held in Singapore. C. R. Chaudhary (*Minister of State (MoS) for Commerce & Industry and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution*) Visited On India's Behalf.
- ✎ India and Japan held their 2nd edition of 'Japan-India Act East Forum' in New Delhi.
- ✎ Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Harsh Vardhan Launched air quality early warning system for Delhi.
- ✎ 6th India International Silk Fair (IISF) HELD in New Delhi. India is 2nd largest producer of silk in world, providing gainful employment to around 8 million artisans and weavers in rural areas.

181. ▶ General Conferences (Oct 21 - 31, 2018) -

- ✎ 4th World Congress on Disaster Management (WCDM-2019) will be organised in Mumbai in January - February 2019, to be organised jointly by Government of Maharashtra, Disaster Management Initiatives and Convergence Society (DMICS), IIT Bombay & TISS Mumbai. WCDM 2019 will be largest assembly on disaster management outside UN system.
- ✎ 5th National Summit on "Good & Replicable Practices & Innovations in Public Health Care Systems in India" held at Kaziranga (Assam).
- ✎ 10th Edition of BIOFACH INDIA, the largest show on the "Organic Sector" in India, held at Pragati Maidan (New Delhi), with theme *Enhancing export of organic products trade from India – strategies and synergies*.
- ✎ 6th North East festival and 15th edition of Indian International Centre festival organized in New Delhi.
- ✎ 20th Water, Energy, Technology, and Environment Exhibition (WETEX) 2018 held at Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, in Dubai (UAE).
- ✎ 5th Edition of 'Women of India National Organic Festival' held in New Delhi.

- 🔗 *Krishi Kumbh 2018* held in Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), to pave way for new technology to be imbibed and better opportunities to created in the agriculture sector.
- 🔗 36th Indian Carpets Expo held at Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), to augment efforts of the handicrafts and small and medium industries.
- 🔗 3-day Sagar Discourse 2 conference held in Panaji (Goa), organized by Forum for Integrated National Security.
- 🔗 Conclave on Capital Goods for Steel Sector, manufacture in India, organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in Bhubaneswar (Odisha). 38 pacts worth \$5 billion were signed among 20 technology providers, to boost manufacturing of capital goods for iron and steel industry.
- 🔗 Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) launched Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign aimed to reduce adverse environmental conditions after Diwali celebrations due to excessive bursting of crackers. It is merged with “Green Good Deed” movement that has been initiated as social mobilization for conservation and protection of environment.
- 🔗 First trilateral meeting among India, Afghanistan and Iran of Coordination Council of Chabahar Agreement took place in Tehran (Iran). Indian delegation was led by Secretary (Economic Relations) TS Tirumurti.
- 🔗 President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated International Arya Mahasammelan 2018 in Delhi.
- 🔗 NITI Aayog organized 4th NITI Lecture Series at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, with theme *AI for ALL: Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Inclusive Growth*.
- 🔗 Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation organised a seminar on Gandhian thoughts and Swachhta to make India a Swachh Bharat by 2019 - 150 the birthday celebration of M K Gandhi.
- 🔗 2nd Guwahati International Film Festival (GIFF 2018) began in Assam, with theme ‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’ Focus region of GIFF 2018 is the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region.
- 🔗 *Childrens Film Bonanza* concluded at Naharlagun (Arunachal Pradesh), organized by Children’s Film Society of India (Ministry of Information & Broadcasting).

182. ▶ General Conferences (Sep 1 - 10, 2018) -

- 🔗 IARI held Conference on Motivating and Attracting Youth in Agriculture (MAYA) at National Agricultural Science Complex (NASC) in New Delhi.
- 🔗 6th International Geriatric Orthopaedic Society of India Conference on theme “Increased Longevity with Reduced Fragility and Enhanced Mobility” held at AIIMS Delhi.
- 🔗 A National Conference organised by Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association in New Delhi.
- 🔗 3-day Defence & Homeland Security Expo and Conference – 2018, organised by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry in association in New Delhi.
- 🔗 US-India Business Council (USIBC) organised its first India Ideas Summit in Mumbai.
- 🔗 Ministry of Railways & Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) organised a seminar on “Leveraging IT for Mobility” in New Delhi. Minister of Railways & Coal, Shri Piyush Goyal launched a new app – “AAPOORTI’ mobile App of ‘Indian Railways e-procurement system’ (IREPS).
- 🔗 31st meeting of Central Hindi Committee held in New Delhi.
- 🔗 115th meeting of India-Pakistan Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) held in Lahore (Pakistan). PK Saxena (Indian Commissioner for Indus Waters), attended the same. Both countries agreed to undertake Treaty mandated tours of both Indus Commissioners in Indus basin on both sides.
- 🔗 Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) announced guidelines for ‘Sandbox’ method to enable testing of new innovative insurance products, during 11th Global Insurance Summit organised by Assocham in Mumbai. Sandbox method would allow insurers or a set of few policyholders to test products in a particular geography before they are available in market.
- 🔗 Conference on “E-Mobility in Indian Railways” organized by Ministry of Railways through Institution of Railways Electrical Engineers (IRSEE) in association with NITI Aayog concluded in New Delhi.
- 🔗 4th Annual Sustainable Smart Cities India Conference held in Bengaluru.
- 🔗 Bi-annual talks between Indian and Bangladeshi border forces held in New Delhi.

183. ▶ General Conferences (Sep 11 - 20, 2018) -

- 🔗 Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) organized National Conference of District Disability Rehabilitation Centres’ at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi.
- 🔗 Rajasthan government held convention on ‘Revitalising India as a Heritage Destination’ to focus on preserving heritage properties in Bharatpur.
- 🔗 All India Pension Adalat held in New Delhi, organised by Department of Pension & Pensioners Welfare (DoP&PW). It is a large scale exercise for pensioners’ welfare undertaken by Government as part of good governance practices.

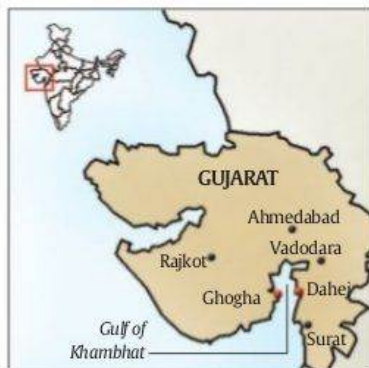
- ✍ My India WiFi India Summit & Awards 2018 organized by DigiAnalysys in New Delhi, with theme Achieving 10 million WiFi Hotspots by 2018.
- ✍ Asean World Economic Forum held in Hanoi (Vietnam), with theme *ASEAN 4.0: Entrepreneurship and the Fourth Industrial Revolution*.
- ✍ Minister of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Mines, Narendra Singh chaired 20th Central Employment Guarantee Council meeting in Bhopal.
- ✍ 4th Eastern Economic Forum held in Vladivostok (Russia), with theme *The Far East: Expanding the Range of Possibilities*.
- ✍ Inaugural Naval Flight Test Seminar held at Goa.
- ✍ Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Deb inaugurated ISRO's Space Technology Incubation Centre(STIC) at National Institute of Technology Agartala. It was launched at the first edition of 'Spacetrionics' organised by the India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA).
- ✍ Textiles Minister Smriti Zubin Irani presented 'Shilp Guru' and National Award to Master craft persons at a function held at Raipur (capital of Chhattisgarh). 8 'Shilp guru' and 25 National awards were presented for 2016. Shilp Guru' is the highest award in the Handicraft sector in India.
- ✍ Home Affairs Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated two Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) pilot projects along India-Pakistan border in Jammu region.
- ✍ Jaipur Literature Festival held in Houston at Asia Society of Texas (USA). The festival is touted as world's largest free literary gathering.

184. ▶ General Conferences (Sep 21 - 30, 2018) -

- ✍ 7th National Conference on Excellence in Workplace Safety and Occupational Health in New Delhi.
- ✍ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Conference on Academic Leadership on Education for Resurgence in New Delhi. To deliberate on challenges facing Indian education system and to work out a plan for a paradigm shift in terms of achieving academic outcomes and in regulation of education.
- ✍ 3rd meeting of IONS Working Group (IWG) on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) held in Vishakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh).
- ✍ National literary and intellectual conference Lok Manthan 2018 held at Khel Gaon in Ranchi (Jharkhand).
- ✍ Joint border conference of India and Bangladesh held at Aizawl (Mizoram).
- ✍ India and Nepal's 5th meeting of Boundary Working Group (BWG) held in Kathmandu. Both Nations agreed to explore possibility of using high resolution satellite images in boundary survey work.
- ✍ Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs 2 day National Orientation workshop on National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) in New Delhi.
 - ✍ NeVA is initiative of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, aiming to make all legislatures in country paperless by making proceedings of houses digital. It hosts secure page for each Member of House for submitting Questions and other Notices.
 - ✍ NeVA serves as 'One Nation, One Application' by bringing uniformity of database for easy and effective engagement of citizens with Government.
- ✍ 21st Central Zonal Council meeting held in Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).
- ✍ Vice president M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated Smart City Expo India-2018 in Jaipur (Rajasthan), to discuss utilizing benefits of new technology, town planning, challenges before socio-economic development in Smart City sector.
- ✍ National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) held its Grameena Habba Event in Bangalore (Karnataka), to expand the market for weavers, rural artisans and craftsmen, SHGs, rural entrepreneurs, and farmers' producer organisations.
- ✍ Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurated Odisha's official Bhawan in Chennai (Tamilnadu). He also launched 'Kalahandi Dialogue' at Bhawanipatna, in Kalahandi (Odisha).

185. ▶ Global monument conservation body *International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)* launched Kerala Heritage Rescue Initiative to assess damage to rich cultural and built heritage sites in flood-devastated Kerala. It aims at setting up platform for emergency response to cultural heritage damaged by floods in Kerala.
186. ▶ Goa Government launched helpline 181, to help women in distress.
187. ▶ Goa tourism department will launch app-based taxi services in state called *GOAMILLES* in July 2018, to organize taxi services in tourism prone state. It has more than 2,800 licensed taxi drivers partnering with the app.
188. ▶ Gogha- Dahej Ro-Pax Ferry service inaugurated in Gujarat, under Sagarmala programme of Ministry of Shipping.
 - ✍ In a successful trial run, 12 loaded trucks were transported by Ro- Pax ferry from Dahej to Gogha across the Gulf of Cambay, via sea route.

- ✎ Land route is a 294 km or 8 hour drive, while Ro-Pax service reduces this to just 31 km through sea route by crossing Gulf in Cambay, taking just 1.5 hours.
- ✎ This is an important development for diamond and textiles traders & workers in Surat to travel via coastal shipping and save the travel time by almost half.
- ✎ Fully operational Ro Pax service with carrying capacity of 100 vehicles and 500 passengers is now opened
- ✎ Total cost of project is estimated to be 615 Crores, of which 117 Crore is funded by Central Government under Sagarmala programme.



✎ Pictorial Representation -

189. ▶ 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.
190. ▶ Government allowed foreign tourists to visit Andaman and Nicobar Islands without any restrictions, overpowering its earlier order that made it mandatory for foreign tourists to register with Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO) within 24 hours of their arrival. However, citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan will require Restricted Area Permit (RAP) to visit.
191. ▶ Government announced recipients of Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony for 2014, 2015 & 2016 -
 - ✎ 2014 - Manipuri dancer Rajkumar Singhajit Singh
 - ✎ 2015 - Chhayanaut (a cultural organization of Bangladesh)
 - ✎ 2016 - Ram Vanji Sutar (Noted sculptor).
- ✎ Tagore Award -
 - ✎ First Tagore Award was conferred on Noted Sitar Maestro Pt. Ravi Shankar, in 2012. 2nd was conferred on Shri Zubin Mehta in 2013. It carries an amount of Rs. 1 crore, a citation in a scroll, a plaque as well as an exquisite traditional handicraft item.
192. ▶ Government approved 122 new research project proposals worth Rs 112 crore for funding under its Impacting Research Innovation and Technology 'IMPRINT-2' scheme.
 - ✎ Implementation of 142 projects under IMPRINT-1 has got underway. Knowledge portal for monitoring progress of these research projects and to disseminate findings will be launched in October 2018.
 - ✎ IMPRINT is the first of its kind government-supported initiative to address the major science and engineering challenges that India must address and champion to enable, empower and embolden nation for inclusive growth and self-reliance.
193. ▶ Government approved assistance of INR 5.5 lakh per family to West Pakistan Refugees (WPRs), to benefit 5764 families of WPRs settled in Jammu and Kashmir. Full expenditure for this scheme will be borne by Central Government.
194. ▶ 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.
195. ▶ Government in June 2017 approved setting up 10 indigenous Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) of 700 MW each in fleet mode, by Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL). Projects are -

Location & State	Project	Capacity(MW)
Chutka, Madhya Pradesh	Chutka - 1&2	2 X 700
Kaiga, Karnataka	Kaiga - 5&6	2 X 700
Mahi Banswara, Rajasthan	Mahi Banswara - 1&2	2 X 700
Gorakhpur, Haryana	GHAVP - 3&4	2 X 700
Mahi Banswara, Rajasthan	Mahi Banswara - 3&4	2 X 700

✎ With these projects, Total nuclear power capacity of India will reach 22480 MW by 2031.


196. ▶ Government launched *#InnovateIndia Platform* as a collaboration between Atal Innovation Mission and Govt.'s citizen centric platform MyGov, to serve as common point for all innovation happening across nation. It is accessible at <https://innovate.mygov.in/innovateindia/>.
197. ▶ Government launched *National REDD+ Strategy India*. to improve livelihood of forest dependent population.
- ▶ REDD+ means “Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation”, conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.
 - ▶ REDD+ aims to achieve climate change mitigation by incentivizing forest conservation. It seeks to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and also enhance forest carbon stocks.
 - ▶ India under its communicated in its Nationally Determined Contribution under Paris Agreement, has committed to capture 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of Carbon dioxide through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.
 - ▶ India's first biennial update report to UNFCCC has revealed that forests in India capture about 12% of India's total GHG emissions. Thus, forestry sector in India is making a positive cost effective contribution for climate change mitigation.
 - ▶ Complying with UNFCCC decisions on REDD+, India has prepared its National REDD+ Strategy, built upon existing circumstances which have been updated in line with India's National Action Plan on Climate Change, Green India Mission and India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to UNFCCC.
198. ▶ Government launched Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0, as a flagship programme of HRD Ministry, it aims to link Higher Education Institutions with set of atleast (5) villages, so that these institutions can contribute to the economic and social betterment of these villages. Currently 748 Institutions are participating under it.
199. ▶ Government launched an air pollution prediction system for Delhi, making it easier to alert general public about air quality 48 hours in advance. It is called *Air Quality Early Warning System*.
200. ▶ Government observed Vigilance Awareness Week from 29th Oct-3rd Nov 2018, with 2018 Theme *Eradicate Corruption-Build a New India*.
201. ▶ Government proposed to set up 3000 Van Dhan Kendras involving 30000 SHGs across country under Van Dhan Scheme of Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- ▶ Van Dhan Scheme was launched on 14th April, 2018 during celebrations of Ambedkar Jayanti at Bijapur (Chhattisgarh).
 - ▶ Under Van Dhan Scheme, 10 Self Help Groups of 30 Tribal gatherers each have been constituted at Bijapur, Chhattisgarh. They are then trained and provided with working capital to add value to the products, which they collect from the Jungle.
 - ▶ Van Dhan Mission targets at livelihood generation for tribals by harnessing non-timber forest produces, with estimated value of 2 Lakh Crores per year.
 - ▶ Further it is to set-up tribal community owned Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (the Kendra) in predominantly forested tribal districts. A Kendra shall constitute of 10 tribal SHGs, each comprising of upto 30 tribal NTFP gatherers or artisans i.e. about 300 beneficiaries per Kendra.
202. ▶ Government reached target of providing 5 crore free LPG connections under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), 8 months ahead of schedule. Uttar Pradesh (87 lakh), West Bengal (67 lakh), Bihar (61 lakh), Madhya Pradesh (45 lakh), Rajasthan (37 lakh) and Odisha (30 lakh) accounted for 65% of connections under PMUY and 47% of beneficiaries are from weaker sections.
- ▶ PMUY was launched in May 2016 with tagline of Swachh Indhan, Behtar Jeevan.
203. ▶ Government will build a stadium of international standard for differently-abled persons in Meghalaya, expected to be completed by 2022, at an estimated cost of over 200 crores.
- ▶ Meghalaya Govt also launched flagship scheme “Blue Revolution: Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries”, to enable self-sufficiency in fish production.
204. ▶ Government will introduce a bill in Winter Session in December 2018, to speed up inter-state river water dispute resolution among states and manage affairs of 13 river basins across country. Named River Basin Management Bill 2018, it will replace River Board Act 1956 which is only advisory in nature.
- ▶ Authorities will be set up for river basins of Ganga, Indus, Godavari, Mahanadi, Mahi, Narmada, Pennar, Cauvery, Krishna, Tapi, Subarnrekha, Brahmani-Baitarini and Brahmaputra- Barak-inter-state rivers of north-east.
205. ▶ 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.

206. ▶ 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%.
207. ▶ Government's think tank NITI Aayog signed agreement with Microsoft India to deploy artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to address challenges in agriculture and healthcare and promote adoption of local languages. This will help NITI Aayog to move beyond pilots and understand how to scale AI implementation in sectors characterized by preponderance of public goods.
208. ▶ Government launched *JANAUSHADHI SUVIDHA* Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin, under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), to be available at over 3600 Janaushadhi Kendras across India. It is priced at INR 2.5 Per pad, down from average price of a pad at INR 8 Currently.
209. ▶ Govt. laid foundation stone for proposed Museum on Prime Ministers of India at Teen Murti Estate in New Delhi.
- ▶ Teen Murti Estate has a total area of 25.50 acres out of which, Nehru Memorial Museum Building occupies around 2 acres only. Government decided to set up *Museum on Prime Ministers of India* in remaining area of Teen Murti Estate.
210. ▶ Govt. launched Innovation Cell and Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA), at AICTE premises to systematically foster the culture of Innovation in all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across country. Major Programs of MHRD Innovation Cell are -
- ▶ Network of Innovation Clubs (NIC) -
 - ▶ It will prescribe basic framework for the structure and smooth running of ICs and will soon share list of different activities which ICs need to undertake for entire academic year.
 - ▶ Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) -
 - ▶ This will systematically rank education institutions primarily on innovation related indicators, to foster spirit of innovation in Higher education.
 - ▶ Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2019 -
 - ▶ 3rd edition of World's Biggest Open Innovation Model - Smart India Hackathon - 2019 has been launched. It is a nationwide initiative to provide students a platform to solve some of pressing daily life problems, and thus inculcate a culture of product innovation and a mindset of problem solving.
 - ▶ Smart India Hackathon 2019 would also have 2 sub-editions – Software edition (a 36-hour software product development competition) and Hardware edition (a 5 days long hardware product development competition).
 - ▶ National Student Startup Policy (NSSP) -
 - ▶ AICTE launched its Student Start-up Policy in November 2016, designed for AICTE approved Institutions in accordance with Govt of India's "Start-up India" Action plan. AICTE's Student Start up policy intends to guide AICTE approved institutions to promote student driven innovations and start-ups.
211. ▶ Green Climate Fund (GCF) has approved US \$43.4 million for enhancing climate resilience for millions of people living in India's coastal communities. This project will focus on selected vulnerable areas of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha states. It will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions – over 3.5 million tonnes of CO₂ will be absorbed through restored ecosystems.
- ▶ It is part of Green Climate Fund (GCF)'s recently approved over \$1 billion new investments for 19 new projects to help developing countries tackle climate change, during a meeting in Manama (Bahrain).
212. ▶ Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani launched 'Poshan Abhiyan'--a statewide mission to eradicate malnutrition among children by providing them nutritious food through Anganwadi centres. He also launched PURNA (*Prevention of Under Nutrition and Reduction of Nutritional Anaemia among Adolescent Girls*) project to eliminate malnutrition among girls in the age group of 14 to 18.
213. ▶ Gujarat Forest Department started vaccination of lions in Gir sanctuary to protect them from a deadly canine distemper virus (CDV) and protozoa infections, The virus blamed for death of as many as 23 lions in Gujarat's Gir sanctuary in less than month.
- ▶ Asiatic lions are believed to have split from African Lions 100,000 years ago. Gir sanctuary is the only wild population of Asiatic lions in world, having over 523 Asiatic Lions.
214. ▶ Gujarat Government granted religious minority status to approx 170 Jews living in state, being 3rd state in India to grant religious minority status to Jews after West Bengal and Maharashtra.
215. ▶ Gujarat Govt. approved 39-crore rupees 'Seema Darshan' project for developing more infrastructure facilities from T-Junction to Zero Point at Nadabet near Suigam in Banaskantha district, to instil patriotism through a unique Gujarat initiative for border tourism.
216. ▶ Gujarat government announced wind-solar hybrid power policy 2018, aiming to make optimum utilisation of the land and grid. It provides 50% concession for cross-subsidy surcharge and additional surcharge when generated energy is sold to a third party. Gujarat


currently generates over 5,500 MW of wind power and 1,600 MW of solar power.


217. ▶ Gujarat government launched *Urban Sanitation and Cleanliness Policy* for better management of solid and liquid waste in cities. It focuses on streamlining collection and disposal of all types of waste in cities and towns.
218. ▶ Gujarat government launched *Suryashakti Kisan Yojana (SKY)*, solar power scheme for farmers enabling them to generate electricity for their captive consumption as well as sell surplus power to grid and earn extra buck.
- ✎ It is first such scheme in country, where farmer will produce his power and sell surplus to State power utility.
 - ✎ Pilot Phase with approx 137 feeders will cover as approx 12400 farmers from 33 districts. The project cost is around Rs 870 crore and it will generate 175 MW.
 - ✎ Under it, farmers of state having existing electricity connection will be given solar panels as per their load requirements. It envisages setting up of separate feeders for agricultural solar energy consumption.
 - ✎ Cost Sharing - State and Central governments will give 60% subsidy on cost of project. Farmer is required to take 5% cost, while 35% will be provided to him as affordable loan with interest rates of 4.5 to 6%.
 - ✎ Duration of scheme is 25 years, split between 7 and 18 year periods. For first 7 years, farmers will get per unit rate of Rs 7 (Rs 3.5 by state power utility + Rs 3.5 by state government). For subsequent 18 years they will get rate of Rs 3.5 for each unit sold.
219. ▶ Gujarat government signed an MoU with Poland government, regarding centenary celebrations to mark independence of Poland in Delhi and other regions of world.
220. ▶ 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.
221. ▶ 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.
222. ▶ HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar launched 3rd edition of World's Biggest Open Innovation Model - 'Smart India Hackathon- 2019'. .
- ✎ SIH-2019 is a nationwide initiative to provide students a platform to solve some of pressing problems we face in our daily lives, and thus inculcate a culture of product innovation and a mindset of problem solving. For 1st time, Private industry/organisations and NGOs can also send their problem statements to students under SIH-2019.
 - ✎ It would have 2 sub-editions – Software edition (a 36-hour software product development competition) and Hardware edition (a 5 days long hardware product development competition).
223. ▶ HRD Ministry approved draft Higher Education Commission of India (Repeal of University Grants Commission Act) Bill 2018 , that seeks to repeal UGC Act and set up Higher Education Commission of India. Stakeholders can give their suggestions at reformofugc@gmail.com by 07-07-2018.
- ✎ Principals of Draft Include Less Government and more Governance, Separation of grant functions, End of Inspection Raj, Focus on academic quality, Powers to enforce.
 - ✎ Highlights of Bill -
 - ✎ Improving academic standards and quality of higher education, specifying norms for learning outcomes, lay down standards of teaching/research etc.
 - ✎ Provide roadmap for mentoring of institutions found failing in maintaining the required academic standards.
 - ✎ Shall have the power to enforce decisions, grant or revoke authorization for starting / closure of academic operations.
 - ✎ Will encourage higher education institutions to formulate a Code of Good Practices covering promotion of teaching and learning.
 - ✎ Provides for penal provisions (graded), which will cover withdrawal of power to grant degrees/ diplomas, or even prosecution sanction in serious willful non-compliance.
 - ✎ There will be an Advisory Council to render advice the Commission on matters concerning coordination of standards in country.
 - ✎ Commission will specify norms for fixing of fee chargeable by higher education institutions and advice Governments accordingly..
 - ✎ It will monitor, through a national data base, development of emerging fields of knowledge and balanced growth of higher education in all spheres.
224. ▶ Harayana Government launched 7-Star Gram Panchayat Rainbow scheme to give star rankings to its panchayats on the basis of seven social parameters - *sex ratio, education, hygiene, environment preservation, governance and social participation*. So far, Ambala topped star ranking followed by Gurugram and Karnal. .
- ✎ Gram panchayats scoring maximum in all parameters will be recognized as Indradhanush Gram Panchayats. They will get special grants for development works from Development and Panchayats Department of State Government.

Rewards -

 6 stars - 20 lakh.

 5 stars - 15 lakh.


 4 stars - 10 lakh.


 Villages for achieving each parameter will be rewarded Rs 1 lakh. Villages having equal or more girl population will be given INR 50000 as bonus with their reward money. Villages which adopt Swachhta Mission will be given additional INR 50000.

Various Colours -

 Pink star - To panchayats that make outstanding performance in improving sex ratio.

 Green star - For protection of environment

 White star - Cleanliness.

 Saffron star - For crime-free villages.


 Sky colour star - To village that will have no drop out.


 Golden star - For good governance.

 Silver star - For participation in development of villages.


225. ▶ Hardeep S Puri (*Minister of State (I/C) of Housing and Urban Affairs*) launched India Smart Cities Fellowship (ISCF) and Internship (ISCI) program, to provide youth an opportunity to experience aspects of Urban planning and governance. Smart Cities Digital Payments Awards 2018 were also launched.


 India Smart Cities Fellowship (ISCF) Program is designed to provide valuable experience to the youth interested in smart cities specifically, and urban renewal sector in general and will bring in new ideas to implement solutions for key urban problems.

 India Smart Cities Internship (ISCI) Program - MOHUA will engage students pursuing Higher education as Interns to help implementation of Smart City Projects in various States/Cities. Internship will be on unpaid basis for 6 to 12 weeks. They will be given an Experience Certificate at successful completion of program.

 The Smart Cities Digital Payments Awards 2018 - *100 days Challenge in 100 Smart Cities* aims to promote ease of living for India's urban residents. Objective of these awards is to guide and reward Smart Cities for promoting digital payments and carrying out innovative payment initiatives.

226. ▶ Hardeep S Puri, Minister of State (I/C), Housing & Urban Affairs launched several entities -

 Swachh Survekshan 2019 - Planned to be conducted from 4th – 31st January 2019 – to rank all cities under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U). This will be the fourth survey of MoHUA.

 SBM ODF Plus and ODF Plus Plus Protocol - Aims at addressing issue of holistic sanitation.

 Swachh Manch web portal

 Ease of Living Index (111 Cities) -

 Maharashtra Cities at Top 3 - Pune (1), Navi Mumbai (2), Greater Mumbai (3). Others in Top 10 - Tirupati, Chandigarh, Thane, Raipur, Indore, Vijaywada and Bhopal.


 West Bengal refused to participate in Centre's rankings, just as it has done with all other urban schemes.

 Last 3 - Rampur (UP - 111), Kohima (Nagaland - 110), Patna (109).

227. ▶ Harsh Vardhan (Minister for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences and Environment, Forest and Climate change) inaugurated air pollution control device WAYU (Wind Augmentation Purifying Unit) for traffic junctions at ITO intersection and Mukarba Chowk in Delhi. WAYU is developed by CSIR – National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI).

228. ▶ Harvest festival of Nuakhai celebrated in western Odisha. During this, new produce Nabannis are offered to presiding deities.

229. ▶ Haryana Assembly passed State Commission for Scheduled Castes Bill 2018, for development setting up a commission for scheduled castes in the state, to safeguard interests of people belonging to SC community.

 State Assembly also passed Bills to rename 2 Universities - YMCA University of Science and Technology Faridabad renamed as J C Bose University of Science and Technology and Haryana Vishwakarma Skill University renamed as Shri Vishwakarma Skill University.

230. ▶ 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.

231. ▶ Haryana Government introduced *Pashu Sanjeevni Sewa* scheme to provide free of cost health care services to livestock in the state through mobile veterinary clinics. Livestock farmers would be able to avail service 24×7 after giving a call on toll free No.1962.
232. ▶ Haryana Government launched an anti-terrorist force (ATF) 'Kavach, to deal with security challenges. For this, Haryana police recruits will be trained by National Security Guard (NSG).
233. ▶ Haryana Government launched 'Paudhagiri campaign', to increase green cover in state and improve climatic conditions. Under this, 22 lakh students studying in Class 6th to 12th will plant sapling each, during 3 months of monsoon (July, August and September), provided by State forest department. Student will get total Rs 300 in three years for successfully looking after its sapling.
234. ▶ Haryana Government signed MoU with Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to set up ethanol plant at village Bohali village in Panipat district with an outlay of INR 900 crores, with capacity of 100 kilolitres of ethanol per day. This will motivate farmers in its 50 km radius area to manage crop residue and prevent straw burning and help to fulfill increasing demand of ethanol and also bio-fuels for consumers of petroleum product.
235. ▶ Haryana Govt. will launch *Chatra Parivahan Suraksha Yojana*, developed for safety of girl students in Haryana.
236. ▶ Haryana government increased upper age limit to enter into government service from 40 to 42 years.
237. ▶ Haryana government issued a notification directing sports persons employed with state to pay 33% of their income earned professionally and through commercial endorsements to state sports council. It will be used for development of sports in Haryana. State government also hiked Dearness Allowance (DA) from 5 % to 7%.
238. ▶ Himachal Pradesh CM Jai Ram Thakur launched *horn not ok* awareness campaign and 'shaur nahin' (no noise) mobile application, to spread awareness of unnecessary blowing horn as it creates unnecessary noise pollution and is harmful to health.
239. ▶ 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 Suvridha Yojna, which will provide 1 lakh women with gas cylinders and stoves free of cost.
240. ▶ 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.
241. ▶ Himachal Pradesh adjudged as top performer under Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) in country.
242. ▶ Himachal Pradesh cabinet announced increment of honorarium of ASHA workers of the health department from 1000 to Rs 1250, to benefit 7,829 ASHA workers in the state.
243. ▶ Himachal Pradesh government will do away with semester system in undergraduate (UG) courses and revert to annual examination system, as recommended by a committee formed to review RUSA (Rashtriya Uchcharat Shiksha Abhiyan).
244. ▶ 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.
245. ▶ Home Minister Rajnath Singh launched 2 portals to strengthen Women Safety -
- ▶ Cyber Crime Prevention Against Women and Children (CCPWC) ([url - cybercrime.gov.in](http://cybercrime.gov.in)), will receive complaints from citizens on objectionable online content related to child pornography, child sexual abuse material, sexually explicit material such as rapes. Complaints registered through this portal will be handled by police authorities of respective State/UTs.
 - ▶ 2nd portal, National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO), which is accessible only to law enforcement agencies, will assist in effectively tracking and investigating cases of sexual offences. It is a central database of "sexual offenders", to be maintained by NCRB for regular monitoring by State Police.
246. ▶ 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.
247. ▶ Home Ministry excluded 29 inhabited islands in Andaman and Nicobar from Restricted Area Permit (RAP) regime under the Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order 1963, till December 2022., to promote tourism. However, citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals having their origin in these countries will continue to require RAP to visit here.
- ▶ Under RAP regime, foreigners are not normally allowed to visit protected area unless Government allows them. Every foreigner, except citizen of Bhutan, who desires to enter protected area, is required to obtain special permit from competent authority.
 - ▶ Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals of Pakistani origin are exception and are not allowed to enter such areas.
248. ▶ Home Ministry relaxed conditions 'four-corner agreement' signed with Bru migrants for their repatriation from Tripura to Mizoram, signed with Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) in July 2018.

As per Agreement -

- It covers 5,407 Bru families (32876 persons) presently staying in temporary camps in Tripura to repatriate them to Mizoram by end of September 2018. These families who moved to Mizoram from Tripura will be given one-time financial assistance of Rs 4 lakh to be kept as fixed deposit in name of head of family. Apart from this, house building assistance of 1.5 lakh, free ration for 2 years will also be provided.

Relaxed Provisions -

- Period of stay for cash assistance of Rs 4 lakh for Bru refugees will be relaxed from 3 to two years. They can withdraw 90% of 4 lakh assistance as bank loan immediately after their return.
- On relocation, at least 50 refugees will be settled in each village.

Background -

- Bru (or Reang) are tribals inhabit to some parts of Northeastern states. In 1997, following bout of ethnic violence between Mizos and Brus, thousands of people from Bru tribe were forced to leave their homes in Mizoram and settle down in Tripura.
- First phase of repatriation of Brus from Tripura to Mizoram started in November 2010, when 1,622 Bru families with 8,573 members were resettled in Mizoram. But repatriation stalled in 2011, 2012 and 2015 amid protests by Mizo NGOs.

249. ▶ Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar announced Swachh Campus rankings -

Cleanest Government universities -

- Maharashi Dayanand University, Haryana
- Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar, Punjab
- Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS), New Delhi

Cleanest residential campus of private universities - Symbiosis International University, Pune

Cleanest non-residential campus of private universities - ITM University, Raipur

Cleanest technical institutions -

- Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham in Coimbatore
- IIT Guwahati
- Siksha 'O' Anusandhan University in Bhubhaneshwar
- IIIT Delhi.

250. ▶ Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar launched web portal of Scheme *Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)*, at url www.sparc.iitkgp.ac.in.

- SPARC scheme aims at improving the research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in world. Under this, 600 joint research proposals will be awarded for 2 years.
- Government in August 2018 had sanctioned SPARC scheme at total cost of 418 Crores for implementation up to 31-3-2020 and Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur is the National Coordinating Institute to implement it.

251. ▶ 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.

252. ▶ Hyderabad Metro became second biggest rail network in India with a total of 46 km service (2nd to Delhi Metro) After Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Governor ESL Narasimhan flagged off 16-km stretch of Hyderabad Metro between Ameerpet and L B Nagar.

253. ▶ IFFCO launched e-commerce platform IFFCO iMandi to address needs of 5.5 Crores farming community associated with it, in partnership with Singapore-based technology firm iMandi. Through this, IFFCO is targeting to reach GMV (gross merchandise value) of \$5

billion in 2 years. Using it, farmers buy all agri inputs of IFFCO, including fertilisers, agro chemicals and seeds at discounted price and get free delivery at their doorstep.

254. ▶ IIT-Kharagpur named national coordinating institute of Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) under Ministry of Human Resource Development.
255. ▶ IIT-Madras will collaborate with Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency (TNeGA) to enhance data-driven governance, by supporting State government on various data science and ICT-related challenges.
256. ▶ IRCTC launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered chatbot *Ask Disha*, aimed at facilitating accessibility by answering users' queries pertaining to various services offered to railway passengers.
257. ▶ IT firm IBM has teamed up with IIT Bombay to 'accelerate' AI research in India through its AI Horizons Network.
258. ▶ 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.
259. ▶ 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.
260. ▶ India became only SAARC country to have a quit-line number on tobacco products (1800-11-2356). India is the 4th such country in Asia after Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia to have a helpline number dedicated for helping people quit tobacco products.
261. ▶ India opened Zokhawthar land immigration check-post in Mizoram along border with Myanmar, as authorised immigration centre for travel to and from Myanmar. Zokhawthar will be second immigration check-post in Mizoram along Myanmar border after Zorinpui check-post in Lawngtlai district which was opened in September 2017.
262. ▶ India will get its first national police museum in Lutyens Delhi, depicting history of central and state police forces. It will be inaugurated on Police Commemoration Day, which is held on October 21.
 - ▶ Also, A National Tribal Museum along with a National Level Tribal Research Institute will also be set up in Delhi.
263. ▶ India's First corn festival held in Chhindwara (Madhya Pradesh).
264. ▶ IndiaSkills 2018, 2nd edition of India's biggest skill competition held at Aerocity Ground in New Delhi. some of awardees in 46 trades will participate in 45th WorldSkills Competition at Kazan (Russia) in 2019.
265. ▶ Indian IT industry apex body NASSCOM (National Association of Software & Services Companies) opened Centre of Excellence for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence (CoE-DSAI) in Bengaluru (Karnataka). to nurture innovation in emerging disruptive technologies such as AI and to leverage the power of data science.
 - ▶ NASSCOM also signed MoU with NITI Aayog to collaboratively foster applied research, accelerating adoption and ethics, privacy and security.
266. ▶ Indian Institute of Technology – Banaras Hindu University (Varanasi) and Amazon Internet Services Private Limited (AISPL) signed MoU to develop cloud-ready job skills by providing access to AWS Educate program and to help establish a Cloud Research Lab on Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML). Cloud Research Lab will provide students with opportunities to use AWS Cloud technology to pursue research initiatives that focus on AI and ML innovation for India.
267. ▶ Indian Institute of Technology-Hyderabad (IIT-H) launched *Fabless Chip Design Incubator (FabCI)* as an exclusive incubator to boost chip design. It is first of its kind in India that will focus on creating an ecosystem for start-ups in chip design.
 - ▶ FabCI's purpose is to incubate at least 50 'Make-in-India' chip design companies that can compete globally and generate Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).
 - ▶ It will also offer virtual support to non-Hyderabad start-ups which can join FabCI and leverage the offerings and participate remotely.
268. ▶ 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.
269. ▶ Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) will stop free travel insurance starting September 1 and *free insurance will be optional*.
- ✎ Insurance provided by IRCTC had a maximum cover of 10 lakh in case of a person's death during a train journey, 7.5 lakh if a person is disabled due to an accident, 2 lakh if injured and 10000 for transportation of mortal remains.
270. ▶ Indian Railways launched first consolidated Bridge Management System (IR-BMS), with data on its 1.5 lakh bridges. IR-BMS aims for meaningful assimilation, analysis and dissemination of information related to various activities about its bridges.
271. ▶ Indian Railways organized a programme on Ethics in Public Governance and Launched "Mission Satyanishtha", at National Rail Museum in New Delhi. It aims to sensitize all railway employees about need to adhere to good ethics and to maintain high standards of integrity at work.
272. ▶ Indian Railways signed MoU with GAIL India, to replace Industrial gases like Dissolved Acetylene, LPG, BMCG and Furnace Oil / High Speed Diesel (HSD) oil with environment friendly Natural Gas.
- ✎ This MoU is a broad based, in principle agreement, between GAIL and Indian Railways for creation of infrastructure and supply of CNG/LNG/PNG for both industrial and domestic purposes.
 - ✎ Replacement by Natural Gases is likely to result into a saving of about Rs. 20 crore per annum to Indian Railways.
273. ▶ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) inaugurated S-Band Polarimetry Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota spaceport (Andhra Pradesh). It will be used for observation of weather system up to range of 500 km and also for early warning of severe weather events.
- ✎ DWR has been developed by Bharat Electronics Ltd Bengaluru under ToT (Training of Trainers) from ISRO, as 7th radar of such type manufactured in country under "Make in India".
274. ▶ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) signed MoU with Central University of Jammu (CUJ) for setting up Satish Dhawan Center for Space Science in University. Another MoU was signed between CUJ and Central Scientific Instruments Organization (CSIR-CSIO), To create awareness about space research and to motivate young minds to take up research related to space.
275. ▶ Indian actress Jaya Prada appointed as goodwill ambassador for Nepal tourism, for 4 years.
276. ▶ Indian postal services honoured Udaipur-based non-profit organisation Narayan Seva Sansthan, by launching their rs 5 postal stamps.
277. ▶ Indian Railways launched a web portal called *Rail Sahyog*, at URL www.railsahyog.in, as a platform for the Corporates and PSUs to contribute to creation of amenities at/near Railway Stations through Corporate Social Responsibility funds. Companies desirous of contributing can show willingness on the portal by registering their requests.
278. ▶ India's first National Environment Survey (NES) will begin in January 2019 to map environment data of 55 districts across 24 states and 3 UTs. The earliest first set of complete green data from this survey will be available in 2020.
- ✎ It will be carried out by MoEFCC through Environmental Information System (ENVIS). It will be done through grid-based approach, using grids measuring 9×9 km to collect comprehensive data on various environmental parameters.
 - ✎ Green data from this survey will provide important tool in hands of policy-makers for decision making at all levels – district, state and national. skilled manpower required for survey will be provided from persons skilled and trained under MoEFCC's Green Skill Development Programme.
279. ▶ India's first flight using biofuel flown from Dehradun (capital of Uttarakhand) to Delhi, conducted by SpiceJet on its turboprop Q-400 plane. Flights used alternative environment friendly fuel for 10 minutes over Dehradun.
- ✎ India joined elite club of nations who have operated flight on alternative energy source like biofuel, having countries like Canada, Australia and US have already conducted these test flights. Biofuel is developed by CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP), Dehradun. The flight was powered with a blend of 75% air turbine fuel (ATF) and 25% biojet fuel.
 - ✎ The Flight carried blend of 25% of bio jet fuel (derived from jatropha seeds) and 75% of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) in one of the two engines of plane, while other carried only ATF. International standards permit a blend rate of up to 50% biofuel with ATF. It can reduce fuel costs by 15-20%.
 - ✎ Jatropha is drought-resistant perennial plant that can grow in marginal or poor soil. It is grows relatively quickly and lives, produces seeds for 50 years. Its seeds has oil content of 37% which be combusted as fuel without being refined. It burns with clear smoke-free flame.




- ✍ It has been tested successfully as fuel for simple diesel engine. Its oil also acts as insecticide..
 - ✍ The use of bio jet fuel, apart from reducing carbon emissions by 80 %, greenhouse gas emissions by about 15 % and sulfur oxides (SOx) emissions by over 99 %, is expected to provide indigenous jet fuel supply security, possible cost savings as feedstock availability at farm level scales up, superior engine performance and reduced maintenance cost for the airline operators.
 - ✍ World's first dedicated biofuel flight (by Dreamliner Boeing 787-9) was flown for first time from Los Angeles (US) to Melbourne (Australia) in January 2018 by Australian carrier Qantas.
 - ✍ Biofuel is produced from vegetable oils, recycled grease, algae and animal fat. It is cleaner, environmental friendly fuel that can be used as alternative in place of fossil fuels.
 - ✍ Ministry of New and Renewable Energy recently on August 10, 2018 (World Biofuel Day 2018) had released National Policy on Biofuels 2018. Under it, Government plans to triple ethanol production over the next four years. It also has set target of 20% blending of ethanol in petrol by 2030.
280. ▶ India's first gallery on robotic dinosaurs was opened to the public at the Pushpa Gujral Science City, in Kapurthala (Punjab).
281. ▶ India's first indigenously developed 500-megawatt (mw) Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam in Tamil Nadu is expected to achieve criticality in 2019, now undergoing sodium commissioning.
- ✍ Criticality of Nuclear Reactor is event of it reaching self-sustained chain reaction. This means that no external source of neutrons is required to sustain fission in reactor core. It is precondition of producing useful amounts of energy from the reactor.
 - ✍ PFBR has been designed indigenously by Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR), to generate 500 MWe of electrical power, with operational life of 40 years. It generates power by burning mixed uranium-plutonium MOX fuel, a mixture of PuO₂ and UO₂.
 - ✍ Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam (Bhavini) has been given responsibility to build these reactors. India is planning to build 21 such reactors by 2030.
282. ▶ 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.
283. ▶ India's longest river bridge with total length of 19.3 kilometers will be built on Brahmaputra river in Assam, connecting Dhubri (Assam) to Fulbarani (Meghalaya). At present, India's largest river bridge is Dhola-Sadia bridge, its length is 9.15 kilometers. It will be completed by 2026-27 and will be public-funded work, with loan from Japanese Finance Agency (JICA).
284. ▶ India's wealthiest women list 2018 by Kotak Wealth-Hurun -
- ✍ Smitha Crishna, 3rd generation heir of Godrej Empire, topped the list with estimated net worth approx USD 6 Billion.
 - ✍ Roshni Nadar (HCL) ranks second with approx 5 Billion USD. Indu Jain of BCCL and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw are ranked 3rd and 4th in list.
 - ✍ Hurun Global Rich List 2018 has 404 women, of which 14 are from India.
285. ▶ Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has set sail a container cargo belonging to food and beverage giant PepsiCo (India) from Kolkata to Varanasi on river Ganga (National Waterway-1). It is India's first container movement on inland vessel post-independence.
286. ▶ Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) will start a new Roll on-Roll off (Ro-Ro) facility in collaboration with Assam Government to provide much-needed connectivity for Majuli Island. It will cut down circuitous road route of 423 KMs that trucks take from Neamati to Majuli Island via Tezpur Road Bridge, by limiting distance to only 12.7 KM.
- ✍ Majuli is one of the biggest riverine islands in the world located on river Brahmaputra and faces serious challenges of connectivity. It has 144 villages with a population of over 1,50,000. Currently, there are only four road bridges across river Brahmaputra - at Jogighopa, Guwahati, Tezpur and Sadiya for connectivity between southern and northern parts of Assam.
 - ✍ Earlier, IWAI started a similar Ro-Ro service between Dhubri and Hatsingimari which reduced the travel distance by 190 KMs.
287. ▶ Insolvency Law Committee (ILC) submitted its 2nd Report on Cross Border Insolvency to Arun Jaitley, which was constituted by Ministry of Corporate Affairs to recommend amendments to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code of India 2016,
- ✍ ILC recommended adoption of UNCITRAL Model Law of Cross Border Insolvency 1997, for it provides for a comprehensive framework to deal with cross border insolvency issues.
 - ✍ UNCITRAL Model Law has till now been adopted in 44 countries and forms part of international best practices in dealing with cross border insolvency issues. The model law gives precedence to domestic proceedings and protection of public interest.
288. ▶ International Aviation Summit held in New Delhi, jointly organised by the Airports Authority of India, Ministry of Civil Aviation and International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- ✍ Civil Aviation Ministry announced Vision 2035 under which it plans to build 100 new airports across India in the next 10-15 years with an investment of USD 60 billion and address major issues concerning aviation industry.








289. ▶ International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) signed MoU with Telangana Government, to conduct a research on impact of Mission Kakatiya programme
- ▶ Mission Kakatiya aims to restore all minor irrigation tanks and lakes in Telangana State, in 5 years. Tanks and lakes are dug to remove silt for increasing water storage capacity.
290. ▶ International Executive Council (International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID)), accorded Heritage Irrigation Structure (HIS) status on Telangana's Sadarmatt anicut and iconic Pedda Cheruvu tank. Both these sites will now be inscribed in the ICID Register of Heritage Irrigation Structures.
- ▶ Sadarmatt anicut - The Sadarmatt barrage, across Godavari in Khanapur of Nirmal district, is an iconic structure installed by the then Hyderabad ruler Nawab Iqbal-ud-Dowla in 1891-92.
 - ▶ Sadarmatt is 437.4 m long on its left flank and 23.8 m on its right flank. maximum flood discharge at the anicut is 7.76 lakh cusecs.
 - ▶ Pedda Cheruvu -
 - ▶ It is spread over an area of 618 acres and was built in 1897 during the rule of Mir Mahaboob Ali Khan, the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad State. It has a 1.8-km-long tank bund and 145-metre wall and three sluices.
291. ▶ J P Nadda, Minister of Health and Family Welfare released National Health Profile (NHP) 2018 prepared by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI). He also launched National Health Resource Repository (NHRR) - Country's first ever national healthcare facility registry of authentic, standardized and updated geo-spatial data of all public and private healthcare establishments.
- ▶ NHRR will be ultimate platform for comprehensive information of all healthcare establishments in India (Private / Government). Over 20 lakh healthcare establishments like hospitals, doctors, clinics, diagnostic labs, pharmacies and nursing homes would be enumerated under this census, capturing data on over 1,400 variables.
292. ▶ Jammu and Kashmir government will host its first ever *global investors meet* in July 2018 in Srinagar, focused on harnessing hydropower potential of 20,000 mega watts in Jammu Kashmir.
293. ▶ Jammu will be the first city in north India to get a full-fledged space technology research centre devoted to research, academics and post-graduation degree course. It will function under Central University Jammu.
294. ▶ Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust signed MoU with Ministry of Railways, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh for implementation of the 362 km Indore- Manmad New Railway Line Project -
- ▶ It will reduce distance from Mumbai/Pune to key central India locations by 171 kilometers, resulting in lower logistics costs.
 - ▶ Joint Venture Company will be formed between Ministry of Shipping or its nominated entity including JNPT with equity share of 55 %, Maharashtra or its nominated entity, Madhya Pradesh or its nominated entity and others with equity share of 15 % each.
295. ▶ Jharkhand Government announced to develop country's first Khadi mall.
296. ▶ Jharkhand government introduced electric vehicles for official use, becoming 5th state of India and first state in eastern India to procure eco-friendly vehicles for government use.
297. ▶ 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.
298. ▶ Karnataka Government unveiled 'Unnati Scheme' to help entrepreneurs from SC/ST Communities. Under it, State Govt. will invest up to Rs 20 crore to create end-to-end support infrastructure for startups and entrepreneurs from a marginalised background.
299. ▶ Karnataka government launched 'Swachha Meva Jayate' campaign, to promote cleanliness across state.
300. ▶ Karnataka government made Yoga mandatory for all colleges and universities in State. All government, aided and private degree colleges in state must conduct yoga for 20-minutes.
301. ▶ Kerala Government appointed KPMG as project consultant partner for rebuilding state ravaged by recent massive floods. Services of KPMG rendered for projects related to revamping to Kerala will be free of cost.
- ▶ Netherlands based KPMG is one of largest professional service companies in world and one of Big Four auditors, along with Deloitte, Ernst & Young, and PricewaterhouseCoopers.
302. ▶ 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.
303. ▶ Kingdom of Netherlands will be Partner Country in 25th DST – CII Technology Summit to be organized in 2019.
304. ▶ Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) launched a flood forecasting and early warning system (FFEWS) for Kolkata City, as India's first comprehensive city-level FFEWS. Asian Development Bank (ADB) from its Urban Climate Change Resilience Trust Fund funded this

project with technical assistance of a \$1 million.

305. ▶ Law Commission of India (LCI) in its 276th Report *Legal Framework: Gambling and Sports Betting including Cricket in India*, recommended that gambling and betting on sports be allowed as regulated activities.
- ▶ It recommended number of changes in law for regulating betting for making it taxable under direct and indirect tax regimes and used as source for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI).
 - ▶ It recommended linking Aadhar or PAN card of individual indulging in betting and gambling and making transaction cashless to regulate illegal activities such as money laundering.
 - ▶ FDI in casino and online gaming industry will bring substantial amounts of investment to those states that decide to permit casinos, propelling growth of tourism, while also enabling such states to generate higher revenue and employment opportunities.
 - ▶ 21st Law commission of India is led by former SC Justice Balbir Sinsh Chauhan, constituted effect from 1st September, 2015. It has a three-year term, ending on 31st August, 2018.
306. ▶ Lok Sabha MPs will be allowed to ask a maximum of five questions in the house per day from upcoming Monsoon Session, down from earlier 10 permitted questions.
307. ▶ Lonar Lake, an ancient circular lake created by a meteorite strike, in Maharashtra and St. Mary's Island, a hexagonal mosaic of basaltic rocks in an island off Udupi will be made global geoparks by Geological Survey of India (GSI).
- ▶ St. Mary's Island which was declared a national geo-heritage site in 1975 is estimated to be an 88-million-year-old.
 - ▶ Lonar crater became a geo-heritage site in 1979. It is around 50,000 years old.
308. ▶ MSME Ministry launched its monthly e-newsletter named *MSME Insider* to disseminate information of activities undertaken by MSME Ministry and act as a communication bridge between MSME Ministry and its stakeholders.
309. ▶ Madhya Pradesh Government announced creation of Niwari as its 52nd district, carved out of Tikamgarh district. It will include tehsils of *Niwari, Orchha and Prithvipur*.
310. ▶ Madhya Pradesh Government announced to observe August 14 every year as Shahid Samman Divas. State Govt. also launched Dial 100 Mobile app, to help needy at the time of emergency.
311. ▶ Madhya Pradesh forest department asked National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to revive its Cheetah Reintroduction Project to reintroduce Cheetahs in Nauradehi sanctuary located in Sagar district of state.
- ▶ Cheetah, fastest land animal was declared extinct in India in 1952. India's last spotted Asiatic cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*) had died in Chhattisgarh in 1947. According to earlier action plan, around 20 cheetahs were to be translocated to Nauradehi from Namibia in Africa.
 - ▶ The Project was conceived in 2009, but State was not ready to finance plan contending that it was Centre's project.
312. ▶ Madhya Pradesh government announced outstanding power bill waiver scheme for laborers and poor families, expected to benefit about 77 lakh people. Cabinet also approved Mukhyamantri Jan Kalyan (Sambal) Yojana 2018 to provide subsidized power.
313. ▶ Madhya Pradesh government launched an outstanding power bill waiver scheme and subsidised power scheme called 'Sambal' for labourers and poor families. Under it, Below Poverty Line (BPL) families would be provided electricity at a cost of Rs 200 per month (maximum).
314. ▶ Madhya Pradesh launched a first of its kind initiative called "Mil -Banche" in all government schools across the state. It Aims to create education and learning awareness among children.
315. ▶ Madhya Pradesh received Geographical Indication (GI) tag for Kadaknath chicken breed from State. GI tag denotes that product comes from particular geographical.
- ▶ Kadaknath Chicken Kadaknath or Kali Masi is unique breed of chicken that is complete black colour. Apart from its meat, its bones and most organs are also black. 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.
316. ▶ Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal delivered its final verdict to ending 50-year-old dispute over sharing of Mahadayi / Mandovi River between Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra.
- ▶ The tribunal was constituted in November 2010 under Interstate River Water Disputes Act 1956.
 - ▶ About two-thirds (76 km) of Mahadayi's 111-km stretch lies in Goa and remaining 35 km is in Karnataka and Maharashtra. Mahadayi River is lifeline of Goa because it is one of few sweet-water sources at state's disposal (most of Goa's 11 rivers contain salt water).
 - ▶ Dispute -
 - ▶ Sharing of waters of Mahadayi River was major cause of dispute between Karnataka and Goa. Karnataka wanted to divert excess water from Mahadayi river to Malaprabha river basin, as part of Kalasa-Banduri Nala project.
 - ▶ Goa opposed Karnataka's proposal, stating that its population is dependent on river's natural path.

 Verdict -

-  Tribunal pegged Karnataka's access to 13.4 tmc of Mahadayi River water for its consumptive use (5.4 tmc) and power generation (8.02 tmc). Goa was allowed to use 24 tmc for state's needs.
-  Maharashtra was awarded lowest share of 1.33 tmc for meeting its in-basin needs with respect to five projects.
-  Central Government will set up Mahadayi Water Management Authority to implement this decision.

317. ▶ 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.
318. ▶ Maharashtra Government signed MoU with Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) to launch Cotton Mission, to create value chain with final market linkages for thousands of cotton farmers in Vidarbha region. Under this, MCX will partner with state agriculture department and other agencies to work with Farmer Producer Organisations and help them connect to organised market network for building their capabilities.
319. ▶ 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.
320. ▶ Maharashtra Government will set up new Cyber University dedicated to mitigating cyber threats. It will train 3,000 professionals to fight cyber-attacks.
321. ▶ 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.
322. ▶ Maharashtra became first state to provide digitally-signed land record receipts (also known as 7/12 receipts), to check irregularities and bring in transparency.
323. ▶ Maharashtra government announced *Kanya Van Samruddhi Yojana*, in which farmers families with girl child will be given saplings for plantation. A farmer family with a girl child between April 1 and March 31 will get 10 saplings free of cost from forest department. Beneficiaries will have to plant saplings between July 1 and 7. Scheme will be applicable for 2 girl childs per family.
324. ▶ Maharashtra government made it compulsory for the Public Works Department to use plastic waste for construction and repair of asphalt roads, to sustainably use increasing amount of plastic waste collected by state civic bodies.
325. ▶ Maharashtra government will launch *one transformer per farmer* Scheme, to reduce electricity losses. Under it, 2 lakh farmers will be given electricity connection for high voltage distribution line which will ensure uninterrupted power supply.
-  Farmers who lose their cattle in attack by wild animals will now get Rs 40,000, up from Rs 25,000 earlier.
 -  Rs 2 lakh hike in for kin of people killed in an attack by wild animals was announced.
326. ▶ Maharashtra government will rename Jalgaon-based North Maharashtra University after Bahinabai Chaudhari, renowned poetess of 19th century.
327. ▶ Maharashtra launched website and app Maha madat to analyze drought situation, to help in accurate analysis of drought-like situation in villages of state. Drought can be declared if a region does not receive rain for a span of 21 days.
328. ▶ Maharashtra's Mahabaleshwar become wettest place in India in 2018, leaving behind Meghalaya's long famed Cherrapunji. Mahabaleshwar received a staggering 5661.6 mm rainfall this season till now, much more than Cherrapunji's 4735 mm.
-  Cherrapunji holds two Guinness world records for receiving the maximum amount of rainfall in a single year, 26,471mm (1,042.2 in) of rainfall between August 1860 and July 1861 and maximum amount of rainfall in a single month (9,300mm) in July 1861.
329. ▶ Mammals of India (MaOI) model of repository on Indian mammals, by National Centers for Biological Sciences (NCBS) Bangalore -
-  It is a first of its kind repository of Mammals in India, as an online portal that aim is to develop individual pages for all Indian mammals covering all related information.
 -  The website *mammalsofindia.org* provides facility for common citizen to upload photographic observations about mammals.
 -  MaOI is an initiative under Biodiversity Atlas project (a species-based bioinformatics platform).
 -  There are about 426 species of mammals known from India, which is about 8.86% of the world species.
330. ▶ 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.
331. ▶ Manipur government constituted two committees to deal with illegal migrants, State Level Monitoring Committee and District Level Monitoring Committees. These will monitor presence of illegal immigrants in state.
332. ▶ Meghalaya Cabinet approved convergence of phase 4 of Meghalaya Health Insurance Scheme (MHIS) with centre's Ayushman Bharat Yojana. Under this, health coverage has been increased to Rs. 5 lakh from previous Rs.2.8 lakh per household excluding government

employees.

333. ▶ Meghalaya Govt. released policy document of 5 year jackfruit mission, during state's jackfruit festival. It aims to generate employment opportunities for over 80,000 farmers, costing approx 80 Crores INR.
334. ▶ Microsoft signed MoU with Rajasthan government to provide free digital training to 9,500 college students in one year. Microsoft will also train educators from government colleges through the Microsoft Innovative Educator Programme, building capacity for innovative use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in classroom.
335. ▶ 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.
336. ▶ Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated the first Mega Food Park in Gujarat, located at Village Shah and Vasravi, Taluka Mangrol, District Surat. State's 2nd mega food park is sanctioned in Mehsana.
337. ▶ Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan laid foundation stone of country's first National Skill Training Institute at Barang near Bhubaneswar (Odisha).
338. ▶ Minister for Women and Child Development, Maneka Sanjay Gandhi laid Foundation for India's First Advanced Forensic Lab in Chandigarh, dedicated to women related cases. It will augment current capacity of CFSL Chandigarh to 2000 Cases per year (from 160 cases). 5 more advanced forensic labs would come up in Mumbai, Chennai, Guwahati, Pune and Bhopal in 3 months, taking annual capacity to 50000 cases.
339. ▶ 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.
340. ▶ Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu launched *ReUnite* mobile application, to track missing children. It will use *AmazonRekognition* web facial recognition service to identify missing kids.
341. ▶ 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.
342. ▶ Minister of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu released the policy on biometric based digital processing of passengers at airports called “Digi Yatra”.
- ▶ It aims to develop standards for digital processing of passengers at airport to ensure uniform implementation and passenger experience across airports. DigiYatra Central Platform will be operational by February 2019, starting from Bangalore & Hyderabad Airports.
343. ▶ Minister of Electronics & IT, Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurated Centre of Excellence for Data Analytics (CEDA) in New Delhi.
- ▶ CEDA will aid in fast-tracking adoption of advanced analytics in government, with centre aiming to strengthen citizen service delivery through data-driven governance.
 - ▶ CEDA aims at providing following services to Government:-
 - ▶ Data Quality Assurance Services.
 - ▶ Custom-built Data Analytics Solutions.
 - ▶ Develop reusable assets.
 - ▶ Knowledge Management.
 - ▶ Capacity Building and Self Service Analytics.

- ✎ Change Management - CEDA will help ministries in assessing impact from the analytics solutions and help in understanding changes to organizational roles and responsibilities
 - ✎ DigiVaarta was also launched on this occasion, to express intention of spreading awareness on DigiDhan. It aims to enable citizen government dialogue and engage citizens in educational and outreach programmes. It has two components –
 - ✎ An SMS application which operates from NIC's SMS Gateway on a special Short-code service allotted for this purpose by DoT with the number "14444". Citizens will receive SMS messages which are pre-approved by experts and the response messages will be made available for further action, analysis and research.
 - ✎ A Mobile application version of DigiVaarta.
- 344. ▶ Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan launched an online portal to enable easy, efficient and transparent booking of common carrier capacity for natural gas transmission services under GAIL's pipelines, as first step to facilitate gas trading on a exchange-traded platform in India.
 - ✎ The online portal is first-of-its-kind in the natural gas sector of the country. It will provide gas consumers the facility to register pipeline capacity bookings online.
- 345. ▶ Minister of Railways and Coal, Piyush Goyal launched "Rail Heritage Digitisation Project" of Indian Railways in collaboration with Google Arts & Culture, accessible at <https://artsandculture.google.com/project/indian-railways>.
 - ✎ Its a landmark effort to showcase country's Rail Heritage to National and International audience in an online story-telling platform.
 - ✎ Railways in India started on 16th April, 1853 between Bori bunder and Thane. Today we have three World Heritage Railways: DHR (Darjeeling Himalayan Railways), NMR (Nilgiri Mountain Railway), KSR (Kalka Shimla Railways).
 - ✎ With over 151,000 kilometres of track, 7,000 stations, 1.3 million employees and 160 years of history, Indian Railway is one of the most celebrated railway networks in world.
- 346. ▶ Minister of State (IC) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Jitendra Singh laid foundation stone of new Science Centre, the "Technology Facility Centre" (TFC) in Jorhat (Assam), in premises of CSIR-North East Institute of Science & Technology (NERIST).
- 347. ▶ Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Statistics & Programme Implementation, Vijay Goel, inaugurated Online Assurances Monitoring System (OAMS), To create transparency in assurance process in Parliamentary affairs.
- 348. ▶ Minister of State for Power and Renewable Energy RK Singh launched award scheme under Saubhagya Scheme (known as Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana). It will felicitate the power distribution companies (DISCOMs) for achieving 100 % household electrification. There will be two quantum of award -
 - ✎ Under first quantum of award, 1st DISCOM / Power Department that achieves 100 % household electrification by end of November 2018 would be provided cash award of Rs 50 Lakh.
 - ✎ 2nd quantum of award includes cash award of Rs 100 crore as grant to concerned DISCOM to be spent in distribution infrastructure development in their area of operation.
- 349. ▶ Minister of Steel, Chaudhary Birender Singh unveiled corporate sports policy for Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) under Ministry of Steel.
 - ✎ Steel CPSEs will discharge their responsibility through infrastructural and institutional support for talent spotting, scholarships, training and coaching.
 - ✎ CPSEs under Steel Ministry will form an apex sports body, which will be affiliated to National Level Sports Associations.
- 350. ▶ 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.
- 351. ▶ Ministry of Agriculture launched *Krishi Kalyan Abhiyan* from June 1 to July 31, 2018, to promote best farming practices and double farmers income launched in 25 villages in Aspirational Districts identified by Ministry of Rural Development and NITI Aayog. Activities Include distribution of soil health cards, mini kits of pulses and horticulture plants etc.

352. ▶ Ministry of Culture launched *Seva Bhoj Yojna* scheme with outlay of INR 325 Crores for 2018-19 and 2019-20. It envisages to reimburse Central Government share of Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) and Integrated Goods and Service Tax (IGST), to lessen burden of Charitable Religious Institutions who provide Food free of cost without any discrimination to General Public, Including Temples, Gurudwara, Mosque, Church, Dharmik Ashram etc.
- It is applicable to Organizations which have been in existence for at least 5 years before applying for financial assistance/grant and who serve free food to at least 5000 people in a month.
 - Ministry will register eligible charitable religious institutions for a time period ending with finance commission period and subsequently registration may be renewed by the Ministry, subject to performance evaluation.
 - Entity will be permitted to submit reimbursement claim of GST and Central Government share of IGST to designated authority of GST Department at State level in prescribed format during validity of registration.
 - Eligible institutions should be registered with Darpan portal.
353. ▶ Ministry of Culture organized 9th Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav under *Ek Bharat Shreshtha 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.
354. ▶ Ministry of Culture released National Museum Research Bulletin Number 10, revived after gap of 16 years. It also has released *Sindhu Ghati Sabhyata: Ek Parichay*, a Hindi version of An Introduction To Indus Valley Civilization which among the bestsellers at National Museum.
- Sindhu Ghati Sabhyata : Ek Parichay* is Hindi version of An Introduction To Indus Valley Civilization, co-authored by Sanjib Kumar Singhm, Gunjan Srivastava and Rajesh Kumar.
355. ▶ Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation launched Swajal Scheme in 115 Aspirational districts, aimed at providing clean drinking water. It will involve outlay of 700 crores through flexi-funds under existing National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) budget. 90% of project cost is taken care by Government and remaining 10% is contributed by beneficiary community.
- Modernisation of 2000 water quality testing laboratories spread across country will also be taken up. INR 1000 crores will be earmarked for addressing drinking water needs of 27,544 arsenic and fluoride affected habitations of country, under National Water Quality Sub-Mission (NWQSM).
356. ▶ Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation selected 10 more iconic sites under Phase III of Swachh Iconic Places (SIP) of Swachh Bharat Mission, launched at Mana village (Uttarakhand).
- 10 new iconic sites are - Raghavendra Swamy Temple (Andhra Pradesh), Hazarduari Palace (West Bengal), Brahma Sarovar Temple (Haryana), Vidur Kuti (Uttar Pradesh), Mana village (Uttarakhand), Pangong Lake (J&K), Nagvasuki Temple (UP), Ima Keithal market (Manipur), Sabarimala Temple (Kerala) and Kanvashram (Uttarakhand).
 - SIP is an initiative of Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation under Swachh Bharat Mission and was launched in 2016. It was initiated as project to take iconic places and their surroundings to higher standards of cleanliness (swachhata).
 - Phase 1 and 2 of SIP each have 10 Iconic places listed under them.
357. ▶ Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS) launched Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2018 (SSG 2018) in New Delhi, a survey to rank all states / districts on basis of rural cleanliness.
- 6980 villages in 698 districts will be covered. The SSG 2018 will assign 65% weightage to findings and outcome and 35% to service level parameters to be obtained from Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) of MDWS.
 - Weights to different elements of SSG are - direct observation (30%), citizen's feedback (35%), service level progress on sanitation (35%).
 - SSG 2018 will be conducted in August 2018. Best states / districts are expected to be awarded on 2nd October 2018.
358. ▶ Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) launched a mobile application named Mumbai Weather Live that will provide information on extreme weather events in Mumbai.
359. ▶ Ministry of Earth Sciences will set up a Cyclone Warning Centre in Thiruvananthapuram, by October 2018, after recent extreme weather events striking Kerala and Karnataka. Currently, IMD has cyclone warning centers at Chennai, Vishakhapatnam, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Mumbai.
- Earth Sciences Ministry will also set up a C-Band Doppler Weather Radar at Mangalore by end of 2019, which will cover parts of northern Kerala. At present, 2 Doppler Weather Radars are in Kerala, at Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram.

360. ▶ Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeITY) launched 5000 Wi-Fi Choupals in villages in partnership with common service centres (CSCs), aiming to transform rural Internet connectivity through BharatNet. They will provide 60,000 WiFi hotspots in rural areas. Wi-Fi Choupals are in addition to broadband connectivity provided gram panchyats through optical fibre network under BharatNet.
361. ▶ Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeITY) will expand its India BPO Promotion Scheme to 1 lakh seats from current 48,000 seats. It will also set up 5th and India's largest National data centre (NDC) in Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) with capacity of 5 lakh virtual servers.
- ▶ India BPO Promotion Scheme (IBPS) was Launched in 2014, to incentivize establishment of BPO firms and their extension to Tier II and Tier III cities.
362. ▶ 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.
363. ▶ Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and World Bank jointly released report on Strengthening Forest Fire Management in Country. It provides recommendations on five broad themes – policy, institutions and capacity, technology, community engagement and data and information.
- ▶ People are main driver of fires in India and forest fires are distributed close to people and infrastructure. But over longer term, shifts in climate caused by anthropogenic global warming may further alter India's forest landscape and fire regime.
 - ▶ India's monsoons are largely responsible for seasonal nature of forest fires in country. Forest fires peak during dry months of March or April before arrival of monsoon.
 - ▶ Forest fires in Northeast are concentrated in smaller area that is subject to repeat burning. Peak fire season is most concentrated (shortest) in Northeast and Northern state of Bihar. Fires in other regions, particularly districts in Central and Southern India are more expansive.
 - ▶ According to National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), fires affecting forests have significant ecological value. Between 2006 and 2015, NRSC scientists forest fires were detected in just under half (281 of 614) of protected areas in India.
 - ▶ Report is significant in light of recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report that explores possibilities of keeping global temperature rise within 1.5 degree Celsius to prevent catastrophic impacts due to unchecked temperature rise.
364. ▶ 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.
365. ▶ 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.
366. ▶ Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) declared 438 sq.km. area around Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (Tamil Nadu) in Nilgiris as an eco-sensitive zone (ESZ), to prohibit human activities near the reserve, which was declared a tiger habitat in 2007. It is a critical part of Nilgiris Biosphere Reserve spread over 5,500 sq. km.
367. ▶ Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) reconstituted Supreme Court-empowered Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA). Bhure Lal will continue to be Chairman of reconstituted 20 Member EPCA.
- ▶ EPCA is Supreme Court mandated body tasked with taking various measures to tackle air pollution in the National Capital Region, notified in 1998 under Environment Protection Act 1986. It is also mandated to enforce Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in NCR as per the pollution levels.
 - ▶ In November 2017, EPCA enforced several measures, including ban on brick kilns, closure of Badarpur thermal power plant, hot mix plants and stone crushers, and construction activities in NCR.
368. ▶ Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) launched India for Humanity initiative, to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of M K Gandhi. It will feature year-long series of artificial limb fitment camps in a number of countries spanning globe. MEA has collaborated with renowned charitable organisation Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS).

369. ▶ Ministry of HRD has launched a Project called *Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM)*, as an integrated platform and portal for online courses. It aims to ensure that every student has access to best quality higher education at affordable cost.
370. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare issued notification for bringing Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Prevention and Control) Act 2017 in force.
- ▶ It aims to safeguard rights of people living with HIV and affected by HIV. It also prohibits requirement for HIV testing as pre-requisite for obtaining employment or accessing health care or education.
371. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched pilot project for transport of sputum specimen for Tuberculosis (TB) Diagnosis by utilising services of Department of Post in New Delhi.
- ▶ Learning from this pilot project experience will be useful for adaptation of specimen transport mechanism through Postal Department across the country, as Significant proportion of TB patients in India are not tested for their symptoms because specimen does not reach laboratory due to non-availability of specimen transport mechanisms.
372. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare prohibited manufacture of 328 Fixed Dose Combinations (FDCs) for human use with immediate effect.
- ▶ Fixed dose combinations (FDC) Drugs have 2 or more active ingredients in a single dosage. They are widely used to improve patient compliance as it is easier for them to take one drug than several. They are acceptable only when drugs so combined have a therapeutic advantage.
373. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare signed an MoU with Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to scale up short term healthcare courses through IGNOU's platform. Under this, curriculum for 10 courses especially designed for health sector, will provide more than 14 lakh trained manpower by 2025.
- ▶ With coming up of 1.5 lakh Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) by 2022 under National Health Protection Mission (NHPM), there will be an urgent need for such health care providers.
 - ▶ Initially four courses will be launched, namely Home Health Aide, Geriatric Care Assistant, Phlebotomist and General Duty Assistant. Followed by remaining six skill-based curriculum as standardized by MoHFW- Diabetes Educator, Dietetic Aide, EMT-Basic, Dispensing Optician/VT and Medical Equipment Technology Assistant.
374. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) signed MoU for setting up of an state-of-the-art Integrated Control Room for Emergency Response (ICR-ER) in Ministry of Home Affairs. It will increase the operational effectiveness and will be helpful in rendering timely assistance during emergency situations.
375. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) designated National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) as nodal authority to curb online child pornography, sexual violence and rape videos. It also has been mandated to launch online portal for receiving complaints and acting on them.
376. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) revoked security clearance of Qatar government's state-funded English news broadcaster Al Jazeera, supposedly to be for documentary made by it on militancy in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), which Indian Government viewed as "biased".
377. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) sanctioned 5 new battalions of anti-riot and crowd control Rapid Action Force (RAF), to be stationed at Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Hajipur (Bihar), Jaipur (Rajasthan), Mangalore (Karnataka) and Nuh (Haryana). Total number of RAF battalions in the country has gone up to 15.
378. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs approved renaming Jharkhand's Nagar Untari town and railway station as Banshidhar Nagar, after Banshidhar Temple, dedicated to Krishna in Garhwa district of state. It is being done as part of its including Banshidhar Nagar as part of Krishna circuit and develop it as major tourist attraction under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
379. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs clarified that members of Gorkha community living in Assam are Not Foreigners and Belong to State, amid questions arising about the same after recently released National Register of Citizens (NRC) for Assam that left out 40 Lakh People.
380. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs sponsored Student Police Cadet (SPC) Programme launched in Gurugram (Haryana), to build bridge between Police and larger community through school students by inculcating values and ethics in them through classes in school and outside. It focuses on students of class 8th and 9th.
- ▶ It does not have any prescribed text book and also any exam. Only one class is proposed in a month. Programme will broadly cover Crime prevention and control.
 - ▶ Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) with support of National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has prepared handbook for imparting instructions.
381. ▶ Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) released the first ever 'Ease of Living Index' covering 111 Indian cities -
- ▶ Andhra Pradesh topped among States, followed by Odisha and Madhya Pradesh
 - ▶ It was decided in June 2017 to rank 116 cities (all smart cities and million plus cities) based on liveability parameters. The 'physical' pillar (infrastructure) was given highest weightage of 45, institutional (governance) and social were weighted 25 each. Economy was

weighted 5.

▶ Ease of Living framework comprised four pillars namely Institutional, Social, Economic and Physical which are further broken down into 78 indicators across 15 categories .

▶ Top 10 Cities -

- ▶ Pune
- ▶ Navi Mumbai
- ▶ Greater Mumbai
- ▶ Tirupati
- ▶ Chandigarh
- ▶ Thane
- ▶ Raipur
- ▶ Indore
- ▶ Vijaywada
- ▶ Bhopal

382. ▶ Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) will launch Global Housing Construction Technology Challenge as part of technology sub-mission of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U). It aims to accelerate PMAY-U's target of providing 'housing for all', as it is moving very slower than its rural counterpart.

▶ Through this, MoHUA will invite ideas for innovative technologies for mass housing projects that can help build houses faster, cheaper and of better quality with sustainable green materials. Winning technologies will be used for construction under PMAY (U).

▶ Also, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs announced that over 51 lakh houses have been approved under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) in the 3 years of its implementation. Out of Which, 28 lakhs houses are already in various stages of construction and 8 lakh completed. PMAY(U) aims provide affordable houses to all poor in urban areas by 2022. Its objective is to construct 2 crore houses across nation.

383. ▶ Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs partnered with Google to launch Loo Review campaign on Google Map, under Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM–U). It will run throughout October and November 2018 in an effort to increase awareness and ease of locating public toilets across India. It aims to encourage all local guides in India to rate and review public toilets on Google Maps.

384. ▶ Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) announced that National Testing Agency (NTA) will train paper setters to set better question papers and provide better model answers. NTA It will take over all examinations from CBSE (except 10th and 12th board examinations) from 2019 in phased manner. It will be also conducting prestigious Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for admission to prominent engineering colleges.

385. ▶ Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) launched National Digital Library of India (NDLI) on occasion of National Reading Day (June 17) in New Delhi. NDLI aims to make digital educational resources available to all, to empower learning.

▶ NDLI (under aegis of National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT)) is a framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility. It been developed by Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur.

386. ▶ 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 (PMMMNMTT), 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.

387. ▶ Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) declared medium (5 GW by 2022) and long-term (30 GW by 2030) targets for offshore wind power capacity addition, as a new element in already existing basket of renewable energy of country.

▶ Target for offshore wind power is moderate in comparison to on-shore wind target of 60 GW and its achievement of 34 GW and solar target of 100 GW by 2022, because of challenges in installing wind power turbines in open seas.

▶ Global capacity of off-shore wind power is about 17 to 18 GW, led by UK, Germany, Denmark, Netherlands & China.

388. ▶ 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.
389. ▶ Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas amended Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules 1959 to include shale in definition of petroleum, to enable exploration of all hydrocarbons in existing fields which is line with new Hydrocarbon Exploration Licensing Policy (HELP). It will help in enhancing domestic exploration and production of hydrocarbons and increasing India's energy security and reducing dependency on imports.
- Shale is fine-grained sedimentary rock that forms from compaction of silt and clay-size mineral particles, commonly called as mud. Shale is distinguished from other mudstones due to laminated (rock is made up of many thin layers) and fissile (rock readily splits into thin pieces along the laminations) nature.
390. ▶ Ministry of Power will make 24 degrees celsius as mandatory default setting and labeling of air conditioners within few months, as part of campaign to promote energy efficiency.
- Every one degree increase in temperature of air-conditioner results in saving of 6% of electricity consumed.
 - Normal human body temperature is approximately 36-37 degree Celsius. Lower temperature around 18-21 degree Celsius controlled by air conditioners is not only uncomfortable but is also unhealthy.
391. ▶ 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.
392. ▶ Ministry of Road Transport & Highways launched Youth Road Safety Learners Licence programme in New Delhi, as a Public-private partnership (PPP) initiative in collaboration with Diageo India and Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE). It attempts to bring structured training program for young, first-time drivers as they apply for learner's license.
393. ▶ 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.
394. ▶ Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) issued draft amendments to Central Motor Vehicles Rules 1989 -
- Makes mandatory for vehicles to affix sticker confirming fitting of Fastag in front wind screen of vehicles.
 - Stipulates additional conditions for obtaining national permit.
 - Tanker carrying dangerous or hazardous goods will be painted in white colour.
 - Fitness certification of transport vehicles will be renewed for 2 years for vehicles up to 8 years old and for 1 year for vehicles older than 8 years.
 - Henceforth, pollution under control certificates and driving license can be carried in physical or digital form.
 - Goods carrying vehicles will be required to carry goods in closed body of vehicle or container, or use tarpaulin if needed to carry in open.
395. ▶ Ministry of Tourism expanded Buddhist tourism circuit under Swadesh Darshan Scheme to 21 more states to make it India's first trans-national tourist circuit. Earlier it was envisaged only to 7 major Buddhist pilgrimage sites in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
396. ▶ Ministry of Tourism inaugurated India's first tribal circuit project connecting 13 tourism sites in Chhattisgarh under Swadesh Darshan Scheme. The circuit connects Jashpur, Kunkuri, Mainpat, Kamleshpur, Maheshpur, Kurdar, Sarodadadar, Gangrel, Kondagaon, Nathiya Nawagaon, Jagdalpur, Chitrakoot, and Tirthgarh in Chhattisgarh.
- Tribal circuit project will improve existing tourist facilities, enhance the overall tourist experience and help in getting more visitors which in return will increase job opportunities in area.
 - Under tribal circuit theme of Swadesh Darshan Scheme, Tourism Ministry has sanctioned four projects to Nagaland, Telangana and Chhattisgarh.
 - Chhattisgarh was considered for the first tribal circuit theme for acknowledging sovereignty of tribes and to promote rich and diverse primitive assets in state.

397. ▶ Ministry of Tourism organized first ever India Tourism Mart (ITM 2018) in New Delhi, in partnership with Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH).
398. ▶ 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%.
399. ▶ Ministry of Water Resources instituted National Water Awards, to encourage efficient management of water resources and create water consciousness in country.
- ▶ The awards will be given for 13 categories - Best State, Best District, Best Village Panchayat, Best Municipal Corporation, Best research, innovation and adaptation of new technology for water conservation, Best educative and mass awareness efforts, Best TV show for promoting water conservation, Best Newspaper, Best School, Best Institution for successful campus water usage, Best Resident Welfare Association (RWA), Organizations for Best Religious and Recreational & Tourism Water Uses and Best Industry for industrial water conservation.
400. ▶ Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation approved 2 major irrigation projects and 4 flood management schemes with a cumulative cost of INR 84748 crores from six States/ UT.
- ▶ Kaleshwaram Project (Telangana), will divert 195 TMC (5522 Million Cubic Meter) of Godavari water to irrigate about 18.25 lakh acres of land in 13 districts of Telangana. It is worth approx INR 80190 crores.
 - ▶ Upper Pravara (Nilwande-II) Project (Maharashtra) will irrigate an area of 2,12,758 acres. It is worth approx INR 2232 crores.
401. ▶ Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation launched fortnightly video contest *Jal Bachao, Video Banao, Puruskar Pao*, to encourage people for better water management. Ministry joined hands with MyGov portal (www.mygov.in) for this contest. Contest will last till 4th November 2018 and three winners will be chosen every fortnight.
- ▶ Video should be uploaded on YouTube and share its accessible link in MyGov contest page, with duration 2 - 10 minutes. Prize amount for first, second and third positions is Rs 25,000, Rs 15,000 and Rs 10,000 respectively.
402. ▶ Ministry of Women and Child Development partnered with NASSCOM to improve its nutrition monitoring app, Integrated Child Development Services-Common Application Software (ICDS-CAS), developed under Poshan Abhiyan (*PM's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nourishment*) that aims to fight malnourishment and stunting.
403. ▶ Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi launched India's first *National Scholarship Portal Mobile App* (NSP Mobile App), to ensure a smooth and hassle-free scholarship system for students from poor and weaker sections. Using it, Students will be able to apply for scholarships sitting in their home.
404. ▶ Mizoram government will introduce a resolution in state legislature objecting to Citizenship Amendment Bill 2016, as the amendment will legalise thousands of Buddhists (Chakmas) who have illegally entered Mizoram from Bangladesh.
- ▶ Also, cabinet approved Sinlung Hills Council Bill 2018, signed as result of peace accord between Mizoram government and erstwhile underground Hmar People's Convention (Democratic) in April 2018.
405. ▶ Monsoon Season 2018 - 19 Passed Bills -
- ▶ Rajya Sabha passed State Banks (Repeal and Amendment) Bill, 2017 to merge six subsidiary banks with SBI. It was approved by Lok Sabha in 2017. It repeals State Bank of India (Subsidiary Banks) Act 1959 AND State Bank of Hyderabad Act 1956, that established SBI subsidiary Banks.
 - ▶ Lok Sabha passed *The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Second Amendment) Bill 2017* to abolish 'no detention policy' in schools (meaning that no child can be held back in any class until completion of elementary school (classes 1-8)). It will empower central / state government to allow schools to hold back child in class 5 / 8, after re-examination on being failed at first.
 - ▶ Lok Sabha passed Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Bill 2017 to reduce number of cheque dishonour cases pending in courts, amending Negotiable Instruments Act 1881.
 - ▶ Interim compensation - Allows court trying offence related to cheque bouncing to direct drawer (person who writes cheque) to pay interim compensation to complainant. It will not exceed 20% of cheque amount and will be paid by drawer within 60 days.
 - ▶ Deposit in case of appeal - If drawer convicted in cheque bouncing case files appeal, appellate court may direct him to deposit minimum of 20% of compensation awarded by trial court during conviction. This will be in addition to any interim compensation.
 - ▶ Returning interim compensation - If drawer is acquitted during trial or by appellate court, court will direct complainant to return interim compensation along with interest.

- ✎ Lok Sabha passed National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill 2017, to approve institutions which are funded by Centre or states, but do not have recognition. It amends NCTE Act 1993. Key Features Include Retrospective recognition of certain teacher education institutions and permits these institutions to start new course / training in teacher education to institutions.
- ✎ Rajya Sabha passed Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill 2013 . It amends Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA) 1988, to bring it in line with United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). Key Features Include
 - ✎ Making Giving bribe a punishable offence
 - ✎ Making it mandatory to take prior approval of competent authority to conduct any investigation into offence alleged to have been committed by a public servant.
 - ✎ Sets trail time period. In case of delays, reasons for it must be recorded for every extension of six months obtained. Total trial period may not exceed 4 years.
 - ✎ Anyone who is caught bribing government officials can be sentenced to a jail term of up to 7 years.
- ✎ Lok Sabha passed Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill 2018 that aims to curb practice of evading criminal prosecution by economic offenders fleeing from country to evade clutches Indian law by remaining outside jurisdiction of Indian courts. Key Features -
 - ✎ It is applicable in cases where total value involved in such economic offences is Rs.100 crore or more.
 - ✎ It establishes Special Court under the Prevention of Money-laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 to declare a person as FEO. court will appoint 'administrator' to oversee confiscated property.
 - ✎ It empowers director / deputy director (appointed under Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002) to attach any property mentioned in application with permission of special court. Attachment will continue for 180 days, unless extended by court.
 - ✎ Bill allows any civil court or tribunal to disallow person declared FEO, from filing or defending any civil claim.
 - ✎ Director / deputy director will have powers vested of civil court.
 - ✎ Appeals against orders of special court will lie before High Court.
- ✎ Lok Sabha passed Homeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Bill 2018, that seeks to replace Central Council of Homoeopathy (CCH) with a board of governors.
 - ✎ It abolishes CCH, as it does not have the powers to deal with its corrupt chief and other members.
 - ✎ New board will comprise seven eminent homeopathy practitioners and administrators to be appointed by government.
- ✎ Lok Sabha passed Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2018 -
 - ✎ Jail term of minimum 20 years or life imprisonment or death for rape of girl under 12 years.
 - ✎ Increases minimum punishment from 10 years to 20 years for crime of rape of girl under 16 years, which can be extended to imprisonment for rest of life.
 - ✎ Increases minimum punishment for rape of women from rigorous imprisonment of 7 years to 10 years, which can be extended to life imprisonment.
 - ✎ Investigation and trial must be completed in two months. It proposes 6 months' time limit for disposal of appeals in rape cases.

406. ▶ Monsoon Session Passed Bills (August 2018) -

- ✎ Parliament passed Constitution (123rd Amendment) Bill that seeks to provide constitutional status to National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC). It was passed by Both (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) in current Monsoon Season of Parliament.
 - ✎ It provides for granting of constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) on par with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, to extend Benefits given to SC / STs to backward classes.
 - ✎ Cabinet also decided to amend the SC/ST Act to further strengthen the law to protect their rights. A committee has been set up under G Rohini to examine sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes.
- ✎ Parliament passed Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts (Amendment) Bill 2018. It enables creation of commercial divisions in High Courts and commercial courts at district level to adjudicate commercial disputes. Features -
 - ✎ Bill Reduction in pecuniary limits, from 1 crore to 3 lakh.
 - ✎ Parent Act barred commercial courts to be constituted in cases where High Court has original jurisdiction to hear commercial cases. Bill removes this bar and allows states to constitute commercial courts where High Courts have original jurisdiction.
 - ✎ Allows state governments to notify commercial appellate courts at the district judge level in areas where High Courts do not have ordinary original civil jurisdiction.
 - ✎ Introduces pre-institution mediation process in cases where no urgent, interim relief is contemplated, to provide parties with opportunity to resolve commercial disputes outside ambit of courts through authorities.

- ✍ Bill removes provision of counterclaim in relation to transfer of suits in a commercial dispute of at least Rs. 1 crore in civil court.
- ✍ It was passed by Both (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) in current Monsoon Season of Parliament.
- ✍ Parliament passed National Sports University Bill 2018, to set up India's first National Sports University in Imphal (Manipur). It is mandated to promote sports education in areas of sports sciences, sports technology, sports management, and sports coaching. Bill empowers It to grant degrees, diplomas and certificates. It was passed by Both (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) in current Monsoon Season of Parliament.
- ✍ Parliament passed Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill 2018 -
 - ✍ Investigating officer will not require approval of any authority for the arrest of an accused.
 - ✍ Preliminary enquiry will not be required for the registration of a First Information Report against a person accused under the Act.
 - ✍ SC/ST Act 1989 states that persons accused of committing an offence under the Act cannot apply for anticipatory bail. The Bill seeks to clarify that this provision will apply despite any judgements or orders of a court that provide otherwise.
 - ✍ Bill restores original provisions of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989. It prohibits commission of offences against members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCs and STs) and establishes special courts for trial of such offences and rehabilitation of victims. It overturns a March 2018 Supreme Court judgment which diluted some provisions of law protecting Dalits and tribals from atrocities.
 - ✍ It was passed by Both (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) in current Monsoon Season of Parliament.
- ✍ Parliament passed Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2018 -
 - ✍ Jail term of minimum 20 years or life imprisonment or death for rape of girl under 12 years.
 - ✍ Increases minimum punishment from 10 years to 20 years for crime of rape of girl under 16 years, which can be extended to imprisonment for rest of life.
 - ✍ Increases minimum punishment for rape of women from rigorous imprisonment of 7 years to 10 years, which can be extended to life imprisonment.
 - ✍ Investigation and trial must be completed in two months. It proposes 6 months' time limit for disposal of appeals in rape cases.
 - ✍ It was passed by Both (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) in current Monsoon Season of Parliament.
- ✍ Lok Sabha passed Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill 2017, to extend facility of 'proxy voting' to overseas Indians, on lines of service voters. It amends Representation of People Act (RPA) 1950 and 1951 to allow for proxy voting and make certain provisions of these Acts gender-neutral.
 - ✍ Approx 1 crore Indians are settled abroad, of which 60 lakh may be within eligible voting age. By granting them proxy voting rights, overseas Indians will be able to exercise franchise during elections and also need not to spend foreign currency to come to India during elections.
- ✍ Lok Sabha passed Arbitration and Conciliation Bill (Amendment) 2018, which provides for time-bound settlement of disputes as well as accountability of arbitrator, to amend Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996.
 - ✍ It contains provisions to deal with domestic and international arbitration, and defines law for conducting conciliation proceedings.
 - ✍ Key Provisions -
 - ✍ Seeks to establish Arbitration Council of India (ACI), for promotion of arbitration, mediation, conciliation and other alternative dispute redressal mechanisms.
 - ✍ Relaxation of time limits - Under 1996 Act, arbitral tribunals are required to make their award within a period of 12 months for all arbitration proceedings. Amendment bill has proposed to remove this time restriction for international commercial arbitrations.
 - ✍ New Bill requires that written claim and the defence to the claim in an arbitration proceeding, should be completed within six months of the appointment of the arbitrators.
 - ✍ Bill provides that all details of arbitration proceedings will be kept confidential except for details of the arbitral award in certain circumstances.
 - ✍ Applicability of Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 2015: The bill clarifies that the 2015 Act shall only apply to arbitral proceedings that started on or after October 23, 2015.
- ✍ Parliament passed Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (2nd Amendment) Bill 2018, seeking to replace Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance 2018. Provisions -
 - ✍ It clarifies that home buyers under a real estate project should be treated as financial creditors.

- ✎ Voting threshold for routine decisions taken by committee of creditors has been reduced from 75 % to 51 %. For certain key decisions, this has been reduced to 66 %.
 - ✎ Allows withdrawal of a resolution application submitted to National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) under the Code, after approval of 90 % of committee of creditors.
 - ✎ Features of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance 2018 -
 - ✎ Section 29(A) of IBC 2016 has been amended to exempt pure play financial entities from being disqualified on account of non-performing assets (NPA).
 - ✎ 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.
 - ✎ It provides a year time to Resolution Applicant to obtain necessary statutory clearances from central, state and other authorities.
 - ✎ Lok Sabha passed Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, outlawing talaq-e-biddat. According to it, talaq-e-biddat has been made a cognizable and non-bailable offence.
 - ✎ Three provisions of the Bill - Instant triple talaq is illegal, It imposes a jail term of up to 3 years and fine, It provides additional safeguards from the Act being misused It also provides for subsistence allowance to Muslim women and custody of minor children as may be determined by the magistrate.
 - ✎ It will soon be tabled in Rajya Sabha, for clearance.
 - ✎ Parliament passed Requisitioning and Acquisition of Immovable Property (Amendment) Bill, regarding compensation payable for acquisition of immovable property by the Centre for defence and security purposes. It was earlier passed by Lok Sabha in July 2018.
 - ✎ The act enables central government to requisition immovable property (or land) for any public purpose like defence and security purposes. Amendment also involves a provision to allow the Centre to re-issue the notice of acquisition to make sure that the property owner gets an opportunity to be heard.
407. ▶ Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport was renamed as Chhatrapati Shivaji '*Maharaj*' International Airport, To pay more respect to great maratha warrior. Mumbai's airport was formerly known as Sahar International Airport. It was renamed as Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in 1999.
408. ▶ Myanmar joined India-initiated International Solar Alliance (ISA), making it 68th signatory to Framework Agreement of ISA.
 - ✎ ISA was jointly launched by India and France in November 2015 at Paris on side lines of COP21 UN Climate Change Conference. Its Framework Agreement came into force in December 2017.
 - ✎ It is headquartered at campus of Natioanl Institute of Solar Energy (NISE), Gurugram, Harayana, making it first international intergovernmental treaty based organization to be headquartered in India. Upendra Tripathy is current head of ISA.
409. ▶ NITI Aayog Approved Bue Print for National health Stack, a Digital Healthcare Infrastructure To Implement Centre's Ayushman Bharat Scheme.
 - ✎ National Health Stack will facilitate collection of comprehensive healthcare data across the country. It Includes assigning a Digital Health ID for every Indian Citizen, Which will enable privileged medical institutions to access Person's Health Data.
 - ✎ Ayushman Bharat aims to provide a coverage of INR 5 Lakh per family annually and benefit more than 10 crore poor families. NITI Aayog has invited comments from stakeholders on consultation paper, by August 1, 2018.
410. ▶ NITI Aayog Launched a Composite Water Management Index as a tool to improve management of water resources. This index is an attempt to inspire States and UTs towards efficient and optimal utilization of water. States are categorized as *North Eastern and Himalayan States* AND *Other States*. Outcomes of report (for 2016 - 17) -
 - ✎ In Other States,Gujarat is ranked at top in reference year (2016-17), followed by Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra.
 - ✎ In North Eastern and Himalayan States, Tripura is at top followed by Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Assam.
 - ✎ In terms of incremental change (over 2015-16 level), Rajasthan is at top in general States and Tripura first amongst North Eastern and Himalayan States.
411. ▶ 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.
412. ▶ NITI Aayog and Actor Sushant Singh Rajput collaborated to promote 2 major initiatives of NITI Aayog - promotion of BHIM and Women Entrepreneurship Platform.

413. ▶ NITI Aayog and IBM launched a first-of-its-kind internship programme for students selected by Atal Innovation Mission (AIM). It will see 38 students receive a two-week paid training in areas like artificial intelligence, Internet-of-Things, cybersecurity, cloud computing and blockchain.
- ▶ 14 Selected teachers from ATLS will also be trained by IBM volunteers and mentors to become innovation coaches.
414. ▶ 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.
415. ▶ NITI Aayog constituted group of experts submitted report titled 'Inventory and Revival of Springs in the Himalayas for Water Security.'
- ▶ It stated that nearly 30% of springs crucial to water security of people are drying and 50% have reported reduced discharge.
 - ▶ It calls for spring mapping and revival, using 8 steps protocol should be taken up across Himalayan states in phased manner, applying carrying capacity concept to all major tourist destinations and implementing and monitoring tourism sector. It also has mooted 8-year programme to overhaul spring water management.
 - ▶ Meghalaya with 3,810 villages with springs has highest number of these water sources in Eastern Himalayan States. Sikkim had greatest density with 94% of its villages having spring. In Western Himalayas, Jammu & Kashmir had both highest number of villages with springs at 3,313 and greatest density of 50.6%.
416. ▶ NITI Aayog has made computer chip manufacturer NVIDIA its deep learning technology partner to support its MoveHack event. NVIDIA will help NITI Aayog to solve grand challenge of making innovations in mass mobility matter of national importance using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and deep learning.
- ▶ MoveHack is global mobility hackathon event organized by NITI Aayog to crowdsource solutions aimed at the future of mobility in India.
 - ▶ Deep learning technology is subset of machine learning (ML) in artificial intelligence (AI) that has networks capable of learning unsupervised from data that is unstructured or unlabelled.
417. ▶ NITI Aayog launched *Pitch to MOVE* mobility pitch competition, aiming to provide budding entrepreneurs a unique opportunity to pitch their business ideas to a distinguished jury. Winners will be felicitated during Global Mobility Summit to be held in New Delhi in September 2018.
- ▶ Pitch to MOVE aims to identify startups, which will help vision of Shared, Connected, Intermodal and Environment Friendly Mobility in India. It is available at <http://mobilitypitch.movesummit.in>
418. ▶ NITI Aayog launched Online Course on Digital Payments, titled 'Understanding Digital Payments'. It has been designed especially for India by International Telecommunication Union (ITU) a specialized UN Agency in ICT in consultation with NITI Aayog and Department of Telecommunications (DoT).
- ▶ It is being offered free of cost and is hosted by ITU Academy online, targeted at mid-level Government officers. Course duration is two weeks (1st to 15th October 2018).
419. ▶ NITI Aayog launched global mobility hackathon Move Hack to crowdsource solutions aimed at future of mobility in India. It is first platform in world that has enmeshed public transport, private transport, road safety, multimodal connectivity and new age transport technologies such as zero emission vehicles and intra city aerial transport spearheaded by Government.
420. ▶ NITI Aayog launched model guidelines for Public-Private partnership in Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). Under these, private partner will invest in upgrading, building and deploying human resources. They will be responsible for operational management and service delivery. Newly issued guidelines will help streamline private participation and encourage world-class infrastructure and patient care in the health sector.
421. ▶ NITI Aayog recommended that Ministry of Agriculture to take up mission on shifting cultivation to ensure inter-ministerial convergence between different ministries. Highlights -
- ▶ State governments have divergent approaches towards shifting cultivation. creating confusion among grass-roots level workers and jhum farmer.
 - ▶ It calls for policy coherence and recognising land for shifting cultivation as agricultural land where farmers practise agro-forestry for production of food rather than as forestland.
 - ▶ Shifting Cultivation
 - ▶ It is traditional agricultural practice that involves clearing vegetative forest cover on land and slopes of hills, drying and burning it before onset of monsoon and cropping on it thereafter. After harvest, this land is left fallow and vegetative regeneration is allowed on it till plot becomes reusable for same purpose in cycle. In north east India, it is called as jhum cultivation.

✎ Shifting cultivation causes in long term causes problem of land degradation and threat to ecology of the region at large.

Burning of forests provide temporary nutrients like potash to soil. Burning of forests results in emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as CO₂, NO₂.

422. ▶ NITI Aayog released first Delta ranking for 108 aspirational districts to measure their incremental progress across five developmental areas during April and May 2018. 49 key performance indicators were mapped across 5 developmental areas - health and nutrition, education, financial inclusion and skill development, agriculture and water resources and basic Infrastructure.

✎ Districts started entering data from April 1, 2018 in *Champions of Change* dashboard.

✎ Most improved - Dahod (Gujarat, rank: 1st), West Sikkim district (Sikkim, 2nd). Ramanathapuram district (Tamil Nadu, 3rd) and Vizianagaram (Andhra Pradesh, 4th) and YSR Kadapa district (Andhra Pradesh, 5th).

✎ Least improved - Kupwara (Jammu and Kashmir), Begusarai (Bihar), Ranchi (Jharkhand), Simdega (Jharkhand) and Khagaria (Bihar).

423. ▶ NITI Aayog released five Thematic Reports on Sustainable Development in Indian Himalayan Region (IHR) recognizing uniqueness of Himalayas and challenges for sustainable development, prepared by 5 working groups that were set up by NITI Aayog in June 2017. Areas are -

✎ Inventory and Revival of Springs in Himalayas for Water Security, Sustainable Tourism in Indian Himalayan Region, Transformative Approach to Shifting Cultivation, Strengthening Skill & Entrepreneurship Landscape in Himalayas and Data and Information for Informed Decision Making.

✎ Inventory and Revival of springs in Himalayas for Water Security.

✎ Sustainable Tourism in Indian Himalayan Region.

✎ Transformative approach to shifting cultivation (i.e. slash and burn (Jhum cultivation)) - There is urgent need for assessment of nature and extent of shifting cultivation area.

✎ Strengthening Skill and Entrepreneurship Landscape in Himalayas - There is need to set up demand driven network of skill and entrepreneurship development Centers in Himalayan States along with consortium of institutions of high learning for mountain specific research and technology.

✎ Data/Information for Informed Decision Making - Central Data Management Agency for Himalayan Database must be set up at GB Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development. It should be linked with Hindukush Himalaya Monitoring and Assessment program (HIMAP).

424. ▶ NITI Aayog signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) with Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizers & Chemicals Limited (GNFC) to work together for implementing Proof-of-Concept (PoC) application for fertilizer subsidy management using Blockchain Technology.

425. ▶ NITI Aayog, Intel, and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) collaborated to set up a Model International Center for Transformative Artificial Intelligence (ICTAI) towards developing and deploying AI-led application-based research projects.

✎ It is part of NITI Aayog's 'National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence' Discussion Paper that focuses on establishing ICTAI in country through private sector collaboration.

✎ Based in Bengaluru, Model ICTAI aims to conduct advanced research to incubate AI-led solutions in three important areas – healthcare, agriculture and smart mobility.

✎ Learnings developed through this model ICTAI will be used by NITI Aayog to set up future ICTAIs across country.

426. ▶ NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) selected 3,000 additional schools for establishment of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs), bringing the total number of ATL schools to 5441. Selected schools shall receive a grant of Rs 20 lakh spread over 5 years to establish Atal Tinkering Labs for nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial spirit among secondary school children across India.

✎ Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) is Government's flagship initiative to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in country.













✎ Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs) create innovators, Atal Incubation Centres and support to Established Incubation Centresure that innovations are taken to market and help create enterprises around these innovations.

427. ▶ NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurs Platform (WEP) signed Statement of Intent (SoIs) with *Shri Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank, Indiabulls Housing Finance, SREI Infrastructure Finance, Srimanta Sankar Mission and Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA)*, to create opportunities and support women entrepreneurs. WEP was launched on International Women's day (March 8, 2018).

428. ▶ National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) drafted fee regulations to put in place uniform fee framework to check increases in school fees by unaided private schools. NCPCR will recommend these draft regulations to Ministry of Human Resource Development. It Suggests -

✎ 10% yearly cap on fee hike permissible by private, unaided schools.

✎ Setting up district fee regulatory authority in states to monitor school fee increases.

-  Formula for determining fees, based on school's location, costs incurred, revenue earned, student strength and other parameters.
 -  It proposes revenue fines of 1 %, 2 %, 5 % on first 3 violations and bar admissions after any further violations.
429. ▶ National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) will constitute 'Mediation Cell' for cases of child custody dispute in NRI marital discord. The Cell will resolve cases of children who were taken away by one of the spouse without the permission of the other spouse due to marital discord or domestic violence.
430. ▶ National Commission for Women (NCW) launched dedicated e-mail address (ncw.metoo@gmail.com) to report instances of sexual harassment at workplace. On receiving complaint, NCW will take forward complaints of sexual harassment at workplace received so that appropriate action may be taken.
431. ▶ National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) initiated process of introducing QR code (Quick Response code) in their textbooks, aimed at helping students understand chapters better by watching film or reading additional content on laptops and digital boards.
432. ▶ 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).
433. ▶ National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC) will be set up on banks of the Ganga river in Patna University campus in Patna (Bihar), as Asia's first Dolphin research centre.
-  Gangetic river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) is one of four freshwater dolphin species in world. The other three are found in Yangtze river, Indus river in Pakistan and Amazon river.
434. ▶ National Mission for Clean Ganga laid down limits of ecological flow of the river Ganga for first time, to enable hydropower projects to modify their operations along river.
-  Upper stretches (origin to Haridwar) will have to maintain 20% of average flow of preceding 10-days between November and March which are dry seasons, 25% during October, April and May, which are the lean seasons, 30% during monsoon months of June-September.
 -  In main stem from Haridwar to Unnao, minimum flow of various barrages have been specified.
435. ▶ National Rail and Transportation Institute (NRTI), India's first university in transport sector, has started functioning. It is presently functioning at National Academy of Indian Railways in Vadodra (Gujarat). University of California, Berkeley and Cornell University are its international partners. It offers two undergraduate courses: BSc Transportation Technology and BBA Transportation Managements.
436. ▶ National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) signed MoU with Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to provide skill training and jobs in construction sector for 2.5 lakh poor people. It will strengthen skill trainings in construction sector for urban poor under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission.
437. ▶ National Security Guard (NSG) became first central paramilitary force to opt for e-ticketing instead of railway warrant. With this, NSG personnel don't have to carry railway warrants as Buying tickets through railway warrant system is a lengthy process.
438. ▶ 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.
439. ▶ Nepal celebrated festival of Fulpati, observed on 7th day of Dashain festival. Tradition is to bring nine types of Fulpati into home on seventh day of Navaratri.
440. ▶ Niti Aayog proposed 15-point action plan named "Breathe India" for combating air pollution in ten most polluted cities.
-  Government should increase focus on electric and hybrid vehicles. Procurement of electric vehicles (EVs) should be mandatory for vehicles for central government use. Central government offices should replace existing fleets older than 15 years to electric vehicles by April, 2021.
 -  Niti Aayog has suggested a carrot-and-stick policy towards air pollution adopted in many European countries. It has called for implementing a large scale feebate programme beginning 2020.
 -  Niti Aayog favoured setting up smog-free towers in cities for providing quick relief from sudden spike in air pollution. Smog-free towers are an innovative technological solution deployed across Europe, which cleans polluted air in an area around it.
 -  To deal with Construction dust, Niti Aayog asked government to enforce use of ready-made concrete.
 -  Recommended strategic decommissioning of inefficient power plants, primarily running on coal. Renewable energy sources must be deployed and preferred.
 -  Suggested government to push to rooftop solar panel power generators. Increasing solar power generation is a critical measure that needs to be adopted in order to reduce air pollution.

441. ▶ Nobel laureate and noted economist Muhammad Yunus (Bangladesh) has been honoured with 11th KISS Humanitarian Award 2018 in Odisha.
442. ▶ North Central Railways (NCR) launched two mobile apps, NCR RASTA (Railway assets Summerised Tracking Application) and Yatri RASTA (Railway Approach to Station Tracking Application) for its employees and passengers, respectively, for locating assets and stations.
443. ▶ 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, betal 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.
444. ▶ Northeast and Assam Petro-chemicals launched Asia's first cannisters based and India's first "Methanol Cooking Fuel Program" in Namrup (Assam). 500 households inside the Assam Petro Complex will be the first pilot project, scaling it to 40,000 households in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Telangana, Goa and Karnataka.
- ✎ It aims at reducing import of crude and an effort to provide clean, import substitute, cost effective and pollution free cooking medium.
 - ✎ Safe handling cannister based cooking stoves are from Swedish Technology and through a Technology transfer a large-scale cooking stove manufacturing plant will come up in India in next 18 months, producing 10 lakh Cookstoves and 1 Crore Cannisters per year.
 - ✎ This Cooking medium can directly substitute LPG, Kerosene, Wood, Charcoal and any other fuel for cooking. The gaseous form, Methanol - DME, can be blended in 20% ratio with LPG.
 - ✎ It is a much more cost effective and environment friendly solution for domestic cooking needs.
445. ▶ Northern states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and UTs of Delhi and Chandigarh agreed to fix uniform tax rates on petroleum products, amid rising fuel prices. They also have agreed to bring uniformity in taxes on liquor and registration of vehicles and transport permit.
446. ▶ Numaligarh Refinery Ltd (NRL) in Assam became first oil public sector undertaking (PSU) in India to adopt an online legal compliance system by introducing 'Legatrix'. Legatrix is cloud-based compliance management system, to effectively manage legal and regulatory compliances through monitoring control at different levels.
447. ▶ Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik has launched a 'Star Rating program' for industries to support State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) regulatory efforts to reduce pollution. It will rate industries from 1 to 5 based on their compliance to pollution standards.
448. ▶ Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurated 300 crores Rukura Medium Irrigation Dam project in Sundargarh district, to irrigate 5,800 hectares of agricultural field.
449. ▶ Odisha Government launched Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana as a new Health Insurance Scheme for journalists. It provides INR 2 Lakh per annum health insurance cover to all working journalists, initially covering families of around 3200 journalists. It is named after prominent social worker Gopalbandhu Das.
450. ▶ Odisha Government launched *Green Mahanadi Mission*, a plantation drive under which 2 crore saplings will be planted along Mahanadi river and its tributaries. It aims to stop soil erosion on river banks and recharge groundwater reserves. Odisha government will also set up a riverine port on river Mahanadi in Kendrapara district.
451. ▶ Odisha Government launched *Nirman Kusuma* programme for providing financial assistance to children of construction workers for their technical education in state. It aims to help fulfil dreams of construction workers' children by providing financial assistance for their education in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and polytechnics.
- ✎ Under it, ITI student is entitled to get financial assistance of Rs. 23,600 and diploma student to get Rs. 26,300 per annum. Besides this, State government also -
 - ✎ Increased financial assistance for girl students by 20%.
 - ✎ Doubled death benefits for the construction workers, to 2 lakh now. Accidental benefit for construction workers' also doubled to 4 lakh.
452. ▶ Odisha Government launched an automatic public address system to warn citizens about cyclone and tsunami, as first such technology in field of Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS) in India. It has been implemented under the assistance of World Bank with a cost of 82 crores.
- ✎ 122 towers have been installed along 480 km long coastline, to produce sirens during emergency. Sound from towers can be heard in communities within 1.5 km. Button will be pressed from state emergency centre in Bhubaneswar during an emergency situation.
 - ✎ Six coastal districts named Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Puri and Ganjam have been covered under the system.

453. ▶ Odisha Government signed MoU with Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) to enhance effective management of all kinds of disasters, aimed at automating risk management, advisory generation and dissemination.
454. ▶ Odisha Government unveiled first-ever ‘Tribal Atlas of Odisha’, a compilation of demographic and cultural information of the tribal population in state, as first-of-its-kind tribal compilation in India. It gives information on tribal regions in state and key demographic indicators like literacy, sex ratio and education.
455. ▶ Odisha Special Task Force (STF) launched drive to bust international syndicate that peddles pangolin, one of world’s most illegally traded mammals. It requested Home Ministry to ask Myanmar government to block transit route for smuggled pangolin under Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT). Pangolin is only scaly mammal on planet. Of its 8 species worldwide, 2 are found in India (Chinese pangolin and Indian pangolin).
456. ▶ Odisha State Assembly has passed resolution seeking creation of 49 Member Legislative Council (Vidhan Parishad or second house of legislature).
- ▶ Resolution now will be sent to Central Government (Union cabinet) for approval, following which it will be tabled in both houses of Parliament. Thereafter, presidential assent is required to make it Act.
 - ▶ India has bicameral system of legislature. Just as Parliament has two Houses, States can have Legislative Council (LC) in addition to Legislative Assembly if they choose to. This option is available under Article 171 of Constitution.
 - ▶ Currently, seven states have Legislative Councils viz. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana. Proposals to create Councils in Rajasthan and Assam are pending in Parliament.
 - ▶ Legislative Council of state cannot have MLAs more than one-third of total number of MLAs of state assembly and not less than 40 members. Jammu & Kashmir is exception, as Section 50 of state’s Constitution, Assembly has 87 members and Legislative Council 36.
 - ▶ Tenure of Member of Legislative Council (MLC) is six years (similar to Rajya Sabha MPs).
457. ▶ Odisha assembly approved naming newly-built Jharsuguda airport after noted freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai. It will be the second airport in Odisha to be renamed, after Biju Patnaik International airport in Bhubaneswar.
458. ▶ Odisha government constituted a *Heritage Cabinet*, headed by CM Naveen Patnaik, aimed at protection of cultural and historical monuments.
459. ▶ Odisha government raised health cover from 5 lakh to 7 lakh under Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojana (BSKY) for women. CM Naveen Patnaik also sanctioned 31.54 crore for 154 panchayats in seven blocks of 6 districts under Ama Gaon Ama Bikash Yojana.
460. ▶ Odisha government signed MOU with two US-based agencies to eradicate malaria. in. The 2 agencies are: ‘Malaria No More’ and ‘Malaria Elimination Trust’.
461. ▶ Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) made oil and gas discoveries in Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, as category-III basins, having hydrocarbon and are considered geologically prospective for exploration.
- ▶ Madhya Pradesh - Deposits were discovered in block in Vindhyan basin. This find is at 3,000-plus meters deep and is being now tested.
 - ▶ West Bengal - Deposits discovered in well in Ashok Nagar of 24 Parganas district.
 - ▶ India has 26 sedimentary basins, of which only seven category-I basins have commercial production of oil and gas. It is in the process of adding eighth basin by putting Kutch offshore discovery (it holds about one trillion cubic feet of gas reserves) to production.
462. ▶ Old World Theatre festival will be organized by India Habitat Centre, recognized by UNESCO as a “Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity”. It will showcase 15 plays on a pan-Indian constellation of original scripts from Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Pune, Mumbai, and Kerala.
463. ▶ Ongoing CBI Controversy -
- ▶ Government on October 23, 2018 removed CBI Director Alok Verma and Special Director Rakesh Asthana from their posts. Government and Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) cited that Verma was not cooperating with CVC’s inquiry into allegations made by Asthana against him.
 - ▶ Alok Verma approached Supreme Court after his removal from post of CBI Director, claiming that it was in violation of Section 4B of Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act 1946, which grants CBI Director a secure term of 2 years. SC will now examine the issue. Meanwhile, M Nageshwar Rao is appointed as CBI Director by Govt.
 - ▶ Rakesh Asthana Removal -
 - ▶ On October 15, CBI booked Asthana for alleged corruption following the FIR registered against him for alleged extortion of over 3 crores from Sathish Babu Sana in a case against meat exporter Moin Qureshi, who is accused of taking money from several people for getting favours from senior government functionaries.
 - ▶ Timeline -

- ✍ August 24 - CBI Special Director Rakesh Asthana writes to Cabinet Secretary, informing him that Alok Verma took Rs 2 crore bribe from businessman Sathish Babu Sana
 - ✍ September 14 - Asthana informs CBI that Verma has issued orders to remove him from IRCTC and INX Media cases
 - ✍ September 20 - Special Investigation Team headed by Aasthana proposes to interrogate Sathish Babu Sana
 - ✍ October 3 - Sana appears before CBI
 - ✍ October 15 - CBI booked Asthana and Sana for alleged corruption. Alok Verma filed a case against Rakesh Asthana, accusing him of taking Rs 3 crore as bribe from Sana. Sana accepted that he agreed to pay Rs 5 crore to Asthana as bribe to give clean chit to Moin Qureshi.
 - ✍ October 19 - Asthana removed from Special Investigation Team
 - ✍ October 21 - PM Modi summons Alok Verma
 - ✍ October 22 - CBI raids its own office and arrests DSP Devender Kumar in connection with allegations against Asthana
 - ✍ October 23 - Central Vigilance Commission divested Alok Verma and Rakesh Asthana of their CBI posts
 - ✍ October 23 - Asthana approached Delhi High Court to get CBI's FIR against him quashed
 - ✍ October 24 - Alok Verma moved SC against his removal and pressed for an urgent hearing
464. ▶ PM Narendra Modi dedicated Mohanpura Project to the Nation, to facilitate irrigation of agricultural land in Rajgarh district (Madhya Pradesh), which is among 115 Aspirational Districts identified by Government for putting special developmental focus.
- ✍ INR 3866 crores project includes a dam and a canal system which will provide drinking water to over 400 villages.
465. ▶ PM Narendra Modi gave awards to top Ranked State, District and State with maximum citizen participation based on National Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2018. As part of Swachh Survekshan Grameen, 6786 villages were covered. top ranked States / Districts -
- ✍ States - Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra
 - ✍ Districts - Satara (Maharashtra), Rewari (Haryana), Pedapalli (Telangana)
 - ✍ States with maximum citizen participation - Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra
 - ✍ Districts with maximum citizens' participation - Nashik (Maharashtra), Solapur, (Maharashtra), Chittorgarh (Rajasthan)
466. ▶ 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.
467. ▶ 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.
468. ▶ 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.
469. ▶ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated several developmental projects in Chhattisgarh -
- ✍ Launched Integrated Command and Control Centre at Naya Raipur Smart City.
 - ✍ Launched modernized and expanded Bhilai Steel Plant.
 - ✍ Laid foundation stone for IIT Bhilai.
 - ✍ Inaugurated air services between Jagdalpur and Raipur.
470. ▶ PM Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC) in Dwarka (New Delhi). On completion, it will be biggest indoor exhibition space in India and also rank among the top 10 in world, with capacity to accommodate

11,000 persons, 5 exhibition halls, 1-kilometre long foyer etc. The project has estimated cost of INR 25703 crores.

It will be implemented by India International Convention and Exhibition Centre Ltd, a 100% government-owned company set up by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).

471. ▶ 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.

472. ▶ PM Narendra Modi launched *Main Nahin Hum* Portal and App, on theme "Self4Society". It will enable IT professionals and organizations to bring together their efforts towards social causes, and service to society, on one platform. It is also expected to generate wider participation of interested people who are motivated to work for the benefit of society.

473. ▶ PM Narendra Modi launched fortnight-long countrywide campaign- Swachhata hi Seva 2018, to mark start of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on October 02, 2018.

On this occasion, Jammu and Kashmir state has been declared open defecation free (ODF).

Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary on October 2, 2019. Key Activities Include -

National Launch, School Engagement - *September 15*

Swachhata Sabhas: *September 16*

Seva Diwas: *September 17*

Railways Swachhata Divas – *September 22*

Antyodaya Divas – *September 25*

Also, President Ram Nath Kovind launched logo and web portal (<http://gandhi.gov.in/>) for commemoration of 150th birth anniversary of M K Gandhi on Oct 02, 2019. Logo is --



474. ▶ PM Narendra Modi launched work for India's first Coal-gasification based fertilizer plant with pet coke blending will come up in Talcher (Odisha), developed by Talcher Fertilizers Limited (joint venture of GAIL (29.67 %), Coal India (29.67%), Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilizers Limited (RCFL-29.67%) and Fertilizer Corporation of India (10.99%).

It will be built at an estimated investment of Rs. 13,000 crore and is targeted to be commissioned by 2022. On completion, this plant will have capacity of producing 1.27 Million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMTPA) of Neem coated prilled urea using coal and petcoke as feedstock. Neem coated urea reduces leaching of nitrogen into soil and checks diversion of urea from agriculture uses.

It will use gas produced from coal, thus reducing dependence on urea and gas imports. Pollutants like Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) produced by this plant will be recycled for production of Urea and other by – products.





475. ▶ 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).










476. ▶ PepsiCo Foundation announced a USD 4.26 million grant to an international non-profit organisation WaterAid to provide safe water access to communities in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala by December 2020. This adds to USD 17 million that Foundation has made in India to date.

477. ▶ Piyush Goyal (*Minister for Railways, Coal, Finance & Company Affairs*) inaugurated Neyveli Lignite Corporation (NLCIL)'s three 100 MW Solar Power Projects for commercial operation, situated at Thoppalaakkarai and Sethupuram in Virudhunagar District and Sellaiya Sezhiyanallur in Tirunelveli District (Tamil Nadu).

478. ▶ Piyush Goyal (Minister of Coal, Railways, Finance & Corporate Affairs) launched the Coal Mine Surveillance & Management System (CMSMS) and Mobile Application 'Khan Prahari' developed by CMPDI (a Subsidiary of CIL).
- ▶ Basic objective of CMSMS is reporting, monitoring and taking suitable action on unauthorised coal mining activities. CMSMS is a web based GIS application through which location of sites for unauthorised mining can be detected. It will use satellite data to detect changes by which unauthorised mining activity extending beyond allotted lease area can be detected.
 - ▶ Complaints originating from coal mines allotted to Coal India will go to Coal India Offices and those originating from coal blocks not allotted to Coal India will go straight to State Government Officers and for each complaint the alert will also go to DM and SP of district.
 - ▶ System also uses information provided by responsible citizens using smartphones using the mobile application "Khan Prahari".
 - ▶ Its Uniqueness is that it uses satellite data as well as public input to capture information on unauthorised coal mining activities and also take appropriate action on them with due transparency.
479. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind approved bill seeking punishment for sexual offenders, cyber criminals and traditional unlawful acts like bootlegging and dacoity in Telangana state. This will replace 1986 Act that had jurisdiction for the undivided Andhra Pradesh but not for Telangana.
480. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind formally declared *Queen Pineapple* as state fruit of Tripura. He also inaugurated National Highway from Matabari to Sabroom in Udaipur (Tripura), during his visit to State.
481. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent to Good samaritan bill of Karnataka, as first such legislation in India.
- ▶ Karnataka Good Samaritan and Medical Professional (Protection and Regulation during Emergency Situations) Bill 2016, provides legal protection to good samaritans who help accident victims with emergency medical care within the golden hour (first hour after a traumatic injury when emergency treatment is very crucial).
482. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent to Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Bill 2015, passed by State Assembly in August 2015. It aims to check rising incidents of witch hunting cases across state, eliminating superstition from society by making such offences under it as non-bailable, non-compoundable and cognizable.
- ▶ It imposes up to 7 years of jail and fine up to 5 lakh rupees. It also proposes sentence of 3 years imprisonment if anybody blames a person for natural disasters in a particular locality.
483. ▶ 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.
484. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated centenary celebrations of Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in New Delhi.
- ▶ Government had recognised DBHPS as one of Institutes of National Importance in 1964. It is divided into four divisions one each for south states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
 - ▶ DBHPS was established by Annie Besant with support from Mahatma Gandhi in 1918 with sole aim of prorogating Hindi in South India to unite northern and southern states.
485. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated 'Festival of Democracy' in Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), to mark diamond jubilee (60 years) celebrations of Kerala legislative assembly.
486. ▶ 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.

487. ▶ 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*.
488. ▶ Project *Development of North East Circuit: Imphal & Khongjom* inaugurated under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism. The project covers two sites i.e. Kangla Fort and Khongjom.
- ▶ Swadesh Darshan scheme was launched in 2014 -15, with 70 projects sanctioned as on date.
 - ▶ Kangla Fort is one of most important historic and archaeological site of Manipur located in the heart of the Imphal city. It served as the seat of Manipur's power till 1891.
 - ▶ Khongjom is place where the last war of resistance of Anglo Manipur War of 1891 was fought.
489. ▶ Public Affairs Index 2018 released by think tank Public Affairs Centre (PAC) -
- ▶ Top 5 States - Kerala (1), Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka and Gujarat (5). Kerala named 3rd best governed state for 3rd consecutive year.
 - ▶ Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar ranked the lowest on PAI.
 - ▶ Top 5 small states - Himachal Pradesh (1), Goa, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura (5). Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya were ranked at the bottom of index among small states.
 - ▶ Total of 30 focus subjects and 100 indicators were measured to derive PAI.
490. ▶ Puducherry Tourism announced first Pondicherry International Film Festival (PIFF), to showcase over 100 films from more than 25 countries. It will be held in September 2018, with France as partner country.
491. ▶ Punjab Cabinet approved amendments to Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to make disrespect of religious texts (Sacrilege) punishable with life imprisonment.
492. ▶ Punjab Cabinet approved formation of the state higher education council to offer quality education, to be headed by CM Amarinder Singh and Higher education minister as vice chairman.
- ▶ It is formed to provide quality higher education in Punjab's institutions through optimum sharing of resources between universities and colleges, for research purposes, academic and governance reforms, monitoring and evaluation of higher education institutions.
 - ▶ Cabinet also approved proposal of the Local Government Department for amending validity of the Punjab Municipal Infrastructure Development Fund (PMIDF) Act, 2011, to extend its validity till 2037-38, from 2020-21.
 - ▶ Cabinet also approved a bill for creation of a price stabilisation fund, to ensure that state farmers get minimum support price (MSP). It would protect interests of farmers amid sudden fall in prices of certain agricultural commodities.
493. ▶ Punjab Government launched *Paani Bachao, Paise Kamao* campaign for checking depletion of underground water. Through this, farmers will receive monetary benefit for less use of tube well. Details related to the use of power and money transferred into account of farmers will be provided to them on phone.
494. ▶ Punjab Government launched a mobile application named 'i-Hariyali' aimed at increasing state's green cover, under 'Mission Tandarust Punjab. It will enable users to order free plant saplings. The 'i-Hariyali' app, ' can be downloaded from the app store for free.
495. ▶ Punjab Government launched a 'Business First Portal' to give a big push towards ease of doing business in state. It aims at facilitating industrialists for regulatory clearances and fiscal approvals and real-time tracking of applications on a common platform.
496. ▶ 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.
497. ▶ Punjab Govt. launched 3 apps to prevent crop residue burning, To check and create awareness about environmental effects of crop residue burning. Apps are i-Khet Machine, e-PEHaL and e-Prevent.
498. ▶ Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir signed an agreement for renewing work on INR 2793 crore Shahpurkandi dam project. It will be irrigating 37,173 ha of land and would provide 206MW of electricity to Punjab and J&K.
499. ▶ Punjab assembly passed Police (Amendment) Bill 2018 that would pave way for setting up of a State Security Commission for selection of director general of police (DGP). It amends Punjab Police Act 2007, that did not provide for selection of DGP from panel as prepared by UPSC.
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 signed four MoUs with Israeli institutions to address issues of farmers and depleting groundwater level in state.
502. ▶ QS Quacquarelli Symonds released "QS India University Rankings 2019" as first standalone ranking of India's higher education institutions - Top 5 universities in QS India University Rankings 2019 -
- ▶ Indian Institute Of Technology Bombay

-  Indian Institute Of Science Bangalore
-  Indian Institute Of Technology Madras
-  Indian Institute Of Technology Delhi
-  Indian Institute Of Technology Kharagpur

503. ▶ Railways introduced Double Stack Dwarf Container Services, flagging off from Western Railway's Rajkot railway station on its maiden commercial run. Despite being smaller in size, dwarf containers can hold a capacity of 30,500 kgs.
504. ▶ Railways launched 2 mobile applications to ease traveling experience - *'Rail MADAD* and *Menu on Rails*. Rail MADAD will enable travelers to lodge complaints, and *Menu on Rails* will facilitate seamless ordering of food. Also, Northern Railways will now monitor the cleanliness of its trains using WhatsApp groups supervised by senior officials.
505. ▶ Railways will Build first station inside a tunnel, at Keylong, at a height of 3,000 metres, on strategic Bilaspur-Manali-Leh line in Himachal Pradesh.
-  It will be part of world's highest rail network at 5,360 metres height. 465-km railway line will have 30 stations and is estimated to cost 83,360 crores.
506. ▶ Rajasthan Assembly passed Rajasthan Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2018, containing provisions for -
-  Relaxation of *two-child* provision for those aspiring to contest panchayat elections provided one of the children is differently-abled
 -  Allowing people suffering from leprosy to contest panchayat elections.
507. ▶ 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.
508. ▶ Rajasthan Government signed MoU with a private trust Sohanlalji Buladeviiji Ojha Gaushala Samiti to build its first 'Cow Sanctuary', a shelter for 10000 cows, in Bikaner district. State government introduced a 20 % surcharge on liquor to use the proceeds for protection of cows.
-  In 2015, Rajasthan became first state to have a separate department and ministry for the welfare of cows.
 -  India's first cow sanctuary is located at MP's Agar Malwa district, named *Kamdhenu Gau Abhyaranya*.
509. ▶ Rajasthan Govt. launched *Bijli Mitra* Mobile app, to help farmers to get their defunct transformers replaced within 6 hours of registering a complaint through app. It is initially launched in Jhalawar.
510. ▶ Rajasthan became first state to implement National Policy on Biofuels, unveiled by central Government in May 2018. Under this, State Government will lay emphasis on increasing production of oilseeds and establish Centre for Excellence in Udaipur to promote research in fields of alternative fuels and energy resources.
511. ▶ Rajasthan government announced to observe September as 'month of nutrition'. State Govt earlier launched 'Annapurna Milk Scheme' -
-  Students of Class 1 to 8 of government schools will be given milk daily instead of thrice a week.
 -  Students in age group of 3-6 years, adolescent girls and pregnant women registered with Anganwadi centres will be provided milk thrice a week.
512. ▶ Rajasthan government approved 1 % reservation for 5 communities - Gadia Lohar, Banjara, Gujjar, Raika and Gadariya.
513. ▶ Rajasthan government launched Annapurna Dudh Yojana, to provide milk thrice a week to 62 lakh students in government schools and madrassas. While students till Class 5 will get 150 ml, students in Class 6-8 will get 200 ml.
514. ▶ Rajasthan government will soon distribute mobile phones to women under Bhamashah Yojana, Focused on women in Below Poverty Line (BPL) families.
515. ▶ Rajasthan ranked first by NITI Aayog among all states after it registered a significant increase in groundwater level due to water conversation structures built under Chief Minister Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan. State also witnessed increase of 81% in irrigation capacity.
516. ▶ Rajasthan's first lion safari inaugurated at Nahargarh Biological Park, located on Delhi-Jaipur National Highway in Aravalli foothills, near Jaipur. 10 Lions in this park were brought from Junagarh, Gujarat under an exchange programme.
517. ▶ Road and Transport Minister Gadkari launched Bidder Information Management System (BIMS), Bhoomi Rashi and PFMS linkage Initiatives of Ministry. Also, Annual Awards for Excellence in National Highways Projects were institutes, to be given from this year onwards.
-  BIMS aims at streamlining process of pre-qualification of bidders for EPC Mode of contracts for National Highway works with enhanced transparency and objectivity. The portal will work as a data base of information about bidders, covering basic details, civil works experience, cash accruals and network, annual turnover etc.
 -  Bhoomi Rashi portal comprises entire revenue data of country, including all 6.4 lakh villages. It has been instrumental in reducing time taken for approval and publication of notifications pertaining to land acquisition.

- Integration of Public Financial Management System (PFMS) with Bhoomi Rashi is one of the key functionalities to facilitate payment related to compensation for land acquisition to all the beneficiaries directly through the Bhoomi Rashi system.
518. ▶ Rural Development Ministry's Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) signed MoU with Delhi University's Lady Irwin College for establishing ROSHNI - Centre of Women Collectives led Social Action.
519. ▶ Santali has become the first Indian tribal language to get a Wikipedia edition in its own script after. Santali is written in Ol Chiki script and spoken by 6.4 million people in India.
520. ▶ Saudi Aramco and ADNOC (Abu Dhabi National Oil Company) signed MoU today to jointly develop an integrated refinery and petrochemicals complex at Ratnagiri in Maharashtra, implemented by Ratnagiri Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd. (RRPCL).
- ▶ Earlier, Saudi Aramco joined the project by signing an MoU with Indian consortium, during International Energy Forum Ministerial meet in April 2018 in New Delhi. RRPCL will now have Saudi Aramco & ADNOC as overseas strategic partners.
 - ▶ The project will be set up as a 50:50 joint partnership (50:50) between the consortium from India and Saudi Aramco and ADNOC.
 - ▶ Mega refinery will be capable of processing 1.2 million barrels of crude oil per day (60 million metric tonnes per annum). It will also provide feedstock for integrated petrochemicals complex, with capacity of 18 million tonnes per annum of petrochemical products.
 - ▶ Project cost is estimated at around Rs.3 lakh crore (USD 44 billion).
521. ▶ Science & Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan unveiled a Air Quality and Weather Forecast System – SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting) at Chandni Chowk in Delhi. The giant LED displays real-time air quality index with colour coding alongwith 72-hour advance forecast. The system, first of its kind in the country, was developed by Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology Pune.
- ▶ It will also measure sun's UV-Index (UVI), PM₁, Mercury and Black carbon in real time in addition to regular air quality and weather parameters like PM_{2.5}, PM₁₀, Sulfur Dioxide, Ozone, Nitrogen Oxides, Carbon Monoxide.
522. ▶ Severe Cyclone Titli caused heavy losses in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, with winds above 150 KMPH.
523. ▶ Shillong (capital of Meghalaya) selected as 100th Smart City. With selection of Shillong, proposed investment in finally selected 100 cities under Smart Cities Mission would be INR 2,05,018 crores.
524. ▶ Shipping and Road Transport & Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari laid foundation stone for development work of Ghagra River as National Waterway-40 at Basti in Uttar Pradesh, as part of Sagarmala Programme.
- ▶ Waterway will stretch from Manjhighat at Ganga-Gaghra river confluence to Faizabad or Ayodhya along Gaghra River for 354 kms.
 - ▶ It was declared as National Waterway (NW)-40 during the year 2016.
 - ▶ Together with National Waterway-1 (on river Ganga), NW-40 will be a major transport modal choice for cargo and passenger movement.
525. ▶ Singphan Elephant Reserve has been named as 30th elephant reserve in India, located in Mon district of Nagaland and spreads over an area of 5825 acres (2357 hac).
526. ▶ 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.
527. ▶ Startup India launched *Startup Academia Alliance* programme, as a unique mentorship opportunity between academic scholars and startups working in similar domains, to fulfill Government's mission to promote entrepreneurship.
528. ▶ State government of Arunachal Pradesh signed an MoU with the British Council to strengthen educational and cultural cooperation, to support the knowledge ambitions and economic growth of state.
529. ▶ Supreme Court Bench (A.K. Sikri and Ashok Bhushan) ruled for the 3rd time that Chief Justice of India (CJI, currently Dipak Misra) is *Master of Roster*. CJI is an individual judge and not powerful collective of five senior-most judges of Supreme Court called the 'Collegium'. CJI has exclusive authority to allocate cases to fellow judges and is spokesperson of the court.
- ▶ Judgment was based on petition filed by former Law Minister Shanti Bhushan for considering expression CJI should be read as meaning Collegium for purpose of allocation of cases. Petition mentioned that to have collegium of SC judges collectively to allocate cases rather than leave entire power in hands of CJI in his administrative capacity as 'Master of Roster'.
530. ▶ Supreme Court adjourned till end of August 2018, the hearing on pleas challenging Constitutional validity of Article 35A, pertaining to Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Article 35A and controversy regarding it -
- ▶ Article 35A appears in Constitution as an *appendix* and not as an amendment. In 2014, an NGO 'We the Citizens' filed a writ petition in Supreme Court seeking striking down of Article 35A as it was not added to Constitution through stated procedure. Hence, it lacks

parliamentary sanction. In 2017, two Kashmiri women filed another case in Supreme Court against Article 35A for its discrimination against J&K women.

✎ This led to an uproar in Kashmir. Political Parties and people of J & K are warning to trigger an explosive situation in J&K, if Article 35A is scrapped.

✎ About Article 35A -

✎ It was added to Constitution (Appendix II) through Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order 1954, issued by then President Rajendra Prasad on May 14, 1954.

✎ Presidential Order of 1954 provided framework for division of powers between J&K and Union Government under Article 370.

✎ If Supreme Court strikes down Article 35A, it will have serious impact on all subsequent Presidential Orders.

✎ Article 370 accords special status to Jammu and Kashmir and acts like a bridge between Indian Constitution and Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir.

✎ Its Origin dates back to 1927 when the Dogras from Jammu approached Maharaja Hari Singh fearing that arrival of people from Punjab will lead to their control in government services. These fears led to issuance of a separate notification by Maharaja in 1927 and 1932 which defined the state subjects and their rights.

✎ J&K Constitution, framed in 1956, retained Maharaja's definition of permanent residents of state.

✎ J&K constitution defined a permanent resident as a person who was born or settled in J&K before 1911 or has been resident in the state for 10 years after lawfully acquiring property in state.

✎ Under Article 35A, emigrants from J&K, including those who migrated to Pakistan, are considered state residents. The descendants of emigrants are considered state subjects for two generations.

✎ It prohibits non-permanent residents from acquiring immovable property, government jobs, scholarships and aid in the state.

531. ▶ 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).

532. ▶ Supreme Court approved issuing hologram-based coloured stickers for vehicles in Delhi based on the fuel used. While petrol and CNG vehicles will need to have a blue sticker, diesel vehicles must carry an orange one. This is aimed at better tackling of air pollution-related issues in Delhi.

533. ▶ Supreme Court asked Government to form a law on deciding whether lawmakers facing criminal charges be barred from contesting elections or should they be disqualified only after conviction. SC also asked political parties and candidates to publish their criminal records at least 3 times in newspapers / TV channels after filing of nomination papers.

534. ▶ Supreme Court banned all construction activities in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Chandigarh till October 9, after these states / UT failed to comply with court's order to come up with a policy on solid waste management.

535. ▶ Supreme Court declared Centre's Aadhaar scheme as constitutionally valid. Bench stated that Aadhaar would remain mandatory for filing IT returns and allotment of Permanent Account Number (PAN). But, it will not be mandatory for Bank accounts, Telecom services, Educational Admissions. Other Notable statements by SC are -

✎ Section 57 of Aadhaar Act that permits private entities to avail Aadhaar data has been struck down.

✎ Aadhaar authentication data cannot be stored for more than 6 months.

✎ National security exception under the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act was also struck down.

536. ▶ Supreme Court declined to refer 1994 Ismail Farooqui judgment (that mosques are not integral to Islam) to a larger constitution bench.

✎ Judgement was delivered by a 3 judge bench. Majority was written by Ashok Bhushan and Chief Justice Deepak Misra. 3rd judge, Abdul Nazeer presented a dissenting judgment.


✎ Decision to not refer issue of reconsideration of 1994 observations on Ayodhya-Ram Janmabhoomi land dispute case to a five-judge constitution bench paves way for SC to hear main Ayodhya land dispute.

✎ The issue whether mosque is integral to Islam cropped up when SC bench headed by CJI Misra was of petitions challenging Allahabad High Court's 2010 verdict, by which disputed land in Ayodhya was to be divided in 3 parts (Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lalla represented by Hindu Maha Sabha).

✎ Ismail Farooqui judgement -

- In 1994, Supreme Court had ruled that namaz or prayers could be offered anywhere and that a mosque was not necessary. This cleared way for government to acquire the land where 16th century Babri mosque was demolished by Hindu Kar Sevaks.
537. ▶ Supreme Court modified its July 2017 order in dowry harassment case for preventing misuse of Section 498A of Indian Penal Code (IPC).
- ▶ The July 2017 decision quashed immediate arrest of accused in dowry cases, saying that complaints under Section 498A of IPC should be scrutinised by Family Welfare Committees before any legal action by police.
 - ▶ Now, After a plea filed by NGO 'Nyayadhar', an organisation formed by women advocates of Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district, Family Welfare Committees are scrapped.
 - ▶ SC left it to Parliament to make suitable rules to check abuse of the law.
538. ▶ Supreme Court of India allowed live streaming and video recording of court proceedings across country, asking government to frame rules in this regard under Article 145 of the Constitution.
- ▶ SC earlier reserved its verdict on the matter on August 24, saying it wanted to implement *open court* concept to decongest courtrooms.
539. ▶ Supreme Court resumed filing of claims and objections by around 40 lakh people who were left out in draft National Register of Citizens (NRC) of Assam, giving second opportunity to citizens keeping in mind the magnitude of the issue. Bench will now hear the matter on October 23, 2018.
- ▶ Assam government in July 2018 released 2nd and final draft of state's National Register of Citizens (NRC). The draft left out approx 40 Lakh people living in state, not marking them as legal citizens of India.
540. ▶ Supreme Court ruled that *None of The Above* (NOTA) option will not be applicable for voting in Rajya Sabha elections. SC held that NOTA option is meant only for universal adult suffrage and direct elections and not for the polls held by the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote as done in Rajya Sabha.
541. ▶ 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.
542. ▶ Supreme Court ruled that no Bharat Stage-IV vehicle shall be sold across the country with effect from April 1, 2020. Bharat Stage VI (BS-VI) emission norm would come into force from April 1, 2020.
- ▶ Bharat stage emission standards were instituted by Government to regulate the output of air pollutants from motor vehicles. BS-IV norms were in force across country since April 2017
 - ▶ In 2016, Government decided to switch over to BS-VI grade fuel directly from BS-IV skipping BS-V.
543. ▶ Supreme Court struck down Section 497 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) 1860 that made adultery punishable offence for men.
- ▶ Section 497 of IPC (Adultery) says that whoever has sexual intercourse with wife of another man (without consent of that man), such intercourse not amounting to offence of rape, is guilty of offence of adultery. Such person shall be punished with imprisonment and / or Fine. In such case the wife shall not be punishable as an abettor.
544. ▶ 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*.
545. ▶ Supreme Court struck down a rule that disallowed females in 10-50 age group from entering the Sabarimala temple in Kerala. Chief Justice Dipak Misra-headed Constitution bench in a 4-1 verdict said temple rule violated their right to equality and right to worship.
546. ▶ 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)
547. ▶ Tamil Nadu CM Edappadi K. Palaniswami has inaugurated India's tallest Film Studio named 'MGR Centenary Film Studio', as 56 feet tall, 110 metres long and 100 feet wide studio. The studio is named after former Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran.


548. ▶ Tamil Nadu Govt. banned sale of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), known as e- cigarettes.
- It comes after recent central government notification, asking all states / UTs to ban e-cigarettes.
 - ENDS are devices that heat solution to create aerosol, which also frequently contains flavours, usually dissolved into propylene glycol and glycerin. e-cigarettes (electronic cigarettes) are most common prototype of ENDS.
549. ▶ Tamil Nadu government announced Scheme for protection of exotic Neela kurinji (*Strobilanthus kunthianus*) plants that flower only once in 12 years.
- This plant species is native to Shola forests in Western Ghats. It is also seen in Shevroys Hills in Eastern Ghats, Anamalai hills and Agali hills in Kerala and Sanduru hills in Karnataka.
 - It grows at height of 30 to 60 cm on hills slopes at an altitude of 1300 to 2400 meters where there is no tree forest. The flowers are purple-blue in colour and blooms once in 12 years.
550. ▶ Tamil Nadu government announced setting up of All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) facility near Madurai, at estimated of INR 1500 crores.
551. ▶ 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.
552. ▶ Tamil Nadu government released draft state Forest Policy that aims to conserve forests and wildlife, under Vision Tamil Nadu 2023 document.
- Tamil Nadu has 30.92 % of the forest declared as 'protected areas'. It has 15 wildlife sanctuaries, 5 National parks, 15 bird sanctuaries, 3 biosphere reserves and 4 project tiger areas.
 - Tamil Nadu will develop innovative strategies to enhance forest and tree cover from current 21.76 % to 33 % by 2030.
 - Forest department will also develop mangroves in Tamil Nadu as 'bio-shield' along the coast as per the policy.
553. ▶ Tamil Nadu government released its Ecotourism Policy 2017, which includes identifying ecotourism sites and will have specific ecotourism product associated with it in their uniqueness and value in terms of aesthetic, natural, cultural and landscape characteristics.
554. ▶ 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.
555. ▶ 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.
556. ▶ Tea Board of India will launch an app aimed at guiding small growers, whose share in total tea production is increasing. Name of the app is Chai Sahay (tea help). It aims to establish two-way communication between manufacturer and customers.
557. ▶ Telangana Government launched Disaster Response Force (DRF) vehicles in Hyderabad, as state's own dedicated disaster force trained in tackling of urban flooding, tree falls, structural collapses and any other site of normal emergencies.
558. ▶ Telangana Government signed MoU with Singapore-based engineering & consulting firm Surbana Jurong for preparing roadmap for Genome Valley 2.0, an upgraded version of life sciences and biotechnology industrial cluster state's capital Hyderabad.
- Genome Valley is India's first organized pharma-biotech cluster for life sciences R&D activities and largest life sciences destination in Asia, being home to over 200 companies employing 10,000 people.
559. ▶ Telangana Government will organize Bonalu Festival between July 15 and August 5, 2018. State government released INR 15 Crores for the same.
560. ▶ Telangana Police launched COP CONNECT' mobile application to support communication and collaboration needs of entire police department of state. This app has features of regular mobile messaging apps and is enabled for chatting, group chats, file and location sharing.
561. ▶ 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.

562. ▶ Telangana government launched first-of-its-kind life insurance programme worth Rs 5 lakh for farmers in state, called Rythu Bandhu Life Insurance Bonds, with cost approx 650 Crores. Insurance amount will be given to farmer's family within 10 days, in case of death of Farmer.

Some Limitations -

 It is limited to farmers aged 18 - 60 years.

 Limited to landowners who received monetary assistance of Rs 4000 from the state government to bear farming costs under the 'Rythu Bandhu' programme earlier this year.

 Tenant farmers have been left out of it.

563. ▶ Telangana government will set up a biotech and pharma facility, B-Hub, India's first organised cluster for life sciences Research & Development at Genome Valley, To support manufacturing activities for bio-pharma R&D. Also, a web portal for life sciences sector has been launched.


564. ▶ 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.

565. ▶ 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.

566. ▶ Telangana Government will set up *District Child Protection Units (DCPU)* in all 31 districts to protect the children from child abuse, child labour and to implement the child rights in all districts.

567. ▶ To combat human trafficking, West Bengal government rolled out Swayangsiddha scheme (means self-reliance), to be executed by West Bengal Police. It aims to empower young boys and girls to make informed choices so that they are less vulnerable to trafficking and child marriage.

568. ▶ To tackle counterfeit drugs in India, NITI Aayog and IT Firm Oracle signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) will pilot a real drug supply-chain using blockchain distributed ledger and Internet of Things (IoT) software.

 It will allow sharing of information across drug supply chain securely, with every exchange getting recorded. There will be no tampering of any record of drug movement and no data will be deleted.

569. ▶ Traditional *Marbat* festival observed in Nagpur (Maharashtra).

570. ▶ Traditional annual Hindu festival of Onam held in Kerala. It is celebrated to commemorate King Mahabali, whose spirit is said to visit Kerala at the time of Onam.

571. ▶ Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu (TRANSTAN) made Aadhaar mandatory for Indian patients to register in the Tamil Nadu Network for Organ Sharing. While foreigners are asked to submit a No Objection Certificate (NoC) from the respective Embassies.


572. ▶ Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (Ministry of Tribal Affairs) signed MoU with National Medicinal Plants Board (Ministry of AYUSH), to promote Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) forest produce for livelihood development of tribal people through promotion of primary level value addition to MAPs produce from forest area at grassroots level.

573. ▶ 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.

574. ▶ 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.

575. ▶ Tripura government launched GPS (Global Positioning System) and wireless based 24x7 "mobile policing" service to control crime, mainly against women. Under Mobile policing, Police will reach the spot within a few minutes to tackle the situation.

576. ▶ 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.

577. ▶ UNICEF and NASSCOM Foundation signed an agreement to strengthen child rights through "meaningful business interventions.

578. ▶ US Food and Drug Administration has approved World's first prosthetic iris that can be implanted to treat patients with missing or damaged iris (coloured part of eye).

579. ▶ Union Territory of Puducherry won top position in National Clean School Award after seven schools from Puducherry were awarded for cleanliness.

- Tamil Nadu bagged second position in National Clean School Award. The third position was shared by Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.
 - 52 schools from across country were bestowed with National Clean School Award in recognition of their efforts in carrying forward Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.
- 580. ▶ Unique Identity Authority of India (UIDAI) announced phased roll-out of face recognition for carrying out Aadhaar authentication as an additional security layer, from September 15, 2018. It also announced new feature *live face photo*, as live feed of person facial features whose Aadhaar is submitted. It will be in addition to fingerprint or iris scans for Aadhaar authentication.
 - It will curb possibility of fingerprint cloning or spoofing and also seeks to tighten audit process and security around issuance and activation of mobile SIMs.
- 581. ▶ 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.
- 582. ▶ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) will set up 'Design University for Gaming' in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. For This, UNESCO signed agreement with Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB).
- 583. ▶ 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.
- 584. ▶ Uttar Pradesh Government announced a new Defence Manufacturing policy named 'UP Defence Aerospace Unit and Employment Generating Policy 2018'. Under this -
 - Entrepreneurs will be given land under plug and play formula investment of INR 50000 crore in 5 years. This would generate 2.5 lakh jobs.
 - Six districts – Aligarh, Agra, Jhansi, Chitrakoot, Kanpur and Lucknow – will be notified for the Defence manufacturing hub, with focus on Bundelkhand region.
 - There will be 2 categories of investment - mega anchor project worth over Rs 1000 crore which will include companies willing to build aircraft, tanks, choppers and anchor units which could invest 200 - 400 crores in several regions.
 - Government also approved proposal to get bank loan of INR 12000 crores from PNB for construction of Purvanchal Expressway.
 - It also approved construction of civil airports at Aligarh, Azamgarh, Moradabad and Shravasti under Regional Air Connectivity policy.
 - Government also approved asset settlement of UP Mining Development Corporation.
- 585. ▶ Uttar Pradesh Police will soon launch first of its kind dial-FIR scheme, where a common man can register regular crimes without going to a police station. Under it, an online photographic dossier of criminals that will be provided to policemen on 22,000 new i-pads.
- 586. ▶ Uttarakhand Assembly passed resolution seeking status of "rashtra mata – mother of the nation" for cow, to strengthen efforts to conserve the species across country.
- 587. ▶ 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.
- 588. ▶ Uttarakhand High Court (HC) banned commercial use of elephants in state and directed the state forest department to rescue the elephants deployed for commercial purposes within 24 hours. Uttarakhand also became first state to give identity cards to gau rakshaks, to differentiate people who protect cows from those who resort to violence in name of cow vigilantism.
- 589. ▶ Uttarakhand High Court declared entire animal kingdom (all animals, including avian and aquatic species) as legal entities with rights, duties and liabilities of living person.
 - HC was hearing PIL by Narayan Dutt Bhatt, filed in 2014 where petitioner had sought directions to restrict movement of horse carts (tongas) between India and Nepal through Banbasa in Champawat district of Uttarakhand. However, HC enlarged scope of petition in larger public interest to promote protection and welfare of animals.
 - HC directed State Government that no animal, including horses moving between India and Nepal, carries excess weight. It also banned use of any sharp equipment throughout state to avoid bruises, swelling, abrasions or severe pain to animals.
 - It also directed all veterinary doctors across state to mandatorily treat animals brought to them.
- 590. ▶ Uttarakhand High Court declared fatwas as unconstitutional and illegal, banning all religious bodies and statutory panchayats in state from issuing fatwas. The ruling came, as the court declared illegal a fatwa banishing the family of a rape victim from their village.
- 591. ▶ Uttarakhand High Court directed state government to provide reservation to transgenders in educational institutions and public appointments, for welfare of transgender persons in state.

592. ▶ Uttarakhand high court banned paragliding, and white water rafting and other water sports until the government frames a policy to regulate them.
593. ▶ Uttarakhand ranked as best state in construction of maximum number of roads under PMGSY during 2017-2018, constructing 1839 kilometre roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana against a target of 1,500 km for 2017-18.
594. ▶ Various Welfare schemes for North eastern Region -
- ▶ North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS) - It is a 100% Central Sector Scheme to be implemented till March 2020, with sum of 1600 crores.
 - ▶ Schemes of North Eastern Council (NEC) and North East Road Sector Development Scheme (NERSDS) - With total cost of 4500 crore for upto 2019-20.
 - ▶ North East Venture Fund (NEVF), set up by North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi), with capital commitment of 100 crores. Out of this, 25 crores has been committed by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).
595. ▶ Various changes in names as tribute to Former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee who passed away recently -
- ▶ Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) announced its decision to rename its School of Management and Entrepreneurship as Atal Bihari Vajpayee School of Management and Entrepreneurship.
 - ▶ Chhattisgarh Govt. renaming upcoming capital of the state Naya Raipur as Atal Nagar.
 - ▶ Uttar Pradesh Govt. will name proposed Bundelkhand Expressway as 'Atal Path'.
 - ▶ AIIMS Rishikesh auditorium, a ghat on Sabarmati River in Gujarat and cyber tower in Mauritius to be named after him.
 - ▶ Andhra Pradesh to name AIIMS Mangalagiri after Him.
 - ▶ Himachal Pradesh to rename Rohtang Tunnel after him.
 - ▶ Madhya Pradesh govt. to rename Habibganj railway station after him.
 - ▶ Assam to name the yet-to-be-inaugurated Bogibeel bridge after him, as Atal Setu.
596. ▶ Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated 2 coastal tourism circuit projects in Andhra Pradesh under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
- ▶ First includes beautification of Nellore tank and Pulicat Lake, facelift to Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary, construction of restaurant and development of Kotha Koduru, Ubbalamadugu, Mypadu, Rama Theertham, and Isukapalli project.
 - ▶ Second coastal circuit is aimed at developing Kakinada port, Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, Hope Island, construction of cottages and wooden huts at Aduru, Pasarlapudi and S Yanam and development of Kotipalli project.
597. ▶ Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated Indian Culinary Institute (ICI) in Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh), promoted by Ministry of Tourism. M main objective of ICI is to institutionalize mechanism to support efforts intended to preserve, document, promote and disseminate Indian Cuisine.
598. ▶ West Bengal Government removed annual family income ceiling in eligibility criteria to be beneficiary under state's Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme.
- ▶ Currently only girls belonging to families with annual family income not more than Rs 1.20 lakh were entitled to get benefits of this scheme. State government will also set up *Kanyashree University* soon.
 - ▶ Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme -
 - ▶ It is conditional cash transfer scheme aimed at improving status and well-being of girl child by incentivising schooling of teenage girls and delaying their marriages until age of 18, launched in October 2013.
 - ▶ Targeted Beneficiaries are girl children within age 13 - 19 years.
 - ▶ Girls regularly attending institutions for education or vocational or sports training.
 - ▶ Girls of Child Care Institutes registered under Juvenile Justice Act (JJ), 2000 within age of 18-19 years.
 - ▶ Components Include -
 - ▶ Annual Scholarship of INR 500 for unmarried girls aged 13-18 years enrolled in classes VIII-XII and One time Grant of Rs 25,000 for girls turned 18 at time of application.
 - ▶ Over 50 lakh girls from the state have been benefited by scheme and removal of ceiling will help another three lakh more girls annually. It was awarded United Nations Public Service Award in June 2017.
599. ▶ West Bengal Government will invest 107 crore rupees to check erosion at vulnerable areas along banks of Ganga and Padma.
600. ▶ West Bengal Government signed MOU with British Council, to promote cultural, educational and skill development exchanges between UK and west Bengal, on occasion of British Council's 70th anniversary in India.
601. ▶ West Bengal government applied for a Geographical Indication (GI) tag for Kohitur mango, which was sold for INR 1500 a piece last season. It is believed to have been cultivated by a royal breeder named Hakim Ada Mohammadi at behest of the last Nawab of Bengal Siraj-ud-Daulah. The variety was reportedly only consumed by royals.

602. ▶ Western Railway renamed Elphinstone Road suburban railway station in Mumbai to Prabhadevi Station (PBHD). It was initially named after Lord Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay Presidency from 1853 to 1860. It has now been renamed in honour of local deity Prabhadevi.
603. ▶ World Bank released World Development Report 2019, with Theme *The Changing Nature of Work*. As part of report, World Bank launched a Human Capital Project (HCP), claimed to be a program of advocacy, measurement, and analytical work to raise awareness and increase demand for interventions to build human capital.

✎ There are three components of HCP - Human capital measurement metric called Human Capital Index (HCI), a programme of measurement and research to inform policy action, and a programme of support for country strategies to accelerate investment in human capital.

✎ Human Capital index (HCI) -

✎ HCI is constructed for 157 countries. It measures amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18. HCI has three components -

✎ Survival, as measured by under-5 mortality rates.

✎ Expected years of Quality-Adjusted School

✎ Health environment using two proxies of *adult survival rates* and *rate of stunting for children under age 5*.

✎ How World Bank's HCI Is different from UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) -

✎ HCI uses survival rates and stunting rate instead of life expectancy as measure of health, and quality-adjusted learning instead of merely years of schooling as measure of education.

✎ Two significant changes from HDI are exclusion of income component and introduction of quality adjustment in learning. Exclusion of income element and introduction of quality adjustment makes HCI far less representative of Human Capital Development than Index claims it to be.

✎ Observations of 1st HCI Report -

✎ For 56% of world's population, HCI is below 0.50, for 92% it is at or below 0.75. Hence only 8% of the population can expect to be 75% as productive as they could be.

✎ Advanced economies such as North America and Europe mostly have HCI value of above 0.75, while South Asia and Sub Saharan Africa have lowest HCI.

✎ Top 5 - Singapore (1), South Korea (2), Japan (3), Hong Kong (4), Finland (5)

✎ Bottom 5 - Chad (157), South Sudan (156), Niger (155), Mali (154), Liberia (153)

✎ Neighbours - China (46), Bangladesh (106), Pakistan (134), Sri Lanka (74), Nepal (102)

✎ Report in Context of India -

✎ HCI for India is estimated at 0.44, **ranked 115th**.

✎ There has been improvement in HCI components in India over last five years.

✎ Probability of Survival to Age 5 is 96 %.

✎ In India, a child who starts school at age 4 can expect to complete 10.2 years of school by her 18th birthday.

✎ Harmonized Test Scores: Students in India score 355 on a scale where 625 represents advanced attainment and 300 represents minimum attainment.

✎ Across India, 83 per cent of 15-year olds will survive until age 60.

✎ In India, HCI for girls is marginally higher than for boys.

✎ Further, India finds the report insignificant as -

✎ Quality adjusted learning has been measured in case of India by using the data as old as 2009.

✎ Purpose of Index is to create political incentive for increased spending on health and education.

Unfortunately, indicators used are so slow moving that none can really be excited about setting out programme of Index improvement.

✎ HCI score for India does not reflect the key initiatives that are being taken for developing human capital, Including -

✎ *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan*

✎ *Ayushman Bharat Programme* (world's largest Health Insurance initiative providing 500 million citizens with adequate health coverage)

✎ *Swachh Bharat Abhiyan* that triggered Sanitation coverage expansion from 38% in 2014 to 83% in 2018, under *Swachh Bharat Mission*.

✎ *Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana* that provided over 4 Crore women with LPG connection to replace firewood and coke based cooking stoves.

604. ▶ World Economic Forum (WEF) launched new Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution in India, based in Maharashtra, as fourth center in chain-ones as part of WEF's global network along with San Francisco (US), Tokyo (Japan) and Beijing (China).
- ✎ It will facilitate to bring together government and business leaders to pilot emerging technology policies. It has selected drones, artificial intelligence and blockchain as the first three project areas.
 - ✎ First project will focus on expanding access to data to accelerate adoption of AI in socio-economic areas like education, healthcare and agriculture. 2nd will focus on application of smart contracts to boost productivity and transparency while reducing inefficiency.
605. ▶ World Heritage Committee declared Victorian and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai as a World Heritage Property, inscribing it site on UNESCO's World Heritage list, as India's 37th UNESCO Heritage Site.
- ✎ This makes Mumbai the second city in India after Ahmedabad to be inscribed on World Heritage List.
 - ✎ Apart from the Mumbai site, committee inscribed three other cultural sites on World Heritage List - Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars region of Iran, Hidden Christian Sites in Nagasaki Region of Japan and Sansa, Buddhist Mountain Monasteries in Korea.
 - ✎ Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensemble of Mumbai comprises 2 architectural styles - 19th century collection of Victorian structures and the 20th century Art Deco buildings along the sea, conjoined by the historical open space of the Oval Maidan.
 - ✎ With this, India now has 37 World Heritage Inscriptions with 29 Cultural, 07 Natural and 01 Mixed sites. India stands second in Asia Pacific (after China), in number of World Heritage properties, overall sixth in world.
606. ▶ World's first of its kind International Centre for 'Humanitarian Forensics' (ICHF) launched at Gujarat Forensic Sciences University in Gandhinagar (Gujarat), as joint venture of International Committee of Red Cross in India, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Gujarat Forensic Science University. It would promote best practices in forensics.
607. ▶ World's first-ever thermal battery plant will be set up in Andhra Pradesh, by Bharat Energy Storage Technology Private Limited (BEST). First-of-its-kind batteries will aim to boost renewable sources of energy production and reduce dependence on non-renewable fossil fuel-based energy generation.
- ✎ In first phase, batteries suited for telecommunications, mini or microgrids and electric buses would be manufactured. Batteries will run for up to 800kms on a single charge.
 - ✎ Thermal plant is expected to start commercial operations by May 2019.
608. ▶ World's tallest girder rail bridge (141 Metres Height) is being built near Noney (Manipur), as part of 111-km-long Jiribam-Tupul-Imphal new broad gauge railway project in Manipur. First section involves construction of 84 kms of railway line connecting Jiribam to Tupul which is on verge of completion. 2nd section of 27 kms connecting Tupul to Imphal is expected to be completed by 2019.

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