



Current Affairs - October to December 2018

Month Type



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

(Showing **165** Important Ones)

International

- ▶ World Trade Organization (WTO) approved constitution of panels to review complaints against US decision to put tariffs of 25% on steel and 10% on aluminium.
 - ▶ WTO Dispute Settlement Body will create separate panels for complaints by European Union, China, Canada, Mexico, Norway and Russia, after US stated it would not agree to a single panel to hear all of them.
 - ▶ DSB also agreed for a panel which will review *certain Chinese measures pertaining to the protection of intellectual property rights* as demanded by US.
- ▶ 2018 Global Hunger Index (GHI), prepared by global NGOs Concern Worldwide (Ireland) and Welthungerhilfe (Germany).
 - ▶ Level of hunger and undernutrition worldwide fell to 20.9, down from 29.2 in 2000.
 - ▶ India was ranked 103rd out of 119 qualifying countries.
 - ▶ 15 countries with 2018 GHI scores of less than 5 are not assigned individual ranks, but rather are collectively ranked 1–15. These are - Belarus, Cuba, Estonia, Kuwait, Latvia, Croatia, Montenegro, Romania, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay, Costa Rica, Chile, Lithuania, Bosnia & Herzegovina.
 - ▶ Bottom 5 - Central African Republic (119), Chad (118), Yemen (117), Madagascar (116), Zambia (115)
 - ▶ Neighbours - Bangladesh (86), China (25), Nepal (72), Pakistan (106), Sri Lanka (67)
- ▶ 26 countries and 11 international organisations committed to Changsha Declaration at the end of a forum on international development cooperation in Changsha, China. It focuses on agricultural and rural development, eliminate poverty and hunger.
- ▶ According to Global Soil Biodiversity Atlas prepared by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), India faces grave danger to soil biodiversity.
 - ▶ Atlas was released as part of WWF's biennial Living Planet Report (LPR) 2018. The key aspect of this year's report was threat to soil biodiversity and pollinators, the two key drivers of biodiversity.
 - ▶ Soil Biodiversity -
 - ▶ Soil biodiversity is total community from genes to species, and varies depending on environment. The immense diversity in soil allows for great variety of ecosystem services that benefit species that inhabit it.
 - ▶ India was coloured red on atlas and is among countries whose soil biodiversity faces the highest level of risk
 - ▶ Pollinators -
 - ▶ 150 million bee colonies were needed to meet pollination requirements of about 50 million hectares of agricultural land in India, only 1.2 million colonies were present. Pollination is process by which plant pollen is transferred from male reproductive organs to female reproductive organs to form seeds.
- ▶ According to report by United Nation's World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), patents granted by India increased by 50% in 2017, from 8,248 in 2016 to 12,387 in 2017. Globally, 1.4 million patents were granted in 2017. China led with 4,20,144 granted patents and was followed by US with 3,18,829.
- ▶ According to research firm Canalis, India overtaken US to become second largest smartphone market in the July-September 2018 quarter. India saw shipment of 40.4 million units during third quarter and was second to China where 100.6 million smartphones. USA was at 40 million units.

7. ▶ Airports Authority of India (AAI) partnered with US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) to develop a roadmap for modernisation of its air traffic services (air traffic management (ATM) and communication, navigation and surveillance (CNS)).
8. ▶ American Express became first foreign payments company allowed to build a network in China, with a 50:50 joint venture with Chinese fintech firm LianLian to set up the payment network.
9. ▶ American Space Exploration Firm SpaceX launched U.S. Air Force's newest 'GPS III' satellite, to replace aging GPS 2R spacecraft launched in 1997. The solar-powered spacecraft, dubbed "Vespucci," is company's first official "National Security Space" mission. Vespucci's nickname honours Italian cartographer and explorer Amerigo Vespucci, after whom North and South America were named.
10. ▶ As per A World bank Report, India retained its position as world's top recipient of remittances in 2018, with Indians abroad sending \$80 billion back home. India is followed by China (\$67 billion), Mexico and Philippines (\$34 billion each) and Egypt (\$26 billion).
11. ▶ As per Australian Bureau of Statistics, Australia surpassed Qatar to become world's leading exporter of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) for the first time. Australia exported 6.55 million tonnes of LNG in November 2018 compared to Qatar's 6.27 million tonnes. LNG is Australia's third-largest export commodity behind coal and iron ore.
12. ▶ As per Global Nutrition Report 2018 -
 - ✎ With 4.6 Crore stunted children, India tops the list. It is followed by Nigeria (1.4 crore) and Pakistan (1.07 Crore). Stunting Means low height for age, which is caused by long-term insufficient nutrient-intake and frequent infections.
13. ▶ As per International Air Transport Association (IATA), India will become world's 3rd largest aviation market by 2024. India is presently at 7th place.
14. ▶ As per International Monetary Fund, global debt reached an all-time high of 184 trillion US dollars with USA, China and Japan accounted for over half of it. On average, world's debt exceeds 86,000 USD dollars per person, which is over 2.5 times average income per-capita.
15. ▶ As per Oxford Economics report, top 10 fastest growing cities in the world from 2019 to 2035 are in India -
 - ✎ Surat, a diamond processing and trading center in Gujarat will see fastest expansion through 2035. Agra and Bangalore gets 2nd and 3rd spot respectively. Hyderabad is in the fourth place, followed by Nagpur, Tirupur, Rajkot, Tiruchirappalli, Chennai and Vijayawada.
 - ✎ In *Africa* - Tanzanian port of Dar es Salaam is fastest City, while top spot in *Europe* is held by Armenian capital of Yerevan, San Jose a proxy for Silicon Valley will be best performer in *North America*.
16. ▶ As per WHO's Global Nutrition Report 2018, India has highest number of 'stunted' children in world (nearly third of global count).
 - ✎ Globally, Stunting (*low height for age*) among children aged under five has fallen from 32.6 per cent in 2000 to 22.2 per cent in 2017.
 - ✎ About 46.6 million children in India suffer from stunting due to poor nutrition intake in long term and repeated infections. India also tops in number of *Wasted* children (*Low Weight for height*), amounting 25.5 million.
 - ✎ In creating this report, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) used district-level aggregate data from 2015-2016 National and Family Health Survey (NFHS) in India along with data from UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Group.
17. ▶ As per a UN Report, Ozone layer that shields life from cancer-causing solar rays is recovering at a rate of 1 - 3 per decade, reversing years of dangerous depletion caused by the release of harmful chemicals. It may get fully healed by 2061.
 - ✎ Montreal Protocol, which was signed in 1987, has been termed as Most Successful environmental agreement ever. It was an International agreement for banning industrial gases such as chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), which harm Ozone Layer.
18. ▶ As per index compiled by Arton Capital, Top three most powerful passports are - UAE (1), Singapore (2), Germany (3).
19. ▶ As per report by Global Carbon Project, 2017's top 4 emitters were China (27%), US (15%), European Union (10%) and India (7%).
20. ▶ As per report by 'Which? Travel', Iceland is safest country to visit, while India is the fourth dangerous. UAE and Singapore are 2nd & 3rd respectively.
 - ✎ South Africa is least safe, owing to high risk of crime, health and terrorism. Turkey was second most dangerous, Thailand is 3rd least safe and India is 4th least safe.
21. ▶ Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed arrangement with World Bank to enact a single framework to make co-financed projects more efficient. ADB's first Alternative Procurement Arrangement (APA) with World Bank will allow procedures on co-financed projects to follow a single procurement framework, in line with ADB's Strategy 2030.
 - ✎ Strategy 2030 is ADB's long-term plan to respond effectively to Asia and Pacific region's changing needs.
22. ▶ Asian Economic Integration Report 2018 presented by Asian Development Bank, with focus on progress in cooperation and migration.
 - ✎ India hosts highest number of outward international migrants in 2017, followed by China and Bangladesh. About one third of international migrants were from Asia in 2017.
 - ✎ FDI in Asian region remain stable with 517.5 billion in 2017.

- ✎ This year in the report there was a special chapter “Toward Optimal Provision of Regional Public Goods in Asia and the Pacific”. It stressed on that optimal provision of Regional public goods can be a solution for development challenges in era of economic interdependence.
23. ▶ Australia declined signing UN Global Compact for Migration (agreed upon in July 2018), saying that it would undermine its existing immigration policies.
- ✎ According to Australian government, nation’s immigration policy already promotes safe, orderly and regular migration. Government feels that adopting it would risk encouraging illegal entry to Australia and reverse hard-won successes in combating people-smuggling trade. Australia’s harsh immigration policy detains asylum-seekers who try to reach the country by boat on remote Pacific islands.
- ✎ US has already rejected this UN pact.
24. ▶ Bahrain’s Economic Development Board signed MoU with Maharashtra Government to provide a framework for Co-operation, to promote FinTech in respective markets.
25. ▶ Bangladesh President Abdul Hamid approved controversial Digital Security Bill 2018, combining colonial-era Official Secrets Act with tough new provisions such as arrests without warrant. It aims to deal harshly with cybercrimes, including hurting religious sentiment, spreading negative propaganda against 1971 Liberation War and Bangabandhu (Sheikh Mujibur Rahman).
- ✎ It also covers illegal activities in e-transactions and spreading defamatory data under its ambit. It provides for 7 - 14 years imprisonment and monetary fines of 25 lakh - 1 crore Taka
- ✎ Law faced widespread vocal opposition from rights groups and journalists that it could endanger freedom of speech— especially on social media. The law has also drawn opposition internationally including from USA.
26. ▶ Canada agreed to sign a trade deal with USA and Mexico, revamping North American Free Trade Agreement. New deal has been named as *United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA)*.
- ✎ USMCA modernises what was covered by NAFTA by adding provisions on digital trade and intellectual property.
- ✎ It would allow US farmers greater access to Canada’s dairy market and address concerns about potential US auto tariffs. The pact will come up for review every six years.
- ✎ Canada will export 2.6 million vehicles to USA, after 25 % global autos tariffs imposed by US on national security grounds. Deal, however, failed to resolve U.S. tariffs on Canada’s steel and aluminum exports.
- ✎ Background -
- ✎ USA President Trump threatened to end 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement into a bilateral pact with Mexico and tax Canadian vehicle exports to USA if Canada failed to sign deal before September 30 midnight deadline. Canada, USA’s 2nd largest trading partner, was left out when the US and Mexico had reached a preliminary deal in late August to revamp NAFTA.
27. ▶ Canada legalised possession and use of recreational cannabis (also called Marijuana), becoming 2nd country to do so After Uruguay.
28. ▶ Central Asian Nation Turkmenistan launched its first messaging app BizBarde. ex-Soviet Nation Turkmenistan has blocked Western social services including Twitter, Facebook and Whatsapp.
29. ▶ Central Asian Nation Tajikistan inaugurated a USD 3.9 billion hydro-electric power plant, a mega project that will eliminate domestic energy shortages and will enable exporting electricity to Afghanistan and Pakistan. It is Built on Vakhsh River and expected to reach height of 335 metres, becoming world’s tallest hydro-electric dam.
30. ▶ Central Indonesia’s Mount Soputan volcano erupted with ash going upto 7.5 km high in sky.
- ✎ Indonesia is highly prone to earthquakes and volcanoes as it is located on *the Pacific Ring of Fire*, a major area in Pacific Ocean, spread approx 25000 miles. 75% of world’s volcanoes are located in this region.
31. ▶ China and Myanmar signed an agreement to build a port in Myanmar’s Kyaukpyu town along the Bay of Bengal. China will fund 70% of the project, while the remaining 30% will be funded by Myanmar.
- ✎ China has been in India’s Vicinity as it has helped build port in Gwadar in Pakistan, Hambantota in Sri Lanka and Chittagong port in Bangladesh.
32. ▶ China and Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) started off their first joint maritime exercises in Zhanjiang (China), to ease regional tensions linked to rival claims in South China Sea.
33. ▶ China completed deployment of its indigenously developed BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) constellation with successful launch of 2 more satellites. They will work with 17 other BDS-3 satellites already in space. BDS will be 4th global satellite navigation system after GPS (USA), Russia’s GLONASS and European Union’s Galileo.
- ✎ BDS will become global in 2020 with over 30 satellites.

- India is also building its navigational system called Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), with an operational name of NAVIC (7 Satellites).
- 34. ▶ China launched 6 Yunhai-2 atmospheric environment research satellites and a test communication satellite of Hongyan constellation into orbit. Yunhai-2 satellites will study environment and first test satellite of Hongyan constellation will be used to verify function of mobile communications in low earth orbit (LEO).
- 35. ▶ China launched its first communication satellite to offer broadband internet services to users worldwide, as CASIC's (China Aerospace Science and Industry Corporation) first satellite under Hongyun project. It aims to rival companies which have similar plans for providing Internet services worldwide.
 - Hongyun Project began in September 2016. Under this, China plans to give broadband internet connectivity to users globally by building a space-based communications network.
 - CASIC will be placing than 150 Hongyun satellites on orbits about 1,000 km above ground around 2023.
 - OneWeb, a USA Firm, will launch 648 low-Earth orbit microsattellites by end of 2019 to provide broadband services.
- 36. ▶ China launched its Centispace-1-s1 satellite, on a Kuaizhou-1A low-cost solid-fuel carrier rocket.
- 37. ▶ China tested the world's largest unmanned transport drone which can carry a payload of 1.5 tonnes, called Feihong-98 (FH-98). It has Max takeoff weight of 5.25 tonnes, capacity of 1.5 tonnes and 15 cubic metres, a flight height of 4,500 metres, speed of 180 KMPH, and a maximum range of 1200 kms.
 - China is also planning to put a 'moon' of its own in the night sky by 2020, to replace conventional street lamps and save electricity.
 - Chengdu city in southwestern Sichuan province of China is developing illumination satellites, which will shine along with the real moon but will be eight times brighter.
 - These satellites will have a reflective coating which can reflect sunlight towards Earth similar to the moon. Placed only 500km above Earth, light reflected from the man-made moon will be more luminous than actual moon.
- 38. ▶ China will sale 48 Wing Loong II high-end armed drones to Pakistan, as largest export deal for drones to date to any country.
 - Wing Loong II is a high-end reconnaissance, strike and multi-role endurance unmanned aerial system, capable of being fitted with air-to-surface weapons. It can payload up to 480kg (1,060lbs), including 12 laser guided missiles or YJ-9E anti-ship missiles. It can fly at maximum altitude of 9,000 metres (29,500 feet).
- 39. ▶ China's first private research university officially inaugurated in Zhejiang Province's Hangzhou city. Autonomy for top educational institutions has been a long-standing demand of Chinese academic community, as china's higher education bodies are mostly govt owned.
 - Chinese Govt also announced to scrap setting population target in future, and give people more freedom with respect to childbirth. China wants to ease restrictions on family planning to combat ageing population.
- 40. ▶ China's BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) started offering global navigation services, to rival America's Global Positioning System (GPS). Pakistan became first foreign nation to use BeiDou system.
 - BeiDou is 4th global navigation system after US's GPS, Russia's GLONASS and the European Union's Galileo.
 - India's Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) (named NAVIC) is a regional satellite navigation system that provides accurate real-time positioning services covering region extending 1500 km around India. Plans are to expand NavIC system by increasing number of satellites from 7 to 11.
- 41. ▶ Chinese President Xi Jinping officially opened world's longest sea-crossing bridge.
 - The \$20-billion bridge, which spans 55 kilometres, connects Hong Kong and Macau to the mainland Chinese city of Zhuhai.
 - Bridge is designed to withstand earthquakes and typhoons, built using 400,000 tonnes of steel, enough to build 60 Eiffel Towers.
 - It includes dual three-lane, oversea stretch (22.9 km) and undersea tunnel (6.7 km) which reaches depth of 44 m. The rest 25.4 km of the bridge runs over land. The two ends of tunnel of bridge are connected to two artificial islands. Bridge contains 400,000 tonnes of steel.
 - Its total cost was 120 billion yuan (\$17.3 billion).
- 42. ▶ Delhi government signed a twin-city agreement with the Moscow (Russia) for cooperation in fields like environment, culture and education, for the next 3 years.
- 43. ▶ Druzhba 2018 (Friendship 2018) joint bilateral military exercise between Pakistan and Russia held in Pakistan, as 3rd addition of this joint military drill.
- 44. ▶ European Central Bank launched TARGET Instant Payment Settlement (TIPS), a new system aimed at letting banks settle payments instantly across Europe, helping them compete with global tech giants like Paypal. It will let people and companies in Europe transfer euros instantly.
- 45. ▶ European Commission became first major economy to target achieving climate neutrality by 2050, as scientists suggest worldwide in order to avoid catastrophic global warming.

46. ▶ European Parliament approved a free trade agreement between Japan and EU, covering 63.5 crore people and almost 33% of world's economy, known as world's largest free trade agreement. EU-Japan Economic Partnership Agreement will remove duties on almost all agricultural and industrial products as well as open up service sector and procurement, eliminating all non-tariff barriers for trade.
47. ▶ European Union (EU) established India's first Jean Monnet Centre of Excellence (CoE) at Department of European Studies (DES) at Manipal Academy of Higher Education (MAHE) in New Delhi. It comes with grant of €1,00,000 to pursue India-EU interdisciplinary studies in culture, literature, education and society. This is for fifth time MAHE has been awarded grants under Erasmus+Jean Monnet initiative.
48. ▶ Export-Import Bank of India extended a credit facility of USD 500 million to Tanzania (East Africa) for water supply projects in country.
49. ▶ Forbes World's 100 Most Powerful Women of 2018 -
- ▶ 4 Indians in the list - Roshni Nadar Malhotra (HCL Enterprises CEO), Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw (CMD of Biocon Limited and chairperson of IIM Bangalore), Shobhana Bhartia (Chairperson and Editorial Director of Hindustan Times Group) & Priyanka Chopra (Actress).
 - ▶ Top 5 in List -
 - ▶ Angela Merkel (German Chancellor)
 - ▶ Theresa May (UK Prime Minister)
 - ▶ Christine Lagarde (IMF Chief)
 - ▶ Mary Barra (CEO of General Motors USA)
 - ▶ Abigail Johnson (CEO of Fidelity Investments USA)
50. ▶ Former PM HD Deve Gowda (*11th PM from June 1, 1996 to April 21, 1997*) conferred with Maharshi Valmiki Jayanti Award on occasion of Valmiki Jayanti (Oct 24), for his contribution to welfare of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes communities. Award will be given by Karnataka CM HD Kumaraswamy.
51. ▶ French President Emmanuel Macron and Morocco's King Mohammed VI have inaugurated Morocco's first high-speed rail line, first ever such line in Africa. \$2 billion project was launched in September 2011 by the king and Nicolas Sarkozy, then president of France. Known as LGV, it will connect the economic hubs of Tangier and Casablanca in 2 hours 10 minutes at a speed of up to 320 kph (199 mph).
52. ▶ From January 2019, Indian tourists travelling to Bhutan via road will need either a voter ID or a valid passport to enter the country, while accompanying children can also travel with a birth certificate. Visitors will now get entry permits instead of identification slips.
53. ▶ Germany and UK with support from World Bank, launched a new Global Risk Financing Facility (GRiF), To support vulnerable countries to climate and disaster shocks.
- ▶ This fund will consist of an initial corpus of \$150 million. It will be built on the work of several existing programs including InsuResilience Climate Risk Financing and Insurance Program MDTF established by BMZ, DFID and World Bank, Centre for Global Disaster Protection established by DFID and World Bank, and InsuResilience Solutions Fund jointly established by BMZ and KFW.
 - ▶ Funding includes Insurance premium financing, Risk financing investments, Risk financing mechanisms that promote parallel improvements in countries for crisis response and recovery AND Technical assistance and capacity building where this is not yet covered by other programs.
54. ▶ Global Competitiveness Report 2018 by World Economic Forum (WEF) -
- ▶ India - Ranked 58th, Bettering 2017 Rank by 5 Places.
 - ▶ Top 5 - USA (1), Singapore (2), Germany (3), Switzerland (4), Japan (5)
 - ▶ Bottom 5 - Chad (140), Yemen (139), Haiti (138), Angola (137), Burundi (136)
 - ▶ Neighbours - Bangladesh (103), Sri Lanka (85), Pakistan (107), Nepal (109)
55. ▶ Global Passport Index 2018 by *Passportindex.org* -
- ▶ Most Powerful Passport is of Singapore, along with Germany. India is ranked 66th in List.
 - ▶ Note that Recent Henley Passport Index 2018 ranked Indian passport at 81st Place, with Japan at top.
56. ▶ Google will shut down its social network Google+ for consumer use over next 10 months after a bug exposed personal data of up to 5 lakh users. Google+ currently has "low usage and engagement" and that 90% of Google+ user sessions last less than 5 seconds. Company plans to keep it alive enterprise customers who use it to facilitate conversation among co-workers.
57. ▶ Government launched information fusion centre (IFC) to boost maritime security and Information exchange in Indian Ocean Region (IOR), set up by Indian Navy at Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) in Gurugram (Haryana).
- ▶ IFC-IOR will share information on "white shipping", or commercial shipping with the countries in the region to improve maritime security and tackling piracy and terrorism in Indian Ocean. Those countries will be served that have White Shipping Information Exchange agreements with India. (21 countries so far).
 - ▶ IFC will generate a seamless real-time picture of the nearly 7,500-km coastline of India by linking all coastal radar chains.

- India also recently signed ascension agreement to Trans Regional Maritime Network (T-RMN), that will allow information exchange on movement of commercial ships on high seas. T-RMN agreement is being steered by Italy.
- 58. ▶ Government of Burundi (East Africa) declared Gitega as country's new political capital, replacing Bujumbura, that will from now on serve as economic capital of the country.
- 59. ▶ Green Climate Fund (GCF) approved more than \$1 billion new investments for 19 new projects to help developing countries tackle climate change, during a meeting of GCF in Manama (Bahrain).
 - Funding was approved for projects linked to geothermal energy in Indonesia, greener cities in Europe and Middle East and protection for coastal communities in India.
 - About GCF -
 - GCF is UN-backed fund considered as key vehicle for climate-related development programs, guided by principles of UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It aims to help developing countries to finance clean energy projects other mitigation efforts, practices and adaptation to counter climate change.
 - It was formally established by UNFCCC decision in Durban, South Africa in December 2011.
- 60. ▶ Henley Passport Index 2018.
 - Indian passport secured 81st rank with visa-free or visa-on-arrival access to 60 destinations.
 - Top 5 - Japan (1), Singapore (2), Germany (3), France (4), South Korea (5)
- 61. ▶ IIT Kharagpur and University of Auckland (New Zealand) signed a pact to foster academic exchange and research collaboration, faculty exchange and visiting/adjunct appointments, student mobility. Its first strategic partnership of University of Auckland with a higher educational institution in India.
- 62. ▶ IMD World Talent Rankings 2017 -
 - India Ranked 53rd, down by 2 places compared to last Year.
 - Top 5 - Switzerland (1), Denmark (2), Norway (3), Austria (4), Netherlands (5)
- 63. ▶ India Based construction major Larsen & Toubro is only Indian firm to be featured among top 25 companies in Forbes' global 2000 best employers list (ranked 22).
 - Among top 100, there are 4 Indian firms - Mahindra & Mahindra (55), Grasim Industries (59) and HDFC (91). Also, Total 24 domestic companies in overall list.
 - Top 3 - Alphabet (1), Microsoft (2), Apple.
- 64. ▶ India and Bangladesh several agreements for enhancing inland and coastal waterways connectivity, Including an agreement to use Chattogram and Mongla Ports in Bangladesh for movement of goods to and from India. An addendum to 'Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade between two countries' has also been signed for the inclusion of Dhubri in India and Pangaon in Bangladesh as new Ports.
- 65. ▶ India and Myanmar signed MoU for appointment of private port operator for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of Sittwe Port, Paletwa Inland Water Terminal and associated facilities included in Kaladan Multi Model Transit Transport Project.
 - Sittwe port in Myanmar will connect India's landlocked north-east region to Bay of Bengal through Mizoram. It will also provide alternate route to Kolkata.
 - It is also significant in implementation of India's Act East Policy as it will boost connectivity and will contribute to job creation in whole region, particularly in Myanmar's strife-torn Rakhine and Chin States.
 - It will significantly lower cost and distance of movement from Kolkata to Mizoram and beyond. It will also reduce dependency on only route narrow strip dubbed as Chicken's Neck in West Bengal, sandwiched between Bhutan and Bangladesh.
- 66. ▶ India announced contributions of \$13.36 million (over ₹97.2 crore) for various United Nations (UN) agencies and development activities at the 2018 United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities. 19 countries pledged a total of \$425.69 million at the conference.
- 67. ▶ India elected as a Member of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) Council for 4-year term (2019-2022), during ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2018 at Dubai (UAE).
- 68. ▶ India elected to United Nations' Human Rights Council for a period of three years, by securing 188 votes in Asia-Pacific category (highest vote among all candidates).
- 69. ▶ India launched humanitarian operation Samudra Maitri to provide assistance to earthquake and tsunami victims in Indonesia, dispatching two aircraft C-130J and C-17 and three naval ships carrying relief material and personnel to Indonesia.
- 70. ▶ India lost one spot to rank as 9th most valuable nation brand in world, according to UK-based consultancy Brand Finance's Nation Brands 2018 report. However, India's brand value increased by 5% to \$2,159 billion. US topped the list with a brand value of \$25,899 billion.

71. ▶ India participated in China's 1st International Import Expo (CIIE) at the National Exhibition and Convention Center in Shanghai. Aims is to reduce the over USD 51 billion trade deficit with neighboring nation. It is considered to be the world's first import-themed national-level expo.
72. ▶ India ranked 28th among 73 countries in 2018 Government e-Payments Adoption Ranking (GEAR) by Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)
- ▶ India jumped 8 positions in this ranking from 36th in 2011.
 - ▶ Norway has topped 2018 GEAR list scoring 89.7 points in seven categories.
73. ▶ India ranked 5th among 206 countries in 2018 *Cigarette Package Health Warnings: International Status* Report by Canadian Cancer Society. In India, 85% of both sides of cigarette packets are covered with warnings.
- ▶ Top 5 - Timor-Leste (92.5%), Nepal (90%), Vanuatu (90%), New Zealand (87.5%) and India held 5th rank jointly with Hong Kong and Thailand for 85% warnings.
74. ▶ India signed an agreement with Iran to make Oil Import payments in Indian rupees. MoU was signed after US letting India and seven other nations to keep buying Iranian oil despite sanctions were imposed on Iran in November.
- ▶ Earlier India paid Iran in Euros using European banking channels. Under the 180-day USA exemption, India is allowed to import a maximum of 300,000 barrels a day of crude oil. This compares to an average daily import of about 560,000 barrels this year.
75. ▶ India will Chair Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) from 1st January 2019, after being handed Chairmanship by European Union during KPCS Plenary 2018 held in Brussels (Belgium).
- ▶ Kimberley Process is Joint international initiative to stem flow of 'conflict diamonds', rough diamonds used by rebel groups to finance wars against legitimate governments. At present, KPCS has 54 members representing 81 countries including EU with 28 members.
 - ▶ Botswana and Russia will serve as Vice-Chair during 2019-2020.
76. ▶ India-China Film Festival held at Siri Fort Auditorium in New Delhi, to deepen cultural understanding between two countries.
77. ▶ Indian IT industry apex body Nasscom partnered with Hiroshima government for co-creating a Japan-India IT Corridor in Hiroshima. Through this partnership, India would be getting a gate way to the cutting-edge manufacturing technology of Japan. Indian companies on software side can help Japanese manufacturing companies adopt digital transformation and create innovative product and solutions lines.
78. ▶ Indian Pavilion inaugurated at Videocittà 2018 event in Rome Film Festival (Italy), with India as partner country for the event.
- ▶ "Mere Pyaare Prime Minister" was only Asian film screened at 13th Rome Film Festival.
79. ▶ Indian Short Film *Period. End of Sentence* made it Oscar shortlist in Documentary Short Subject category. Its about women in India fighting against deeply rooted stigma of menstruation and delving upon work of real-life 'Pad Man' Arunachalam Muruganantham. India's entry for the Foreign Language Film Category, Village Rockstars is out of Oscar race.
80. ▶ Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd (ISPRL) signed MoU in with Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) to explore the possibility of storing ADNOC crude oil at ISPRL's underground oil storage facility at Padur in Karnataka, which has a 2.5 million tonne capacity.
- ▶ ADNOC is only foreign oil and gas company so far, to invest by way of crude oil in India's strategic petroleum reserves program.
 - ▶ It has been announced a few days after cabinet Approved filling of Padur Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) at Padur (Karnataka) by overseas National Oil Companies (NOCs).
81. ▶ Indian-American Adobe CEO Shantanu Narayen named by Fortune in its 2018 Business Person of the Year list, ranked 12th. List has been topped by Tricia Griffith (CEO of US Insurance Company Progressive).
82. ▶ India's national accreditation body National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NABCB) secured equivalence for its accreditation programme for Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems (OHSMS) Certification Bodies in Asia-Pacific region, by signing Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) of Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC).
- ▶ Now, Any industry carrying ISO 45001 certificate with NABCB logo will be recognized in Asia Pacific region. It will benefit Indian Industry as it is exporting products to various countries in Asia Pacific region.
 - ▶ Now, NABCB can facilitate export of Indian goods into the world market by attesting that these are certified as per international standards by competent certifying bodies.
 - ▶ NABCB is 3rd accreditation body in Asia Pacific Region to become internationally equivalent in the region, after accreditation bodies of Hong Kong and Mexico.
 - ▶ MLA with PAC would now facilitate signing MLA with International Accreditation Forum (IAF) to secure full international equivalence.
83. ▶ India's non-life insurance penetration risen marginally to 0.9 % of GDP (\$ 27 billion), but still remains among highest underinsurance levels globally, as per a report by Lloyd's. It was .7 % for India in 2012.

- India's insurance gap accounts for 17 % of the total global insurance gap (\$162.5 billion).
 - Globally, India has seventh-largest insurance gap, with top spot held by Bangladesh (in Terms of % of GDP). In absolute terms, China has biggest insurance gap of \$ 76.4 billion.
 - Netherlands remains the country with the highest insurance penetration at 7.7 per cent, followed by South Korea (5 %).
84. ▶ Interbrand's "Best 100 Global Brands 2018" report -
- Apple displaced Google to become top brand in the world in 2018. Apple's brand value grew 16 % to \$214.5 billion. It also became first company in US to hit the \$1 trillion market cap.
 - Amazon achieved 56% growth to become third top brand globally.
 - Facebook fell to 9th place, amid data breach controversies.
85. ▶ International Energy Agency (IEA) report *World Energy Outlook 2018* stated that natural gas will overtake coal as world's second largest energy source after oil by 2030, expected due to a drive to cut air pollution and rise in liquefied natural gas (LNG) use.
- Global gas demand would increase by 1.6 % a year to 2040 and would be 45 % higher by then than present. Electricity demand will grow 2.1 % a year and will account for a quarter of energy used by 2040.
 - CO2 emissions would rise by 10 % to 36 gigatonnes in 2040, mostly driven by growth in oil and gas.
86. ▶ International Energy Agency report *World Energy Outlook* stated that India will overtake the U.S. to become world's second-biggest emitter of carbon dioxide from the power sector before 2030. China will remain the biggest emitter.
87. ▶ International Monetary Fund (IMF), World Bank and World Trade Organization collectively launched report "Reinvigorating Trade and Inclusive Growth" report, seeking liberalisation of global service sector, asserting that barriers to these services trade currently is roughly as high as those to trade in goods about a half century ago.
- Services comprise some two-thirds of global GDP and employment, Yet facing lags due to limited opening of service sectors to foreign competition. Full services trade liberalisation can raise manufacturing productivity by average of 22%.
 - Services comprise significant shares of value added of all sectors in economy, yet Only quarter of global trade is traded as services. The trade in services sector has potential of contributing particularly strongly to productivity growth and economic growth overall.
 - Prolonged slowdown in pace of trade reform is leading to widespread trade distortions and putting at risk strength of global economic recovery, despite recent rebound in trade.
88. ▶ Israel became a full member of Financial Action Task Force (FATF), an international body set up to combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other threats to international financial system.
89. ▶ Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries launched United Arab Emirates' (UAE) first locally made satellite KhalifaSat into orbit. The Japanese rocket also carried an IBUKI-2 greenhouse gas observation satellite for Japan.
90. ▶ Japan announced to withdraw from International Whaling Commission (IWC) and resume commercial whaling in its territorial waters next year, after 30 years.
91. ▶ Japan joined joint exercise 'Kamandag'(venom) with US and Filipino troops in Philippines for first time since World War II. Its first time Japanese armoured military vehicles were used on foreign soil since 1945.
92. ▶ Joint military exercise *Iron Magic 19* between United Arab Emirates (UAE) and United States (US) held near Dubai.
93. ▶ Luxembourg became first country to make all public transport free, implementing it from 2020. It is aimed at addressing environmental issues and problem of traffic congestion.
94. ▶ Malaysia Government abolished death penalty, following strong domestic opposition for it.
95. ▶ Maldives Govt. approved to rejoin the Commonwealth, two years after withdrawing from 53-nation grouping.
96. ▶ Members of European Parliament approved banning single-use plastics, to curb marine pollution. The ban is likely to take effect by 2021.
97. ▶ MoU signed between Department of Biotechnology and Cancer Research UK for India-UK India-UK Cancer Research Initiative, as a collaborative 5-year bilateral research initiative. Both CRUK and DBT will invest £5m each in this 5-year pilot, and seek investment from potential partners. It was launched at Inaugural Researchers' Summit held in New Delhi.
- David Hunter of University of Oxford and CS Pramesh of Tata Memorial Hospital will serve respectively as Chair and Co-chair of India-UK Cancer Research Initiative's Advisory Panel.
98. ▶ More than 30 countries announced establishment of African Carnivore Initiative, to save 4 carnivores species - (Panthera leo), Cheetah (Acinonyx jubatus), Leopard (Panthera pardus), and African Wild Dog (Lycaon pictus).
- It is unique collaboration between only two global treaties whose mandate is to conserve endangered species - Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS) and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
99. ▶ Morocco launched its second earth observation satellite named Mohammed VI-B on board of Arianespace Vega rocket. It will be placed at same orbit as its twin satellite Mohammed 6-A, the first Moroccan satellite launched in November 2017. It completes Morocco's two-

satellite constellation for Earth observation.

100. ▶ NASA's first OSIRIS-REx (*Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer*) mission designed to visit asteroid and return sample of its dust back to Earth reached its destination, Bennu, two years after its launch. It will study the asteroid for 1.5 years. It is NASA's first asteroid sampling mission i.e. it will survey surface, collect sample and deliver it safely back to Earth.
101. ▶ NSE signed a pact with the Uttarakhand government to provide access to capital to SMEs, to fuel growth of such SMEs in state by increasing awareness along with government on opportunities to raise capital, SME exchange guidelines, listing processes, compliance with listing etc.
102. ▶ Nagaland government signed 5 year MoU with e-Governance Academy of Estonia to provide advisory and technical knowledge for setting up of e-Governance Academy of Nagaland (e-GAN).
103. ▶ Named *Little India Gate*, first-of-its-kind structure in Indonesia recognizing contribution of Indian community in development of Medan city, has been unveiled.
104. ▶ National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) signed a MoU with the Dubai Internet City (DIC) to help small and medium-sized Indian enterprises expand their operations in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region.
105. ▶ Nepal banned Indian currency above Rs 100 (Including New Indian notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations). It can affect Indian tourist and Nepali people working in India, who carry currency in Nepal for transaction.
106. ▶ Nepal government launched a Social Security Scheme for formal sector workers, Including People of all ages and categories. It will be contribution based and will cover medical facilities, motherhood, accident and physical incapacity security.
107. ▶ Nepal imposed a monthly limit on the amount of Indian currency its citizen can spend in India. Nepal Rastra Bank (NRB) stated that a Nepali citizen would be unable to spend more than INR 1 lakh per month while paying for goods and services in India.
 - ▶ Recently, Nepal banned Indian currency above Rs 100 (Including New Indian notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations).
108. ▶ PM Narendra Modi conferred with United Nation's Champions of the Earth Award 2018 by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres in New Delhi. He is among the six winners who received this award. Other Awardees are -
 - ▶ French President Emmanuel Macron.
 - ▶ India's Cochin International Airport - Awarded in Entrepreneurial Vision category. It is world's first fully solar-powered airport.
 - ▶ Joan Carling - Awarded lifetime achievement award as a prominent defender of environmental and indigenous rights.
 - ▶ Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods - Jointly recognised in Science and Innovation category.
 - ▶ China's Zhejiang's Green Rural Revival Programme - Awarded in inspiration and action category.
109. ▶ Pakistan cabinet approved issuance of first-ever renminbi-denominated 'Panda Bonds' to raise loans from China's capital markets, as country moved a step forward to give Chinese currency status at par with US dollar.
110. ▶ Pakistan test-fired Ghauri ballistic missile capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear warheads up to a distance of 1300 kilometres.
111. ▶ Pakistan will launch its first manned mission in 2022, same year that India has planned to launch its own manned space mission Gaganyaan. It will be attempted by Pakistan with China's help.
112. ▶ Paytm launched QR-based smartphone payment settlement service in Japan, Named *PayPay*, in collaboration with SoftBank and Yahoo Japan Corporation. It is built around its QRtech, which is deployed in India to allow customers to make offline payments.
113. ▶ Philips selected 19 start-up companies for its first global start-up collaboration programme named 'AI in Healthcare for Radiology, Ultrasound and Oncology'. It will be conducted at Philips' innovation hubs in Bengaluru, Cambridge (US), Eindhoven (Netherlands) and Shanghai (China).
114. ▶ QS Asia University Ranking 2018 -
 - ▶ Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-Bombay) has topped the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Asia University Rankings from India followed by IIT Delhi and IIT Madras.
 - ▶ Eight Indian universities have figured among the top 100 in the list of Asia's top 50 universities.
 - ▶ There are 75 universities from India in the top 500 Asia list.
 - ▶ National University of Singapore is ranked as Asia's best university, followed by University of Hong Kong, Nanyang Technological University (Singapore), Tsinghua University (China) and Peking University (China).
115. ▶ Qatar announced to leave Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from January 2019 and focus more on production of natural gas.
116. ▶ RTI rating by Access Info Europe and the Centre for Law and Democracy, created by Transparency International -
 - ▶ India ranked at 6th position out of 123 countries, after a downfall of 4 positions from the previous year. India got a score of 128 out of 150. It noted that India doesn't provide protection for whistleblowers.

- ✎ In India, total RTIs filed in 2017 were: 66.6 lakh, out of which, 4.8 lakh were rejected. Total number of second appeals were 18.5 lakh and total penalty imposed by CIC is 1.9 crore.
- ✎ Top 5 - Afghanistan, Mexico, Serbia, Sri Lanka, Slovenia. Austria Ranked Lowest.
- 117. ▶ Russia's Akademik Lomonosov, world's first floating nuclear power plant (FNPP) become operational. For power generation, it has been fitted with two modified KLT-40 naval propulsion nuclear reactors (each of 35 MW capacity) together providing up to 70 MW of electricity and 300 MW of heat. It is named after Russian Academician Mikhail Lomonosov.
- 118. ▶ SBI signed MoU with Kathmandu-based National Banking Institute (NBI) for development of human resources of NBI. SBI will impart education, training and development to facilitate transformation of NBI's HR department.
- 119. ▶ Saudi Arabia and UAE announced USD 500 million in aid Yemen, the war torn Arab Nation.
- 120. ▶ South Korea and USA resumed their battalion-level marine exercises "Korea Marine Exercise Program (KMEP)", in Pohang (South Korea).
- 121. ▶ Sri Lanka President Maithripala Sirisena announced to lift suspension of parliament as international pressure mounted on him to open legislature and resolve a leadership struggle.
 - ✎ Recently, Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena removed Ranil Wickremesinghe as prime minister of Sri Lanka, amid Political Turmoil because of Differences between President Sirisena and PM Vikramasinghe. Mahinda Rajapaksha was appointed as new Prime Minister.
- 122. ▶ Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) is only Indian company among top 10 firms to get foreign labour certification for the H-1B visas for the fiscal year 2018, according to data from US Department of Labour.
 - ✎ H-1B visas are the most sought-after among Indian IT professionals. London-headquartered Ernst and Young emerged as top employer to have received the certification.
- 123. ▶ Telangana government and British Council signed MoU to strengthen educational and cultural cooperation.
- 124. ▶ Thailand became first Southeast Asian nation to legalise use of marijuana and kratom for medical use and research.
 - ✎ Also, Israel's parliament (Knesset) approved exporting of medical marijuana, making Israel 3rd country after Netherlands and Canada, to take its medical cannabis global.
- 125. ▶ Times Higher Education *Global University Employability Rankings 2018* -
 - ✎ India's IISc Bangalore (28), IIT Delhi (58) and IIM Ahmedabad (144) have made it to Top 150 Universities list.
 - ✎ Top 5 -
 - ✎ Harvard University (USA)
 - ✎ California Institute of Technology (USA)
 - ✎ Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA)
 - ✎ University of Cambridge (UK)
 - ✎ Stanford University (USA)
- 126. ▶ Trident Juncture 18 (TRJE18) NATO-led military exercise to be held in Norway in October and November 2018, as largest of its kind in Norway since 1980s. 50,000 participants from 31 nations will take part, including 10,000 vehicles, 250 aircraft and 65 vessels.
- 127. ▶ UAE President Sheikh Khalifa bin Zayed Al Nahyan declared 2019 as Year of Tolerance, an extension of the Year of Zayed which has run in 2018. In 2016, UAE introduced first post of Minister of State for Tolerance and launched National Tolerance Programme.
- 128. ▶ UK India Business Council released its report named *Beyond the Top 200-Effective International Collaboration for Indian Higher Education*, -
 - ✎ By 2030 India will have the largest number of people in the world of college-going age - 140 million. Currently there are 736 universities in India educating 28.6 million students. India will need another 1,500 institutions by 2030 to accommodate huge influx of students.
- 129. ▶ UK-based charity Oxfam International's 'Commitment to Reducing Inequality (CRI) Index' -
 - ✎ India ranked 147th among 157 countries, describing country's poor commitment to reducing inequality.
 - ✎ Top 5 - Denmark (1), Germany (2), Finland (3), Australia (4), Norway (5).
 - ✎ Bottom 5 - Nigeria (157), Uzbekistan (156), Haiti (155), Chad (154), Sierra Leone (153).
 - ✎ Neighbours - Bhutan (152), Bangladesh (148), Nepal (139), Pakistan (137), Sri Lanka (102), China (81)
- 130. ▶ UN General Assembly adopted a framework to strengthen international response to global refugee crisis, with USA and Hungary only nations to have voted in against the Global Compact on Refugees.
- 131. ▶ UN will launch a project on creating an "inventory" of art forms, craftsmanship and other intangible cultural heritage of the country. A total of 13 intangible cultural heritage elements from India have been inscribed till date on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

132. ▶ UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) approved India's proposal to observe an International Year of Millets in 2023. FAO also approved India's membership to Executive Board of UN World Food Program (WFP) for 2020 and 2021.
133. ▶ UNESCO added six new elements into its list of *intangible heritages* -
- ▶ Chidaoba - Georgia's traditional wrestling.
 - ▶ Hurling - Field game from Ireland. It dates back 2,000 years
 - ▶ Reggae - Jamaican music originating from marginalized groups.
 - ▶ Raiho-shin - Japanese rituals used to admonish laziness and teach children good behavior.
 - ▶ As-Samer - consists mainly of dancing and singing and practiced across many areas of Jordan.
 - ▶ Spring festive rites of Kazakhstan's horse breeders - Marks beginning of a new annual horse-breeding cycle.
134. ▶ US Based Merriam-Webster declared 'Justice' as its 2018 Word Of The Year.
- ▶ Earlier, 'Toxic' was chosen as 'Word of the Year 2018' by Oxford Dictionaries. Also, Dictionary.com chosen *misinformation* as its word of the year.
135. ▶ US International Trade Commission ruled against putting an anti-dumping duty on the import of a synthetic fluoropolymer from India and China. Fluoropolymer is a key ingredient in the non-stick coating for pans and other cookware.
- ▶ Without the orders, PTFE imports from India would have been subject to an anti-dumping duty of 22.78 %.
136. ▶ US, Mexico and Canada signed new US-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) which will replace North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). USMCA will govern over a trillion dollars worth of trade between three countries.
137. ▶ US-based Hyperloop Transportation Technologies or HyperloopTT launched first full-scale transportation capsule to be operational in 2019, named *Quintero One*. Its a 32-metre 5 tonne capsule, made a specially made dual-layer smart composite material called "Vibranium".
- ▶ It can move at speeds of more than 750 miles (1,200 kilometers) per hour and has a capacity to hold 30 to 40 passengers.
 - ▶ In May 2018, Andhra Pradesh signed Mou with HyperloopTT to set up Hyperloop transportation system connecting Anantapur, Amaravati, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam, as part of 700-800-km-long integrated public transit system.
 - ▶ Maharashtra government too signed pact with Richard Branson-led Virgin Group to build Mumbai-Pune Hyperloop.
 - ▶ HyperloopTT would build the first Hyperloop system in China in the Guizhou province.
138. ▶ USA based IT Firm IBM acquired software Firm Red Hat in a \$34 billion cash and debt deal, as IBM's biggest ever acquisition so far. It will become a unit of IBM's Hybrid Cloud division.
139. ▶ USA exempted India from imposition of certain sanctions for development of strategically-located Chabahar port in Iran, along with construction of railway line connecting it with landlocked Afghanistan. This exception relates to reconstruction assistance and economic development for Afghanistan. These activities are vital for ongoing support of Afghanistan's growth and humanitarian relief.
- ▶ US has imposed toughest ever sanctions on defiant Iran aimed at altering the Iranian regime's "behaviour". It covered Iran's banking and energy sectors and reinstate penalties for countries and companies in Europe, Asia and elsewhere that do not halt Iranian oil imports.
 - ▶ However, eight countries — India, China, Italy, Greece, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey — were temporarily allowed to continue buying Iranian oil as they showed significant reduction in oil purchase from Iran.
140. ▶ USA merged its Consulate General with its new embassy in Israel into single diplomatic mission in Jerusalem, as part of US's global efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness of its operations. Earlier in May 2018, US moved its Israeli Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
- ▶ US will establish new Palestinian Affairs Unit inside embassy in Jerusalem to continue reporting, outreach and programming in West Bank and Gaza as well as with Palestinians in Jerusalem.
141. ▶ USA will pull out of three-decade-old Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty signed with Russia during Cold War.
- ▶ INF was crucial Cold War-era treaty banning development, testing and possession of short and medium range ground-launched nuclear missiles with range of 500-5,000 km, signed in December 1987 between USA and USSR.
 - ▶ It was central to ending arms race between two superpowers during cold war and protected America's NATO allies in Europe from Soviet missile attacks. It was designed to provide measure of some strategic stability on continent of Europe.
 - ▶ USA alleged that Russia has violated treaty and has been violating it for many years. This violation comes after Russia's alleged development and deployment of Novator 9M729 missile (also known as SSC-8), that could strike Europe at short notice.
 - ▶ It will allow US new nuclear weapon options in Pacific, to counter China's growing influence and may also trigger new Arms race between USA & Russia.
142. ▶ Ukraine approved ending two-decade-old treaty on friendship, cooperation and partnership between Ukraine and Russia. Treaty will be terminated on April 1, 2019 amid rising tensions between two countries.

143. ▶ Ukraine began series of large-scale air force exercises with USA and other NATO countries, named *Clear Sky 2018*.
144. ▶ Ukraine's parliament imposed martial law for 30 days in country to counter differences with Russia, after a weekend naval confrontation off disputed Crimean Peninsula in which Russia fired on and seized three Ukrainian vessels.
145. ▶ United Arab Emirates (UAE) Govt. increased representation of Emirati women in Federal National Council to 50 % (from 22.5 % currently), to enforce women empowerment.
146. ▶ United Arab Emirates resumed its diplomatic services at its embassy in Syria, after six years of suspension, amid syrian civil war.
147. ▶ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization (WHO) reiterated India's status as polio-free country, after some oral polio vaccine vials being found contaminated with the type-2 polio virus.
- ▶ They also asserted that all vaccines provided under Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) are safe and urged people to get their children vaccinated.
 - ▶ India was certified polio-free in March 2014 and it still continues to remain vigilant against all three types of polioviruses. Last polio case due to wild poliovirus in country was detected on 13 January 2011.
148. ▶ United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released special report on global warming in Incheon (South Korea), with contributions from 91 authors from 40 countries. It will be key scientific input in upcoming Katowice Climate Change Conference in Poland in December 2018.
- ▶ It shows how half degree of warming makes big difference, adversely impacting global population and overall ecosystem.
 - ▶ It is possible to meet new warming target, with nations taking rapid transitions over 10 to 20 years and reach net zero around 2050, 25 years earlier than planned under earlier 2-degree goal.
 - ▶ It lists four pathways to curb global warming and through which the 1.5 degree target can be achieved. Also, Varying amounts between 100 to 1000 gigatons (billion tonnes) of CO₂ needs to be removed from atmosphere in these four pathways.
 - ▶ Advantages of keeping global temperature rise within 1.5 degrees celsius -
 - ▶ By 2100, global sea level rise would be 10 cm lower with global warming of 1.5 degrees compared with 2 degrees Celsius.
 - ▶ Arctic Ocean free of sea ice in summer would be once per century with global warming of 1.5 degrees, compared with at least once per decade with 2 degrees Celsius.
 - ▶ Coral reefs will decline by 70-90% with global warming of 1.5 degrees, whereas virtually all (over 99%) would be lost with 2 degrees Celsius.
 - ▶ Climate-related risks to health, livelihoods, food security, water supply, human security and economic growth are projected to increase with global warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius and increase further with 2 degrees Celsius.
149. ▶ United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA) issued special stamps with Diyas lamps (special event sheet) to commemorate India Hindu festival of Diwali, in denomination of US \$1.15.
150. ▶ United Nations Security Council lifted sanctions against Eritrea, after nine years of imposition. The Security Council had imposed an arms embargo, asset freeze and a travel ban on Eritrea, amidst claims that the northeast African nation, supported al-Shabab militants in Somalia.
151. ▶ United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group have formed strategic partnership to support efforts eliminate hunger globally by 2030. Alibaba Cloud will work with WFP to develop digital "World Hunger Map", to monitor global hunger and operations to end scourge by 2030, one of UN's key Sustainable Development goals.
152. ▶ Western Pacific nation Palau became first country to ban many kinds of sunscreen, to protect its coral reefs from chemicals that cause significant damage.
153. ▶ With a lifespan of roughly 10 years, China's Tiangong space station (also known as Heavenly Palace) will become replacement of International Space Station, which will retire in 2024. Three astronauts will be permanently stationed in 60-tonne orbiting lab, which will enable crew to conduct biological and microgravity research.
- ▶ ISS is a collaboration between US, Russia, Canada, Europe and Japan. It has been in operation since 1998.
154. ▶ World Bank Ease of Doing Business Report 2018 (16th Edition) -
- ▶ India saw a surge of 23 places with 77th rank in current report. In Previous report, India was ranked 100th. Overall, India has improved by 57 places in 2 years, compared to 130 in 2016 and 77 in 2018.
 - ▶ Top 10 - New Zealand (1), Singapore (2), Denmark (3), Hong Kong (4), South Korea (5), Georgia (6), Norway (7), USA (8), UK (9), Macedonia (10).
 - ▶ Bottom 5 - Somalia (190), Eritrea (189), Venezuela (188), Yemen (187), Libya (186)
 - ▶ Neighbours - China (46), Pakistan (136), Bangladesh (176), Nepal (110), Sri Lanka (100)
155. ▶ World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation (IFC) launched its \$1 billion masala bond programme in the US and Europe, aimed at funding rapidly expanding investment activities of IFC in India.

- ▶ Masala bonds are rupee-denominated borrowings issued overseas. IFC uses them to raise rupee funds overseas and brings the proceeds to India for investments.
- 156. ▶ World Bank announced concessional loan worth USD 195 million to Nepal to reform country's financial and energy sectors.
- 157. ▶ World Bank announced funding of up to \$1 billion for the Indonesian government to supplement relief and reconstruction efforts in wake of the earthquake and tsunami that hit the country last month.
- 158. ▶ World Bank approved US\$155.7 million loan to Nepal to build and maintain bridges, and improve food security of vulnerable households and communities.
- 159. ▶ World Bank released its East Asia and Pacific economy update October 2018 edition.
 - ▶ Countries of the East Asia and Pacific region will grow at 6.3 per cent in 2018 mainly due to China's moderate growth, down from 6.6 % growth of region in 2017.
- 160. ▶ World Bank report titled *In the Dark: How Much Do Power Sector Distortions Cost South Asia*. As per the report -
 - ▶ Efficiency gap in India's power sector costs the Indian economy 4% every year (\$86 billion in 2016 FY).
 - ▶ Rural household's income in India can be increased by \$9.4 billion and business losses worth USD 22.7 billion can be eliminated with 24 hours access to power supply. In 2016, around 20% of electricity generated was lost during transmission and distribution, as highest loss rate in world.
 - ▶ The consumption of groundwater in India has increased by 700% from 1950 to 2014.
 - ▶ Reliable access to electricity will have positive impact on Gender Equality by increasing women's employment and girls' study time. It will lead to lower use of kerosene lamps which would improve environment. Energy prices should be rationalised to reflect actual cost of supply.
- 161. ▶ World Economic Forum Gender Gap Index 2018 -
 - ▶ India ranked at 108th position, same rank as 2017.
 - ▶ Top 10 - Iceland (1), Norway (2), Sweden (3), Finland (4), Nicaragua (5).
- 162. ▶ World Health Organization (WHO) launched first global guidelines on sanitation and health, aimed at securing health and wellbeing for everyone, everywhere by considering sanitation as fundamental foundation of human health and development. By adopting these, countries can significantly reduce diarrhoeal deaths due to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene.
- 163. ▶ World Trade Organization has set up a panel to look into the India-US export-subsidy dispute, on request of the US to examine the allegations on India's export incentive measures.
 - ▶ US has challenged India's export subsidy programmes such as Merchandise Exports from India Scheme in the WTO, stating that these initiatives were harming its companies.
 - ▶ According to US, all WTO members, including India, are required to provide subsidies consistent with provisions of WTO's Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures.
- 164. ▶ World's Most Innovative University Report, by Reuters news agency rankings -
 - ▶ It was first published in 2015, since then there has been no mention of any Indian university in the list.
 - ▶ In top 100, 48 universities are from North America, 23 from Asia, 27 from Europe and 2 from Middle East. US dominated with 46 universities among top 100.
 - ▶ Top 10 -
 - ▶ Stanford University (US)
 - ▶ Massachusetts Institute of Technology (US)
 - ▶ Harvard University (US)
 - ▶ University of Pennsylvania (US)
 - ▶ University of Washington(US)
 - ▶ University of Texas System(US)
 - ▶ KU Leuven (Belgium)
 - ▶ Imperial College London (United Kingdom)
 - ▶ University of North Carolina (US)
 - ▶ Vanderbilt University (US)
- 165. ▶ 'Toxic' has been chosen as the 'Word of the Year 2018' by Oxford Dictionaries, Stating that it had become a "descriptor for year's most talked about topics". While, Dictionary.com chosen *misinformation* as its word of the year.

