



Current Affairs - May to July 2018

Month Type



- **230** Current Affairs were found in **Last Three Months** for Type - **International**

(Showing **140** Important Ones)

International

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

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

Top 5 are -

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

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

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

- ▶ North Korea extended its Clocks by 30 Minutes, to synchronize its time zone with that south Korea, which was pulled back 30 minutes 3 years ago. Its a major step towards unification among 2 Koreas looking for peace.
- ▶ 12th Global Peace Index (GPI) 2018 by Australian Think Tank Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), Rankng 163 Nations -
 - ▶ Top 5 - Iceland (1), New Zealand (2), Austria (3), Portugal (4), Denmark (5)
 - ▶ Bottom 5 - Syria (163), Afghanistan (162), South Sudan (161), Iraq (160), Somalia (159)
 - ▶ Neighbours - Nepal (84), Pakistan (151), **Sri Lanka (67)**, Bangladesh (93)
 - ▶ BRICS - Brazil (106), Russia (154), **India (136)**, China (112), South Africa (125)
 - ▶ India improved as compared to 137th Rank in 2017 List.
- ▶ 18th International Children's Film Festival began in Kolkata, to screen 36 films from 17 countries. It is organised by Cine Central in collaboration with UNICEF.
- ▶ 1st Asia Power Index Australia Based Lowy Institute -
 - ▶ Termed as *giant of the future*, India is ranked 4th out of 25 nations in Asia-Pacific region. As per Report, India trails behind in indicators of defence networks and economic relationships.
 - ▶ A country's overall power is its weighted average across eight measures of power - *economic resources, military capability, resilience, future trends, diplomatic influence, economic relationships, defence networks and cultural influence.*
 - ▶ USA, China And Japan are top 3. While Russia is at 5th Place.
- ▶ 2018 *Soft Power 30* Index, by UK-based firm Portland and University of Southern California -
 - ▶ UK topped the list, with France placed second. List does not feature India. Germany was ranked 3rd, followed by USA.
 - ▶ India does not feature in global list, but is ranked 8th 10 countries in Asia.
- ▶ 2018 A.T. Kearney Foreign Direct Investment Confidence Index (25 Nations) -
 - ▶ Top 5 - USA, Canada, Germany, UK, China.

- India is ranked at 11th, down from 8th Position in China.
- 9. ▶ 3rd BRICS Film Festival held in Durban (South Africa), along with International Durban Film Festival (DIFF). Last day of festival was celebrated as India Country Day. Indian winners of Film Festival -
 - Best Actress - Bhanita Das, Village Rockstars
 - Best Film - Newton by Amit Masurkar
 - Special Jury Award - Village Rockstars by Rima Das
- 10. ▶ *End of Childhood Index 2018* report by global child rights group named *Save the Children*.
 - India ranked 113th in list of 175 countries.
 - Top 5 - Singapore (1), Slovenia (2), Norway (3), Sweden (4), Finland (5)
 - Bottom 5 - Niger (175), Mali (174), Central African Republic (173), Chad (172), South Sudan (171)
- 11. ▶ According to FDI Report 2018 by FDI Intelligence (division of Financial Times Ltd.), USA surpassed India as top destination to attract Greenfield FDI investment (\$87.4 billion FDI).
 - Number of greenfield FDI projects in India during year fell sharply by 21% to 637.
- 12. ▶ According to International Service for the Acquisition of Agri-Biotech Applications (ISAAA) '*Global Status of Commercialized Biotech/GM Crops in 2017*' report -
 - India with 11.4 million hectares (mh) has world's 5th largest area cultivated under genetically modified (GM) crops in 2017. India's entire GM crop area is under single crop BT Cotton incorporating genes from *Bacillus thuringiensis* or Bt soil bacterium coding for resistance against heliothis bollworm insect pests.
 - USA has highest area under transgenic crops (75 mh), followed by Brazil (50.2 mh), Argentina (23.6 mh) and Canada (13.1 mh).
 - In 2017, farmers planted 189.8 mh under transgenic crops, as against 1.7 mh in 1996, when transgenic crops were grown commercially for first time.
 - Highest share in world's total 189.8 mh GM crop area in 2017 is of soyabean (94.1 mh), followed by maize (59.7 mh), cotton (24.1 mh).
- 13. ▶ According to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) -
 - Total nuclear warheads with 9 nuclear countries (*USA, Russia, Britain, France, China, India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea*).
 - Out of 14465 nuclear warheads at beginning of 2018, 3750 are actually deployed.
 - Top Holders are -
 - Russia - 6850
 - USA - 6450
 - France - 300
 - China - 280
 - Pakistan 140-150
 - Britain - 215
 - India - 130-140
 - Israel - 80
 - North Korea - 10-20
- 14. ▶ Acting New Zealand PM Winston Peters demanded Australia to change their flag, As the Flag of New Zealand looks similar to that of Australia. New Zealand flag was adopted 52 years before Australian flag and was adopted in 1902, replacing union jack. Australian flag was adopted in 1954.
- 15. ▶ Aditya Puri, managing director of HDFC Bank is only Indian in Barron's top 30 global CEO list 2018, Featuring for fourth consecutive year.
- 16. ▶ AfrAsia Bank Global Wealth Migration Review -
 - India is named 6th wealthiest country in world, with total wealth of 8,230 billion dollars.
 - USA is ranked top with total wealth of 62,584 Billion dollars, followed by China with wealth of 24,803 billion dollars and Japan (19,522 billion dollars).
- 17. ▶ African Nations Ethiopia and Eritrea declared end to their long conflict, with marking launch of a commercial flight from Ethiopia to Eritrea in 20 years.
 - Eritrea was once a province of Ethiopia. In 1993, Eritrea separated after an independence struggle. Demarcation of shared border caused a brutal conflict in 1998-2000, in which 80,000 people were killed.
- 18. ▶ After USA withdrawing recently from UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC), UN General Assembly elected Iceland to replace USA. Iceland's term will be valid until December 31, 2019.

19. ▶ As part of its plan to connect billions of people who are still offline, Facebook will launch Athena, its own Internet satellite, early in 2019. The project is designed to *efficiently provide broadband access to unserved and underserved areas throughout the world.*
20. ▶ As per Future Development blog of World Bank's Brookings Institute titled as *The start of a new poverty narrative -*
 - ▶ India is no longer a nation having world's largest poor population. Nigeria has now overtaken India with largest number of extremely poor people at 87 million in early 2018.
 - ▶ India is moving down in global poverty ranking. From 125 million poor people in 2016, India had just 73 million people in poorest of poor index as of May 2018.
 - ▶ Approx 44 Indians are being taken out of poverty every minute, highest rate in world.
21. ▶ As per a UN Report, Delhi will surpass Tokyo (Japan) as most populous city in world by 2028.
22. ▶ Asia's first arbitration centre specialised in intellectual property, called *International Arbitration Centre in Tokyo (IACT)*, will be opened in Tokyo (Japan) in September 2018. It will have around 12 arbitrators from various parts of the world, who would try to resolve disputes within a time period of 1 year. IACT would also handle disputes between non-Japanese companies if both parties agree.
23. ▶ Azerbaijan inaugurated a pipeline at Sangachal Terminal, creating first direct route to transport gas from one of world's largest fields to Europe bypassing Russia. Project is worth USD 40-billion. It consists of 3 linked pipelines that will bring gas from Azerbaijani Shah Deniz 2 field across Azerbaijan, Georgia, Turkey, Greece, Albania and Adriatic Sea to southern Italy.
24. ▶ Bangladesh's first communication satellite Bangabandhu-1 will be launched by SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket from Kennedy Space Center Launch Complex 39A. It will provide wide range of broadcast and communication services throughout Bangladesh. It is built by Thales Alenia Space, a Franco-Italian aerospace manufacturer. It is named after Bangladesh's *Father of the Nation - Sheikh Mujibur Rahman.*
25. ▶ Blood Moon 2018 or century's longest total lunar eclipse of 1 hour 43 minutes occurred on July 27-28, 2018. It was majorly seen in Eastern Hemisphere including Central Asia, Eastern Africa and South East Asia.
 - ▶ Moon was gradually covered by Earth's shadow and totality phase was seen on July 28 and total eclipse lasted up to 2h 43m. During this time, Moon was located at apogee (i.e. at farthest from Earth) in its orbit and moved at slower speed in its orbit, making it longest duration of total eclipse of this century.
 - ▶ Such long duration of total lunar eclipses earlier had occurred on July 16, 2000 for totality duration of 1 hour 46 minutes and on June 15, 2011 for totality duration of 1 hour 40 minutes.
26. ▶ BrandZ Top 100 Most Valuable Global Brands List 2018 -
 - ▶ HDFC Bank is only Indian brand in List, ranked 60th.
 - ▶ Top 4 - Google (1), Apple (2), Amazon (3), Microsoft (4).
27. ▶ Canadian Parliament passed a historic bill legalizing recreational use of marijuana nationwide, becoming second country to do so.
28. ▶ Caribbean Nation Dominican Republic and China established diplomatic relations, amid China's growing influence. With this, Dominican Republic has broken 77-year alliance with Taiwan.
29. ▶ Central Bank of Argentina raised interest rates by 300 basis points to fight inflationary pressures. Interest rates have been raised from 27.25 to 30.25 %, to prop up its ailing currency from sliding further against US dollar.
30. ▶ Chemical weapons watchdog Organisation for Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) has granted itself new powers to help identify those responsible for chemical attacks in Syria, as a proposal tabled by United Kingdom. Until now, OPCW was only able to say whether chemical weapons were used – but not who had used them.
31. ▶ China has built world's longest cross-sea bridge with length 55 KMs, connecting Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China. It took 7 years to complete, is six lanes wide and comprises of 4 tunnels and 4 artificial islands. It has cost approx 20 Billion USD.
 - ▶ World's longest bridge is also in china, known as Danyang-Kunshan Grand Bridge, with 164.7 KM Length.
 - ▶ China also aims to deliver its domestically developed AG600 by 2022, world's largest amphibious aircraft.
32. ▶ China launched a hyperspectral imaging satellite 'Gaofen-5' for comprehensive observation of atmosphere, including air pollution. It is first China-developed satellite that can monitor air pollution.
33. ▶ China launched a new communication satellite named *APSTAR-6C*. It will offer TV transmission, communication, Internet and multimedia services to customers in Asia-Pacific region.
34. ▶ China launched an optical remote sensing satellite which will be used to monitor its Belt and Road Initiative, named Gaofen-11.
35. ▶ China's first domestically manufactured aircraft carrier known only as "Type 001A" started sea trials. Its name is speculated to be *Shandong*, after province of same name. It is approx 315 metres long, with displacement capacity of about 55,000 tonnes (70,000 loaded).
36. ▶ Chinese e-Commerce giant Alibaba acquired Pakistan's Largest e-commerce firm *Daraz.pk* for \$150 Million.
37. ▶ Colombia Became first South American Nation to Join North Atlantic Treaty Organization as global partner. NATO reached partnership agreement with Colombia in May 2017, just after Colombia signed peace agreement with communist Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), ending longest civil conflict in Latin America.

38. ▶ Cyclonic Storm Sagar, the strongest tropical cyclone to ever make landfall in Somalia (East Africa), and first named cyclone of 2018 North Indian Ocean cyclone season. It traversed entire Gulf of Aden, affected Yemen and made landfall over northwestern Somalia.
39. ▶ Denmark banned wearing of face veils (burqa and niqab) in public places, a move that will criminalise Muslim women who choose to wear niqab or burqa.
40. ▶ East African Nation Uganda's parliament passed a law to impose a controversial tax on people using social media platforms. It imposes a 200 shilling (\$0.05, £0.04) daily levy on people using internet messaging platforms like Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber and Twitter, arguing that social media encouraged gossip.
41. ▶ East African Nations Ethiopia and Eritrea agreed to fully implement a peace deal reached in 2000, ending 20-year war between two countries. Eritrea seceded from Ethiopia in 1993, and the two countries fought a border war from 1998 to 2000.
42. ▶ European Nation Hungary will withdraw from Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration agreement, to be adopted in December 2018. Hungarian government opposed migration, arguing that UN agreement could aid flow of migrants to Europe and force countries to shelter them. USA withdrew from it last year.
43. ▶ European Parliament rejected a controversial European Union copyright law proposal that was proposed by Beatles legend Paul McCartney against creators of Wikipedia.
- ✎ It proposed to put more responsibility on websites to check for copyright infringements and forced platforms to pay for linking to news.
 - ✎ Wikipedia went down on July 4 in Poland, Spain and Italy, in protest against the Draft law.
 - ✎ The two highly contested parts of the law are -
 - ✎ Article 11 -
 - ✎ Required online platforms to pay publishers a fee if they link to their news content. It proposed to protect newspapers and other outlets from internet giants like Google and Facebook using their material without payment.
 - ✎ However, article failed to clearly define what constitutes a link and hence, could be manipulated by governments to curb freedom of speech on Internet.
 - ✎ Article 13 -
 - ✎ Proposed greater responsibility on websites to enforce copyright laws. It would make online platforms legally liable for copyrighted material put on the web by users.
 - ✎ It means that social media sites and other websites would check every piece of content uploaded including texts, images, sounds or code. It is too expensive for most companies.
 - ✎ Article has been most controversial and it faced most resistance from critics.
44. ▶ European Union (EU) and Japan have signed Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), as biggest ever trade deal negotiated by EU and creates free trade zone covering nearly third of the world's GDP. Key Fats Include -
- ✎ Eases up Agricultural exports. It ensures protection in Japan of more than 200 high-quality European agricultural products (Geographical Indications (GIs)), and protection of several Japanese GIs in EU.
 - ✎ Services markets - Opens up services markets, in particular financial services, e-commerce, telecommunications and transport.
 - ✎ Procurement markets - Guarantees EU companies access to large procurement markets of 48 large Japanese cities.
 - ✎ Automotive sector - Addresses sensitivities of EU in this sector and elimination of customs duties in transition periods of up to 7 years.
 - ✎ Trade and sustainable development .
 - ✎ Data protection.
45. ▶ European Union Film Festival (EUFF) began in New Delhi on 18th June at the Siri Fort Auditorium, With 24 latest European films from 23 EU Member States. The festival will traverse through 11 cities in India till 31st August.
46. ▶ European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) brought into full effect, clarifying individual rights to personal data collected by companies for targeted advertising and other purposes.
- ✎ GDPR sets new rules for how companies manage and share personal data. Though rules apply only to citizens of European Union, global nature of internet means that nearly every online service will be affected.
 - ✎ GDPR sets a higher than ever bar for obtaining personal data on the internet, higher seen before. Rules will also force companies that suffer data breaches to disclose them within 72 hours.
47. ▶ Facebook co-founder Mark Zuckerberg overtook Warren Buffett as world's third-richest person, with \$81 Billion Net Worth. He is now only behind Amazon founder Jeff Bezos (\$141 Billion) and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates (\$93 Billion).
48. ▶ Facebook obtained a licence to set up a startup incubator in China despite its website being banned in country since 2009. The \$30-million subsidiary will be located in Hangzhou city, to reportedly make small investments and give advice to local businesses.

49. ▶ Financial Action Task Force (FATF) placed Pakistan in its 'grey list' for its failure to check activities of terrorists operating from and within its territory, including failure to curb Terror Financing.
- ▶ This may hurt Pakistan's economy as well as its international standing and make it tough for it to receive international funding.
 - ▶ FATF is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 to combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
50. ▶ Forbes' *World's Most Powerful People 2018* List (75 People) -
- ▶ Xi Jinping (China's President) is at top for first time ever.
 - ▶ Top 5 - Chinese President XI Jinping (1), Russian President Vladimir Putin (2), US President Donald Trump (3), German Chancellor Angela Merkel (4), Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos (5).
 - ▶ 2 Indians named in list - PM Modi (9th) and Reliance Chairman Mukesh Ambani (32nd).
51. ▶ France will reintroduce compulsory national service for all 16-year-olds. French boys and girls would do a minimum of 1 month service in first phase which would focus on voluntary teaching and working with charities among others. 2nd phase will be voluntary and focus on areas linked to defence and security.
52. ▶ France banned smartphones, tablets and other internet-enabled devices in schools, applicable for pupils aged between 3 - 15 years.
53. ▶ German conglomerate Bayer completed its \$63-billion takeover of US-based Monsanto to create world's biggest agro-chemical and seed company.
54. ▶ Global Flight Pricing Report by Melbourne-based Rome2rio Low-cost carriers IndiGo & Air India among top 5 cheapest airlines in world in providing international connectivity, ranked 2nd and 5th position. Air Asia X is named as cheapest airline in world.
55. ▶ Global Innovation Index (GII) 2018, by Cornell University, INSEAD and World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) -
- ▶ India ranked 57th, improving from its last year rank of 60.
 - ▶ Top 6 - Switzerland (1), Netherlands (2), Sweden (3), United Kingdom (4), Singapore (5), USA (6)
 - ▶ Neighbours - China (17), Bangladesh (116), Pakistan (109), Sri Lanka (88), Nepal (108)
56. ▶ Global Military Expenditure Report 2017 by Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) -
- ▶ India surpassed France to become 5th largest military spender.
 - ▶ Top five (Amount in Billion USD) - US (610), China (228), Saudi Arabia (69.4), Russia (66.3) and India (63.9).
57. ▶ Google launched Android Things (codenamed Brillo), a variant of Android operating system for Internet of Things (IoT) devices, aiming to enable IoT machines developers to be built faster, cheaper and more secure.
- ▶ *Android Things* is aimed to be used with low-power and memory constrained Internet of Things (IoT) devices, which are usually built from different microcontroller unit (MCU) platforms.
58. ▶ Greece and Republic of Macedonia reached a historic agreement to end a bitter 27-year name dispute that kept Macedonia out of international institutions such as Nato and EU.
- ▶ Macedonia naming dispute is a political dispute over use of name "Macedonia" between Greece and Republic of Macedonia, formerly a region within Yugoslavia.
 - ▶ Agreement says that Republic of Macedonia will be Known as *Republic of Northern Macedonia*, ending the naming dispute.
 - ▶ Deal reached by two countries' prime ministers is expected to be signed by their foreign ministers soon. After that, Macedonia's parliament would vote on it, and if it approved, Macedonian President Gjorge Ivanov's signature would be needed.
 - ▶ However, Macedonian President Mr. Ivanov said that he will not sign the accord to change his country's name.
59. ▶ Guatemala (Central America) and Paraguay (South America) moved their Israeli Embassy to Jerusalem, after USA recently moved its Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
60. ▶ HDFC has been ranked as 5th biggest public company globally in 'consumer financial services category' on Forbes' list. American Express topped category, while Indiabulls Housing Finance is only other Indian company (at 13th place). In overall list topped by China's ICBC, HDFC took 321st place. There are a total of 58 Indian companies on the overall list of 2000 firms, with Reliance Industries (83rd) as Best in India.
61. ▶ Healthcare Access and Quality Index Data for 195 countries from Global Burden of Disease Study 2016 by Lancet -
- ▶ India ranked 145th.
 - ▶ Top five - Iceland (1), Norway (2), Netherlands (3), Luxembourg (4), Finland and Australia (5th rank each)
 - ▶ Countries with lowest scores are Central African Republic (195), Somalia (194), Guinea-Bissau (193), Chad (192), and Afghanistan (191).
 - ▶ China (48th), Sri Lanka (71st), Bangladesh (133rd), Nepal (149th), Pakistan (154th).
62. ▶ IFFCO (Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative) and Indian Potash Ltd (IPL) acquired 37 % stake in JPMC (Jordan Phosphate Mines Company), Jordan's largest mining and chemical firm, for INR 900 crores.






















63. ▶ IMD World Competitiveness Rankings (63 countries) -
📌 India rose one place to 44th. China is ranked 13th.
📌 Top 5 - US (1), Hong Kong (2), Singapore (3), Netherlands (4), Switzerland (5).
64. ▶ India and UAE signed MoU to create a bilateral Artificial Intelligence Bridge that envisages the generation of \$20 billion in economic benefits during the next decade. It was signed During Visit of Deepak Bagla to UAE, managing director and CEO of Invest India.
65. ▶ India become 69th shareholder of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.
📌 European Bank is headquartered in London (UK). President is Suma Chakrabarti (Indian Origin).
66. ▶ India dragged USA to World Trade Organisation's (WTO) Dispute Settlement Mechanism over imposition of import duties on steel and aluminium.
📌 In March 2018, USA imposed heavy import tariffs on imported steel and aluminium items, sparking fears of global trade war. USA levied 25% tariff on steel and 10% tariff on aluminium imported from all countries except Canada and Mexico.
67. ▶ India extended financial aid of INR 99 million (approx 10 Crores) to Nepal for construction of 2,700 shallow tube well (STWs) irrigation systems in 12 districts of southern Terai region to boost agricultural productivity. It is final payment for Nepal-Bharat Maitri Irrigation Project, which has seen India release total 227.6 million Nepali rupees to Nepal for implementing this project.
68. ▶ India invited USA President Donald Trump to be chief guest at 2019 Republic Day celebrations. If accepted, Trump will be 2nd serving US President after Barack Obama to be invited as chief guest of Republic Day Parade.
📌 Also, 1st India-USA 2+2 Talks may be held in September 2018. On India's Behalf, Sushma Swaraj (External Affairs Minister) and Nirmla Sitharaman (Defence Minister) will be attending the talks.
69. ▶ India is elected as Vice Chair of Asia Pacific Region of World Customs Organisation (WCO) for 2 years.
📌 WCO is Located in Brussels (Belgium), with 182 customs administrations as Members and Kunio Mikuriya as Secretary General.
70. ▶ India is ranked 6th in global optimism index in second quarter (Q2) of 2018, by Grant Thornton's International Business Report (IBR), a quarterly global business survey. It was topped by Indonesia followed by Netherlands, Austria, Philippines and China.
71. ▶ India moved up 15 places to 73rd in terms of money parked by its citizens with Swiss banks in 2017, while UK remains on top. UK accounted for over 27% (403 billion francs) of total foreign money while India accounted for 0.07%. The money held by Indians rose 50% to 1.01 billion francs (INR 7000 crores).
72. ▶ India named 3rd largest solar market in world in 2017 behind China and USA, in a Mercom Communications report. India had set up record 9.6 GW of solar installations in 2017, more than double 4.3 GW installed in 2016.
73. ▶ India pledged \$5 million for United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) in Near East. Besides, 19 other countries also made pledges for UNRWA at Pledging Conference for UNRWA in New York (US). Sweden pledged US \$250 million over 3 years, \$ 51 million and UAE \$50 million.
📌 India also increased its grant to Global Environment Facility's (GEF) new four-year investment cycle, known as GEF-7 from \$12 million to \$15 million. It was announced at GEF Council meet at Da Nang (Vietnam), and approved \$4.1 billion replenishment of GEF-7.
74. ▶ India ranked 11 in terms of FDI attractiveness, according to AT Kearney report, down from 8 in 2017 and 9 in 2016.
📌 Top 5 - US (1), Canada (2), Germany (3), UK (4), China (5)
75. ▶ India received first shipment of its so far cheapest Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from Russian supplier Gazprom, priced USD 7 per million British Thermal Unit (mBtu), which is around 1.5 USD cheaper from LNG imported from Qatar (India's oldest and largest supplier of LNG).
📌 India is fourth largest importer of LNG, with import dependence 45% to 50 %.
76. ▶ India released grant of Nepalese Rupees (NRs) 18.07 crore for river training and construction of embankments along Lalbakeya, Bagmati and Kamla rivers in Nepal. India also released 33.10 Crore rupees to Nepal towards cost of two road packages of Birgunj-Thori Road being implemented under Postal Highway Projects.
77. ▶ India, Netherlands and Sweden launched first-of-its-kind joint research programme on HIV/AIDS, aimed at harnessing complementary research strengths and diverse expertise of 3 nations to catalyze development of better tools to address epidemic of HIV.
78. ▶ India's Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) bagged order for executing largest hydro power project in Nepal, The 900 Megawatt Arun-3 hydro project placed by SJVN Arun-3 Power Development Company (SAPDC). Order is worth INR 536 Crores.
79. ▶ India's National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) established 2nd Digital Collaborative Opportunities Plaza (SIDCOP) platform in Guiyang (China), as India's second IT corridor in China (1st in Dalian) to provide Indian IT firms access to Chinese software market.
80. ▶ Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) launched China's first India-dedicated publicly offered investment fund, named *Industrial and Commercial Bank Credit Suisse India Market Fund* with over \$3.6 trillion in assets (largest in world).

- ✎ It will invest in exchange-traded funds listed on more than 20 exchanges in Europe and US that are based on Indian market. It will invest in future of Indian economy and track distribution of industrial structure across Indian market.
 - ✎ This fund opens way for Chinese investors and provided good tool for low-threshold investment in India. It is also regarded as significant to boost investments in India.
81. ▶ International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) removed Nepal from its Significant Safety Concern (SSC) list. In 2013, ICAO enlisted Nepal in SSC category as Nepal's compliance to ICAO's standard at that time stood only at 55 % out of standard 60 %.
 82. ▶ Internet Firm Google has been fined a record €4.34bn by European Commission, saying it used Android mobile operating system to illegally *cement its dominant position* in search.
 83. ▶ Ireland People voted to end *abortion ban*, hailed as *a quiet revolution* in a very socially conservative country. Government proposed that law should be changed to allow unrestricted access to abortions up to 12 weeks of pregnancy.
 84. ▶ Israel government enacted a new law which will financially penalize Palestinian Authority for paying stipends to Palestinians killed or jailed by Israel. Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu repeatedly demanded to stop Palestinians from paying stipends to prisoners and their families.
 85. ▶ Israel passed a Controversial Bill declaring that only Jews have right of self-determination in country, defining it as an exclusively Jewish state. It also strips Arabic of its designation as an official language alongside Hebrew, downgrading it to a special status that enables its continued use within Israeli institutions.
 86. ▶ Israel withdrawn its bid for a non-permanent seat at UN Security Council (UNSC) for 2019-2020 term.
 - ✎ UNSC has 5 permanent and 10 non-permanent members who are elected for a two-year term.
 87. ▶ Japan Based Conglomerate Sony Corporation acquired London Based EMI Music Publishing, in a USD 1.9-billion deal. EMI is second-largest music publishing company by revenue. It will add over 2.1 million songs to Sony's huge list, which already owns 2.3 million copyrights.
 88. ▶ Japan adopted an economic plan that will allow more foreign workers to work in country. This will help rapidly aging country to make up for its declining workforce. Under it, Japan will relax visa requirements in sectors facing severe labour shortages and will create new five-year visa category for non-professional foreign workers. Applicants for new visa status will need to pass certain skill tests and have some degree of Japanese language proficiency in order to receive new five-year visas.
 89. ▶ Malaysia Government announced abolishing Goods and Services Tax (GST) by reducing it to 0%. New Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad had promised to abolish 6% GST levy before his electoral victory.
 90. ▶ Microsoft launched prototype of an underwater data centre off the coast of Scotland's Orkney Islands, as part of Microsoft's Project Natick. The capsule contains 864 servers and 27.6 Petabytes of storage, and has been placed 117 feet below ocean's surface. It is designed to hold data for up to 5 years without maintenance.
 91. ▶ Passport Index 2018 by Henley and Partners -
 - ✎ It analyzes 199 different passports across 227 destinations to list rankings annually.
 - ✎ Japanese passport is named most powerful passport in world, granting visa-free access to 189 countries.
 - ✎ Indian passport secured 76th rank in index with its holders getting visa-free access to 59 countries.
 92. ▶ QS World Best Universities Ranking 2019 (Top 1000 Universities Listed) -
 - ✎ Top 5 -
 - ✎ Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA)
 - ✎ Stanford University (USA)
 - ✎ Harvard University (USA)
 - ✎ California Institute of Technology (Caltech) (USA)
 - ✎ University of Oxford (UK)
 - ✎ Indian Universities in List -
 - ✎ 24 Indian Universities in 2018 List, up from 20 last year.
 - ✎ IIT Bombay topped among Indian Universities in List (162nd Place), Followed by IISC Bengaluru (170), IIT Delhi (172), IIT Madras (264) and IIT Kanpur (283).
 93. ▶ Rajniranth Starrer Kaala become first Indian film to release in Saudi Arabia. Note that Hollywood's Black Panther recently became first film to release in Saudi Arabia in 35 years. Saudi Arabia also recently gave away its first batch of driving licenses to women after decades long ban.
 94. ▶ Researchers discovered new strain of Ebola virus in bats in northern Bambuli region of African Nation Sierra Leone, named as Bambuli. It is 6th known virus strain Ebola virus. Others are Zaire, Sudan, Tai Forest, Bundibugyo and Reston. Zaire strain of Ebola virus is the most deadly strain known.

95. ▶ Researchers from Institute of Archaeology of Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and Peking University announced that Chinese civilization was born 5800 years ago and got matured 3800 years ago., after 15 years of state-funded work. First civilisation emerged in areas around Yellow, Yangtze and Western Liao rivers.
96. ▶ Russia established a new directorate in Russian Army to promote patriotism. A similar directorate existed in the Soviet Army to ensure that soldiers remained loyal to then-ruling Communist party.
97. ▶ Russia launched Glonass-M positioning satellite on board of Soyuz-2.1b carrier rocket, as part of GLONASS network GLONASS (Russian acronym for Global Navigation Satellite System) which provides real-time positioning data for surface, sea and airborne objects around globe, at accuracy reportedly at par with US Global Positioning System (GPS). With this, there are now total 26 Glonass satellites in orbit.
98. ▶ Russia launched world's First floating nuclear power unit into Baltic Sea, with 70-megawatt Capacity, named Akademik Lomonosov.
99. ▶ Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation (Rosatom)'s subsidiary Nikiret signed an agreement with Indian engineering services firm Core Energy Systems Pvt Ltd for promotion of its technical security equipment in India, to assist in India's Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) project.
100. ▶ SAARC Development Fund (SDF) will launch social enterprise development programme (SEDP) as part of its social window, aimed at building social enterprises by using mix of grants and concessional returnable capital. It intends to fund around 80 enterprises across 8 SAARC member states (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka) annually.
101. ▶ Saudi Arabia Government established Ministry of Culture, separating it from Information Ministry, amid attempts to modernise the conservative kingdom.
102. ▶ Seychelles President Danny Faure said that India-Seychelles joint project to develop naval base at Assumption Island in his country can not move forward. Seychelles will develop military facilities at the island on its own.
 - ▶ Agreement was signed with India in 2015 to develop a naval facility at Assumption Island which would have given India strategic advantage in Indian Ocean Region (IOR), but the project had to be halted after growing political opposition in Seychelles. It was meant to India's first Naval Base project overseas and had acquired significance after China had acquired its first African naval base in Djibouti (near Horn of Africa) in November 2014.
 - ▶ Assumption Island is a small island situated southwest of Seychelles main and largest island of Mahe. It is situated very close to Mozambique Channel from where much Indian Ocean maritime routes pass. Its location lends it strategic importance for monitoring shipping in the Mozambique Channel.
103. ▶ South Africa unveiled a powerful radio telescope, part of an international project that scientists say will provide new details on the Milky Way and other galaxies, called MeerKAT.
 - ▶ MeerKAT, originally Karoo Array Telescope, is a radio telescope consisting of 64 mirrors.
 - ▶ It is largest and most sensitive radio telescope in southern hemisphere until Square Kilometer Array is completed in 2024 (tentative).
 - ▶ Square Kilometre Array (SKA) is a large multi radio telescope project aimed to be built in Australia and South Africa. If built, it would have a total collecting area of approximately one square kilometer.
104. ▶ Swedish Academy, That organizes Nobel Prize in Literature announced that, Nobel Prize in literature will not be awarded this year due to sex-abuse allegations and other issues. Swedish Academy has been in stress due to #MeToo campaign since November 2017. Academy has been alleged of sexual misconduct by husband of one of its members.
105. ▶ UK launched new UKRI Science, Research and Academia scheme for overseas scientists and researchers, including Indians, to enhance growth of UK's research sector. It invites researchers and academics to come to UK for up to 2 years. It is being added to the already existing Tier 5 (Temporary Worker Government Authorised Exchange) visa route.
106. ▶ UN Environment Programme (UNEP) partnered with Google to monitor impacts of human activity on global ecosystems by using sophisticated online tools, to develop platform to enable governments, NGO's and public to track specific environment-related development targets with user-friendly front-end.
 - ▶ In long term, it will strive to establish platform for open-source data and analysis of UN Sustainable Development Goals. It will enable UNEP to get access to most sophisticated online tools to track progress, identify priority areas for action, and needs for making world sustainable.
107. ▶ UN Member states approved a 6.69 billion US Dollar budget for 13 peacekeeping operations for 2018-19. It is 2nd year in a row, that UN has made significant cuts to overall peacekeeping budget.
 - ▶ Missions include -
 - ▶ MINUJUSTH (UN Mission for Justice Support in Haiti)
 - ▶ MINUSCA (Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Central African Republic)
 - ▶ MINURSO (Mission for Referendum in Western Sahara)
 - ▶ MONUSCO (Stabilisation Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo)


 UNIFIL (Interim Force in Lebanon).

 United States is biggest contributor to UN, paying 22% of \$5.4 billion core budget and 28.5% of US \$7.9 billion peacekeeping budget. China is other top contributor with 10.3% followed by Japan with 9.7%.


108.  UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced to hold a climate summit in September 2019 in New York to review commitments of 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change, Considering effects of climate spreading all over the world. Earlier, Guterres appointed Michael Bloomberg as his Special Envoy for Climate Action.
109.  US President Donald Trump signed an executive order to create a *faith-based* initiative, which would recognize vital role of faith in American life. It would ensure that faith-based organizations have equal access to government funding and equal right to exercise their beliefs.
110.  US state California's economy surpassed UK to become world's fifth largest, With GDP of \$2.7 trillion, with UK and India as Next. California is only behind USA, China, Japan and Germany.
111.  USA Govt. cancelled NASA's Carbon Monitoring System (CMS) programme, amid budget constraints and higher priorities within science budget. NASA's CMS Programme costing \$10 million per year was meant to track carbon and methane, key greenhouse gases that contribute to global warming.
112.  USA and Philippine Armies held their Joint annual military exercise *Balikatan*.
113.  USA announced its withdrawal from United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC), accusing it of "chronic bias" against Israel. Recently, UNHRC blamed Israel for Gaza violence, and rejected USA demand to condemn Hamas (The Palestinian Extremist Group).
114.  USA designated India as Strategic Trade Authorization-1 (STA-1) country that will allow it to buy highly advanced and cutting-edge sensitive technologies from USA, bringing India in par with US's closest allies such as NATO.
 -  Currently there are 36 countries on STA-1 list, with India being only South Asian on list.
 -  STA-1 treatment will expand scope of technology exports subject to Export Administration Regulations (EAR) that can be made to India without individual licenses.
115.  USA imposed stiff 25% tariff on US \$50 billion worth of Chinese goods, accusing China of intellectual property (IP) theft and unfair trade practices. Tariffs will be applied in two waves, first to 818 Chinese goods worth \$34 billion and in second wave it will apply to 284 goods worth another \$16 billion. As a backfire action, China also imposed additional tariffs and duties on \$50-billion worth of American products.
 -  Also, India also imposed higher import tariffs (ranging from 20 to 50%) on 30 goods from USA, ranging from automobile components to agro products such as almonds, shrimps and chocolates. It is expected to rake in additional \$240 million to India.
116.  USA proposed establishing an *Arab NATO* force to counter Iran's military expansion in region. Proposed Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA) will consist of the US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain, Egypt and Jordan.
117.  USA pulled out of an international nuclear deal with Iran signed in 2015 by USA and 5 other Powers (UK, Russia, France, China, Germany and European Union).
 -  This could raise risk of conflict in Middle East, upset America's European allies and bring uncertainty to global oil supplies.
 -  The deal eased sanctions on Iran in exchange for the country limiting its nuclear programme, seen by many as a way to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear bomb.
 -  USA Prez Trump complained that the agreement, does not address Iran's ballistic missile programme, its nuclear activities and nor its role in conflicts in Yemen and Syria. It did not prevent Iran from cheating and continuing to pursue nuclear weapons, so it needs to be vanished and Tough Economic Sanctions are being put back on Iran.
118.  USA renamed its oldest and largest strategically important military command US Pacific Command (PACOM) to Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM). It is responsible for all US military activity in greater Pacific region. It has about 375,000 civilian and military personnel assigned, which also includes India. Renamed INDOPACOM will now extend its reach from Pacific Ocean to Indian Ocean Region.
119.  USA unveiled world's most powerful supercomputer called 'Summit', beating previous record-holder China's Sunway TaihuLight. With a peak performance of 200,000 trillion calculations per second (200 petaflops), it is over twice as fast as Sunway TaihuLight, which is capable of 93,000 trillion calculations per second. Summit has 4,608 servers.
120.  USA withdrawn invitation to Chinese navy to participate in 2018 Rim of Pacific (RIMPAC) maritime exercise, amid China's continued illegal militarisation of islands in disputed South China Sea. RIMPAC 2019 is 26th edition of this exercise. RIMPAC is world's largest international maritime warfare exercise, held biennially near Honolulu, Hawaii (USA).
121.  USA's Stanford University will assist Uttar Pradesh Government to combat chronic disease like Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES).
122.  United Arab Emirates (UAE) adopted a new system of entry visas, under which it will issue long-term residency visas for up to 10 years to international investors and 'exceptional talents' including professionals and students. It will attract investors and increase economic

competitiveness globally. UAE also allowed foreign investors to own 100% of UAE-based businesses by end of 2018, up from 49% cap currently.

123. ▶ United Kingdom chosen *Sutherland*, on A'Mhoine peninsula on north coast of Scotland as site of UK's first spaceport, to send satellites vertically into orbit by early 2020s.
124. ▶ United Kingdom's National Crime Agency (NCA) listed Pakistan among top three sources for money laundering, other two being Nigeria and Russia. UK is prime destination for foreign corrupt and politically exposed people (PEPs) to launder money.
125. ▶ United Nations E-Government Survey 2018 -
 - ▶ India jumped 22 places to break into top 100 this year, ranked 96th.
 - ▶ Top 5 - Denmark (1), Australia (2), South Korea (3), UK (4), Sweden (5)
126. ▶ United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) elected South Africa, Indonesia, Dominican Republic, Germany and Belgium as non-permanent members of UN Security Council (UNSC). They will have two-year term beginning January 1, 2019.
127. ▶ United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres constituted a High-Level Panel on Digital Cooperation, to be co-chaired by Melinda Gates and Jack Ma (Executive Chairman of Alibaba Group).
 - ▶ Panel has been mandated to contribute to broader public debate on the importance of cooperative and interdisciplinary approaches to ensure a safe and inclusive digital future. It Panel will identify policy, research and information gaps, and make proposals to strengthen international cooperation in the digital space.
128. ▶ United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted Resolution 2428 to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan, 5 years after civil war began. It calls upon all UN member states to prevent supply, sale or transfer to South Sudan – from or through their territories till 31 May 2019.
129. ▶ United Nations finalized Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration to better manage international migration and strengthen migrant rights. Its first time that UN Member countries negotiated an agreement covering all dimensions of international migration, forming a non legally binding framework. US did not agreed upon these new UN Migration terms.
130. ▶ WHO launched new *WHO Global action plan on physical activity and health 2018-2030: More active people for a healthier world*, explaining how countries can reduce physical inactivity in adults and adolescents by 15% by 2030. It specifies a set of 20 policy areas aimed to develop more active societies by improving the environments and opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to do more Physical Activities.
131. ▶ World Bank approved \$700 million to help Bangladesh achieve its education for all vision by improving primary education sector, under Quality Learning for All Program (QLEAP). Also, Pakistan and World Bank inked agreements worth \$565 million to support projects in power and water sectors.
132. ▶ World Health Organisation (WHO) classified gaming addiction as mental health disorder in its International Classification of Diseases (ICD). WHO defines gaming disorder as pattern of gaming behaviour characterized by impaired control over gaming, increased priority given to gaming over other activities.
133. ▶ World Health Organisation (WHO) published its first *Essential Diagnostics List*, a catalogue of tests needed to diagnose most common diseases along with number of global priority diseases.
 - ▶ It aims to address inability to access diagnostic services, keeping the away from correct treatment.
 - ▶ The list contains 113 tests, out of which 58 are for detection of a wide range of common conditions and Remaining 55 tests are for detection of *priority* diseases such as tuberculosis, malaria, HIV, hepatitis B and C, syphilis and human papillomavirus.
 - ▶ WHO will update list on regular basis and will also issue call for applications to add categories to next edition.
 - ▶ It will provide a uniform tool useful to all countries, to test and treat health complications better and use health funds more efficiently by concentrating on truly essential tests.
134. ▶ World Health Organization (WHO) launched comprehensive plan to eliminate industrially-produced artificial trans fats from global food supply by 2023. WHO calls on governments to use 'REPLACE' action package to eliminate industrially-produced trans-fatty acids from food supply. World Health Organization (WHO) also held an emergency meeting to discuss on outbreak of Ebola in Congo (Central Africa).
135. ▶ World Health Organization (WHO) validated Nepal for having eliminated trachoma, a contagious bacterial infection of eye. It makes Nepal first country in WHO's South-East Asia Region to defeat trachoma, world's leading infectious cause of blindness.
136. ▶ World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) notified declaration submitted by India related to Article II and III of Appendix to Paris Act (1971) related to Berne (*Switzerland*) Convention for Protection of Literary and Artistic Works.
 - ▶ It will enable India to avail facilities provided for Article II and III of Appendix to Berne Convention during 10 years period that will expire, on October 10, 2024.
 - ▶ India has been member of Berne Convention since April 1928 and has been submitting declaration as per Article II and III of Appendix from time to time.

 Berne Convention for Protection of Literary and Artistic Works (Berne Convention) is international copyright agreement that mandates equal treatment of copyrighted works by signatories, known as Berne Union. It was adopted in 1886 in Berne, Switzerland.

137. ▶ World Meteorological Organization (WMO) designated India as nodal centre for developing customized model to issue advance warning of floods to Asian countries, called as Flash Flood Guidance System.

 It will provide forecasts by computing likelihood of rainfall and soil moisture levels to warn of possible floods. It will be customized weather model, originally developed by US and donated to WMO to warn about flash floods at least six hours in advance.

138. ▶ World Reputation Rankings 2018 Times Higher Education (THE) -

 Indian Institute of Science Bengaluru (IISc Bangalore) is Only University in Global Top 100 (Ranked 91).

 Top 5 - Harvard University (USA), Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA), Stanford University (USA), University of Cambridge (UK) and University of Oxford (UK).

139. ▶ World's First third generation European Pressurised Reactor (EPR) reactor started working in Taishan (China).

 EPR is a third generation pressurised water reactor (PWR) design, developed mainly by Framatome and Électricité de France (EDF) in France, and Siemens in Germany. In Europe this reactor design was called European Pressurised Reactor, and internationalised name was Evolutionary Power Reactor. 2 EPR units under construction in Finland and France are both facing costly construction delays.

140. ▶ Yahoo launched a group messaging app called *Squirrel*, focussed on friends, family and work groups.

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