



Current Affairs - March 2018 to May 2018

Month Type



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International

- ▶ JLL's annual global report 'City Momentum Index' (CMI) 2018 -
 - ▶ Indian cities dominated *short term momentum ranking*, with Hyderabad and Bengaluru are at top two positions. Pune ranked fourth, Kolkata (5th) and Delhi (8th).
- ▶ 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.
- ▶ 11 Pacific Rim countries entered into Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership or CP TPP or TPP11 in Santiago (Chile). It is revised version of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) proposed by US, finalized after US withdrew from it.
 - ▶ TPP11 includes Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.
 - ▶ It will be world's third largest trade bloc after European Union (EU) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). It will come into effect 60 days after 6 of 11 member countries ratify it domestically.
- ▶ 11th World Hindi Conference (विश्व हिंदी सम्मेलन) will be hosted by Mauritius in Port Lois in August 2018 with theme *Vaishvik Hindi Aur Bharatiy Sanskriti*.
- ▶ 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 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.
- ▶ 2018 World Press Freedom Index by Reporters Without Borders (RSF)
 - ▶ India ranked 138th (falling 2 positions from 136th in 2017).
 - ▶ Top 5 - Norway (1), Sweden (2), Netherlands (3), Finland (4), Switzerland (5)
 - ▶ North Korea is at Bottom (150th).
 - ▶ Neighbours - Bangladesh (146), Sri Lanka (131), Pakistan (139), Nepal (106)
- ▶ 44 African countries from total 55 members of African Union (AU) have signed agreement to create African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), one of world's largest free trade blocs, during a summit held in Kigali (Rwanda). AfCFTA will bring together 1.2 billion people with combined gross domestic product (GDP) of more than \$2 trillion from Africa.
- ▶ *Gulf Shield* – 1 military exercise of 23 countries including Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states held in Saudi Arabia. This 1 month exercise is largest military drill in region.
- ▶ *We Are Sikhs*, A campaign to create awareness of Sikhism and its followers in USA has won a top award for excellence in public relations programming to promote public causes. It won 2018 PRWeek US award in category of Public Cause.
- ▶ A rare signed photo of M K Gandhi, walking alongside Madan Mohan Malaviya, was auctioned for USD 41806 in USA. It dates back to August - December 1931.

12. ▶ A three-day international conference on “Accessible Tourism” has been held in Nepal,. During this, Nepal launched first accessible trekking trail for differently abled and elders in Pokhara city. Inaugurated trek is a 1.3 kilometers section of the 14 kilometer hiking path in ridge connecting Sarangkot to Naudanda areas.
13. ▶ According to *Clampdowns and Courage-South Asia Press Freedom Report 2017-18* by UNESCO -
 - ▶ India accounted for 82 out of 97 instances of Internet shutdown among South Asia between May 2017 and April 2018.
 - ▶ Pakistan witnessed 12 while Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka reported just 1 instance each of internet shutdown.
14. ▶ According to *Migration and Development Brief* by World Bank, India retained top position as recipient of remittances with about \$69 billion in 2017. India was followed by China (\$64 billion), Philippines (\$33 billion), Mexico (\$31 billion), Nigeria (\$22 billion) and Egypt (\$20 billion). Global remittance grew 7% to US \$613 billion in 2017.
15. ▶ According to Chinese General Administration of Customs, India-China bilateral trade reached \$84.44 billion last year, a historic high with 18.63% year-on-year growth. This is well above previous high of \$71.18 billion registered in 2016.
16. ▶ According to International Energy Agency (IEA), global energy-related carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions rose to historic high of 32.5 gigatonnes in 2017. It was due to higher energy demand and slowing of energy efficiency improvements. While, Global energy demand rose by 2.1% in 2017 to 14,050 million tonnes of oil equivalent.
17. ▶ According to Internet Security Threat Report by Symantec, India is third most vulnerable country in terms of risk of cyber threats (malware / spam /ransomware) (with 5.09% global threats). USA (26.61% global threats) is most vulnerable, followed by China (10.95%) in 2017. India is 2nd most impacted by spam and bots attacks, third most impacted by network attacks, and fourth most impacted by ransomware.
18. ▶ According to Steel Users Federation of India (SUFU), India overtook Japan to become world’s second largest producer of crude steel, with China at top.
19. ▶ According to US Treasury Department, India is now 12th largest overseas holder of US government securities, with India’s exposure being US \$144.7 billion.
 - ▶ Overall, China is largest holder of US government securities with holdings to tune of \$1.18 trillion, followed by Japan at \$1.06 trillion. Ireland third with \$326.5 billion.
20. ▶ According to global property consultancy Knight Frank’s Wealth Report 2018 -
 - ▶ Mumbai ranked 47th on *city wealth index* among 314 cities in world, while Guangzhou (China) tops the list.
21. ▶ According to report *Indian Industry’s Inclusive Footprint in South Africa – Doing Business, Doing Good*, released by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) -
 - ▶ 140 Indian companies invested approx \$4 billion in South Africa, creating nearly 18000 direct employment opportunities.
22. ▶ Aditya Puri, managing director of HDFC Bank is only Indian in Barron’s top 30 global CEO list 2018, Featuring for fourth consecutive year.
23. ▶ Afghanistan offered to recognise Terror Group Taliban as a legitimate political group in order to end over 16-year-long war.
24. ▶ 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).
25. ▶ Air India flight (AI 139) became first flight to land at Tel Aviv Airport (Israel), after passing through Saudi Arabia air space. This is first time, Saudi Arabia has allowed a commercial flight to Israel to use its airspace. Saudi Arabia’s decision to permit Air India to use its airspace enabled it to take a shorter route, saving 2.10 hours of travel time.
26. ▶ Airports Council International (ACI) named Mumbai (Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport) and Delhi (Indira Gandhi International Airport) for top position among airports handling over 40 million passengers annually, in its annual airport service quality (ASQ) awards. Beijing and Shanghai Pudong (China) have been ranked 2nd.
27. ▶ Airports Council International (ACI) ranked New Delhi’s Indira Gandhi International Airport as 16th in world in terms of traffic volumes. Georgia’s Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) ranked as busiest airport in world.
28. ▶ Andhra Pradesh ranks 51st globally in Multidimensional Poverty Index according to a household survey conducted in state, in association with University of Oxford (UK). It is first Indian state to conduct a household survey at state and district level to estimate multidimensional poverty.
29. ▶ Arab Nation Qatar announced \$50 million donation to United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA). India also increased aid for Palestinian refugees to \$5 million, from \$1.5 Million Initially.
30. ▶ Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru temporarily left Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), amid differences over choosing secretary general of the group.

31. ▶ Arms import by India increased by 24% between 2008-2012 and 2013-2017 period as per data by International Peace Research Institute.
 - ✎ India is followed by Saudi Arabia, Egypt, UAE, China, Australia, Algeria, Iraq, Pakistan and Indonesia as world top importers.
 - ✎ Largest arms suppliers to India are Russia (62%), US (15%) and Israel (11%).
32. ▶ As per Grant Thornton's quarterly global business survey -
 - ✎ India slipped to 6th position globally in business optimism index for first quarter of 2018.
 - ✎ Top five - Austria, Finland, Indonesia, Netherlands and US.
33. ▶ As per Hurun's Global Rich List 2018 -
 - ✎ India has 3rd highest number of Billionaires across world with 131 names (31 added this year). Mukesh Ambani remains India's richest person with net worth of \$26 billion.
 - ✎ China with 819 names and USA with 571 are at top 2 places.
34. ▶ As per a UN Report, Delhi will surpass Tokyo (Japan) as most populous city in world by 2028.
35. ▶ As per a World Bank Report, India's new Indirect Tax System, The goods and services tax (GST) is one of most complex with the second highest tax rate in the world (After Chile), among 115 countries which have a similar indirect tax system. Further, there are several exempted sales and exports are zero-rated, which allows exporters to claim refund for taxes paid on inputs.
36. ▶ Australia abolished its employer-sponsored 457 visa programme which was mainly used by Indians. It has been replaced with a new programme that requires higher English-language proficiency and job skills.
37. ▶ 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.
38. ▶ BHEL commissioned 1st unit of 110 MW of Kishanganga hydroelectric project (HEP) of NHPC in Jammu and Kashmir, Located on Jhelum Tributary Kishanganga. All three units of 340 MW project will generate 1,350 million units (MU) of clean electricity annually.
39. ▶ BHEL signed a Technology Collaboration Agreement (TCA) with South Korea's HLB Power. It is for in-house manufacturing of large size gates and dampers used in coal fired power plants that would be commissioned or retrofitted with high capacity emission control equipment.
40. ▶ BRICS New Development Bank (NDB) will launch Americas Regional Office in Brazil, to increase operational capabilities of NDB in Brazil.
41. ▶ Bangladesh Government ended quota system in government services, that sets aside jobs for some special groups. It has been done after several protests against the same.
42. ▶ 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*.
43. ▶ Bank of America launched new chatbot named *Erica* that can help customers check balances, remind about bills and answer bank-related questions.
44. ▶ Bilateral trade between India and China through Nathu La border (Sikkim) has resumed, located at 14,200 feet.
45. ▶ Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation announced USD 170 million projects aimed at advancing women's economic empowerment in India, Tanzania, Kenya and Uganda. Projects are focused on advancing gender equality, increasing job opportunities, spreading digital financial inclusion, and supporting agricultural sector and women's support groups.
46. ▶ Bisket Jatra Festival celebrated in Nepal, believed to have started during Malla dynasty and marks beginning of Nepali new year.
47. ▶ Bloomberg Billionaires List 2018 -
 - ✎ Mukesh Ambani ranked 19th Globally, 3rd in Asia and 1st in India with net worth of \$38.3 billion. Alibaba co-founder Jack Ma is ranked 14th, Followed by Tencent Founder Pony Ma (Ma Huateng).
 - ✎ Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos is at top (\$126 Billion), Followed by Bill Gates (\$91 B).
48. ▶ Bolivia unveiled its 200 km long flag and 3 metre wide, claimed to be world's biggest flag. It extended between cities La Paz and Oruro. Bolivia is demanding access to Pacific Ocean, which it lost to Chile in a war in the 19th century.
49. ▶ Brazzaville declaration was signed to promote better management and conservation of world's largest tropical peatlands-Cuvette Centrale region in Congo Basin from unregulated land use and prevent its drainage and degradation.
 - ✎ It was signed by Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo and Indonesia during 3rd Partners Meeting of Global Peatlands Initiative held in Brazzaville (Republic of Congo).
 - ✎ Peatlands are wetlands that contain mixture of decomposed organic material, partially submerged in layer of water, lacking oxygen. Their high carbon content makes them uniquely vulnerable to incineration if they are drained. They are globally important carbon store.

50. ▶ Britain's Royal Navy Received its first unmanned autonomous minesweeping system, capable of operating from a land or ship-based control station.
51. ▶ 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.
52. ▶ Central Asian Nation Kazakhstan launched a 72-hour-long transit visa free regime for Indian citizens from 17th April 2018 to 31st December 2018.
53. ▶ 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.
54. ▶ China abolished 2 term limit on Presidency, allowing Xi Jinping to remain as country's leader for life.
55. ▶ 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.
56. ▶ China introduced China Science and Technology Cloud (CSTC) to provide scientists with accessible, accurate and secure data services to promote research.
57. ▶ China is constructing world's fastest wind tunnel, to help in development of spacecraft. This 265 meter-long tunnel would be used to test hypersonic aircraft that can travel up to a speed of 30,625 kph.
58. ▶ China launched 2 Beidou-3 MEO satellites (Beidou-30 and Beidou-31) as part of its third and final stage of launching its domestic Beidou (Compass) satellite navigation system. The new Twin satellites are MEO (Medium Earth Orbit) satellites, as third phase of Beidou satellite navigation system. BeiDou is 2nd generation of Chinese homegrown navigational system seen as rival to US's Global Positioning System (GPS). It comprises total 35 satellites (including 27 MEO (21,500 km orbits), 3 IGSO and 5 GSO satellites).
59. ▶ 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.
60. ▶ 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.
61. ▶ China proposed construction of the India-Nepal-China Economic Corridor with multi-dimensional connectivity through Himalayas, during Nepalese foreign minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali's Visit to China.
62. ▶ China will build its first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Liaoning by 2025, as part of its plans to achieve weaponry and technical developments for People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy by 2025.
 - ▶ At present, China's navy has 2 aircraft carriers running on conventional oil. French Navy's *Charles de Gaulle* is only non-US aircraft carrier powered by nuclear reactors. USA's Nimitz-class and Ford-class carrier are run by nuclear power.
63. ▶ China will launch a new meteorological satellite called Fengyun-II 09, to enhance its weather forecasting capabilities. It will be last in Fengyun-II series.
64. ▶ China will launch world's longest cross-sea bridge, connecting Hong Kong, Macau and mainland China. It will be 55km-long and six lanes wide.
65. ▶ 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).
66. ▶ Chinese e-Commerce giant Alibaba acquired Pakistan's Largest e-commerce firm *Daraz.pk* for \$150 Million.
67. ▶ Chinese space startup *OneSpace* launched its OS-X rocket, with a 30 feet long satellite named *Chongqing Liangjiang star*. It is first private Chinese firm to launch a commercial rocket.
68. ▶ 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.
69. ▶ 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.
70. ▶ Democratic Republic of Congo declared a new outbreak of Ebola in northwestern part, as 9th outbreak of Ebola since its discovery in 1976.
71. ▶ E-Commerce Major Amazon launched its first-ever debit card in North American Nation Mexico.
72. ▶ European Nation France approved making 15 years as legal age of sexual consent.
73. ▶ 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.
74. ▶ Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) signed line of credit (LoC) agreement with Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) to provide US \$500 million credit facility to fund various development projects in 15-member countries of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) region in western-south Africa.
- ✎ ECOWAS is regional group of 15 West African countries. It was founded in May 1975, with signing of Treaty of Lagos. It aims to promote economic integration in all fields of activity of constituting countries.
75. ▶ Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg apologised for recent data breach controversy related to Data analytics firm *Cambridge Analytica*.
- ✎ Cambridge Analytica (CA) is 2013 established data analytics firm, under its British parent company Strategic Communications Laboratories (SCL) Group. Main objective of CA is to come up with political campaigns and reach out to potential voters by combining data from multiple sources.
 - ✎ CA alleged assisted in Donald Trump's victory in US Presidential Elections 2016, by using unethically gathered data to manipulate voter behaviour. CA also allegedly worked with the Leave EU camp during Britain's exit from the European Union (Brexit).
 - ✎ Facebook controversy -
 - ✎ One of CA co-founders, Christopher Wylie stated that CA exploited Facebook to harvest millions of people's profiles without their permission and used information to create a psychological profile of users as well as their friends. This was then used for targeted political advertising during UK's Brexit referendum as well as during the 2016 US presidential elections.
 - ✎ How -
 - ✎ Facebook lets app developers seek permissions from users to use their personal data to help develop the app. CA reportedly got private data from a Cambridge researcher - Aleksandr Kogan, who created an app called 'thisisyourdigitallife' to offer personality predictions online. Though Kogan got access to the data, it was only meant to be used by him for developing the app and not be shared with others. However, he allegedly sold the data to the CA.
 - ✎ Issues related to India -
 - ✎ CA reportedly planned expanding its services to other nations' electoral processes, especially India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh as they approach elections.
 - ✎ CA reportedly reached out to the two main political parties of the nation for a possible collaboration for the upcoming 2019 Lok Sabha elections.
 - ✎ Recently, IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad delivered a sharp warning to Facebook stating that Government would take stringent action including summoning its CEO Mark Zuckerberg to India, in case of any data theft of Indians.
 - ✎ Meanwhile, both ruling party and main opposition party of India reportedly accused each other of having links with Cambridge Analytica and engaging the firm in past elections.
76. ▶ Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg's Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and Bill Gates' Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation partnered to accelerate breakthroughs in education. It will focus on math, writing, and skills that correspond with things like memory and self-control.
77. ▶ Finnish Communication Giant Nokia acquired California (USA) based Internet of Things (IoT) start up *SpaceTime Insight*.
78. ▶ For first time in nation's history, Saudi Arabia's women participated in an all-female marathon, held in al-Ahsa. Over 1500 women participated in event.
79. ▶ For the first time, Nepal Rastra Bank (Nepal's Central Bank) permitted domestic commercial banks to borrow funds from foreign banks and financial institutions, aiming to resolve liquidity crunch prevailing in Nepal's banking system since past few months. Banks of Nepal can now borrow loans up to 25 % of their core capital for 1 - 5 years.
80. ▶ 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).
81. ▶ Forbes' *billionaires List 2018* -
- ✎ Top 5 -
 - ✎ Amazon founder Jeff Bezos (\$110 Billion)
 - ✎ Microsoft founder Bill Gates (\$90 billion),
 - ✎ Warren Buffet (\$84 billion)

- ✎ Bernard Arnault and family (\$72 billion)
- ✎ Facebook founder-CEO Mark Zuckerberg (\$71 billion)
- ✎ India's Mukesh Ambani (chairman of Reliance Industries) is 19th on list with worth of \$40.1 billion. Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma (aged 39 years) is youngest Indian billionaire with net worth of \$1.7 billion.
- 82. ▶ France announced to contribute 61.9 million dollars toward urgent humanitarian aid for Syria.
- 83. ▶ Global Firepower index 2017 (133 Nations) -
 - ✎ India's military strength is ranked 4th, after USA, Russia and China. France is ranked 5th. Pakistan is ranked 13th.
- 84. ▶ 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.
- 85. ▶ 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).
- 86. ▶ Global Urban Air Pollution database released by World Health Organisation (WHO) -
 - ✎ 14 Indian cities named in list of world's 20 most polluted cities in terms of particulate matter PM2.5 levels in 2016. These cities include Delhi, Varanasi, Kanpur, Faridabad, Gaya, Patna, Agra, Muzaffarpur, Srinagar, Gurgaon, Jaipur, Patiala and Jodhpur.
- 87. ▶ Global cyber security provider Kaspersky stated that India ranks 33rd worldwide in facing web-borne threats.
- 88. ▶ Google Launched its *Home* and *Mini Bluetooth speakers* in India priced at INR 9999 at 4499 Respectively. Google Home and Home Mini can be activated by saying 'Ok Google' and can answer user's general questions.
- 89. ▶ 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.
- 90. ▶ Greece's first space agency named *Hellenic Space Agency* has been officially launched. It is expected to benefit the country in various sectors viz. telecommunications, defense, medical applications, environmental monitoring, agriculture, fire prevention and control.
- 91. ▶ Guatemala (Central America) and Paraguay (South America) moved their Israeli Embassy to Jerusalem, after USA recently moved its Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
- 92. ▶ 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).
- 93. ▶ 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.
- 94. ▶ 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).
- 95. ▶ IT firm Cognizant acquired Hedera Consulting, a Belgium-based business advisory and data analytics services company.
- 96. ▶ Index of Economic Freedom 2018 by Heritage Foundation -
 - ✎ India ranked 130th out of 186 economies.
 - ✎ Top 5 - Hong Kong (1), Singapore (2), New Zealand (3), Switzerland (4), Australia (5)
 - ✎ Bottom 5 - North Korea (180), Venezuela (179), Cuba (178), Congo (177), Eritrea (176)
 - ✎ Neighbours - Bangladesh (128), Pakistan (131), Nepal (133), Sri Lanka (111)
- 97. ▶ India and Bangladesh signed agreement to set up a 129.5 km oil pipeline with capacity of 1 million metric tons per annum. Pipeline will be built from Siliguri Marketing Terminal of Numaligarah Refinery Ltd (NRL) in India to Parbaripur depot of Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation (BPC). Other MoUs Included -
 - ✎ Cooperation between India's Prasar Bharati and Bangladesh Betar.
 - ✎ Installation of Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) Urdu Chair in Dhaka University.
 - ✎ Set up language labs in 500 schools in Bangladesh.
 - ✎ Trial run of first container train between India and Bangladesh flagged off from Kolkata.
- 98. ▶ India and Eritrea (East Africa) signed MoU on Foreign Office Consultations.


99. ▶ India and European Union (EU) signed cooperation agreement related to sharing of earth observation satellite data. Under this, EU will provide India with free, full and open access to data from Copernicus Sentinel family of satellites using high bandwidth connections from data hub to data hub. India will provide Copernicus programme and its participating states with free, full and open access to data from ISRO's earth observation satellites.
- ✎ This comprises data from land, ocean and atmospheric series of ISRO's civilian satellites (Oceansat-2, Scatsat-1, Megha-Tropiques, SARAL, INSAT-3D, INSAT-3DR) with exception of commercial high-resolution satellites data.
100. ▶ India and Finland signed agreement on tax dispute with Nokia under Mutual Agreement Procedure (MAP) system. This involves payment of Rs 1,600 crore, a sum that was deposited with government by Nokia in March 2018. This paves way for the sale of Nokia's Chennai (Sriperumbudu) plant, which has been shuttered since November 2014.
101. ▶ India and Sri Lanka agreed on cooperation on exchange of information and other aspects to tackle smuggling of drugs in both countries.
102. ▶ India and World Expo 2020 signed participants contract for India's pavilion in World Expo 2020 (Dubai), held once in 5 years.
103. ▶ India became 3rd largest electricity producer, with Electricity production of 1,003.525 Billion Unit between April 2017 – January 2018, as per data by India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF) under commerce ministry. Top 3 Producers of Electricity are - China, USA and India.
104. ▶ 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.
105. ▶ India emerged as top recipient of foreign direct investment (FDI) from within Commonwealth and is 2nd most lucrative source of investment within 53-member Commonwealth after UK.
106. ▶ India for first time started importing Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) from USA, under 20-year Sale Purchase Agreement (SPA) with USA's natural gas exporter Cheniere Energy signed in December 2011. Under it, GAIL will purchase around 3.5 Million Tonne of LNG per year from Sabine Pass.
107. ▶ India for the first time agreed for most revered Buddhist relics from Sarnath to be taken to Sri Lanka for public exposition on occasion of Vesak festival. This is second time that India has taken initiative to exhibit sacred relics of Lord Buddha in Sri Lanka, after first time in 2012.
108. ▶ India is named second fastest growing country for passenger traffic based on traffic forecasts during 2017-40 by Airports Council International (ACI), after Vietnam 8.5 % growth rate. India has 7.5 % and Iran has 7.3 % Passenger Growth Rate. Recently, ACI ranked Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi at 16th position in the twenty busiest airports in world list.
109. ▶ India is ranked 10th on a new Commonwealth Innovation Index, topped by UK, Singapore and Canada. Index was launched as part of a new Commonwealth Innovation Hub on the sidelines of Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London (UK). Theme of CHOGM 2018 *Towards a Common Future*. India was represented by PM Narendra Modi.
- ✎ Alongside, Malaria Summit was also held in London (United Kingdom), organized by non-profit organisation Malaria No More in conjunction AND Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
 - ✎ 53 Commonwealth Nations adapted Commonwelath Cyber Declaration at summit, to take action on cybersecurity by 2020. It also aims to tackle criminal groups and hostile state actors who pose a global threat to cybersecurity.
 - ✎ Commonwealth Nations also agreed for Britain's Prince Charles succeeding his mother Queen Elizabeth II as Head of Commonwealth.
 - ✎ India and 3 other countries (Sri Lanka, Mauritius and Malta) participated creating in USD 5 million *Commonwealth Small States Trade Finance Facility* which will enable small states to obtain easier access to international trade finance to diversify their economies and achieve sustainable development goals. Standard Chartered Bank and Bank of Baroda, are facility managers for this fund. 31 Commonwealth nations classified as small states can avail this facility. Before it is available to all such nations, it will be rolled out on pilot basis in Bahamas, Botswana, Brunei, Dominica, Fiji, Mauritius, Namibia and Seychelles.
110. ▶ 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.
111. ▶ India overtook Germany to become fourth largest automobile market, growing its Automobile by 9.5%. China topped the list followed by USA and Japan.
112. ▶ India received its first Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) cargo from United States (US) under long-term supply deal, on board GAIL's LNG ship *Meridian Spirit*.
113. ▶ 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.


114. ▶ India replaced Vietnam to become second largest producer of mobile phones in 2017. Currently, China stands at number one in mobile production around the world.
115. ▶ India sent Bangladesh its second relief consignment under Operation Insaniyat, on board INS Airavat, to help displaced Rohingya Muslims who fled Myanmar into Bangladesh following military crackdown in violence-hit Rakhine state.
116. ▶ India signed agreement with UN to build homes 50000 Houses for Nepal's April 2015 earthquake quake victims. India will give USD 8.41 million to UNOPS (United Nations Office for Project Services) and USD 7.41 Million to the UNDP (United Nations Development Programme) to build 50000 homes by this agreement.
117. ▶ India will become 69th member of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). Membership process includes purchase of shares by India at an estimated cost of around 1 million euros.
118. ▶ India won 6 elections to United Nations (UN) Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) bodies, and won places on executive boards of four UN bodies.
- ▶ India won elections to Executive Boards of UN Development Programme (UNDP), UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and UN-Women. India will serve three-year terms from January 2019 on those executive boards.
 - ▶ India was elected on UN Commission on Population and Development, Social Development, Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.
119. ▶ India's BSF and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) declared 8.3 km stretch of Indo-Bangladesh border as first 'crime-free zone', stretching Gunarmath and Kalyani Border Out Posts (BOPs) in India and Puthkhali and Daulatpur BOPs in Bangladesh. Bangladesh and India shared 4156 km long international border.
120. ▶ India, Bangladesh and Russia signed MoU for cooperation in construction of 2*1200 MWs Capacity Rooppur nuclear power plant near Dhaka (Bangladesh). It is first initiative under India-Russia nuclear deal to undertake atomic energy projects in third countries. It will India's first atomic energy venture abroad and Bangladesh's first atomic energy project.
121. ▶ India, China and other Asian countries will Coordinate to raise voice against Asian premium charged by Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).
- ▶ Asian Premium is extra charge being collected by OPEC countries from Asian countries when selling oil in comparison to western countries. They charge approx 10% extra from Asian Nations as Asian Premium and they give 10% discount to western Nations.
 - ▶ Its a concern for India as for Oil, India is largely dependent on Imports. India sources about 86% of crude oil, 75% of natural gas and 95% of LPG from OPEC member nations.
 - ▶ OPEC is an organization of 14 oil-exporting developing nations. Its headquarters are in Vienna (Austria) and Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia (de facto leader of OPEC), Kuwait, Qatar, UAE, Algeria, Angola, Libya, Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, Ecuador and Venezuela. OPEC members account 43% of global oil production and 73% of world's oil reserves.
122. ▶ 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.
123. ▶ India-United Kingdom (UK) Joint Team won Newton-Bhabha Fund for project on Groundwater Arsenic Research in Ganga River Basin. Project is aimed to assess problem of arsenic poisoning and to understand aggravation such situation in next 25 to 30 years and its influence on groundwater management practices and suggest water remedial technologies accordingly, conducted from 3 sites – Bijnor and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Nadia in West Bengal.
- ▶ Newton Bhabha Fund is provided by the British Council and aims to bring together UK and Indian scientific research and innovation sectors to find joint solutions to the challenges facing India in economic development and social welfare.
124. ▶ Indian Consortium consisting of IOCL, BPCL and HPCL and Saudi Aramco signed an MOU to jointly develop an integrated refinery and petrochemicals complex called Ratnagiri Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd. (RRPCL) in Maharashtra.
- ▶ It will be capable of processing 1.2 million barrels of crude oil per day (60 million metric tonnes per annum (MMTPA)). Project cost is estimated at INR 3 lakh crores (USD 44 billion).
125. ▶ Indian Railways handed over eighteen 1350 HP AC/DC diesel electric locomotives to Myanma Railways, to develop cordial relations with neighboring Nation.
126. ▶ Indian Steel Association (ISA) state that USA's move to levy steep tariff on steel imports may hit India's domestic steel market. Recently, USA proposed to impose tariffs of 25% on steel imports and 10% on imported aluminium to protect domestic steel industry from cheap imports.
127. ▶ 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.
128. ▶ 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.


129. ▶ 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.
130. ▶ International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) signed Host Country Agreement here, to ISA a juridical personality and gives it power to contract, to acquire and dispose off movable and immovable properties. Under this, ISA shall have such privileges, applicable tax concessions and immunities as are necessary for ISA's Headquarter to independently discharge its function..
 - ✎ ISA is headquartered in Gugugra (Haryana) with Upendra Tripathy as Interim Director General.
131. ▶ Investment Firm SoftBank signed \$930-million deal with China's energy conglomerate Golden Concord (GCL) to produce and sell solar equipment in India. GCL will have 40% stake in joint venture. The project will have a 4 gigawatt-capacity and will produce solar ingots, silicon wafers, batteries, and components.
132. ▶ Iran banned use all cryptocurrencies including bitcoin by its banks and financial institutions. Iran Govt stated that it was necessary since cryptocurrencies can be turned into a means for money-laundering and financing terrorism.
133. ▶ Iran, Turkey and Russia held a special Meet in Ankara (Turkey), aiming to speed peace process for Syria and bolster their influence in the country.
134. ▶ Iraq overtook Saudi Arabia as India's top crude oil supplier by supplying 38.9 million tonnes (MT) crude oil in the current financial year. India is 80% dependent on imports to meet its oil needs.
135. ▶ 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.
136. ▶ 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.
137. ▶ 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.
138. ▶ Japan activated Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (ARDB), its first marine unit since World War 2. In Japan's Constitution that was formed after WW 2, it renounced the right to wage war.
139. ▶ Kotak Mahindra Bank overtook SBI to become India's second-most-valued Bank in terms of market capitalisation. KMB's Market cap rose to 2.23 Lakh Crores. HDFC Remains at top with 5.03 Lakh Crores Market Cap. Bandhan Bank debuted in top 50 Indian Brands with 64000 Crores Market Cap.
140. ▶ Kuwait presented draft UN Security Council (UNSC) resolution, proposing to set up an international protection mission for Palestinians, after recent killing of palestinians amid their anti Israel protests at Gaza Strip.
141. ▶ Maharashtra government signed MoU with British Council to strengthen educational and cultural cooperation. British Council will expand its existing work in state, where it has trained over 100000 teachers benefitting around five million learners.
142. ▶ 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.
143. ▶ Malaysian Government proposed 10 years in jail and hefty fines for publishers of fake news. Under Anti-Fake News Bill, anyone who publishes fake news could face fines of up to 500000 ringgit (USD 128140), up to 10 years in jail, or both.
144. ▶ Maldives Parliament approved anti-defection bill which states that MPs elected on political party tickets will lose their seat if they leave their party, get expelled, or change parties.
145. ▶ Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE) 2018 -
 - ✎ India ranked 52 among 57 countries.
 - ✎ Ghana (46.4 %) ranks first in world with highest number of women business owners, followed by Russia (34.6 %), Uganda (33.8 %), New Zealand (33 %) and Australia (32.1 %).
146. ▶ Microsoft surpassed Google's parent company Alphabet in market capitalisation for first time in 3 years, becoming 3rd most valuable firm (at \$753 billion) after Apple (\$924 billion) and Amazon (\$783 billion).
147. ▶ Ministry of Communications launched Cool EMS Service with Japan, as a one-way service from Japan to India which allows customers in India to import Japanese food items for personal use which is allowed under Indian regulations. Initially available in Delhi only.
148. ▶ Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) will tie up with US and Finland to develop new pollution-forecast system that will help anticipate particulate matter (PM) levels at least two days in advance and at greater resolution.

 Currently, System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), run out of Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, serves as apex forecaster of pollution trends in Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad. It generates likely air quality profile for a day in advance, for these cities.

149. ▶ Mumbai is named 16th among top 20 costliest cities in world, according to Knight Frank Wealth Report 2018, based on 4 major indicators - wealth, investments, lifestyle and future. Top 3 Wealthiest Cities - Guangzhou (China), Hong Kong (China), New York (USA).
150. ▶ Myanmar deferred signing agreement with India to streamline free movement of people within 16 km along the open border between two countries, citing domestic compulsions and asked for more time for the agreement to be sealed.

 India and Myanmar share 1643 km unfenced border along Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram.
151. ▶ Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi's human rights award conferred by US Holocaust Memorial Museum has been taken back, which they had presented to her in 2012. It was done after ongoing violence against Rohingya Muslim minority community in Rakhine state of Myanmar.
152. ▶ NASA launched GOES-S (*Geostationary Operational Environmental Satellite*), an advanced weather satellite meant to safeguard Western USA, by forecasting natural calamities such as hurricanes, wildfires, floods etc. GOES-S will not only keep a watch over West Coast of USA, Alaska and Hawaii, but also over Mexico and Central America.
153. ▶ National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) signed an agreement with Cab Aggregator Uber to explore Urban Air Mobility (UAM) for future air transportation such as flying cars in populated areas. UAM is a safe system for air vehicles, to move passengers and cargo within a city.
154. ▶ National Assembly of France passed a controversial immigration law. While government defended the bill as balanced, it has been criticised by rightwingers for being too soft and by leftwingers for being repressive. New law aims for better-controlled immigration, as it reduces waiting time for asylum applications by almost half to six months and makes it easier to deport those turned down as "economic" migrants.
155. ▶ National Gallery of Modern Art (New Delhi) organized an exhibition titled *To the End of Land*, in collaboration with Embassy of Israel in India, on occasion of 25 years of diplomatic relations with Israel.
156. ▶ National Highways Authority of India took its First International assignment as it signed an agreement for upgradation of Yagyi – Kalewa section of highway in Myanmar, to be completed in 3 years.
157. ▶ Neighbouring Nation Sri Lanka declared a state of emergency for 10 days, to curb heightening violence targeting Muslim minority, mainly in Kandy.
158. ▶ New Delhi ranked 22nd globally and 8th in Asia in TripAdvisor's top 25 travellers choice of destinations list 2018, topped by Paris (France). It is followed by London (UK), Rome (Italy), Bali (Indonesia), Crete (Greece).
159. ▶ New Zealand Govt. banned all new offshore oil exploration permits as a part of Government's plan to transition towards a carbon-neutral future. Note that existing permits cover an area of 100000 sq km and some still have decades left on their exploration rights.
160. ▶ North Korean leader Kim Jong Un declared that his nation would stop its nuclear tests and intercontinental missile launches and will shut down its atomic test site. This brings relief to global community as North Korea has been continuously doing Nuclear tests and aggressively enhancing its nuclear capabilities over past few years.

 In a historic first, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un crossed border that separates 2 Koreas at demilitarized zone (DMZ) to enter South Korea, becoming first North Korean leader to step into South Korean territory since 1953.
161. ▶ Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) and Electricite de France (EDF) of France signed an Industrial Way Forward Agreement for implementation of six nuclear power reactor units at Jaitapur (Maharashtra) with a total capacity of about 10000 MW. Evolutionary Pressurized Reactors (EPRs) are evolutionary reactors, whose design has evolved from "KONVOI" and "N4" reactors are operational in Germany and France respectively for over 20 years.
162. ▶ ONGC Videsh Ltd signed MoU with IDRO Oil (a subsidiary of state-run Iranian Development and Renovation Organisation) for developing Susangerd field in Iran. OVL and IDRO Oil will jointly bid for a USD 1 billion contract for development of Susangerd oilfield in southern Iran.
163. ▶ Oklahoma will become first US State to use Nitrogen Gas for executions. Nitrogen is an odourless and tasteless gas that makes up about 78 % of air that humans breathe. However, it causes death when inhaled without any oxygen.
164. ▶ Pacific Ocean Nation Marshall Islands will become first country to recognize cryptocurrency as its legal tender and adopt transparent crypto monetary system. Its Parliament passed law to create a digital currency called *Sovereign* (symbol *SOV*) to raise cash and boost economy. It will be implemented with Israeli fintech startup Neema.

 Initially, 24 million SOVs will be circulated and will be backed by Govt as a legal tender in country. SOV will be different from other cryptocurrencies because it will be officially recognized by law as legal tender and effectively backed by government.

165. ▶ Pakistan hosted its first ever Shanghai Cooperation Organisation-Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (SCO-RATS) legal experts meeting in Islamabad.
166. ▶ Pakistan test fired Babur Weapon System-1 (B), enhanced version of indigenously-built Babur cruise missile with range of 700 KMs.
167. ▶ Pakistan's Parliament passed a bill granting fundamental rights to transgenders and outlawing discrimination against them.
168. ▶ Palestine submitted instrument of accession to Chemical Weapons Convention to European Union (EU), world's chemical weapons watchdog.
169. ▶ Philippines formally Withdrawn from Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), mentioning that ICC was a righteous stand against those who politicise and weaponise human rights.
170. ▶ Qatar approved a draft law on regulating ownership and use of properties by foreigners. It rules that non-Qataris might own and use properties under specific conditions, applicable to land space including buildings and residential units, detachment units in residential complexes.
 - ▶ In Aug 2017, Qatar became first Arab Nation to offer permanent residency to foreigners.
171. ▶ Qatar banned products from United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and Egypt; To protect safety of consumers by stopping trafficking of goods. These 4 nations has cut all diplomatic relations with Qatar amid suspected terror financing by Qatar.
172. ▶ Qatar introduced national service for women for first time. Women aged over 18 will now be able to volunteer for national service under law, men will have to serve for a year instead of three months.
173. ▶ Quality of Living survey 2018 by Mercer -
 - ▶ Austria's capital city Vienna has been rated world's most liveable city for 9th consecutive year.
 - ▶ Top 3 - Vienna (Austria), Zurich (Switzerland), Auckland (New Zealand) AND Germany's Munich tied for third place.
 - ▶ Hyderabad and Pune have been rated India's most liveable cities as they have tied for 142nd place.
 - ▶ Iraq's capital Baghdad is rated least liveable city for the tenth consecutive year.
174. ▶ Reliance chairman Mukesh Ambani, Human rights lawyer Indira Jaising and Architect Balkrishna Doshi are named by Fortune magazine as World's Greatest Leaders of 2018, at 24th, 20th and 43rd places respectively.
175. ▶ Renowned Indian painter Raja Ravi Varma's untitled painting of Tilottama was sold for \$795,000 (around Rs 5 crore) at Sotheby's Modern and Contemporary South Asian art auction in New York.
176. ▶ Report by global startup ecosystem map Startupblink -
 - ▶ India is ranked 37th out of 125 countries in global startup ecosystem in 2017.
 - ▶ Top 5 - United States (1st), United Kingdom (2nd), Canada (3rd), Israel (4th) and Germany (5th).
 - ▶ In Asia - Singapore (10th), China (12th), South Korea (17th), Japan (20th).
 - ▶ In Africa - South Africa (38th), Kenya (53rd), Egypt (54th), and Nigeria (57th).
177. ▶ 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.
178. ▶ Russia launched world's First floating nuclear power unit into Baltic Sea, with 70-megawatt Capacity, named Akademik Lomonosov.
179. ▶ Russia successfully test fired its latest nuclear Inter Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) RS-28 Sarmat, with Speed over Mach 20 (20 times speed of light) and Operational range over 11000 kilometres. RS-28 Sarmat is a heavy liquid-propellant ICBM capable of carrying nuclear charges. It aims to replace R-36M2 Voyevoda ICBM, which is Russia's only Strategic Missile Force since 1988. Pakistan Navy also test fired indigenously developed Submarine Launched version of Cruise Missile (SLCM) *BABUR*, with range under 500 KMs.
180. ▶ Russia tested hypersonic missile named *Kinzhal*, said to travel at 10 times speed of sound and have a range of 2,000 km.
181. ▶ SWIFT (Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication System) platform expanded its GPI (Global Payment Innovation) Tracker system to help banks track their global transactions and keep full vigil on payments activity. From November 2018, GPI Tracker system will be included in all payment instructions carried between all 11,000 customers on SWIFT at all times. It will extend transparency and drive more banks to join service to make GPI new normal in cross-border payments.
 - ▶ SWIFT GPI was launched in May 2017 to help banks to track their global transactions at all times, keeping full vigil on payments activity. It accounts for 10% of cross border payment traffic on SWIFT network.
 - ▶ SWIFT is global financial messaging service that enables financial institutions worldwide to send and receive information about financial transactions in secure, standardized and reliable environment.
182. ▶ Saudi Arabia approved national policy of its atomic energy programme, as it prepares to award contracts for its first nuclear power plants. Policy insists on limiting nuclear activities to peaceful purposes and calls for enhanced safety measures as well as use of best practices for radioactive waste management.

183. ▶ Saudi Arabia opened its first public movie theatre, after over 35 years of prohibition for religious reasons. A special screening of Marvel superhero film 'Black Panther' was held in Riyadh.
184. ▶ Scientists from Australian Institute of Marine Biology have developed an ultra-fine biodegradable film, some 50000 times thinner than a human hair, to prevent coral bleaching, that had spread across the Great Barrier Reef in Australia in 2016 and 2017. Shield has been designed to sit on the surface of the water above the corals rather than directly on corals to provide an effective barrier against sun.
185. ▶ Scotland become first country to introduce a minimum unit pricing for alcohol. Alcoholic products in Scotland will cost a minimum of 50 pence per unit.
186. ▶ Seychelles' govt. refused to ratify a deal signed with India to build military infrastructure on its Assumption Island, signed in 2015 during Indian PM Narendra Modi's visit to Seychelles.
187. ▶ Singapore and China signed MOU to promote collaboration between companies from both countries in third-party markets along China's ambitious Belt and Road routes.
 - ▶ Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) BRI is China's ambitious development strategy that aims to boost its connectivity and trade that will that will connect Asia, Africa, Middle East and Europe. It was proposed by Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013. It comprises two components viz. the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road.
188. ▶ Singapore's Changi Airport is named world's best airport for 6th consecutive year by consultancy firm Skytrax.
 - ▶ Incheon International Airport in South Korea and Haneda Airport in Japan were placed 2nd and 3rd respectively.
 - ▶ Mumbai airport (Chhatrapati Shivaji Airport) is ranked 63rd, Bangalore (Kempegowda Airport) and Delhi (Indira Gandhi Airport) are at 64th and 66th place respectively.
189. ▶ Soft Drinks Industry Levy (also known as soft drinks sugar tax / sin tax / sugar tax) came into force in United Kingdom as part of government's plan to combat obesity and sugar related disease. Drinks containing 5 grams of sugar per 100ml taxed are taxed at 18 pence per litre, and those with more than 5 grams per 100ml taxed at 24 pence per litre.
190. ▶ South Korean pop group BTS won online reader's poll for TIME 'Person of the Year 2018'. South Korean President Moon Jae-in finished 2nd with 5% votes, followed by former US President Barack Obama with 3% votes.
191. ▶ Southeastern Australian state New South Wales (NSW) announced USD 1.58 million partnership with India to enhance Indian startup ecosystem, technology, and advanced manufacturing sectors.
192. ▶ Swaziland's King Mswati III, Africa's last absolute monarch officially changed name of his country to *Kingdom of eSwatini*. Its a Swazi language name that stands for 'place of the Swazi'.
193. ▶ 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.
194. ▶ Syria returned to France Légion d'honneur (France's Highest Civilian Honour) presented to its President Bashar al-Assad. Syria stated that it has been done as France is a PRO-USA Nation.
195. ▶ Taipei World Trade Centre (TWTC) launched its office at New Delhi, to promote trade between India and Taiwan. It will serve as a single venue that combines consulting service on trade-related issues, trading partners, suppliers, and markets for international business.
196. ▶ Technology Firm Google acquired US-based Tenor, a GIF platform for Android, iOS, and desktop. Tenor's GIF-searching functionality will be integrated into Google Images and Gboard, company's virtual keyboard.
197. ▶ Turkey launched construction of its first-ever nuclear power plant in Mersin region, with support from Russia. Cost of power plant would be around 20 billion dollars and will meet 10 % power requirements of Turkey.
198. ▶ UK-based data analytics company Cambridge Analytica announced to shut down its operations, after being caught in a massive data-harvesting scandal took away all of its customers. Approx 2 months ago, it was revealed that CA had illegally harvested data of over 87 million Facebook users and used it to manipulate voter behavior in 2016 US Presidential elections.
199. ▶ UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) launched UN Road Safety Trust Fund to improve road safety worldwide. The fund has potential to galvanise global efforts to address road safety situation, building on progress made and experience gained over Decade of Action for Road Safety 2011-2020. It will serve as catalyst for progress towards road safety targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
200. ▶ 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.
201. ▶ US Department of Treasury included India in monitoring list of its major trading partners that merit close attention to their currency practices and macroeconomic policies. This list identifies countries that are trying to artificially manage value of their currency to gain trade advantage, by keeping exchange rate low to promote cheaper exports. India is 6th addition to this watch list after China, Japan, South

Korea, Germany and Switzerland.

202. ▶ 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.
203. ▶ 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.
204. ▶ US state of New Jersey declared April as 'Sikh Awareness and Appreciation Month' as part of its effort to promote awareness of Sikhism.
205. ▶ USA Aerospace Firm *Lockheed Martin* announced setting up of F-16 jet production unit in India, under *Make in India* initiative.
206. ▶ 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.
207. ▶ USA Prez Donald Trump declared dead the *Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA)* program, as it protected immigrants brought to nation illegally as children.
208. ▶ USA Supreme Court restricted deportation of immigrant felons (अपराधी) by ruling that US Immigration and Nationality Act requiring deportation of immigrants convicted of certain crimes of violence is unconstitutionally vague.
209. ▶ USA Trade Representative (USTR) again placed India on 'Priority Watch List' in its annual Special 301 Report on state of intellectual property protection, along with 11 Other Nations.
 - ▶ This Report identifies US trading partners that do not effectively protect IP rights or deny market access to its innovators that rely on protection of their IP rights.
 - ▶ India remains one of world's most challenging major economies with respect to protection and enforcement of intellectual property, as India's enforcement action and policies are insufficient to curb problem.
 - ▶ Report slammed Health Ministry of India for creating uncertainty in pharmaceutical market by demanding that pharmaceutical companies provide details of how they were using granted patents.
210. ▶ USA and Israeli forces held *Juniper Cobra 2018* Joint military drill.
211. ▶ USA and Philippine Armies held their Joint annual military exercise *Balikatan*.
212. ▶ USA and South Korea began their joint military training exercise named 'Foil Eagle'.
213. ▶ USA banned use of Venezuelan cryptocurrency (Petro) by its Citizens, stating that its introduction is intended to skirt US sanctions.
214. ▶ USA based software Firm Adobe acquired Magento for USD 1.68 billion. Magento works in B2B and B2C context and will help Adobe to compete with salesforce and provide functionality in e-commerce space.
215. ▶ USA challenged China at World Trade Organisation (WTO) over intellectual property breaches, alleging China of denying foreign patent holders (including US companies), basic patent rights that prevent Chinese entity from using technology after a licensing contract ends. US also accused China of violating WTO norms by imposing discriminatory contract terms against imported foreign technology.
216. ▶ 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.
217. ▶ 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.
218. ▶ 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).
219. ▶ USA's Stanford University will assist Uttar Pradesh Government to combat chronic disease like Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES).
220. ▶ USA, France and Britain launched military operation against Syria, in response to Syrian President Bashar al-Assad's chemical attack that killed over 60 people last week.

221. ▶ 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.
222. ▶ United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Malaysia concluded joint military exercise *Desert Tiger 5*, in Dubai (UAE).
223. ▶ United Arab Emirates (UAE) approved law on Equal Wages and Salaries for men and women, to provide women with equal opportunities as partners in UAE's development.
224. ▶ United Arab Emirates (UAE) became first arab nation to have Nuclear Power after constuction of its \$20 billion Barakah Plant west of Abu Dhabi has been Completed, led by Korea Electric Power Corp.
225. ▶ 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.
226. ▶ United Nations Committee for Development Policy (CDP) announced Bhutan along with Kiribati, Sao Tome and Principe and Solomon Islands will be recommended for graduation from least developed country (LDC) category. These four nations will be recommended to move up from ranks of poorest nations on account of increasing national earning power as well as access to better health care.
227. ▶ United Nations children's agency (UNICEF) stated that India has seen a sharp decline in child marriages over past 10 years, with only 27 % of girls getting married before 18 years in comparison to 47 per cent a decade back.
228. ▶ United Nations has issued an appeal for 951 million Dollars to meet the needs of nearly 900,000 Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. Recently, Rohingya influx has become world's fastest-growing refugee crisis with tens of thousands fleeing by land and sea daily from Myanmar's northern Rakhine state.
229. ▶ United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) designated 14 sites as Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems (GIAHS), located in China, Egypt, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Portugal, Spain and Sri Lanka. With this, there are now 50 Globally Important Agricultural Heritage Systems in 20 countries.
- ✎ 14 New GIAHS-
 - ✎ Siwa Oasis - Egypt
 - ✎ Chinampa Agriculture in World Natural and Cultural Heritage Zone - Mexico
 - ✎ Zhagana Agriculture - Forest-Animal Husbandry Composite System - China
 - ✎ Huzhou Mulberry-dyke & Fish Pond System - China
 - ✎ Osaki Kodo's Traditional Water Management System for Sustainable Paddy Agriculture - Japan
 - ✎ Nishi-Awa Steep Slope Land Agriculture System - Japan
 - ✎ Traditional Hadong Tea Agrosystem in Hwagae-myeon - South Korea
 - ✎ Agricultural System of Valle Salado de Añana - Spain
 - ✎ Malaga Raisin Production System in La Axarquía - Spain
 - ✎ Cascaded Tank-Village System - Sri Lanka
 - ✎ Rice Terraces in Southern Mountainous and Hilly Areas - China
 - ✎ Xiajin Yellow River Old Course Ancient Mulberry Grove System - China
 - ✎ Traditional Wasabi Cultivation in Shizuoka - Japan
 - ✎ Barroso Agro-sylvo-pastoral System - Portuga
 - ✎ GIAHS in India -
 - ✎ Saffron Heritage of Kashmir (J & K)
 - ✎ Koraput Traditional Agriculture (Odisha)
 - ✎ Kuttanad Below Sea Level Farming System (Kerala)
230. ▶ United States Trade Representative (USTR) announced reviewing eligibility of India, Indonesia and Kazakhstan in Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) based on concerns about countries' compliance with program.
- ✎ In Case of India, This review is based on concerns related to its compliance with GSP market access criterion and two petitions related to same criterion, filed by US dairy industry and US medical device industry.
 - ✎ Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) GSP is largest and oldest US trade preference programme introduced in 1976. It is designed to promote economic development by allowing duty-free entry for thousands of products from designated beneficiary countries. In India's case, GSP enables duty-free entry of 3,500 product lines in US markets. Total US imports under GSP in 2017 was \$21.2 billion, of which India was biggest beneficiary with \$5.6 billion.
231. ▶ Venezuelan Government led by President Nicolas Maduro decided to remove three zeros off Venezuelan currency Bolivar, to counter hyperinflation and crippling economic crisis. It is aimed to guarantee commercial activities and it will come into effect from June 4, 2018.

- ✎ Government will take out of circulation current bills and put into circulation new bills, to be known as *sovereign bolivar*.
 - ✎ Largest bill in circulation is 100000 bolivar note, which trades for about \$0.50.
 - ✎ A kilo of sugar (2.2 pounds) costs around 250,000 bolivars, while average wages are approx 450000 Bolivars only.
 - ✎ Venezuela's new set of monetary denomination will consist of 2 coins of 1 bolivar and 2 bolivar. There will be Notes of 2, 5, 10, 20, 50, 100, 200 and 500 bolivars.
 - ✎ Venezuelan government also recently launched cryptocurrency *Petro*.
232. ▶ Vietnam's Nguyen Huong Giang is named winner of *Miss International Queen* in Thailand at one of world's top beauty pageants for transgender women.
233. ▶ Washington become USA first state to enact its own net-neutrality requirements after U.S. regulators repealed Obama-era rules designed to keep internet an even playing field. New law also requires internet providers to disclose information about their management practices, performance and commercial terms.
234. ▶ West African country Sierra Leone became first country to deploy blockchain technology in election process. Blockchain based solution used in Sierra Leone's election was developed by a Switzerland based voting technology company *Agora*.
235. ▶ World Bank (WB) agreed to provide a grant to Bangladesh for meeting the basic needs of around one million Rohingyas who fled their homeland Myanmar.
236. ▶ World Bank Group approved USD 13 billion increase in paid-in capital, as part of a series of internal reforms. It consists USD 7.5 billion paid-in capital for International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and USD 5.5 billion for International Finance Commission (IFC). It also includes a USD 52.6 billion callable capital increase for IBRD.
237. ▶ World Bank approved \$55mn Loan to expand use of clean renewable energy in rural areas of Bangladesh where grid electricity cannot reach easily, under Second Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Development (RERED II) Project.
238. ▶ World Economic Forum's (WEF) released Report Energy Transition Index 2018 titled *Fostering Effective Energy Transition*. It ranks countries on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability
- ✎ India was ranked at 78th among 114 countries.
 - ✎ Top 5 - Sweden (1st), Norway (2nd), Switzerland (3rd), Finland (4th), Denmark (5th).
 - ✎ BRICS - Brazil (38th), Russia (70th) and China (76th).
239. ▶ World Happiness Index 2018 by UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network -
- ✎ In this report, Several parameters are used to generate a happiness score of country on a scale from 1 to 10.
 - ✎ India is ranked 133rd among 156 countries, down from 122 rank last year.
 - ✎ 2018 edition, for the first time ranked happiness of foreign-born immigrants in 117 countries.
 - ✎ Top 5 Happiest - Finland (1st), Norway (2nd), Denmark (3rd), Iceland (4th), Switzerland (5th). USA ranked 18th and Britain 19th.
 - ✎ Neighbours - Pakistan (75th), Nepal (101st), Bhutan (97th), Bangladesh (115th), Sri Lanka (116th).
240. ▶ 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.
241. ▶ World Health Organization (WHO) invited pharmaceutical companies around world to submit proposals to manufacture affordable versions of newer medicines for treatment of drug resistant tuberculosis (DR-TB). It requested drug makers to submit Expression of Interest (EoI) for Bedaquiline and Delamanid, two new-generation drugs, recommended for DR-TB.
242. ▶ 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).
243. ▶ 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.
244. ▶ World Trade Organization (WTO) will set up panel to examine whether India has complied with its 2016 ruling in case against US regarding domestic content requirements (DCR) rules for solar cells and modules.
- ✎ In 2016, WTO ruled against India for favouring local manufacturers in its solar power programme, on petition filed by USA.

✎ Afterwards, USA alleged that India continues to apply WTO-inconsistent measures and had approached WTO demanding action against India for non-compliance of WTO ruling in December 2017.

245. ▶ Worldwide Cost of Living report 2018 by the Economist Intelligence Unit -

✎ Top 5 Costliest Cities - Singapore (1st for 5th straight year), Paris (France), Zurich (Switzerland), Hong Kong, Oslo (Norway).

✎ Syrian capital Damascus is world's cheapest city.

✎ Indian cities of Bangalore, Chennai and New Delhi and Pakistan's Karachi featured among ten cheapest locations surveyed.

246. ▶ World's biggest cruise-liner, "Symphony of the Seas", has been set sail in France, to embark on its maiden voyage in Mediterranean.

247. ▶ World's first long-distance electric bus line began service in Paris (France), presented by Flixbus. It will link Paris to France's northern city of Amiens, undertaking a 160 kilometres journey within 2 hours.

248. ▶ World's longest sandstone cave named 'Krem Puri' has been discovered in Meghalaya.

✎ It was discovered in 2016, but its actual length was found between 5th February and 1st March 2018.ii. It is 24583 metres long, over 6000 metres longer than world record-holder Cueva Del Saman, a sandstone cave in Edo Zulia, Venezuela.

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

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