



Current Affairs - August to October 2018

Month Type



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(Showing **302** Important Ones)

National

- ▶ Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) signed 2 MoUs with Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), to launch the programme "PRAKRITI" with objective to promote awareness about forests and environment.
 - ▶ Through this collaboration, knowledge will be imparted to students/teachers of NVS and KVS on environment, forest, environmental services and contemporary areas of forestry research by way of lectures and interactive sessions by scientists of ICFRE institutes.
 - ▶ MoUs are signed for period of 10 years are expected to make youth sensitive about issues of environment and forests and help them to become responsible citizens.
- ▶ Nitin Gadkari (*Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation*) Signed MoUs with 6 States - Uttarakhand, UP, HP, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi for construction of Lakhwar Multipurpose Project on Yamuna near Dehradun, with cost approx INR 3966 Crores.
 - ▶ It was initially approved in 1976 but work was suspended in 1992. It envisages construction of a 204 m high concrete dam across river Yamuna near Lohari village in Dehradun district of Uttarakhand with a storage capacity of 330.66 MCM.
 - ▶ It will provide irrigation for 33,780 hectares land and availability of 78.83 MCM water for use in the 6 basin states. The project will also generate 300 MW of power.
 - ▶ Besides Lakhwar Multi-Purpose project, there are two other major projects being envisaged in the Upper Yamuna reaches which are Kishau Multi-Purpose project and Renukaji Multi-Purpose project. A fourth project is the Vyasi project, a run-of-the-river scheme under which a concrete dam across River Yamuna is being constructed near Vyasi village in Dehradun district.
- ▶ Odisha Government tied up with Japan for its mega investment Conclave 2018 to take place in November 2018, called *Make in Odisha*.
- ▶ 12th Plan Document has fixed targets of 25.2 % Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) by 2017-18 and 30% GER by 2020-21. As per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2017-18, GER in higher education has increased from 24.5% in 2015-16 to 25.8% in 2017-18.
- ▶ 17.86 KM long Trilokpuri Sanjay Lake to Shiv Vihar section of Delhi Metro Pink Line has been flagged off, taking Delhi Metro to league of top metro networks with operational length over 300 km (like London, Beijing, Shanghai and New York). Delhi Metro Network has now become 314 kilometres long with 229 metro stations.
- ▶ 2 new projects of Punjab and Tripura got sanctioned under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
 - ▶ In Punjab, project covers sites of Anandpur Sahib, Fatehgarh Sahib, Chamkaur Sahib, Ferozpur, Amritsar, Khatkar Kalan Kalanour Patiala at the cost of Rs 100 crore.
 - ▶ In Tripura, sites of Surma Cherra- Unakoti- Jampui Hills- Gunabati-Bhunaneshwari- Matabari- Neermahal- Boxanagar- Chotta khola- Pilak- Avangchaarra have been covered. It has planned cost of 65 Crores.
- ▶ 4 day international dance festival titled "Udbhav Utsav" held in Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh).
- ▶ 4th International Film Festival of Shimla "IFFS 2018" concluded in Shimla (Himachal Pradesh). Best Feature Film award was given to *Sinjar* by Sandeep Pampally.
- ▶ 6th India International Silk Fair (IISF) held at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi, organised by Indian Silk Export Promotion Council (ISEPC).
 - ▶ India is 2nd largest producer of silk after China.
- ▶ A 126 MW capacity wind power project has been commissioned in Bhuj (Gujarat), as part of India's first ISTS auction which was conducted by state-run Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) in February 2017.

- ✎ Bid was for projects to be connected on ISTS wherein power generated from one state (renewable resource rich state) can be transmitted to other renewable deficient states. Energy generated from this project is being purchased by Bihar, Odisha, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh.
 - ✎ It marks beginning of capacity additions in wind power based on market discovered tariffs, in line with Government's plan of having 175 GW renewable energy by 2022.
11. ▶ AYUSH Ministry introduced new Central Sector scheme for promoting pharmacovigilance of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy (ASU&H) Drugs. It aims to develop culture of documenting adverse effects, monitoring and surveillance of misleading advertisements of drugs.
 - ✎ Government has sanctioned grant of Rs 10.60 Crore for the establishment of 3 pharmacovigilance network, which will consist of National Pharmacovigilance Centre (NPvCC), Intermediary Pharmacovigilance Centres (IPvCCs) and Peripheral Pharmacovigilance Centres (PPvCC).
 - ✎ All India Institute of Ayurveda New Delhi has been designated as National Pharmacovigilance Centre. It received the grant from the government.
 - ✎ Government aims to achieve the target of 100 peripheral pharmacovigilance centres by 2020.
 12. ▶ According to report by Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In), maximum (35 %) of cyber-attacks on official Indian websites are from China, followed by US (17 %) and Russia (15 %). It is followed by Pakistan (9%), Canada (7%) and Germany (5%).
 13. ▶ All India Council for Technical Education will establish country's first AICTE Training and Learning (ATAL) Academy in Jaipur (Rajasthan), with 3 more ATAL academies to come at Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), Guwahati (Assam) and Baroda (Gujarat) by 2019.
 - ✎ These will provide upgraded teaching methods and modules to make technical education more effective and accountable. Faculties will be trained on the eight-module course in these academies in five months.
 - ✎ The training will be mandatory for new teachers from 2019 and it will be necessary for existing teachers and assistant teachers while applying for promotions.
 14. ▶ Alphonso Mango from Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Palghar, Thane and Raigad districts of Maharashtra has been registered as Geographical Indication (GI).
 - ✎ GI is an indication used on products with a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin. GI products can benefit the rural economy in remote areas, by supplementing the incomes of artisans, farmers, weavers and craftsmen.
 - ✎ King of mangoes, Alphonso, better known as 'Hapus' in Maharashtra, is in demand in domestic and international markets not only for its taste but also for pleasant fragrance and vibrant colour.
 15. ▶ Andhra Pradesh CM Minister Chandrababu Naidu flagged off 'Swachh Dhara' programme at Amravati, To provide clean drinking water across state.
 16. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Government approved Mukhyamantri Yuva Nestam, an unemployment allowance scheme to provide Rs 1000 per month unemployed youth in state. It will benefit 12 lakh youth in the 22-35 years age group from state.
 17. ▶ Andhra Pradesh Government signed an MoU with electronics company Holytech, to set up Holytech' plant in 75 acres land in Tirupati and Chittoor districts. This first-of-its-kind facility in India will create 6000 direct job opportunities.
 18. ▶ Andhra Pradesh government started unemployment allowance as part of Yuva Nestam scheme for state's youth from October 2018, launching a website at yuanestham.ap.gov.in. It is aimed for unemployed youth between 25 - 35 years. It would give candidates an allowance of INR 1000 along with free of cost skill development training.
 19. ▶ Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) discovered collection of 254 Copper Coins in premises of Khirki Mosque (Delhi). The mosque was built by Khan-i-Jahan Juman Shah, Prime Minister of Firoz Shah Tughluq (1351-88) and is believed to be one of 7 mosques built by him.
 20. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh CM Pema Khandu dedicated Arunachal Pradesh's first Sainik School at Niglok in East Siang district to people of Arunachal Pradesh. It started its first academic session from 27th August 2018 with 60 students.
 21. ▶ Arunachal Pradesh assembly approved creation of three new districts - Pakke-Kesang, Lepa Rada and Shi Yomi. It will take number of districts in state up to up to 25 districts.
 - ✎ Pakke-Kessang - To be carved out of East Kameng district.
 - ✎ Lepa Rada - To be created by bifurcating Lower Siang district.
 - ✎ Shi-Yomi - To be created by bifurcating West Siang district.
 22. ▶ As a first of its kind ruling in India, Uttarakhand High Court invoked 'parens patriae' doctrine and declared itself as a legal guardian of members of bovine (cow) family across state. It grants court inherent power and authority to act as guardian for those who are unable to take care of themselves.

23. ▶ As per a recent Law Ministry report, India has 19.49 judges per 10 lakh people on an average. Subordinate courts have a shortage of 5748 judicial officers, and 24 high courts have a total of 406 vacancies. Working strength of lower judiciary is 16726, while approved strength is 22474.
24. ▶ Assam Government become first Indian state to offer a Wage Compensation Scheme for pregnant women working in tea gardens of state -
✎ INR 12000 will be given to pregnant women in 4 instalments - 2000 in 1st trimester, 4000 in 2nd trimester, 3000 for institutional delivery and 3000 for registration of child's birth. Women will also get maternity leaves, ranging 3 months before delivery to 3 months after delivery.
25. ▶ Assam celebrated its 3rd Bihu festival known as Kati Bihu' festival across state. Name of the other 2 Bihu festivals is: Rongali and Bohagi Bihu.
26. ▶ Assamese movie 'Village Rockstars' selected as India's official entry to Oscars 2019 (91st Academy Awards) under Foreign Language Film category. It was selected by 12-member jury of Film Federation of India (FII), led by Kannada producer-director SV Rajendra Singh Babu.
27. ▶ Badminton player PV Sindhu is only sportsperson featuring in Forbes India's 1st 'tycoons of tomorrow' list of 22 young achievers in the fields of business, acting and sports.
28. ▶ Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) will become first airport in Asia to introduce face recognition based passage system technology from 2019. For this, Bengaluru International Airport Ltd. (BIAL), which operates KIA has signed agreement with Portuguese software firm Vision Box. It will allow passengers to board flights and move across different sections of the airport using automatic biometric boarding procedure instead of manual boarding passes verification.
29. ▶ Bharti Airtel will provide optical fibre network in Tamil Nadu, to add 3000 KM of fibre network to Taminadu's 14000 km fibre Network. Airtel will open 12,000 new mobile sites across the State to add to network capacity and take high-speed data services deeper into rural areas.
30. ▶ Bihar Govt. launched girl child welfare scheme *Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana*. It will provide 54100 for a girl child from her birth until she graduates. It will be run by three departments namely education, health and social welfare. Also, State Govt. raised amount under Bicycle Yojna from 2500 to 3000.
31. ▶ Bihar's Shahi litchi got Geographical Indication (GI) tag, making it an exclusive brand. Shahi litchi is famous for its sweet, juicy, unique flavour and aroma, is mostly grown in Muzaffarpur and neighbouring districts including East Champaran, Vaishali, Samastipur and Begusarai.
32. ▶ Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) will start operating its first regional centre or avifauna observatory on the campus of Wetland Research and Training Centre near Chilika Lake (Asia's largest brackish water lagoon), Odisha. Avifauna observatory will carry out research on avian disease by collecting samples and monitor Nalabana Bird Sanctuary.
33. ▶ Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) and NITI Aayog released *State Energy Efficiency Preparedness Index* -
✎ It will serve as a standard reference document for energy intensive industries and help them achieve high operational efficiency of energy consuming utilities.
✎ States are categorised based on their efforts and achievements towards energy efficiency implementation, as 'Front Runner', 'Achiever', 'Contender' and 'Aspirant'.
✎ Front Runner States are Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Rajasthan.
✎ While most states have implemented national programmes designed by BEE and EESL, the 'Front Runner' and 'Achiever' states have several individual initiatives as well.
34. ▶ CBSE affiliated schools in Kerala, whose board exam documents such as mark sheets/ migration certificates/ pass certificates have got lost or damaged in the state's floods, CBSE will provide them with digital mark sheets, migration certificates and pass certificates through the 'Parinam Manjusha' portal/ DigiLocker.
✎ CBSE with National E-Governance Division (NEGD) has developed the first-of-its-kind digital academic repository called 'Parinam Manjusha'. The academic repository will be integrated with DigiLocker.
35. ▶ CSIR has developed Less Polluting Firecrackers named – safe water releaser (SWAS), safe minimal aluminium (SAFAL) and safe thermite cracker (STAR), which are environment friendly and are 15-20 % cheaper than conventional ones. E-crackers also being developed with products like E-Ladi, E-Anar, E-cracker.
36. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Aug 01, 2018) -
✎ General Approvals -
✎ Raising funds up to 15,000 crores as Extra Budgetary Resources (EBR) for Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) during 2018-19 through NABARD.
✎ Expansion of scope of work of *International Centre for Drinking Water Quality* to authorise it for receiving EBR funds for SBM(G), disbursement of same to States/UTs implementing agencies, and its repayment.

- ✍ Change name of Society to "National Centre for Drinking Water, Sanitation and Quality" in place of "International Centre for Drinking Water Quality".
- ✍ Permit exploration of unconventional hydrocarbons such as Shale oil/gas, Coal Bed Methane (CBM) etc. It will enable realization of prospective hydrocarbon reserves in existing Contract Areas. New investment activities and chances of finding new hydrocarbon discoveries and resultant increased domestic production thereof is expected.
- ✍ Restructuring Agricultural Scientists' Recruitment Board (ASRB), making it 4 Member body (up from 3 Members). Tenure of ASRB member will be for 3 years or till 65 years of age. Functioning ASRB shall be delinked from ICAR and to be attached with Deptt. of Agricultural Research & Education (DARE) under Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare.
- ✍ Approved first extension of Concessional Financing Scheme (CFS) to support Indian Entities bidding for strategically important infrastructure projects abroad. It is proposed to extend the Scheme for another five years from 2018 to 2023.
- ✍ Approved death penalty or life imprisonment to those involved in piracy at sea, to have a domestic anti-piracy legislation to provide necessary legal framework for prosecution of those involved in piracy-related crimes.
- ✍ Approved introducing a Bill to restore original provisions of SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, that was ruled out by Supreme Court in March 2018. It introduces three new clauses after Section 18 of original Act.
 - ✍ Preliminary enquiry shall not be required for registration of a First Information Report against any person.
 - ✍ Arrest of a person accused of having committed an offence under Act would not require any approval.
 - ✍ Provisions of Section 438 of Code of Criminal Procedure, which deals with anticipatory bail, shall not apply to a case under this Act, in spite of any judgment or order of any Court.
- ✍ CCEA Approvals -
 - ✍ Approved Interest Free Loan (IFL) equivalent to interest during construction (IDC) component of 422 crores, 415 crores and 419 crores for Gorakhpur, Sindri and Barauni projects respectively to Hindustan Urvarak and Rasayan Limited (HURL) fertilizer projects.
 - ✍ Approved issue of fresh equity shares to extent of 15% of paid up equity capital efface value of Rs. 5 each by Hindustan Copper Limited (HCL) through Qualified Institutions Placement (QIP) route. Govt shareholding will come down from 76.05% to 66.13%.
 - ✍ Approved opening of 13 new Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) in 7 States and 2nd Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya (JNV) in Alot in Ratlam (Madhya Pradesh). Presently, KVs are imparting quality education to more than 12 lakh students and JNVs are providing modern education free of cost to nearly 2.50 lakh students across country.

37. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Aug 09, 2018) -

- ✍ General Approvals -
 - ✍ Approved extension of term of Commission to examine issue of Sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes in Central List till November 2018.
 - ✍ Approved raising 4 additional battalions of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), at estimated cost of 637 crores. These will initially be raised as 2 battalions in Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) and 1 battalion each in Border Security Force (BSF) and Assam Rifles (ARs). Later these battalions will be converted into NDRF battalions and will be placed in Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Delhi National Capital Region.
- ✍ MOUs -
 - ✍ Indonesia - cooperation in health and Science sector.
 - ✍ MoU between Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and Chartered Professional Accountants of Canada (CPA Canada).
 - ✍ Korea - Trade Remedy Cooperation.
 - ✍ Approved Joint issue of Postage Stamps on India-South Africa on theme *20 Years of Strategic Partnership*.
- ✍ CCEA Approvals -
 - ✍ Approved release of pulses to States/UTs at discounted rate to be utilized for various Welfare Schemes from stock of pulses procured under Price Support Schemes (PSS), to enable States/UTs to use pulses in various Welfare Schemes like PDS, Mid-Day Meal Scheme etc.
 - ✍ States/UT can lift 34.88 lakh MT of Tur, Chana, Masoor, Moong and Urad at discount of 15 per Kg over prevailing wholesale market price of sourcing state. Government will spend 5237 crores for its implementation.
 - ✍ Approved construction of 6.930 km long 4-lane bridge at Kosi River in Phulaut (Bihar), to be completed by June 2022. It will fill 10 km long missing link between Phulaut and Bihpur on NH-106, to bring down journey between 2 places to 12 KM, from 72 KM Currently.

- ✎ Approved revision of *Post Matric Scholarship for Other Backward Classes Students for studying in India* scheme for upto 2019-20. Revisions include - Annual parental income will be increased from Rs. One Lakh to Rs. 1.5 lakh, 30% of funds allocated earmarked for girl students and 5% for students with disabilities.
- ✎ Approved continuation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) beyond 12th Five Year Plan period ((2012–2017)). It will help in connecting 38,412 habitations at estimated cost of Rs. 84,934 crore.
 - ✎ Initially targets of PMGSY were to be achieved by March 2022, however, sunset date of achievement of PMGSY-I was pre-poned to March 2019, with changed funding pattern in ratio of 60:40 between Centre and States (90:10 for 8 North Eastern and 3 Himalayan States)
 - ✎ PMGSY-II and habitations under identified LWE blocks (100-249 population) covered by March 2020. Under, PMGSY-II, against target length of 50,000 km works of upgradation almost 32,100 km road length have been sanctioned in 13 states, which have transited to PMGSY-II. 12,000 km road length has been completed up to March, 2018 against the sanctions issued.

38. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Aug 29, 2018) -

✎ MOUs -

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

✎ General Approvals -

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

✎ CCEA Approvals -

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

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




✎ General Approvals -

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

✎ MOUs -







- ✎ Russia - Road Transport, MSME.

 CCEA Approvals -




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

40. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Oct 10, 2018)




 General Approvals -

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

 MOUs -







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

 CCEA Approvals -

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

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

 General Approvals -

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

 MOUs -

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

✍ CCEA Approvals -

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

42. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Sep 05, 2018) -

✍ General Approvals -

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

✍ Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) -

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

43. ▶ Cabinet Approvals (Sep 12, 2018) -

✍ General Approvals -

- ✍ Approved introduction of Bill in Parliament for amendment of NID Act 2014 to include four new National Institutes of Design (NID) viz. Amaravati/Vijayawada (Andhra Pradesh), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), Jorhat (Assam) and Kurukshetra (Haryana) within ambit of NID Act 2014 and declare them as Institutions of National Importance (INIs) at par with NID Ahmedabad.
- ✍ Approved Policy framework to promote and incentivize Enhanced Recovery (ER)/ Improved Recovery (IR)/ Unconventional Hydrocarbon (UHC) production Methods/ to improve recovery factor of existing hydrocarbons reserves for augmenting domestic production of oil and gas.
 - ✍ It will be applicable to all contractual regimes and Nomination fields. It is expected to spur new investment, provide impetus to economic activities and generate additional employment opportunities.

- ✍ Cabinet approved new Umbrella Scheme *Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshhan Abhiyan' (PM-AASHA)*, aimed at ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce, as announced in Budget for 2018.

- ✍ PM-AASHA includes mechanism of ensuring remunerative prices to farmers and is comprised of -

- ✍ Price Support Scheme (PSS),

- ✍ Physical procurement of pulses, oilseeds and Copra will be done by Central Nodal Agencies with proactive role of State governments. In addition to NAFED, Food Cooperation of India (FCI) will take up PSS operations in states /districts.

- ✍ Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS)

- ✍ It is proposed to cover all oilseeds for which MSP is notified. In this direct payment of difference between the MSP and selling price will be made to pre-registered farmers selling his produce in the notified market yard through a transparent auction process. All payment will be done directly into registered bank account of farmer.

- ✍ This scheme does not involve any physical procurement of crops as farmers are paid difference between the MSP price and Sale price on disposal in notified market.

- ✎ Pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PPPS).

- ✎ Procurement Stats -

- ✎ During 2010-14, procurement was INR 3500 crores whereas during 2014-18, it has risen to INR 34000 crores.

- ✎ For procurement of these agri-commodities during 2010-14, Government Guarantee of 2500 crore was provided with expenditure of only 300 crores. During 2014-18, Guarantee has been increased to 29000 crores with expenditure of 1000 crores.

- ✎ Now, Cabinet has increased government guarantee by INR 16550 crores, making it 45550 crore in total. INR 15053 crores is sanctioned for PM-AASHA implementation.

- ✎ MOUs -

- ✎ Brunei Darussalam - Cooperation in Space Research, Science and Applications. Operation of Telemetry Tracking and Telecommand station for satellite and launch vehicles.

- ✎ Collaborative Research on Distributed Ledger and Block chain Technology in context of Development of digital economy by Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) with participating member banks, under BRICS Interbank Cooperation Mechanism.

- ✎ Participating banks are - Banco Nacional de Desenvolvimento Economico e Social (BNDES, of Brazil), China Development Bank (CDB), State Corporation Bank for Development and Foreign Economic Affairs (Vnesheconombank, of Russia) and Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA).

- ✎ South Africa - exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes.

- ✎ Egypt - Agriculture & allied sectors.

- ✎ Malta - Tourism.

- ✎ CCEA Approvals -

- ✎ Approved revising price of ethanol derived from B heavy molasses / partial sugarcane juice and fix a higher price for 100% sugarcane juice based ethanol for ethanol supply year from 1st December 2018 to 30th November 2019.

- ✎ Fix ex-mill price of ethanol derived out of B heavy molasses / partial sugarcane juice to INR 52.43 per litre (earlier 47.13 / litre).

- ✎ Fix the ex-mill price of ethanol derived from 100% sugarcane juice at 59.13 per litre (earlier from prevailing price of Rs.47.13 per litre).

- ✎ OMCs are advised to prioritise ethanol from 100 % sugarcane juice, B heavy molasses / partial sugarcane juice, C heavy molasses and Damaged Food grains/other sources, in that order.

- ✎ Approved continuation of Capacity Development Scheme for 2017-18 to 2019-20 with outlay of INR 2250 crores.

- ✎ CDS is an Ongoing Central Sector Scheme of MoSPI, aimed at augmenting infrastructural, technical as well as manpower resources for making available credible and timely Official Statistics for policy makers and public.

- ✎ It has 2 Sub-schemes - Economic Census and Support for Statistical Strengthening (SSS).

- ✎ Under Economic Census -listing of all non-agricultural establishments is undertaken periodically, which forms the basis for conducting detailed socio-economic surveys.

- ✎ SSS Sub-scheme is to strengthen State/ Sub-State level statistical systems/ infrastructure to facilitate development of a robust national system.

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

- ✎ CCEA Approvals -

- ✎ Approved equity investment of INR 1033.54 crores ($\pm 29.67\%$) of project cost for setting up a Coal Gasification based fertilizer project in Talcher Fertilizer Ltd. (TFL) by Rashtriya Chemicals & Fertilizers Limited (RCF). Revival of Talcher project will ensure huge investment in the fertilizer sector from Government through PSUs.

- ✎ Approved enhancement of honorarium to Anganwadi Workers/Anganwadi Helpers (AWWs/AWHs) and performance linked incentive to AWHs with total cost of INR 10649 crores, till 31-03-2020.

- ✎

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

- ✎ Approved to construct new line between Budni to Indore (Mangaliyagaon) with approximate length of 205.5 Km, with cost 3261 crores.

- ✎ Approved ASHA Benefit Package w.e.f. October 2018, with 2 components -

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

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

✎ CCEA Approvals -

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

✎ General Approvals -

- ✎ Increasing of Government ownership in Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) and change in existing structure -
 - ✎ Acquisition of 51% equity held by the -Government Institutions in GSTN, and Restructure GSTN, with 100% government ownership shall have equity structure between the Centre (50%) and the States (50%).
 - ✎ Allow change in the existing composition of the Board of GSTN inducting three directors from Centre and States and three other independent directors to be nominated by Board of Directors and one Chairman and the CEO. Thus total number of Directors is 11.
- ✎ Central Assistance of INR 620 Crores and 206 Crores for implementation of relining of Rajasthan Feeder Canal and Sirhind Feeder Canal respectively over five years (2018-19 to 2022-23).
- ✎ Approved National Digital Communications Policy-2018 and re-designation of the Telecom Commission as the *Digital Communications Commission*.

✎ It aims to -

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

✎ Strategy Includes -

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

✎ MOUs -

- ✎ With Uzbekistan -
 - ✎ Tourism

- ✍ Law & Justice
 - ✍ Combating Illicit Trafficking in Narcotics, Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors
 - ✍ For establishment of the Uzbek-Indian Free Pharmaceutical Zone in the Andijan Region of Uzbekistan. The MoU will be signed during the visit of President of Uzbekistan to India on 1st October 2018.
 - ✍ Agriculture and Allied sectors
 - ✍ Pharmaceutical sector
 - ✍ South Korea - Applied Science and Industrial Technology
 - ✍ Co-operation MoU between Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Kenya (ICPAK).
 - ✍ MoU between NITI Aayog, and Ministry of Economic Development of the Russian Federation (MEDRF) in the field of social, economic, industrial and regional development programs.
46. ▶ Cabinet cleared ordinance to make instant triple talaq penal offence, after It was signed by President Ram Nath Kovind later as per Article 123 of Constitution. Compelling reason cited by Government for promulgation of this ordinance was that practice of triple talaq continues unabated even after annulled by Supreme Court due to absence of legal framework.
47. ▶ Census 2021 for first time in independent India will collect data on Other Backwards Castes (OBCs), after over 25 years after implementation of 27% reservation for OBCs based on Mandal Commission's recommendations on basis of last castes data collected in 1931 census.
- ✍ In 1953, President under Article 340 had set up first Backward Classes Commission under chairmanship of Kaka Kelkar to identify backward classes other than SCs and STs at national level. Its conclusions were rejected later.
 - ✍ Later in January 1979, 2nd Backward Classes Commission headed by B P Mandal was appointed to consider reservations, to redress caste discrimination. It reported that OBC population at 52% and classified 1,257 communities as backward. It also recommended increasing existing quotas, which were only for SC/ST, from 22.5% to 49.5% to include OBCs. Its recommendations were implemented in 1990.
 - ✍ UPA government (under Manmohan Singh) accepted demand for caste-based enumeration and undertaken Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) in 2011. However, SECC-2011 data was not made public for certain errors identified by Registrar General of India.
48. ▶ Central Government launch Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences (IMPRESS) scheme to promote research in Social Sciences.
- ✍ Government support would be funding of 414 crore on 1500 projects for policy themes in the social sciences at cost of 20-25 Lakh per project.
 - ✍ 11 Thematic Areas - State and Democracy Urban transformation, Media, Culture and Society Employment, Skills and Rural transformation Governance, Innovation and Public Policy Growth, Macro-trade and Economic Policy Agriculture and Rural Development Health and Environment Science and Education Social Media and Technology Politics, Law and Economics.
 - ✍ Indian Council of Social Science and Research (ICSSR) will be the project implementing agency.
49. ▶ Central Government notified that it has withdrawn proposal for setting up 'Social Media Communication Hub', after Supreme Court termed it like *creating a surveillance state*. Social Media Communications Hub was a proposed platform to allow government to keep eye on all social media platforms, to track any individual's public posts across these online platforms.
50. ▶ Central Information Commission (CIC) brought Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) under the RTI (Right to Information) Act, after concluded that characteristics of BCCI fulfil required conditions of Section 2(h) of RTI Act.
51. ▶ Chhattisgarh Government renamed Naya Raipur smart city as *Atal Nagar*, in honour of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who passed away recently. Also, Madhya Pradesh Govt. named 3 awards after former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Awards are for poets, journalists and administration.
52. ▶ Chhattisgarh became first state to provide Right to Skills' Development to the youth, flagging off 15 Skill Chariots to launch government's 'Skills on Wheels' project.
53. ▶ Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra launched three applications for benefit of litigants and lawyers - e-Filing, e-Pay, and National Service and Tracking of Electronic Processes (NSTEP); created under eCourts project Phase II and led by Justice MB Lokur.
- ✍ e-Filing - Available at efiling.ecourts.gov.in, it is meant for online registration of lawyers and litigants.
 - ✍ e-Pay - Available at pay.ecourts.gov.in, It is a unified portal wherein facility to pay online court fees is provided.
 - ✍ NSTEP - It is a transparent and secure system for transmission of process from one location to another and will address delays in process.
54. ▶ Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu unveiled a new transaction structure for future greenfield airports proposed under NABH Nirmaan 2018, aimed at boosting investment in Indian aviation sector.

- ✎ *Maximum Blended Aeronautical Yield (MBAY)* in terms of INR per passenger shall be pre-determined by Concessioneing Authority at beginning of Concession Period. It shall undergo adjustments to account for inflation and certain eventualities over Concession Period. MBAY for greenfield airports for FY 18-19 is proposed to be INR 400 per passenger.
- ✎ Concession Period is proposed to be 40 years. Base rate of MBAY and Concession Fee shall be indexed to 50% of inflation.
- ✎ Once in 5 years, Concessionaire shall propose base rate of MBAY for the next 5 years.
- ✎ Quality assurance -
 - ✎ Regulator may formulate the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for greenfield airports and modify them once every 5 years.
 - ✎ Every greenfield airport shall constitute a Airport User Consultative Committee (AUCC).
 - ✎ AUCC may recommend change in MBAY to Regulator (limited to 10%) based on Concessionaire's performance.
- ✎ Benefits of new approach -
 - ✎ Future airports will be simple and cost-efficient. There will be no incentive to enhance Capex and Opex to demand higher tariffs. The era of high revenue share (30-50 %) for Concessioneing Authority may end. It will bring down cost to passengers. It will attract more investors and funding institutions into airports.
- 55. ▶ Civil Aviation Ministry approved setting up water aerodromes in Odisha, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Assam. In first phase of the project, Chilka Lake (Odisha), Sabarmati River Front and Sardar Sarovar Dam (Gujarat) have been identified for the development of such facilities.
 - ✎ Airdrome is location from which aircraft flight operations take place, regardless of whether they involve air cargo, passengers. The development of aerodromes projects in India will pave way for operation of amphibian planes (both in land and water) to enhance air connectivity.
- 56. ▶ Coal India and NLC India (formerly Neyveli Lignite Corporation) will jointly set up 5000 MW of power generation capacity of which 3000 MW would be solar powered while the rest 2000 MW would be coal-fuelled.
 - ✎ Coal India has been tasked to become a net zero emission energy company by the ministry of coal, a move which requires it to generate 3,000 MW of solar power.
- 57. ▶ Delhi Police inducted India's first all-woman Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team for anti-terrorist operations.
- 58. ▶ Delhi government launched Chief Minister's Urban Leaders Fellowship Programme that seeks to attract young leaders across the country to work with it on addressing some of the most pressing urban challenges. Fellows will be assigned to work with ministers or senior officials and will be paid remuneration of Rs 1.25 lakh per month (75,000 per month to Associate Fellows).
- 59. ▶ Delhi government launched doorstep delivery of 40 essential government services such as caste and marriage certificates, driving license and new water connections in the first phase. The services will be provided for an extra fee of Rs 50. Delivery would be completed with help of assigned *Mobile sahayaks*.
- 60. ▶ Delhi has been ranked last among 14 cities on basis of vehicular emissions in a survey conducted by Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), a Delhi-based research organisation to assess transport-related emissions from urban commuting.
 - ✎ It classified Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai as megacities and Bhopal, Vijaywada, Lucknow, Jaipur, Chandigarh, Kochi, Pune, Ahmedabad as metro cities.
 - ✎ Bhopal ranked best for its lowest overall vehicular emission and fuel consumption, followed by Vijaywada and Chandigarh.
 - ✎ In terms of Per-travel trip emissions & energy consumption - Kolkata (1), Mumbai and Bhopal.
- 61. ▶ Department of Biotechnology (DBT) signed MOU with International Energy Agency (IEA). It seeks to deepen co-operation in clean energy innovations to accelerate development of clean energy technologies in India and will support generation of data for policymaking and improve knowledge of good policy practices for innovation in India and around world.
- 62. ▶ Department of Biotechnology (Ministry of Science and Technology) signed MoU with International Energy Agency (IEA) for enhancing innovation for Clean Energy Transition, to support clean energy technologies in India.
 - ✎ It will be coordinated for Ministry of Science & Technology by Mission Innovation India Unit set up by DBT and for IEA it will be coordinated by its International Partnership and Initiatives Unit (IPI). It will be initially valid for three years.
- 63. ▶ Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (Ministry of Commerce and Industry) unveiled tricolour logo for geographical indication (GI) certified products, with tagline *Invaluable Treasures of Incredible India*. As per a contest, winning logo was designed by Adri Chatterjee and winning tagline was coined by Akancha Tripathi.
 - ✎ GI tag is used on certain products which correspond to specific geographical location or origin. The goods and products having tag are recognised for their origin, quality and reputation and gives it required edge in global market.
- 64. ▶ Department of Telecom (DoT) exempted wireless devices that operate in low frequency range like bluetooth, wireless chargers, internet-of-things (IoT) products, medical devices etc. from licensing requirement. It is aimed at facilitating ease of doing business for adoption of new technologies like IoT, machine-to-machine (M2M) communications.

65. ▶ Dharmendra Pradhan (Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship) launched SATAT (Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation) as an innovative initiative to make available Compressed Bio-Gas CBG in market for use in automotive fuels.
- ✍ Under it, with PSU Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) are inviting Expression of Interest (EoI) to set up CBG production plants, by 31st March, 2019.
 - ✍ Government is keen to set up 5000 CBG plants in next 5 years. Government will incur 75,000 Crore capital expenditure for setting up infrastructure for City Gas distribution network.
 - ✍ SATAT initiative promises efficient municipal solid waste management and tackling problem of polluted urban air due to farm stubble-burning and carbon emissions.
66. ▶ Directorate General of Civil Aviation issued Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) or regulations for civil use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS) commonly known as *Drones*, to be effective from December 1, 2018.
- ✍ Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu said Drone Regulations 1.0 are intended to enable visual line-of-sight daytime-only and a maximum of 400 feet altitude operations of drones.
 - ✍ Unmanned Aircraft Operator Permit (UAOP) will be required for drone operators except for nano drones operating below 50 ft.; micro drones operating below 200 ft; and those owned by NTRC, ARC and Central Intelligence Agencies.
 - ✍ Digital Sky Platform is the first-of-its-kind national Unmanned Traffic Management (UTM) platform that implements “No Permission, No Takeoff” (NPNT).
 - ✍ Users will be required to do a one-time registration of their drones, pilots and owners.
 - ✍ For every flight, users will be required to ask for permission to fly on a mobile app. This requirement is exempted for the nano category of drones. Once the user puts forward his request to fly, an automated process permits or denies the request instantly.
67. ▶ Election Commission announced Schedule for General Elections to Legislative Assemblies of Chhattisgarh Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Mizoram & Telangana (To be held in November - December 2018).
68. ▶ Election Commission of India (EC) removed NOTA (None of the Above) option from ballot papers of Rajya Sabha, Legislative Council elections following directive of Supreme Court.
- ✍ In August 2018, Supreme Court had said that NOTA will not be applicable as ballot option in Rajya Sabha polls. It will only continue to be option in direct elections such as Lok Sabha and state assemblies, quashing June 2014 notification of EC that allowed use of NOTA option in Rajya Sabha elections.
69. ▶ Environment Ministry launched *Harit Diwali, Swasth Diwali* campaign, which was initiated in 2017-18, aiming to minimize bursting of crackers. This campaign is now merged with “Green Good Deed” movement, initiated as a social mobilization for protection of environment.
70. ▶ FCI Aravali Gypsum and Minerals India Limited (FAGMIL), a CPSU under Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers received approval from Government of Himachal Pradesh for setting up of White Cement Plant to cater to demand of white cement in North India. It will be first PSU white cement plant in India. Installed capacity of Plant will be 1000 TPD.
71. ▶ FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO), women’s wing of Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) launched WOW (Wellness of Women) mobile application aimed at creating awareness on preventive healthcare for women across country, backed by Apollo Hospitals Group.
72. ▶ First India-Israel Innovation Centre (IIIC) entrepreneurial technology hub launched in Bengaluru (Karnataka), to forge local partnerships and joint ventures between companies from two countries.
73. ▶ Food Safety and Standards Authority (FSSAI) notified food safety standards for honey and its products in bid to curb adulteration, to help farmers to fetch better prices for their products.
- ✍ Honey products should comply with 18 parameters like that of sucrose content, glucose ratio, pollen count, foreign oligosaccharides etc.
 - ✍ These products should contain fixed maximum 5% limit for sucrose, 10% for carvia callosa and honeydew honey. The moisture percentage should be maximum 20% and pollen count should be 25,000 per gram.
74. ▶ Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil) initiative to enable collection and conversion of used cooking oil to biodiesel. According to FSSAI, maximum permissible limits for Total Polar Compounds (TPC) have been set at 25%, beyond which cooking oil is unsafe for consumption.
75. ▶ Former President Pranab Mukherjee launched National Electoral Transformation (NETA) mobile application that allows voters to rate and review their political representatives, developed by Pratham Mittal. It is first of its kind platform in India that allows voters to rate and review the political representatives in their constituencies.

- ✎ It aims to foster political accountability and transparency among leaders., inspired by US' approval system. Using it, voters can review and rate their elected representatives (MLAs, MPs and ministers) and hold them accountable as well.
 - ✎ It is also seen as instrument to gauge voter sentiment across constituencies, available in 16 languages.
- 76. ▶ Foundation stone for Second Generation (2G) Ethanol Bio-refinery of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited laid at Baulasingha village in Bargarh district of Odisha.
 - ✎ The Bio-refinery, the first of its kind to be set up, will have a capacity to produce 3 crore litres of fuel grade Ethanol annually using Rice straw as feedstock. Ethanol produced from this plant will be blended with Petrol. The cost is around 100 Crores.
 - ✎ India has surplus biomass availability of about 120-160 MMT annually which if converted, has potential to yield 3000 crore litres of ethanol. National Biofuel Policy of India 2018 targets 20% Ethanol blending to Petrol by 2030. However, due to non-availability of Ethanol, current Ethanol blending in Petrol is about 3 to 4%.
 - ✎ Setting up of 2G Ethanol plants will help achieve target of Ethanol blending in Petrol. Bargarh Bio-Refinery will utilize about 2 lakh tonnes of Rice straw annually as feedstock which will be sourced from nearby locations.
- 77. ▶ General Conferences (Aug 1 - 10, 2018) -
 - ✎ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated *One District One Product* Summit in Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh). Amazon partnered with UP government to provide support MSME entrepreneurs across nine districts, under ODOP Scheme. This will be a part of Amazon India's Kala Haat programme which aims to help traditional industries to enter in to ecommerce business.
 - ✎ NITI Aayog's International Conference on "Sustainable Growth through Material Recycling: Policy Prescriptions" Held in New Delhi.
 - ✎ 17th Indo-US Military Cooperation Meeting held in New Delhi
 - ✎ 51st ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Foreign Ministers meeting Held in Singapore.
 - ✎ Telangana Govt. signed MoU with It Firm Tech Mahindra to launch India's first Blockchain district, during International Blockchain Congress 2018 in Hyderabad. It will be centre of excellence, incubator and process development for emerging technology with innovative infrastructure and facilities to foster growth of Indian blockchain start-ups and companies.
 - ✎ Startup India Yatra launched in Raipur (capital of Chattisgarh), to travel to other cities of state over coming month.
 - ✎ *Bridging Japan and India by Bamboo* event held in Tripura, with Japan committing to assist in Bamboo handicraft sector of Tripura.
 - ✎ 5th *Act East Business Show -2018* held in Shillong (Meghalaya).
 - ✎ First-ever festival for insects that help maintain ecosystem is organized jointly by WWF (World Wide Fund) India and Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS).
 - ✎ Govt. inaugurated an exhibition entitled *Pratibandhit Sahitya mein Swatantrata Sangram* (Freedom Movement through Prescribed Literature) in National Archives of India (New Delhi).
 - ✎ NITI Aayog hosted an Investors' Conference in New Delhi, for Holistic Development of Islands. It will attract investment for sustainable development of eco-tourism projects in Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands.
 - ✎ Hardeep S Puri, Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs launched official trailer for film *Halkaa*, under Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban) in partnership with New Delhi Municipal Council, set to release on Sep 05.
 - ✎ All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) signed MoU with IIT Delhi to boost research in traditional medicine and streamline hospital care facilities. It was signed at two-day conference of heads of AYUSH National Institutes organised by All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) in New Delhi, aimed at upgrading national institutes of traditional medicine at par with IITs and IIMs.
- 78. ▶ General Conferences (Aug 11 - 20, 2018) -
 - ✎ Jatayu sculpture inaugurated at Jatayu Earth Center (JEC) at Chadayamangalam in Kollam district (Kerala), as world's largest bird sculpture.
 - ✎ Meeting of Senior Officials of the Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) held in Kathmandu (Nepal) today.
 - ✎ Nepal-India Literature Festival 2018 held in Birgunj (Nepal).
- 79. ▶ General Conferences (Aug 21 - 31, 2018) -
 - ✎ Indian Council of Agricultural Research organized 2 day conference on Motivating and Attracting Youth in Agriculture (MAYA) held in New Delhi, In order to meet the challenge of providing sustainable livelihoods for a rapidly growing population and to motivate and attract youth in agriculture.
 - ✎ India Banking Conclave (IBC) 2018 held in New Delhi, organised by Centre for Economic Policy Research (CEPR) along with NITI Aayog.
 - ✎ 5 day International water colour festival held in Ranchi at Audrey House, to promote the rich art and culture of Jharkhand.
- 80. ▶ General Conferences (Oct 1-10, 2018) -

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

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

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

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

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

- 🔗 *Krishi Kumbh 2018* held in Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh), to pave way for new technology to be imbibed and better opportunities to created in the agriculture sector.
 - 🔗 36th Indian Carpets Expo held at Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), to augment efforts of the handicrafts and small and medium industries.
 - 🔗 3-day Sagar Discourse 2 conference held in Panaji (Goa), organized by Forum for Integrated National Security.
 - 🔗 Conclave on Capital Goods for Steel Sector, manufacture in India, organised by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in Bhubaneswar (Odisha). 38 pacts worth \$5 billion were signed among 20 technology providers, to boost manufacturing of capital goods for iron and steel industry.
 - 🔗 Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) launched Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign aimed to reduce adverse environmental conditions after Diwali celebrations due to excessive bursting of crackers. It is merged with “Green Good Deed” movement that has been initiated as social mobilization for conservation and protection of environment.
 - 🔗 First trilateral meeting among India, Afghanistan and Iran of Coordination Council of Chabahar Agreement took place in Tehran (Iran). Indian delegation was led by Secretary (Economic Relations) TS Tirumurti.
 - 🔗 President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated International Arya Mahasammelan 2018 in Delhi.
 - 🔗 NITI Aayog organized 4th NITI Lecture Series at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi, with theme *AI for ALL: Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Inclusive Growth*.
 - 🔗 Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation organised a seminar on Gandhian thoughts and Swachhta to make India a Swachh Bharat by 2019 - 150 the birthday celebration of M K Gandhi.
 - 🔗 2nd Guwahati International Film Festival (GIFF 2018) began in Assam, with theme ‘*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*’ Focus region of GIFF 2018 is the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) region.
 - 🔗 *Childrens Film Bonanza* concluded at Naharlagun (Arunachal Pradesh), organized by Children’s Film Society of India (Ministry of Information & Broadcasting).
83. ▶ General Conferences (Sep 1 - 10, 2018) -
- 🔗 IARI held Conference on Motivating and Attracting Youth in Agriculture (MAYA) at National Agricultural Science Complex (NASC) in New Delhi.
 - 🔗 6th International Geriatric Orthopaedic Society of India Conference on theme “Increased Longevity with Reduced Fragility and Enhanced Mobility” held at AIIMS Delhi.
 - 🔗 A National Conference organised by Supreme Court Advocates on Record Association in New Delhi.
 - 🔗 3-day Defence & Homeland Security Expo and Conference – 2018, organised by PHD Chamber of Commerce and Industry in association in New Delhi.
 - 🔗 US-India Business Council (USIBC) organised its first India Ideas Summit in Mumbai.
 - 🔗 Ministry of Railways & Centre for Railway Information Systems (CRIS) organised a seminar on “Leveraging IT for Mobility” in New Delhi. Minister of Railways & Coal, Shri Piyush Goyal launched a new app – “AAPOORTI’ mobile App of ‘Indian Railways e-procurement system’ (IREPS).
 - 🔗 31st meeting of Central Hindi Committee held in New Delhi.
 - 🔗 115th meeting of India-Pakistan Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) held in Lahore (Pakistan). PK Saxena (Indian Commissioner for Indus Waters), attended the same. Both countries agreed to undertake Treaty mandated tours of both Indus Commissioners in Indus basin on both sides.
 - 🔗 Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) announced guidelines for ‘Sandbox’ method to enable testing of new innovative insurance products, during 11th Global Insurance Summit organised by Assocham in Mumbai. Sandbox method would allow insurers or a set of few policyholders to test products in a particular geography before they are available in market.
 - 🔗 Conference on “E-Mobility in Indian Railways” organized by Ministry of Railways through Institution of Railways Electrical Engineers (IRSEE) in association with NITI Aayog concluded in New Delhi.
 - 🔗 4th Annual Sustainable Smart Cities India Conference held in Bengaluru.
 - 🔗 Bi-annual talks between Indian and Bangladeshi border forces held in New Delhi.
84. ▶ General Conferences (Sep 11 - 20, 2018) -
- 🔗 Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan) organized National Conference of District Disability Rehabilitation Centres’ at Dr. Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi.
 - 🔗 Rajasthan government held convention on ‘Revitalising India as a Heritage Destination’ to focus on preserving heritage properties in Bharatpur.
 - 🔗 All India Pension Adalat held in New Delhi, organised by Department of Pension & Pensioners Welfare (DoP&PW). It is a large scale exercise for pensioners’ welfare undertaken by Government as part of good governance practices.

- ✎ My India WiFi India Summit & Awards 2018 organized by DigiAnalysys in New Delhi, with theme Achieving 10 million WiFi Hotspots by 2018.
 - ✎ Asean World Economic Forum held in Hanoi (Vietnam), with theme *ASEAN 4.0: Entrepreneurship and the Fourth Industrial Revolution*.
 - ✎ Minister of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Mines, Narendra Singh chaired 20th Central Employment Guarantee Council meeting in Bhopal.
 - ✎ 4th Eastern Economic Forum held in Vladivostok (Russia), with theme *The Far East: Expanding the Range of Possibilities*.
 - ✎ Inaugural Naval Flight Test Seminar held at Goa.
 - ✎ Tripura CM Biplab Kumar Deb inaugurated ISRO's Space Technology Incubation Centre(STIC) at National Institute of Technology Agartala. It was launched at the first edition of 'Spacetrionics' organised by the India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA).
 - ✎ Textiles Minister Smriti Zubin Irani presented 'Shilp Guru' and National Award to Master craft persons at a function held at Raipur (capital of Chhattisgarh). 8 'Shilp guru' and 25 National awards were presented for 2016. Shilp Guru' is the highest award in the Handicraft sector in India.
 - ✎ Home Affairs Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated two Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) pilot projects along India-Pakistan border in Jammu region.
 - ✎ Jaipur Literature Festival held in Houston at Asia Society of Texas (USA). The festival is touted as world's largest free literary gathering.
85. ▶ General Conferences (Sep 21 - 30, 2018) -
- ✎ 7th National Conference on Excellence in Workplace Safety and Occupational Health in New Delhi.
 - ✎ PM Narendra Modi inaugurated Conference on Academic Leadership on Education for Resurgence in New Delhi. To deliberate on challenges facing Indian education system and to work out a plan for a paradigm shift in terms of achieving academic outcomes and in regulation of education.
 - ✎ 3rd meeting of IONS Working Group (IWG) on Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) held in Vishakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh).
 - ✎ National literary and intellectual conference Lok Manthan 2018 held at Khel Gaon in Ranchi (Jharkhand).
 - ✎ Joint border conference of India and Bangladesh held at Aizawl (Mizoram).
 - ✎ India and Nepal's 5th meeting of Boundary Working Group (BWG) held in Kathmandu. Both Nations agreed to explore possibility of using high resolution satellite images in boundary survey work.
 - ✎ Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs 2 day National Orientation workshop on National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) in New Delhi.
 - ✎ NeVA is initiative of Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, aiming to make all legislatures in country paperless by making proceedings of houses digital. It hosts secure page for each Member of House for submitting Questions and other Notices.
 - ✎ NeVA serves as 'One Nation, One Application' by bringing uniformity of database for easy and effective engagement of citizens with Government.
 - ✎ 21st Central Zonal Council meeting held in Lucknow (Uttar Pradesh).
 - ✎ Vice president M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated Smart City Expo India-2018 in Jaipur (Rajasthan), to discuss utilizing benefits of new technology, town planning, challenges before socio-economic development in Smart City sector.
 - ✎ National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) held its Grameena Habba Event in Bangalore (Karnataka), to expand the market for weavers, rural artisans and craftsmen, SHGs, rural entrepreneurs, and farmers' producer organisations.
 - ✎ Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik inaugurated Odisha's official Bhawan in Chennai (Tamilnadu). He also launched 'Kalahandi Dialogue' at Bhawanipatna, in Kalahandi (Odisha).
86. ▶ Global monument conservation body *International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)* launched Kerala Heritage Rescue Initiative to assess damage to rich cultural and built heritage sites in flood-devastated Kerala. It aims at setting up platform for emergency response to cultural heritage damaged by floods in Kerala.
87. ▶ Goa Government launched helpline 181, to help women in distress.
88. ▶ Gogha- Dahej Ro-Pax Ferry service inaugurated in Gujarat, under Sagarmala programme of Ministry of Shipping.
- ✎ In a successful trial run, 12 loaded trucks were transported by Ro- Pax ferry from Dahej to Gogha across the Gulf of Cambay, via sea route.
 - ✎ Land route is a 294 km or 8 hour drive, while Ro-Pax service reduces this to just 31 km through sea route by crossing Gulf in Cambay, taking just 1.5 hours.

- ✎ This is an important development for diamond and textiles traders & workers in Surat to travel via coastal shipping and save the travel time by almost half.
- ✎ Fully operational Ro Pax service with carrying capacity of 100 vehicles and 500 passengers is now opened
- ✎ Total cost of project is estimated to be 615 Crores, of which 117 Crore is funded by Central Government under Sagarmala programme.



✎ Pictorial Representation -

89. ▶ Government allowed foreign tourists to visit Andaman and Nicobar Islands without any restrictions, overpowering its earlier order that made it mandatory for foreign tourists to register with Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO) within 24 hours of their arrival. However, citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan will require Restricted Area Permit (RAP) to visit.
90. ▶ Government announced recipients of Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony for 2014, 2015 & 2016 -
 - ✎ 2014 - Manipuri dancer Rajkumar Singhajit Singh
 - ✎ 2015 - Chhayanaut (a cultural organization of Bangladesh)
 - ✎ 2016 - Ram Vanji Sutar (Noted sculptor).
- ✎ Tagore Award -
 - ✎ First Tagore Award was conferred on Noted Sitar Maestro Pt. Ravi Shankar, in 2012. 2nd was conferred on Shri Zubin Mehta in 2013. It carries an amount of Rs. 1 crore, a citation in a scroll, a plaque as well as an exquisite traditional handicraft item.
91. ▶ Government approved 122 new research project proposals worth Rs 112 crore for funding under its Impacting Research Innovation and Technology 'IMPRINT-2' scheme.
 - ✎ Implementation of 142 projects under IMPRINT-1 has got underway. Knowledge portal for monitoring progress of these research projects and to disseminate findings will be launched in October 2018.
 - ✎ IMPRINT is the first of its kind government-supported initiative to address the major science and engineering challenges that India must address and champion to enable, empower and embolden nation for inclusive growth and self-reliance.
92. ▶ Government launched *National REDD+ Strategy India*. to improve livelihood of forest dependent population.
 - ✎ REDD+ means "Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation", conservation of forest carbon stocks, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.
 - ✎ REDD+ aims to achieve climate change mitigation by incentivizing forest conservation. It seeks to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation and also enhance forest carbon stocks.
 - ✎ India under its communicated in its Nationally Determined Contribution under Paris Agreement, has committed to capture 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of Carbon dioxide through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.
 - ✎ India's first biennial update report to UNFCCC has revealed that forests in India capture about 12% of India's total GHG emissions. Thus, forestry sector in India is making a positive cost effective contribution for climate change mitigation.
 - ✎ Complying with UNFCCC decisions on REDD+, India has prepared its National REDD+ Strategy, built upon existing circumstances which have been updated in line with India's National Action Plan on Climate Change, Green India Mission and India's Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) to UNFCCC.
93. ▶ Government launched an air pollution prediction system for Delhi, making it easier to alert general public about air quality 48 hours in advance. It is called *Air Quality Early Warning System*.
94. ▶ Government observed Vigilance Awareness Week from 29th Oct-3rd Nov 2018, with 2018 Theme *Eradicate Corruption-Build a New India*.
95. ▶ Government reached target of providing 5 crore free LPG connections under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), 8 months ahead of schedule. Uttar Pradesh (87 lakh), West Bengal (67 lakh), Bihar (61 lakh), Madhya Pradesh (45 lakh), Rajasthan (37 lakh) and Odisha (30 lakh) accounted for 65% of connections under PMUY and 47% of beneficiaries are from weaker sections.
 - ✎ PMUY was launched in May 2016 with tagline of Swachh Indhan, Behtar Jeevan.

96. ▶ Government will build a stadium of international standard for differently-abled persons in Meghalaya, expected to be completed by 2022, at an estimated cost of over 200 crores.
- ▶ Meghalaya Govt also launched flagship scheme “Blue Revolution: Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries”, to enable self-sufficiency in fish production.
97. ▶ Government will introduce a bill in Winter Session in December 2018, to speed up inter-state river water dispute resolution among states and manage affairs of 13 river basins across country. Named River Basin Management Bill 2018, it will replace River Board Act 1956 which is only advisory in nature.
- ▶ Authorities will be set up for river basins of Ganga, Indus, Godavari, Mahanadi, Mahi, Narmada, Pennar, Cauvery, Krishna, Tapi, Subarnrekha, Brahmani-Baitarini and Brahmaputra- Barak-inter-state rivers of north-east.
98. ▶ Government’s think tank NITI Aayog signed agreement with Microsoft India to deploy artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to address challenges in agriculture and healthcare and promote adoption of local languages. This will help NITI Aayog to move beyond pilots and understand how to scale AI implementation in sectors characterized by preponderance of public goods.
99. ▶ Govt. laid foundation stone for proposed Museum on Prime Ministers of India at Teen Murti Estate in New Delhi.
- ▶ Teen Murti Estate has a total area of 25.50 acres out of which, Nehru Memorial Museum Building occupies around 2 acres only. Government decided to set up *Museum on Prime Ministers of India* in remaining area of Teen Murti Estate.
100. ▶ Govt. launched Innovation Cell and Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA), at AICTE premises to systematically foster the culture of Innovation in all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across country. Major Programs of MHRD Innovation Cell are -
- ▶ Network of Innovation Clubs (NIC) -
 - ▶ It will prescribe basic framework for the structure and smooth running of ICs and will soon share list of different activities which ICs need to undertake for entire academic year.
 - ▶ Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA) -
 - ▶ This will systematically rank education institutions primarily on innovation related indicators, to foster spirit of innovation in Higher education.
 - ▶ Smart India Hackathon (SIH) 2019 -
 - ▶ 3rd edition of World’s Biggest Open Innovation Model - Smart India Hackathon - 2019 has been launched. It is a nationwide initiative to provide students a platform to solve some of pressing daily life problems, and thus inculcate a culture of product innovation and a mindset of problem solving.
 - ▶ Smart India Hackathon 2019 would also have 2 sub-editions – Software edition (a 36-hour software product development competition) and Hardware edition (a 5 days long hardware product development competition).
 - ▶ National Student Startup Policy (NSSP) -
 - ▶ AICTE launched its Student Start-up Policy in November 2016, designed for AICTE approved Institutions in accordance with Govt of India’s “Start-up India” Action plan. AICTE’s Student Start up policy intends to guide AICTE approved institutions to promote student driven innovations and start-ups.
101. ▶ Green Climate Fund (GCF) has approved US \$43.4 million for enhancing climate resilience for millions of people living in India’s coastal communities. This project will focus on selected vulnerable areas of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha states. It will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions – over 3.5 million tonnes of CO₂ will be absorbed through restored ecosystems.
- ▶ It is part of Green Climate Fund (GCF)’s recently approved over \$1 billion new investments for 19 new projects to help developing countries tackle climate change, during a meeting in Manama (Bahrain).
102. ▶ Gujarat Forest Department started vaccination of lions in Gir sanctuary to protect them from a deadly canine distemper virus (CDV) and protozoa infections, The virus blamed for death of as many as 23 lions in Gujarat’s Gir sanctuary in less than month.
- ▶ Asiatic lions are believed to have split from African Lions 100,000 years ago. Gir sanctuary is the only wild population of Asiatic lions in world, having over 523 Asiatic Lions.
103. ▶ HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar launched 3rd edition of World’s Biggest Open Innovation Model - ‘Smart India Hackathon- 2019’ .
- ▶ SIH-2019 is a nationwide initiative to provide students a platform to solve some of pressing problems we face in our daily lives, and thus inculcate a culture of product innovation and a mindset of problem solving. For 1st time, Private industry/organisations and NGOs can also send their problem statements to students under SIH-2019.
 - ▶ It would have 2 sub-editions – Software edition (a 36-hour software product development competition) and Hardware edition (a 5 days long hardware product development competition).
104. ▶ Hardeep S Puri, Minister of State (I/C), Housing & Urban Affairs launched several entities -

- ✎ Swachh Survekshan 2019 - Planned to be conducted from 4th – 31st January 2019 – to rank all cities under Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U). This will be the fourth survey of MoHUA.
- ✎ SBM ODF Plus and ODF Plus Plus Protocol - Aims at addressing issue of holistic sanitation.
- ✎ Swachh Manch web portal
- ✎ Ease of Living Index (111 Cities) -
 - ✎ Maharashtra Cities at Top 3 - Pune (1), Navi Mumbai (2), Greater Mumbai (3). Others in Top 10 - Tirupati, Chandigarh, Thane, Raipur, Indore, Vijaywada and Bhopal.
 - ✎ West Bengal refused to participate in Centre's rankings, just as it has done with all other urban schemes.
 - ✎ Last 3 - Rampur (UP - 111), Kohima (Nagaland - 110), Patna (109).
- 105. ▶ Harsh Vardhan (Minister for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences and Environment, Forest and Climate change) inaugurated air pollution control device WAYU(Wind Augmentation Purifying Unit) for traffic junctions at ITO intersection and Mukarba Chowk in Delhi. WAYU is developed by CSIR – National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI).
- 106. ▶ Harvest festival of Nuakhai celebrated in western Odisha. During this, new produce Nabannis are offered to presiding deities.
- 107. ▶ Haryana Assembly passed State Commission for Scheduled Castes Bill 2018, for development setting up a commission for scheduled castes in the state, to safeguard interests of people belonging to SC community.
 - ✎ State Assembly also passed Bills to rename 2 Universities - YMCA University of Science and Technology Faridabad renamed as J C Bose University of Science and Technology and Haryana Vishwakarma Skill University renamed as Shri Vishwakarma Skill University.
- 108. ▶ Haryana Government introduced *Pashu Sanjeevni Sewa* scheme to provide free of cost health care services to livestock in the state through mobile veterinary clinics. Livestock farmers would be able to avail service 24×7 after giving a call on toll free No.1962.
- 109. ▶ Haryana Government launched an anti-terrorist force (ATF) 'Kavach, to deal with security challenges. For this, Haryana police recruits will be trained by National Security Guard (NSG).
- 110. ▶ Haryana Government signed MoU with Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) to set up ethanol plant at village Bohali village in Panipat district with an outlay of INR 900 crores, with capacity of 100 kilolitres of ethanol per day. This will motivate farmers in its 50 km radius area to manage crop residue and prevent straw burning and help to fulfill increasing demand of ethanol and also bio-fuels for consumers of petroleum product.
- 111. ▶ Himachal Pradesh CM Jai Ram Thakur launched *horn not ok* awareness campaign and 'shaur nahin' (no noise) mobile application, to spread awareness of unnecessary blowing horn as it creates unnecessary noise pollution and is harmful to health.
- 112. ▶ Home Minister Rajnath Singh launched 2 portals to strengthen Women Safety -
 - ✎ Cyber Crime Prevention Against Women and Children (CCPWC) ([url - cybercrime.gov.in](http://url-cybercrime.gov.in)), will receive complaints from citizens on objectionable online content related to child pornography, child sexual abuse material, sexually explicit material such as rapes. Complaints registered through this portal will be handled by police authorities of respective State/UTs.
 - ✎ 2nd portal, National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO), which is accessible only to law enforcement agencies, will assist in effectively tracking and investigating cases of sexual offences. It is a central database of "sexual offenders", to be maintained by NCRB for regular monitoring by State Police.
- 113. ▶ Home Ministry excluded 29 inhabited islands in Andaman and Nicobar from Restricted Area Permit (RAP) regime under the Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order 1963, till December 2022., to promote tourism. However, citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals having their origin in these countries will continue to require RAP to visit here.
 - ✎ Under RAP regime, foreigners are not normally allowed to visit protected area unless Government allows them. Every foreigner, except citizen of Bhutan, who desires to enter protected area, is required to obtain special permit from competent authority.
 - ✎ Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals of Pakistani origin are exception and are not allowed to enter such areas.
- 114. ▶ Home Ministry relaxed conditions 'four-corner agreement' signed with Bru migrants for their repatriation from Tripura to Mizoram, signed with Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) in July 2018.
 - ✎ As per Agreement -
 - ✎ It covers 5,407 Bru families (32876 persons) presently staying in temporary camps in Tripura to repatriate them to Mizoram by end of September 2018. These families who moved to Mizoram from Tripura will be given one-time financial assistance of Rs 4 lakh to be kept as fixed deposit in name of head of family. Apart from this, house building assistance of 1.5 lakh, free ration for 2 years will also be provided.
 - ✎ Relaxed Provisions -

✍ Period of stay for cash assistance of Rs 4 lakh for Bru refugees will be relaxed from 3 to two years. They can withdraw 90% of 4 lakh assistance as bank loan immediately after their return.

✍ On relocation, at least 50 refugees will be settled in each village.

✍ Background -

✍ Bru (or Reang) are tribals inhabit to some parts of Northeastern states. In 1997, following bout of ethnic violence between Mizos and Brus, thousands of people from Bru tribe were forced to leave their homes in Mizoram and settle down in Tripura.

✍ First phase of repatriation of Brus from Tripura to Mizoram started in November 2010, when 1,622 Bru families with 8,573 members were resettled in Mizoram. But repatriation stalled in 2011, 2012 and 2015 amid protests by Mizo NGOs.

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

✍ Cleanest Government universities -

✍ Maharashi Dayanand University, Haryana

Guru Nanak Dev University in Amritsar, Punjab

Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS), New Delhi

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

✍ Cleanest non-residential campus of private universities - IITM University, Raipur

✍ Cleanest technical institutions -

✍ Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham in Coimbatore

✍ IIT Guwahati

✍ Siksha 'O' Anusandhan University in Bhubhaneshwar

✍ IIIT Delhi.

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

✍ SPARC scheme aims at improving the research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in world. Under this, 600 joint research proposals will be awarded for 2 years.

✍ Government in August 2018 had sanctioned SPARC scheme at total cost of 418 Crores for implementation up to 31-3-2020 and Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur is the National Coordinating Institute to implement it.

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

118. ▶ IIT-Kharagpur named national coordinating institute of Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) under Ministry of Human Resource Development.

119. ▶ IIT-Madras will collaborate with Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency (TNeGA) to enhance data-driven governance, by supporting State government on various data science and ICT-related challenges.

120. ▶ IRCTC launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered chatbot *Ask Disha*, aimed at facilitating accessibility by answering users' queries pertaining to various services offered to railway passengers.

121. ▶ IT firm IBM has teamed up with IIT Bombay to 'accelerate' AI research in India through its AI Horizons Network.

122. ▶ India became only SAARC country to have a quit-line number on tobacco products (1800-11-2356). India is the 4th such country in Asia after Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia to have a helpline number dedicated for helping people quit tobacco products.

123. ▶ India opened Zokhawthar land immigration check-post in Mizoram along border with Myanmar, as authorised immigration centre for travel to and from Myanmar. Zokhawthar will be second immigration check-post in Mizoram along Myanmar border after Zorinpui check-post in Lawngtlai district which was opened in September 2017.

124. ▶ India's First corn festival held in Chhindwara (Madhya Pradesh).

125. ▶ IndiaSkills 2018, 2nd edition of India's biggest skill competition held at Aerocity Ground in New Delhi. some of awardees in 46 trades will participate in 45th WorldSkills Competition at Kazan (Russia) in 2019.

126. ▶ Indian Institute of Technology-Hyderabad (IIT-H) launched *Fabless Chip Design Incubator (FabCI)* as an exclusive incubator to boost chip design. It is first of its kind in India that will focus on creating an ecosystem for start-ups in chip design.

✍ FabCI's purpose is to incubate at least 50 'Make-in-India' chip design companies that can compete globally and generate Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).

✍ It will also offer virtual support to non-Hyderabad start-ups which can join FabCI and leverage the offerings and participate remotely.

127. ▶ Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) will stop free travel insurance starting September 1 and *free insurance will be optional*.
- ✎ Insurance provided by IRCTC had a maximum cover of 10 lakh in case of a person's death during a train journey, 7.5 lakh if a person is disabled due to an accident, 2 lakh if injured and 10000 for transportation of mortal remains.
128. ▶ Indian Railways signed MoU with GAIL India, to replace Industrial gases like Dissolved Acetylene, LPG, BMCG and Furnace Oil / High Speed Diesel (HSD) oil with environment friendly Natural Gas.
- ✎ This MoU is a broad based, in principle agreement, between GAIL and Indian Railways for creation of infrastructure and supply of CNG/LNG/PNG for both industrial and domestic purposes.
 - ✎ Replacement by Natural Gases is likely to result into a saving of about Rs. 20 crore per annum to Indian Railways.
129. ▶ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) inaugurated S–Band Polarimetry Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota spaceport (Andhra Pradesh). It will be used for observation of weather system up to range of 500 km and also for early warning of severe weather events.
- ✎ DWR has been developed by Bharat Electronics Ltd Bengaluru under ToT (Training of Trainers) from ISRO, as 7th radar of such type manufactured in country under “Make in India”.
130. ▶ Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) signed MoU with Central University of Jammu (CUJ) for setting up Satish Dhawan Center for Space Science in University. Another MoU was signed between CUJ and Central Scientific Instruments Organization (CSIR-CSIO), To create awareness about space research and to motivate young minds to take up research related to space.
131. ▶ Indian actress Jaya Prada appointed as goodwill ambassador for Nepal tourism, for 4 years.
132. ▶ Indian postal services honoured Udaipur-based non-profit organisation Narayan Seva Sansthan, by launching their rs 5 postal stamps.
133. ▶ Indian Railways launched a web portal called *Rail Sahyog*, at URL www.railsahyog.in, as a platform for the Corporates and PSUs to contribute to creation of amenities at/near Railway Stations through Corporate Social Responsibility funds. Companies desirous of contributing can show willingness on the portal by registering their requests.
134. ▶ India's first National Environment Survey (NES) will begin in January 2019 to map environment data of 55 districts across 24 states and 3 UTs. The earliest first set of complete green data from this survey will be available in 2020.
- ✎ It will be carried out by MoEFCC through Environmental Information System (ENVIS). It will be done through grid-based approach, using grids measuring 9×9 km to collect comprehensive data on various environmental parameters.
 - ✎ Green data from this survey will provide important tool in hands of policy-makers for decision making at all levels – district, state and national. skilled manpower required for survey will be provided from persons skilled and trained under MoEFCC's Green Skill Development Programme.
135. ▶ India's first flight using biofuel flown from Dehradun (capital of Uttarakhand) to Delhi, conducted by SpiceJet on its turboprop Q-400 plane. Flights used alternative environment friendly fuel for 10 minutes over Dehradun.
- ✎ India joined elite club of nations who have operated flight on alternative energy source like biofuel, having countries like Canada, Australia and US have already conducted these test flights. Biofuel is developed by CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP), Dehradun. The flight was powered with a blend of 75% air turbine fuel (ATF) and 25% biojet fuel.
 - ✎ The Flight carried blend of 25% of bio jet fuel (derived from jatropha seeds) and 75% of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) in one of the two engines of plane, while other carried only ATF. International standards permit a blend rate of up to 50% biofuel with ATF. It can reduce fuel costs by 15-20%.
 - ✎ Jatropha is drought-resistant perennial plant that can grow in marginal or poor soil. It is grows relatively quickly and lives, produces seeds for 50 years. Its seeds has oil content of 37% which be combusted as fuel without being refined. It burns with clear smoke-free flame.
 - ✎ It has been tested successfully as fuel for simple diesel engine. Its oil also acts as insecticide..
 - ✎ The use of bio jet fuel, apart from reducing carbon emissions by 80 %, greenhouse gas emissions by about 15 % and sulfur oxides (SOx) emissions by over 99 %, is expected to provide indigenous jet fuel supply security, possible cost savings as feedstock availability at farm level scales up, superior engine performance and reduced maintenance cost for the airline operators.
 - ✎ World's first dedicated biofuel flight (by Dreamliner Boeing 787-9) was flown for first time from Los Angeles (US) to Melbourne (Australia) in January 2018 by Australian carrier Qantas.
 - ✎ Biofuel is produced from vegetable oils, recycled grease, algae and animal fat. It is cleaner, environmental friendly fuel that can be used as alternative in place of fossil fuels.
 - ✎ Ministry of New and Renewable Energy recently on August 10, 2018 (World Biofuel Day 2018) had released National Policy on Biofuels 2018. Under it, Government plans to triple ethanol production over the next four years. It also has set target of 20% blending of ethanol in petrol by 2030.

136. ▶ India's first gallery on robotic dinosaurs was opened to the public at the Pushpa Gujral Science City, in Kapurthala (Punjab).
137. ▶ India's first indigenously developed 500-megawatt (mw) Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) at Kalpakkam in Tamil Nadu is expected to achieve criticality in 2019, now undergoing sodium commissioning.
- ▶ Criticality of Nuclear Reactor is event of it reaching self-sustained chain reaction. This means that no external source of neutrons is required to sustain fission in reactor core. It is precondition of producing useful amounts of energy from the reactor.
 - ▶ PFBR has been designed indigenously by Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR), to generate 500 MWe of electrical power, with operational life of 40 years. It generates power by burning mixed uranium-plutonium MOX fuel, a mixture of PuO₂ and UO₂.
 - ▶ Bharatiya Nabhikiya Vidyut Nigam (Bhavini) has been given responsibility to build these reactors. India is planning to build 21 such reactors by 2030.
138. ▶ India's longest river bridge with total length of 19.3 kilometers will be built on Brahmaputra river in Assam, connecting Dhubri (Assam) to Fulbarani (Meghalaya). At present, India's largest river bridge is Dhola-Sadia bridge, its length is 9.15 kilometers. It will be completed by 2026-27 and will be public-funded work, with loan from Japanese Finance Agency (JICA).
139. ▶ India's wealthiest women list 2018 by Kotak Wealth-Hurun -
- ▶ Smitha Crishna, 3rd generation heir of Godrej Empire, topped the list with estimated net worth approx USD 6 Billion.
 - ▶ Roshni Nadar (HCL) ranks second with approx 5 Billion USD. Indu Jain of BCCL and Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw are ranked 3rd and 4th in list.
 - ▶ Hurun Global Rich List 2018 has 404 women, of which 14 are from India.
140. ▶ Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has set sail a container cargo belonging to food and beverage giant PepsiCo (India) from Kolkata to Varanasi on river Ganga (National Waterway-1). It is India's first container movement on inland vessel post-independence.
141. ▶ Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) will start a new Roll on-Roll off (Ro-Ro) facility in collaboration with Assam Government to provide much-needed connectivity for Majuli Island. It will cut down circuitous road route of 423 KMs that trucks take from Neamati to Majuli Island via Tezpur Road Bridge, by limiting distance to only 12.7 KM.
- ▶ Majuli is one of the biggest riverine islands in the world located on river Brahmaputra and faces serious challenges of connectivity. It has 144 villages with a population of over 1,50,000. Currently, there are only four road bridges across river Brahmaputra - at Jogighopa, Guwahati, Tezpur and Sadiya for connectivity between southern and northern parts of Assam.
 - ▶ Earlier, IWAI started a similar Ro-Ro service between Dhubri and Hatsingimari which reduced the travel distance by 190 KMs.
142. ▶ Insolvency Law Committee (ILC) submitted its 2nd Report on Cross Border Insolvency to Arun Jaitley, which was constituted by Ministry of Corporate Affairs to recommend amendments to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code of India 2016,
- ▶ ILC recommended adoption of UNCITRAL Model Law of Cross Border Insolvency 1997, for it provides for a comprehensive framework to deal with cross border insolvency issues.
 - ▶ UNCITRAL Model Law has till now been adopted in 44 countries and forms part of international best practices in dealing with cross border insolvency issues. The model law gives precedence to domestic proceedings and protection of public interest.
143. ▶ International Aviation Summit held in New Delhi, jointly organised by the Airports Authority of India, Ministry of Civil Aviation and International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- ▶ Civil Aviation Ministry announced Vision 2035 under which it plans to build 100 new airports across India in the next 10-15 years with an investment of USD 60 billion and address major issues concerning aviation industry.
144. ▶ International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) signed MoU with Telangana Government, to conduct a research on impact of Mission Kakatiya programme
- ▶ Mission Kakatiya aims to restore all minor irrigation tanks and lakes in Telangana State, in 5 years. Tanks and lakes are dug to remove silt for increasing water storage capacity.
145. ▶ International Executive Council (International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID)), accorded Heritage Irrigation Structure (HIS) status on Telangana's Sadarmatt anicut and iconic Pedda Cheruvu tank. Both these sites will now be inscribed in the ICID Register of Heritage Irrigation Structures.
- ▶ Sadarmatt anicut - The Sadarmatt barrage, across Godavari in Khanapur of Nirmal district, is an iconic structure installed by the then Hyderabad ruler Nawab Iqbal-ud-Dowla in 1891-92.
 - ▶ Sadarmatt is 437.4 m long on its left flank and 23.8 m on its right flank. maximum flood discharge at the anicut is 7.76 lakh cusecs.
 - ▶ Pedda Cheruvu -
 - ▶ It is spread over an area of 618 acres and was built in 1897 during the rule of Mir Mahaboob Ali Khan, the sixth Nizam of Hyderabad State. It has a 1.8-km-long tank bund and 145-metre wall and three sluices.

146. ▶ Jammu will be the first city in north India to get a full-fledged space technology research centre devoted to research, academics and post-graduation degree course. It will function under Central University Jammu.
147. ▶ Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust signed MoU with Ministry of Railways, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh for implementation of the 362 km Indore- Manmad New Railway Line Project -
- ▶ It will reduce distance from Mumbai/Pune to key central India locations by 171 kilometers, resulting in lower logistics costs.
 - ▶ Joint Venture Company will be formed between Ministry of Shipping or its nominated entity including JNPT with equity share of 55 %, Maharashtra or its nominated entity, Madhya Pradesh or its nominated entity and others with equity share of 15 % each.
148. ▶ Jharkhand government introduced electric vehicles for official use, becoming 5th state of India and first state in eastern India to procure eco-friendly vehicles for government use.
149. ▶ Karnataka Government unveiled 'Unnati Scheme' to help entrepreneurs from SC/ST Communities. Under it, State Govt. will invest up to Rs 20 crore to create end-to-end support infrastructure for startups and entrepreneurs from a marginalised background.
150. ▶ Karnataka government launched 'Swachha Meva Jayate' campaign, to promote cleanliness across state.
151. ▶ Karnataka government made Yoga mandatory for all colleges and universities in State. All government, aided and private degree colleges in state must conduct yoga for 20-minutes.
152. ▶ Kerala Government appointed KPMG as project consultant partner for rebuilding state ravaged by recent massive floods. Services of KPMG rendered for projects related to revamping to Kerala will be free of cost.
- ▶ Netherlands based KPMG is one of largest professional service companies in world and one of Big Four auditors, along with Deloitte, Ernst & Young, and PricewaterhouseCoopers.
153. ▶ Kingdom of Netherlands will be Partner Country in 25th DST – CII Technology Summit to be organized in 2019.
154. ▶ Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) launched a flood forecasting and early warning system (FFEWS) for Kolkata City, as India's first comprehensive city-level FFEWS. Asian Development Bank (ADB) from its Urban Climate Change Resilience Trust Fund funded this project with technical assistance of a \$1 million.
155. ▶ Lonar Lake, an ancient circular lake created by a meteorite strike, in Maharashtra and St. Mary's Island, a hexagonal mosaic of basaltic rocks in an island off Udipi will be made global geoparks by Geological Survey of India (GSI).
- ▶ St. Mary's Island which was declared a national geo-heritage site in 1975 is estimated to be an 88-million-year-old.
 - ▶ Lonar crater became a geo-heritage site in 1979. It is around 50,000 years old.
156. ▶ MSME Ministry launched its monthly e-newsletter named *MSME Insider* to disseminate information of activities undertaken by MSME Ministry and act as a communication bridge between MSME Ministry and its stakeholders.
157. ▶ Madhya Pradesh Government announced creation of Niwari as its 52nd district, carved out of Tikamgarh district. It will include tehsils of *Niwari, Orchha and Prithvipur*.
158. ▶ Madhya Pradesh Government announced to observe August 14 every year as Shahid Samman Divas. State Govt. also launched Dial 100 Mobile app, to help needy at the time of emergency.
159. ▶ Madhya Pradesh forest department asked National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to revive its Cheetah Reintroduction Project to reintroduce Cheetahs in Nauradehi sanctuary located in Sagar district of state.
- ▶ Cheetah, fastest land animal was declared extinct in India in 1952. India's last spotted Asiatic cheetah (*Acinonyx jubatus venaticus*) had died in Chhattisgarh in 1947. According to earlier action plan, around 20 cheetahs were to be translocated to Nauradehi from Namibia in Africa.
 - ▶ The Project was conceived in 2009, but State was not ready to finance plan contending that it was Centre's project.
160. ▶ Madhya Pradesh launched a first of its kind initiative called "Mil -Banche" in all government schools across the state. It Aims to create education and learning awareness among children.
161. ▶ Madhya Pradesh received Geographical Indication (GI) tag for Kadaknath chicken breed from State. GI tag denotes that product comes from particular geographical.
- ▶ Kadaknath Chicken Kadaknath or Kali Masi is unique breed of chicken that is complete black colour. Apart from its meat, its bones and most organs are also black. It is native tribal districts of Jhabua, Alirajpur and parts of Dhar in Madhya Pradesh.
 - ▶ Kadaknath chicken contains 25-27% of protein in comparison with other breeds of chickens that contain 18% protein. It is also known for its high iron content.
162. ▶ Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal delivered its final verdict to ending 50-year-old dispute over sharing of Mahadayi / Mandovi River between Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra.
- ▶ The tribunal was constituted in November 2010 under Interstate River Water Disputes Act 1956.
 - ▶ About two-thirds (76 km) of Mahadayi's 111-km stretch lies in Goa and remaining 35 km is in Karnataka and Maharashtra. Mahadayi River is lifeline of Goa because it is one of few sweet-water sources at state's disposal (most of Goa's 11 rivers contain salt water).

✍ Dispute -

- ✍ Sharing of waters of Mahadayi River was major cause of dispute between Karnataka and Goa. Karnataka wanted to divert excess water from Mahadayi river to Malaprabha river basin, as part of Kalasa-Banduri Nala project.
- ✍ Goa opposed Karnataka's proposal, stating that its population is dependent on river's natural path.

✍ Verdict -

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

163. ▶ Maharashtra Government will set up new Cyber University dedicated to mitigating cyber threats. It will train 3,000 professionals to fight cyber-attacks.
164. ▶ Maharashtra launched website and app Maha madat to analyze drought situation, to help in accurate analysis of drought-like situation in villages of state. Drought can be declared if a region does not receive rain for a span of 21 days.
165. ▶ Maharashtra's Mahabaleshwar become wettest place in India in 2018, leaving behind Meghalaya's long famed Cherrapunji. Mahabaleshwar received a staggering 5661.6 mm rainfall this season till now, much more than Cherrapunji's 4735 mm.
- ✍ Cherrapunji holds two Guinness world records for receiving the maximum amount of rainfall in a single year, 26,471mm (1,042.2 in) of rainfall between August 1860 and July 1861 and maximum amount of rainfall in a single month (9,300mm) in July 1861.
166. ▶ Mammals of India (MaOI) model of repository on Indian mammals, by National Centers for Biological Sciences (NCBS) Bangalore -
- ✍ It is a first of its kind repository of Mammals in India, as an online portal that aim is to develop individual pages for all Indian mammals covering all related information.
 - ✍ The website *mammalsofindia.org* provides facility for common citizen to upload photographic observations about mammals.
 - ✍ MaOI is an initiative under Biodiversity Atlas project (a species-based bioinformatics platform).
 - ✍ There are about 426 species of mammals known from India, which is about 8.86% of the world species.
167. ▶ Manipur government constituted two committees to deal with illegal migrants, State Level Monitoring Committee and District Level Monitoring Committees. These will monitor presence of illegal immigrants in state.
168. ▶ Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated the first Mega Food Park in Gujarat, located at Village Shah and Vasravi, Taluka Mangrol, District Surat. State's 2nd mega food park is sanctioned in Mehsana.
169. ▶ Minister of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu released the policy on biometric based digital processing of passengers at airports called "Digi Yatra".
- ✍ It aims to develop standards for digital processing of passengers at airport to ensure uniform implementation and passenger experience across airports. DigiYatra Central Platform will be operational by February 2019, starting from Bangalore & Hyderabad Airports.
170. ▶ Minister of Electronics & IT, Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurated Centre of Excellence for Data Analytics (CEDA) in New Delhi.
- ✍ CEDA will aid in fast-tracking adoption of advanced analytics in government, with centre aiming to strengthen citizen service delivery through data-driven governance.
 - ✍ CEDA aims at providing following services to Government:-
 - ✍ Data Quality Assurance Services.
 - ✍ Custom-built Data Analytics Solutions.
 - ✍ Develop reusable assets.
 - ✍ Knowledge Management.
 - ✍ Capacity Building and Self Service Analytics.
 - ✍ Change Management - CEDA will help ministries in assessing impact from the analytics solutions and help in understanding changes to organizational roles and responsibilities
 - ✍ DigiVaarta was also launched on this occasion, to express intention of spreading awareness on DigiDhan. It aims to enable citizen government dialogue and engage citizens in educational and outreach programmes. It has two components –
 - ✍ An SMS application which operates from NIC's SMS Gateway on a special Short-code service allotted for this purpose by DoT with the number "14444". Citizens will receive SMS messages which are pre-approved by experts and the response messages will be made available for further action, analysis and research.
 - ✍ A Mobile application version of DigiVaarta.
171. ▶ Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan launched an online portal to enable easy, efficient and transparent booking of common carrier capacity for natural gas transmission services under GAIL's pipelines, as first step to facilitate gas trading on a

exchange-traded platform in India.

- ▶ The online portal is first-of-its-kind in the natural gas sector of the country. It will provide gas consumers the facility to register pipeline capacity bookings online.

172. ▶ Minister of Railways and Coal, Piyush Goyal launched “Rail Heritage Digitisation Project” of Indian Railways in collaboration with Google Arts & Culture, accessible at <https://artsandculture.google.com/project/indian-railways>.

- ▶ Its a landmark effort to showcase country’s Rail Heritage to National and International audience in an online story-telling platform.
- ▶ Railways in India started on 16th April, 1853 between Bori bundar and Thane. Today we have three World Heritage Railways: DHR (Darjeeling Himalayan Railways), NMR (Nilgiri Mountain Railway), KSR (Kalka Shimla Railways).
- ▶ With over 151,000 kilometres of track, 7,000 stations, 1.3 million employees and 160 years of history, Indian Railway is one of the most celebrated railway networks in world.

173. ▶ Minister of State (IC) Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Jitendra Singh laid foundation stone of new Science Centre, the “Technology Facility Centre” (TFC) in Jorhat (Assam), in premises of CSIR-North East Institute of Science & Technology (NERIST).

174. ▶ Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Statistics & Programme Implementation, Vijay Goel, inaugurated Online Assurances Monitoring System (OAMS), To create transparency in assurance process in Parliamentary affairs.

175. ▶ Minister of State for Power and Renewable Energy RK Singh launched award scheme under Saubhagya Scheme (known as Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana). It will felicitate the power distribution companies (DISCOMs) for achieving 100 % household electrification. There will be two quantum of award -

- ▶ Under first quantum of award, 1st DISCOM / Power Department that achieves 100 % household electrification by end of November 2018 would be provided cash award of Rs 50 Lakh.
- ▶ 2nd quantum of award includes cash award of Rs 100 crore as grant to concerned DISCOM to be spent in distribution infrastructure development in their area of operation.

176. ▶ Minister of Steel, Chaudhary Birender Singh unveiled corporate sports policy for Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) under Ministry of Steel.

- ▶ Steel CPSEs will discharge their responsibility through infrastructural and institutional support for talent spotting, scholarships, training and coaching.
- ▶ CPSEs under Steel Ministry will form an apex sports body, which will be affiliated to National Level Sports Associations.

177. ▶ Ministry of Culture released National Museum Research Bulletin Number 10, revived after gap of 16 years. It also has released Sindhu Ghati Sabhyata: Ek Parichay, a Hindi version of An Introduction To Indus Valley Civilization which among the bestsellers at National Museum.

- ▶ *Sindhu Ghati Sabhyata : Ek Parichay* is Hindi version of An Introduction To Indus Valley Civilization, co-authored by Sanjib Kumar Singhm, Gunjan Srivastava and Rajesh Kumar.

178. ▶ Ministry of Earth Sciences will set up a Cyclone Warning Centre in Thiruvananthapuram, by October 2018, after recent extreme weather events striking Kerala and Karnataka. Currently, IMD has cyclone warning centers at Chennai, Vishakhapatnam, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Ahmedabad and Mumbai.

- ▶ Earth Sciences Ministry will also set up a C-Band Doppler Weather Radar at Mangalore by end of 2019, which will cover parts of northern Kerala. At present, 2 Doppler Weather Radars are in Kerala, at Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram.

179. ▶ Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and World Bank jointly released report on Strengthening Forest Fire Management in Country. It provides recommendations on five broad themes – policy, institutions and capacity, technology, community engagement and data and information.

- ▶ People are main driver of fires in India and forest fires are distributed close to people and infrastructure. But over longer term, shifts in climate caused by anthropogenic global warming may further alter India’s forest landscape and fire regime.
- ▶ India’s monsoons are largely responsible for seasonal nature of forest fires in country. Forest fires peak during dry months of March or April before arrival of monsoon.
- ▶ Forest fires in Northeast are concentrated in smaller area that is subject to repeat burning. Peak fire season is most concentrated (shortest) in Northeast and Northern state of Bihar. Fires in other regions, particularly districts in Central and Southern India are more expansive.
- ▶ According to National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), fires affecting forests have significant ecological value. Between 2006 and 2015, NRSC scientists forest fires were detected in just under half (281 of 614) of protected areas in India.
- ▶ Report is significant in light of recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) special report that explores possibilities of keeping global temperature rise within 1.5 degree Celsius to prevent catastrophic impacts due to unchecked temperature rise.

180. ▶ Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) reconstituted Supreme Court-empowered Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA). Bhure Lal will continue to be Chairman of reconstituted 20 Member EPCA.
- ▶ EPCA is Supreme Court mandated body tasked with taking various measures to tackle air pollution in the National Capital Region, notified in 1998 under Environment Protection Act 1986. It is also mandated to enforce Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in NCR as per the pollution levels.
 - ▶ In November 2017, EPCA enforced several measures, including ban on brick kilns, closure of Badarpur thermal power plant, hot mix plants and stone crushers, and construction activities in NCR.
181. ▶ Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) launched India for Humanity initiative, to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of M K Gandhi. It will feature year-long series of artificial limb fitment camps in a number of countries spanning globe. MEA has collaborated with renowned charitable organisation Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS).
182. ▶ Ministry of HRD has launched a Project called *Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM)*, as an integrated platform and portal for online courses. It aims to ensure that every student has access to best quality higher education at affordable cost.
183. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare issued notification for bringing Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Prevention and Control) Act 2017 in force.
- ▶ It aims to safeguard rights of people living with HIV and affected by HIV. It also prohibits requirement for HIV testing as pre-requisite for obtaining employment or accessing health care or education.
184. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched pilot project for transport of sputum specimen for Tuberculosis (TB) Diagnosis by utilising services of Department of Post in New Delhi.
- ▶ Learning from this pilot project experience will be useful for adaptation of specimen transport mechanism through Postal Department across the country, as Significant proportion of TB patients in India are not tested for their symptoms because specimen does not reach laboratory due to non-availability of specimen transport mechanisms.
185. ▶ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare prohibited manufacture of 328 Fixed Dose Combinations (FDCs) for human use with immediate effect.
- ▶ Fixed dose combinations (FDC) Drugs have 2 or more active ingredients in a single dosage. They are widely used to improve patient compliance as it is easier for them to take one drug than several. They are acceptable only when drugs so combined have a therapeutic advantage.
186. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) signed MoU for setting up of an state-of-the-art Integrated Control Room for Emergency Response (ICR-ER) in Ministry of Home Affairs. It will increase the operational effectiveness and will be helpful in rendering timely assistance during emergency situations.
187. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) designated National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) as nodal authority to curb online child pornography, sexual violence and rape videos. It also has been mandated to launch online portal for receiving complaints and acting on them.
188. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) revoked security clearance of Qatar government's state-funded English news broadcaster Al Jazeera, supposedly to be for documentary made by it on militancy in Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), which Indian Government viewed as "biased".
189. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) sanctioned 5 new battalions of anti-riot and crowd control Rapid Action Force (RAF), to be stationed at Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), Hajipur (Bihar), Jaipur (Rajasthan), Mangalore (Karnataka) and Nuh (Haryana). Total number of RAF battalions in the country has gone up to 15.
190. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs approved renaming Jharkhand's Nagar Untari town and railway station as Banshidhar Nagar, after Bansidhar Temple, dedicated to Krishna in Garhwa district of state. It is being done as part of its including Banshidhar Nagar as part of Krishna circuit and develop it as major tourist attraction under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
191. ▶ Ministry of Home Affairs clarified that members of Gorkha community living in Assam are Not Foreigners and Belong to State, amid questions arising about the same after recently released National Register of Citizens (NRC) for Assam that left out 40 Lakh People.
192. ▶ Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) released the first ever 'Ease of Living Index' covering 111 Indian cities -
- ▶ Andhra Pradesh topped among States, followed by Odisha and Madhya Pradesh
 - ▶ It was decided in June 2017 to rank 116 cities (all smart cities and million plus cities) based on liveability parameters. The 'physical' pillar (infrastructure) was given highest weightage of 45, institutional (governance) and social were weighted 25 each. Economy was weighted 5.
 - ▶ Ease of Living framework comprised four pillars namely Institutional, Social, Economic and Physical which are further broken down into 78 indicators across 15 categories .
 - ▶ Top 10 Cities -
 - ▶ Pune


- ✍ Navi Mumbai
- ✍ Greater Mumbai
- ✍ Tirupati
- ✍ Chandigarh
- ✍ Thane
- ✍ Raipur
- ✍ Indore
- ✍ Vijaywada
- ✍ Bhopal

193. ▶ Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs partnered with Google to launch Loo Review campaign on Google Map, under Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM–U). It will run throughout October and November 2018 in an effort to increase awareness and ease of locating public toilets across India. It aims to encourage all local guides in India to rate and review public toilets on Google Maps.
194. ▶ Ministry of Road Transport & Highways launched Youth Road Safety Learners Licence programme in New Delhi, as a Public–private partnership (PPP) initiative in collaboration with Diageo India and Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE). It attempts to bring structured training program for young, first-time drivers as they apply for learner’s license.
195. ▶ Ministry of Tourism inaugurated India’s first tribal circuit project connecting 13 tourism sites in Chhattisgarh under Swadesh Darshan Scheme. The circuit connects Jashpur, Kunkuri, Mainpat, Kamleshpur, Maheshpur, Kurdar, Sarodadadar, Gangrel, Kondagaon, Nathiya Nawagaon, Jagdalpur, Chitrakoot, and Tirthgarh in Chhattisgarh.
- ✍ Tribal circuit project will improve existing tourist facilities, enhance the overall tourist experience and help in getting more visitors which in return will increase job opportunities in area.
 - ✍ Under tribal circuit theme of Swadesh Darshan Scheme, Tourism Ministry has sanctioned four projects to Nagaland, Telangana and Chhattisgarh.
 - ✍ Chhattisgarh was considered for the first tribal circuit theme for acknowledging sovereignty of tribes and to promote rich and diverse primitive assets in state.
196. ▶ Ministry of Tourism organized first ever India Tourism Mart (ITM 2018) in New Delhi, in partnership with Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH).
197. ▶ Ministry of Water Resources instituted National Water Awards, to encourage efficient management of water resources and create water consciousness in country.
- ✍ The awards will be given for 13 categories - Best State, Best District, Best Village Panchayat, Best Municipal Corporation, Best research, innovation and adaptation of new technology for water conservation, Best educative and mass awareness efforts, Best TV show for promoting water conservation, Best Newspaper, Best School, Best Institution for successful campus water usage, Best Resident Welfare Association (RWA), Organizations for Best Religious and Recreational & Tourism Water Uses and Best Industry for industrial water conservation.
198. ▶ Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi launched India’s first *National Scholarship Portal Mobile App* (NSP Mobile App), to ensure a smooth and hassle-free scholarship system for students from poor and weaker sections. Using it, Students will be able to apply for scholarships sitting in their home.
199. ▶ Monsoon Session Passed Bills (August 2018) -
- ✍ Parliament passed Constitution (123rd Amendment) Bill that seeks to provide constitutional status to National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC). It was passed by Both (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) in current Monsoon Season of Parliament.
 - ✍ It provides for granting of constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) on par with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, to extend Benefits given to SC / STs to backward classes.
 - ✍ Cabinet also decided to amend the SC/ST Act to further strengthen the law to protect their rights. A committee has been set up under G Rohini to examine sub-categorisation of Other Backward Classes.
 - ✍ Parliament passed Commercial Courts, Commercial Division and Commercial Appellate Division of High Courts (Amendment) Bill 2018. It enables creation of commercial divisions in High Courts and commercial courts at district level to adjudicate commercial disputes. Features -
 - ✍ Bill Reduction in pecuniary limits, from 1 crore to 3 lakh.
 - ✍ Parent Act barred commercial courts to be constituted in cases where High Court has original jurisdiction to hear commercial cases. Bill removes this bar and allows states to constitute commercial courts where High Courts have original jurisdiction.


- ✍ Allows state governments to notify commercial appellate courts at the district judge level in areas where High Courts do not have ordinary original civil jurisdiction.
- ✍ Introduces pre-institution mediation process in cases where no urgent, interim relief is contemplated, to provide parties with opportunity to resolve commercial disputes outside ambit of courts through authorities.
- ✍ Bill removes provision of counterclaim in relation to transfer of suits in a commercial dispute of at least Rs. 1 crore in civil court.
- ✍ It was passed by Both (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) in current Monsoon Season of Parliament.
- ✍ Parliament passed National Sports University Bill 2018, to set up India's first National Sports University in Imphal (Manipur). It is mandated to promote sports education in areas of sports sciences, sports technology, sports management, and sports coaching. Bill empowers It to grant degrees, diplomas and certificates. It was passed by Both (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) in current Monsoon Season of Parliament.
- ✍ Parliament passed Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill 2018 -
 - ✍ Investigating officer will not require approval of any authority for the arrest of an accused.
 - ✍ Preliminary enquiry will not be required for the registration of a First Information Report against a person accused under the Act.
 - ✍ SC/ST Act 1989 states that persons accused of committing an offence under the Act cannot apply for anticipatory bail. The Bill seeks to clarify that this provision will apply despite any judgements or orders of a court that provide otherwise.
 - ✍ Bill restores original provisions of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989. It prohibits commission of offences against members of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (SCs and STs) and establishes special courts for trial of such offences and rehabilitation of victims. It overturns a March 2018 Supreme Court judgment which diluted some provisions of law protecting Dalits and tribals from atrocities.
 - ✍ It was passed by Both (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) in current Monsoon Season of Parliament.
- ✍ Parliament passed Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill 2018 -
 - ✍ Jail term of minimum 20 years or life imprisonment or death for rape of girl under 12 years.
 - ✍ Increases minimum punishment from 10 years to 20 years for crime of rape of girl under 16 years, which can be extended to imprisonment for rest of life.
 - ✍ Increases minimum punishment for rape of women from rigorous imprisonment of 7 years to 10 years, which can be extended to life imprisonment.
 - ✍ Investigation and trial must be completed in two months. It proposes 6 months' time limit for disposal of appeals in rape cases.
 - ✍ It was passed by Both (Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha) in current Monsoon Season of Parliament.
- ✍ Lok Sabha passed Representation of the People (Amendment) Bill 2017, to extend facility of 'proxy voting' to overseas Indians, on lines of service voters. It amends Representation of People Act (RPA) 1950 and 1951 to allow for proxy voting and make certain provisions of these Acts gender-neutral.
 - ✍ Approx 1 crore Indians are settled abroad, of which 60 lakh may be within eligible voting age. By granting them proxy voting rights, overseas Indians will be able to exercise franchise during elections and also need not to spend foreign currency to come to India during elections.
- ✍ Lok Sabha passed Arbitration and Conciliation Bill (Amendment) 2018, which provides for time-bound settlement of disputes as well as accountability of arbitrator, to amend Arbitration and Conciliation Act 1996.
 - ✍ It contains provisions to deal with domestic and international arbitration, and defines law for conducting conciliation proceedings.
 - ✍ Key Provisions -
 - ✍ Seeks to establish Arbitration Council of India (ACI), for promotion of arbitration, mediation, conciliation and other alternative dispute redressal mechanisms.
 - ✍ Relaxation of time limits - Under 1996 Act, arbitral tribunals are required to make their award within a period of 12 months for all arbitration proceedings. Amendment bill has proposed to remove this time restriction for international commercial arbitrations.
 - ✍ New Bill requires that written claim and the defence to the claim in an arbitration proceeding, should be completed within six months of the appointment of the arbitrators.
 - ✍ Bill provides that all details of arbitration proceedings will be kept confidential except for details of the arbitral award in certain circumstances.

- ✍ Applicability of Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 2015: The bill clarifies that the 2015 Act shall only apply to arbitral proceedings that started on or after October 23, 2015.
- ✍ Parliament passed Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (2nd Amendment) Bill 2018, seeking to replace Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance 2018. Provisions -
 - ✍ It clarifies that home buyers under a real estate project should be treated as financial creditors.
 - ✍ Voting threshold for routine decisions taken by committee of creditors has been reduced from 75 % to 51 %. For certain key decisions, this has been reduced to 66 %.
 - ✍ Allows withdrawal of a resolution application submitted to National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) under the Code, after approval of 90 % of committee of creditors.
 - ✍ Features of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance 2018 -
 - ✍ Section 29(A) of IBC 2016 has been amended to exempt pure play financial entities from being disqualified on account of non-performing assets (NPA).
 - ✍ Promoters of companies with turnover of up to Rs 250 crore will be allowed to bid. Earlier, they were barred from bidding as government feared that they will walk away with stressed assets at a discount.
 - ✍ It provides a year time to Resolution Applicant to obtain necessary statutory clearances from central, state and other authorities.
 - ✍ Lok Sabha passed Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, outlawing talaq-e-biddat. According to it, talaq-e-biddat has been made a cognizable and non-bailable offence.
 - ✍ Three provisions of the Bill - Instant triple talaq is illegal, It imposes a jail term of up to 3 years and fine, It provides additional safeguards from the Act being misused It also provides for subsistence allowance to Muslim women and custody of minor children as may be determined by the magistrate.
 - ✍ It will soon be tabled in Rajya Sabha, for clearance.
- ✍ Parliament passed Requisitioning and Acquisition of Immovable Property (Amendment) Bill, regarding compensation payable for acquisition of immovable property by the Centre for defence and security purposes. It was earlier passed by Lok Sabha in July 2018.
 - ✍ The act enables central government to requisition immovable property (or land) for any public purpose like defence and security purposes. Amendment also involves a provision to allow the Centre to re-issue the notice of acquisition to make sure that the property owner gets an opportunity to be heard.
- 200. ▶ Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport was renamed as Chhatrapati Shivaji 'Maharaj' International Airport, To pay more respect to great maratha warrior. Mumbai's airport was formerly known as Sahar International Airport. It was renamed as Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport in 1999.
- 201. ▶ NITI Aayog and IBM launched a first-of-its-kind internship programme for students selected by Atal Innovation Mission (AIM). It will see 38 students receive a two-week paid training in areas like artificial intelligence, Internet-of-Things, cybersecurity, cloud computing and blockchain.
 - ✍ 14 Selected teachers from ATIs will also be trained by IBM volunteers and mentors to become innovation coaches.
- 202. ▶ NITI Aayog constituted group of experts submitted report titled 'Inventory and Revival of Springs in the Himalayas for Water Security.'
 - ✍ It stated that nearly 30% of springs crucial to water security of people are drying and 50% have reported reduced discharge.
 - ✍ It calls for spring mapping and revival, using 8 steps protocol should be taken up across Himalayan states in phased manner, applying carrying capacity concept to all major tourist destinations and implementing and monitoring tourism sector. It also has mooted 8-year programme to overhaul spring water management.
 - ✍ Meghalaya with 3,810 villages with springs has highest number of these water sources in Eastern Himalayan States. Sikkim had greatest density with 94% of its villages having spring. In Western Himalayas, Jammu & Kashmir had both highest number of villages with springs at 3,313 and greatest density of 50.6%.
- 203. ▶ NITI Aayog has made computer chip manufacturer NVIDIA its deep learning technology partner to support its MoveHack event. NVIDIA will help NITI Aayog to solve grand challenge of making innovations in mass mobility matter of national importance using Artificial Intelligence (AI) and deep learning.
 - ✍ MoveHack is global mobility hackathon event organized by NITI Aayog to crowdsource solutions aimed at the future of mobility in India.
 - ✍ Deep learning technology is subset of machine learning (ML) in artificial intelligence (AI) that has networks capable of learning unsupervised from data that is unstructured or unlabelled.
- 204. ▶ NITI Aayog launched *Pitch to MOVE* mobility pitch competition, aiming to provide budding entrepreneurs a unique opportunity to pitch their business ideas to a distinguished jury. Winners will be felicitated during Global Mobility Summit to be held in New Delhi in

September 2018.

 Pitch to MOVE aims to identify startups, which will help vision of Shared, Connected, Intermodal and Environment Friendly Mobility in India. It is available at <http://mobilitypitch.movesummit.in>

205. ▶ NITI Aayog launched Online Course on Digital Payments, titled 'Understanding Digital Payments'. It has been designed especially for India by International Telecommunication Union (ITU) a specialized UN Agency in ICT in consultation with NITI Aayog and Department of Telecommunications (DoT).


 It is being offered free of cost and is hosted by ITU Academy online, targeted at mid-level Government officers. Course duration is two weeks (1st to 15th October 2018).

206. ▶ NITI Aayog launched global mobility hackathon Move Hack to crowdsource solutions aimed at future of mobility in India. It is first platform in world that has enmeshed public transport, private transport, road safety, multimodal connectivity and new age transport technologies such as zero emission vehicles and intra city aerial transport spearheaded by Government.


207. ▶ NITI Aayog launched model guidelines for Public-Private partnership in Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs). Under these, private partner will invest in upgrading, building and deploying human resources. They will be responsible for operational management and service delivery. Newly issued guidelines will help streamline private participation and encourage world-class infrastructure and patient care in the health sector.


208. ▶ NITI Aayog recommended that Ministry of Agriculture to take up mission on shifting cultivation to ensure inter-ministerial convergence between different ministries. Highlights -

 State governments have divergent approaches towards shifting cultivation. creating confusion among grass-roots level workers and jhum farmer.


 It calls for policy coherence and recognising land for shifting cultivation as agricultural land where farmers practise agro-forestry for production of food rather than as forestland.

 Shifting Cultivation

 It is traditional agricultural practice that involves clearing vegetative forest cover on land and slopes of hills, drying and burning it before onset of monsoon and cropping on it thereafter. After harvest, this land is left fallow and vegetative regeneration is allowed on it till plot becomes reusable for same purpose in cycle. In north east India, it is called as jhum cultivation.


 Shifting cultivation causes in long term causes problem of land degradation and threat to ecology of the region at large. Burning of forests provide temporary nutrients like potash to soil. Burning of forests results in emissions of greenhouse gases (GHGs) such as CO₂, NO₂.


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


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

 Inventory and Revival of springs in Himalayas for Water Security.


 Sustainable Tourism in Indian Himalayan Region.


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

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

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

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

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

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

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

211. ▶ National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) will constitute 'Mediation Cell' for cases of child custody dispute in NRI marital discord. The Cell will resolve cases of children who were taken away by one of the spouse without the permission of the other spouse due to marital discord or domestic violence.
212. ▶ National Commission for Women (NCW) launched dedicated e-mail address (ncw.metoo@gmail.com) to report instances of sexual harassment at workplace. On receiving complaint, NCW will take forward complaints of sexual harassment at workplace received so that appropriate action may be taken.
213. ▶ National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC) will be set up on banks of the Ganga river in Patna University campus in Patna (Bihar), as Asia's first Dolphin research centre.
 - 🔗 Gangetic river dolphin (*Platanista gangetica*) is one of four freshwater dolphin species in world. The other three are found in Yangtze river, Indus river in Pakistan and Amazon river.
214. ▶ National Mission for Clean Ganga laid down limits of ecological flow of the river Ganga for first time, to enable hydropower projects to modify their operations along river.
 - 🔗 Upper stretches (origin to Haridwar) will have to maintain 20% of average flow of preceding 10-days between November and March which are dry seasons, 25% during October, April and May, which are the lean seasons, 30% during monsoon months of June-September.
 - 🔗 In main stem from Haridwar to Unnao, minimum flow of various barrages have been specified.
215. ▶ National Rail and Transportation Institute (NRTI), India's first university in transport sector, has started functioning. It is presently functioning at National Academy of Indian Railways in Vadodra (Gujarat). University of California, Berkeley and Cornell University are its international partners. It offers two undergraduate courses: BSc Transportation Technology and BBA Transportation Managements.
216. ▶ National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) signed MoU with Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to provide skill training and jobs in construction sector for 2.5 lakh poor people. It will strengthen skill trainings in construction sector for urban poor under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission.
217. ▶ Nepal celebrated festival of Fulpati, observed on 7th day of Dashain festival. Tradition is to bring nine types of Fulpati into home on seventh day of Navaratri.
218. ▶ North Central Railways (NCR) launched two mobile apps, NCR RASTA (Railway assets Summerised Tracking Application) and Yatri RASTA (Railway Approach to Station Tracking Application) for its employees and passengers, respectively, for locating assets and stations.
219. ▶ Northeast and Assam Petro-chemicals launched Asia's first cannisters based and India's first "Methanol Cooking Fuel Program" in Namrup (Assam). 500 households inside the Assam Petro Complex will be the first pilot project, scaling it to 40,000 households in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Telangana, Goa and Karnataka.
 - 🔗 It aims at reducing import of crude and an effort to provide clean, import substitute, cost effective and pollution free cooking medium.
 - 🔗 Safe handling cannister based cooking stoves are from Swedish Technology and through a Technology transfer a large-scale cooking stove manufacturing plant will come up in India in next 18 months, producing 10 lakh Cookstoves and 1 Crore Cannisters per year.
 - 🔗 This Cooking medium can directly substitute LPG, Kerosene, Wood, Charcoal and any other fuel for cooking. The gaseous form, Methanol - DME, can be blended in 20% ratio with LPG.
 - 🔗 It is a much more cost effective and environment friendly solution for domestic cooking needs.
220. ▶ Northern states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and UTs of Delhi and Chandigarh agreed to fix uniform tax rates on petroleum products, amid rising fuel prices. They also have agreed to bring uniformity in taxes on liquor and registration of vehicles and transport permit.
221. ▶ Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik has launched a 'Star Rating program' for industries to support State Pollution Control Board (SPCB) regulatory efforts to reduce pollution. It will rate industries from 1 to 5 based on their compliance to pollution standards.
222. ▶ Odisha Government launched *Nirman Kusuma* programme for providing financial assistance to children of construction workers for their technical education in state. It aims to help fulfil dreams of construction workers' children by providing financial assistance for their education in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and polytechnics.
 - 🔗 Under it, ITI student is entitled to get financial assistance of Rs. 23,600 and diploma student to get Rs. 26,300 per annum. Besides this, State government also -
 - 🔗 Increased financial assistance for girl students by 20%.
 - 🔗 Doubled death benefits for the construction workers, to 2 lakh now. Accidental benefit for construction workers' also doubled to 4 lakh.

223. ▶ Odisha Government launched an automatic public address system to warn citizens about cyclone and tsunami, as first such technology in field of Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS) in India. It has been implemented under the assistance of World Bank with a cost of 82 crores.
- ▶ 122 towers have been installed along 480 km long coastline, to produce sirens during emergency. Sound from towers can be heard in communities within 1.5 km. Button will be pressed from state emergency centre in Bhubaneswar during an emergency situation.
 - ▶ Six coastal districts named Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Puri and Ganjam have been covered under the system.
224. ▶ Odisha State Assembly has passed resolution seeking creation of 49 Member Legislative Council (Vidhan Parishad or second house of legislature).
- ▶ Resolution now will be sent to Central Government (Union cabinet) for approval, following which it will be tabled in both houses of Parliament. Thereafter, presidential assent is required to make it Act.
 - ▶ India has bicameral system of legislature. Just as Parliament has two Houses, States can have Legislative Council (LC) in addition to Legislative Assembly if they choose to. This option is available under Article 171 of Constitution.
 - ▶ Currently, seven states have Legislative Councils viz. Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jammu and Kashmir, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and Telangana. Proposals to create Councils in Rajasthan and Assam are pending in Parliament.
 - ▶ Legislative Council of state cannot have MLAs more than one-third of total number of MLAs of state assembly and not less than 40 members. Jammu & Kashmir is exception, as Section 50 of state's Constitution, Assembly has 87 members and Legislative Council 36.
 - ▶ Tenure of Member of Legislative Council (MLC) is six years (similar to Rajya Sabha MPs).
225. ▶ Odisha assembly approved naming newly-built Jharsuguda airport after noted freedom fighter Veer Surendra Sai. It will be the second airport in Odisha to be renamed, after Biju Patnaik International airport in Bhubaneswar.
226. ▶ Odisha government signed MOU with two US-based agencies to eradicate malaria. in. The 2 agencies are: 'Malaria No More' and 'Malaria Elimination Trust'.
227. ▶ Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC) made oil and gas discoveries in Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal, as category-III basins, having hydrocarbon and are considered geologically prospective for exploration.
- ▶ Madhya Pradesh - Deposits were discovered in block in Vindhyan basin. This find is at 3,000-plus meters deep and is being now tested.
 - ▶ West Bengal - Deposits discovered in well in Ashok Nagar of 24 Parganas district.
 - ▶ India has 26 sedimentary basins, of which only seven category-I basins have commercial production of oil and gas. It is in the process of adding eighth basin by putting Kutch offshore discovery (it holds about one trillion cubic feet of gas reserves) to production.
228. ▶ Old World Theatre festival will be organized by India Habitat Centre, recognized by UNESCO as a "Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity". It will showcase 15 plays on a pan-Indian constellation of original scripts from Chennai, Bangalore, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Pune, Mumbai, and Kerala.
229. ▶ Ongoing CBI Controversy -
- ▶ Government on October 23, 2018 removed CBI Director Alok Verma and Special Director Rakesh Asthana from their posts. Government and Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) cited that Verma was not cooperating with CVC's inquiry into allegations made by Asthana against him.
 - ▶ Alok Verma approached Supreme Court after his removal from post of CBI Director, claiming that it was in violation of Section 4B of Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act 1946, which grants CBI Director a secure term of 2 years. SC will now examine the issue. Meanwhile, M Nageshwar Rao is appointed as CBI Director by Govt.
 - ▶ Rakesh Asthana Removal -
 - ▶ On October 15, CBI booked Asthana for alleged corruption following the FIR registered against him for alleged extortion of over 3 crores from Sathish Babu Sana in a case against meat exporter Moin Qureshi, who is accused of taking money from several people for getting favours from senior government functionaries.
 - ▶ Timeline -
 - ▶ August 24 - CBI Special Director Rakesh Asthana writes to Cabinet Secretary, informing him that Alok Verma took Rs 2 crore bribe from businessman Sathish Babu Sana
 - ▶ September 14 - Asthana informs CBI that Verma has issued orders to remove him from IRCTC and INX Media cases
 - ▶ September 20 - Special Investigation Team headed by Aasthana proposes to interrogate Sathish Babu Sana
 - ▶ October 3 - Sana appears before CBI
 - ▶ October 15 - CBI booked Asthana and Sana for alleged corruption. Alok Verma filed a case against Rakesh Asthana, accusing him of taking Rs 3 crore as bribe from Sana. Sana accepted that he agreed to pay Rs 5 crore to Asthana as bribe to give clean

chit to Moin Qureshi.

- ✍ October 19 - Asthana removed from Special Investigation Team
- ✍ October 21 - PM Modi summons Alok Verma
- ✍ October 22 - CBI raids its own office and arrests DSP Devender Kumar in connection with allegations against Asthana
- ✍ October 23 - Central Vigilance Commission divested Alok Verma and Rakesh Asthana of their CBI posts
- ✍ October 23 - Asthana approached Delhi High Court to get CBI's FIR against him quashed
- ✍ October 24 - Alok Verma moved SC against his removal and pressed for an urgent hearing

230. ▶ PM Narendra Modi gave awards to top Ranked State, District and State with maximum citizen participation based on National Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2018. As part of Swachh Survekshan Grameen, 6786 villages were covered. top ranked States / Districts -

- ✍ States - Haryana, Gujarat, Maharashtra
- ✍ Districts - Satara (Maharashtra), Rewari (Haryana), Pedapalli (Telangana)
- ✍ States with maximum citizen participation - Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra
- ✍ Districts with maximum citizens' participation - Nashik (Maharashtra), Solapur, (Maharashtra), Chittorgarh (Rajasthan)

231. ▶ PM Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC) in Dwarka (New Delhi). On completion, it will be biggest indoor exhibition space in India and also rank among the top 10 in world, with capacity to accommodate 11,000 persons, 5 exhibition halls, 1-kilometre long foyer etc. The project has estimated cost of INR 25703 crores.

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

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

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

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

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

- ✍ National Launch, School Engagement - *September 15*
- ✍ Swachhata Sabhas: *September 16*
- ✍ Seva Diwas: *September 17*
- ✍ Railways Swachhata Divas – *September 22*
- ✍ Antyodaya Divas – *September 25*

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



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

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

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

235. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind approved bill seeking punishment for sexual offenders, cyber criminals and traditional unlawful acts like bootlegging and dacoity in Telangana state. This will replace 1986 Act that had jurisdiction for the undivided Andhra Pradesh but not for Telangana.
236. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind gave his assent to Good samaritan bill of Karnataka, as first such legislation in India.
- ▶ Karnataka Good Samaritan and Medical Professional (Protection and Regulation during Emergency Situations) Bill 2016, provides legal protection to good samaritans who help accident victims with emergency medical care within the golden hour (first hour after a traumatic injury when emergency treatment is very crucial).
237. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated centenary celebrations of Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in New Delhi.
- ▶ Government had recognised DBHPS as one of Institutes of National Importance in 1964. It is divided into four divisions one each for south states of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
 - ▶ DBHPS was established by Annie Besant with support from Mahatma Gandhi in 1918 with sole aim of prorogating Hindi in South India to unite northern and southern states.
238. ▶ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated 'Festival of Democracy' in Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), to mark diamond jubilee (60 years) celebrations of Kerala legislative assembly.
239. ▶ Project *Development of North East Circuit: Imphal & Khongjom* inaugurated under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism. The project covers two sites i.e. Kangla Fort and Khongjom.
- ▶ Swadesh Darshan scheme was launched in 2014 -15, with 70 projects sanctioned as on date.
 - ▶ Kangla Fort is one of most important historic and archaeological site of Manipur located in the heart of the Imphal city. It served as the seat of Manipur's power till 1891.
 - ▶ Khongjom is place where the last war of resistance of Anglo Manipur War of 1891 was fought.
240. ▶ Punjab Cabinet approved amendments to Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) to make disrespect of religious texts (Sacrilege) punishable with life imprisonment.
241. ▶ Punjab Cabinet approved formation of the state higher education council to offer quality education, to be headed by CM Amarinder Singh and Higher education minister as vice chairman.
- ▶ It is formed to provide quality higher education in Punjab's institutions through optimum sharing of resources between universities and colleges, for research purposes, academic and governance reforms, monitoring and evaluation of higher education institutions.
 - ▶ Cabinet also approved proposal of the Local Government Department for amending validity of the Punjab Municipal Infrastructure Development Fund (PMIDF) Act, 2011, to extend its validity till 2037-38, from 2020-21.
 - ▶ Cabinet also approved a bill for creation of a price stabilisation fund, to ensure that state farmers get minimum support price (MSP). It would protect interests of farmers amid sudden fall in prices of certain agricultural commodities.
242. ▶ Punjab Govt. launched 3 apps to prevent crop residue burning, To check and create awareness about environmental effects of crop residue burning. Apps are i-Khet Machine, e-PEHaL and e-Prevent.
243. ▶ Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir signed an agreement for renewing work on INR 2793 crore Shahpurkandi dam project. It will be irrigating 37,173 ha of land and would provide 206MW of electricity to Punjab and J&K.
244. ▶ Punjab assembly passed Police (Amendment) Bill 2018 that would pave way for setting up of a State Security Commission for selection of director general of police (DGP). It amends Punjab Police Act 2007, that did not provide for selection of DGP from panel as prepared by UPSC.
245. ▶ Punjab government signed four MoUs with Israeli institutions to address issues of farmers and depleting groundwater level in state.
246. ▶ QS Quacquarelli Symonds released "QS India University Rankings 2019" as first standalone ranking of India's higher education institutions - Top 5 universities in QS India University Rankings 2019 -
- ▶ Indian Institute Of Technology Bombay
 - ▶ Indian Institute Of Science Bangalore
 - ▶ Indian Institute Of Technology Madras
 - ▶ Indian Institute Of Technology Delhi
 - ▶ Indian Institute Of Technology Kharagpur
247. ▶ Railways will Build first station inside a tunnel, at Keylong, at a height of 3,000 metres, on strategic Bilaspur-Manali-Leh line in Himachal Pradesh.
- ▶ It will be part of world's highest rail network at 5,360 metres height. 465-km railway line will have 30 stations and is estimated to cost 83,360 crores.
248. ▶ Rajasthan Assembly passed Rajasthan Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2018, containing provisions for -
- ▶ Relaxation of *two-child* provision for those aspiring to contest panchayat elections provided one of the children is differently-abled

- ▶ Allowing people suffering from leprosy to contest panchayat elections.
- 249. ▶ Rajasthan government announced to observe September as 'month of nutrition'. State Govt earlier launched 'Annapurna Milk Scheme' -
 - ▶ Students of Class 1 to 8 of government schools will be given milk daily instead of thrice a week.
 - ▶ Students in age group of 3-6 years, adolescent girls and pregnant women registered with Anganwadi centres will be provided milk thrice a week.
- 250. ▶ Rajasthan government will soon distribute mobile phones to women under Bhamashah Yojana, Focused on women in Below Poverty Line (BPL) families.
- 251. ▶ Rajasthan's first lion safari inaugurated at Nahargarh Biological Park, located on Delhi-Jaipur National Highway in Aravalli foothills, near Jaipur. 10 Lions in this park were brought from Junagarh, Gujarat under an exchange programme.
- 252. ▶ Road and Transport Minister Gadkari launched Bidder Information Management System (BIMS), Bhoomi Rashi and PFMS linkage Initiatives of Ministry. Also, Annual Awards for Excellence in National Highways Projects were instituted, to be given from this year onwards.
 - ▶ BIMS aims at streamlining process of pre-qualification of bidders for EPC Mode of contracts for National Highway works with enhanced transparency and objectivity. The portal will work as a data base of information about bidders, covering basic details, civil works experience, cash accruals and network, annual turnover etc.
 - ▶ Bhoomi Rashi portal comprises entire revenue data of country, including all 6.4 lakh villages. It has been instrumental in reducing time taken for approval and publication of notifications pertaining to land acquisition.
 - ▶ Integration of Public Financial Management System (PFMS) with Bhoomi Rashi is one of the key functionalities to facilitate payment related to compensation for land acquisition to all the beneficiaries directly through the Bhoomi Rashi system.
- 253. ▶ Rural Development Ministry's Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) signed MoU with Delhi University's Lady Irwin College for establishing ROSHNI - Centre of Women Collectives led Social Action.
- 254. ▶ Santali has become the first Indian tribal language to get a Wikipedia edition in its own script after. Santali is written in Ol Chiki script and spoken by 6.4 million people in India.
- 255. ▶ Severe Cyclone Titli caused heavy losses in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh, with winds above 150 KMPH.
- 256. ▶ Shipping and Road Transport & Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari laid foundation stone for development work of Ghagra River as National Waterway-40 at Basti in Uttar Pradesh, as part of Sagarmala Programme.
 - ▶ Waterway will stretch from Manjhighat at Ganga-Gaghra river confluence to Faizabad or Ayodhya along Gaghra River for 354 kms.
 - ▶ It was declared as National Waterway (NW)-40 during the year 2016.
 - ▶ Together with National Waterway-1 (on river Ganga), NW-40 will be a major transport modal choice for cargo and passenger movement.
- 257. ▶ Singphan Elephant Reserve has been named as 30th elephant reserve in India, located in Mon district of Nagaland and spreads over an area of 5825 acres (2357 hac).
- 258. ▶ Startup India launched *Startup Academia Alliance* programme, as a unique mentorship opportunity between academic scholars and startups working in similar domains, to fulfill Government's mission to promote entrepreneurship.
- 259. ▶ State government of Arunachal Pradesh signed an MoU with the British Council to strengthen educational and cultural cooperation, to support the knowledge ambitions and economic growth of state.
- 260. ▶ Supreme Court adjourned till end of August 2018, the hearing on pleas challenging Constitutional validity of Article 35A, pertaining to Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). Article 35A and controversy regarding it -
 - ▶ Article 35A appears in Constitution as an *appendix* and not as an amendment. In 2014, an NGO 'We the Citizens' filed a writ petition in Supreme Court seeking striking down of Article 35A as it was not added to Constitution through stated procedure. Hence, it lacks parliamentary sanction. In 2017, two Kashmiri women filed another case in Supreme Court against Article 35A for its discrimination against J&K women.
 - ▶ This led to an uproar in Kashmir. Political Parties and people of J & K are warning to trigger an explosive situation in J&K, if Article 35A is scrapped.
 - ▶ About Article 35A -
 - ▶ It was added to Constitution (Appendix II) through Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order 1954, issued by then President Rajendra Prasad on May 14, 1954.
 - ▶ Presidential Order of 1954 provided framework for division of powers between J&K and Union Government under Article 370.
 - ▶ If Supreme Court strikes down Article 35A, it will have serious impact on all subsequent Presidential Orders.
 - ▶ Article 370 accords special status to Jammu and Kashmir and acts like a bridge between Indian Constitution and Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir.

- ✎ Its Origin dates back to 1927 when the Dogras from Jammu approached Maharaja Hari Singh fearing that arrival of people from Punjab will lead to their control in government services. These fears led to issuance of a separate notification by maharaja in 1927 and 1932 which defined the state subjects and their rights.
 - ✎ J&K Constitution, framed in 1956, retained Maharaja's definition of permanent residents of state.
 - ✎ J&K constitution defined a permanent resident as a person who was born or settled in J&K before 1911 or has been resident in the state for 10 years after lawfully acquiring property in state.
 - ✎ Under Article 35A, emigrants from J&K, including those who migrated to Pakistan, are considered state residents. The descendants of emigrants are considered state subjects for two generations.
 - ✎ It prohibits non-permanent residents from acquiring immovable property, government jobs, scholarships and aid in the state.
261. ▶ Supreme Court approved issuing hologram-based coloured stickers for vehicles in Delhi based on the fuel used. While petrol and CNG vehicles will need to have a blue sticker, diesel vehicles must carry an orange one. This is aimed at better tackling of air pollution-related issues in Delhi.
262. ▶ Supreme Court asked Government to form a law on deciding whether lawmakers facing criminal charges be barred from contesting elections or should they be disqualified only after conviction. SC also asked political parties and candidates to publish their criminal records at least 3 times in newspapers / TV channels after filing of nomination papers.
263. ▶ Supreme Court banned all construction activities in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Chandigarh till October 9, after these states / UT failed to comply with court's order to come up with a policy on solid waste management.
264. ▶ Supreme Court declared Centre's Aadhaar scheme as constitutionally valid. Bench stated that Aadhaar would remain mandatory for filing IT returns and allotment of Permanent Account Number (PAN). But, it will not be mandatory for Bank accounts, Telecom services, Educational Admissions. Other Notable statements by SC are -
- ✎ Section 57 of Aadhaar Act that permits private entities to avail Aadhaar data has been struck down.
 - ✎ Aadhaar authentication data cannot be stored for more than 6 months.
 - ✎ National security exception under the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act was also struck down.
265. ▶ Supreme Court declined to refer 1994 Ismail Farooqui judgment (that mosques are not integral to Islam) to a larger constitution bench.
- ✎ Judgement was delivered by a 3 judge bench. Majority was written by Ashok Bhushan and Chief Justice Deepak Misra. 3rd judge, Abdul Nazeer presented a dissenting judgment.
 - ✎ Decision to not refer issue of reconsideration of 1994 observations on Ayodhya-Ram Janmabhoomi land dispute case to a five-judge constitution bench paves way for SC to hear main Ayodhya land dispute.
 - ✎ The issue whether mosque is integral to Islam cropped up when SC bench headed by CJI Misra was of petitions challenging Allahabad High Court's 2010 verdict, by which disputed land in Ayodhya was to be divided in 3 parts (Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lalla represented by Hindu Maha Sabha).
 - ✎ Ismail Farooqui judgement -
 - ✎ In 1994, Supreme Court had ruled that namaz or prayers could be offered anywhere and that a mosque was not necessary. This cleared way for government to acquire the land where 16th century Babri mosque was demolished by Hindu Kar Sevaks.
266. ▶ Supreme Court modified its July 2017 order in dowry harassment case for preventing misuse of Section 498A of Indian Penal Code (IPC).
- ✎ The July 2017 decision quashed immediate arrest of accused in dowry cases, saying that complaints under Section 498A of IPC should be scrutinised by Family Welfare Committees before any legal action by police.
 - ✎ Now, After a plea filed by NGO 'Nyayadhar', an organisation formed by women advocates of Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district, Family Welfare Committees are scrapped.
 - ✎ SC left it to Parliament to make suitable rules to check abuse of the law.
267. ▶ Supreme Court of India allowed live streaming and video recording of court proceedings across country, asking government to frame rules in this regard under Article 145 of the Constitution.
- ✎ SC earlier reserved its verdict on the matter on August 24, saying it wanted to implement *open court* concept to decongest courtrooms.
268. ▶ Supreme Court resumed filing of claims and objections by around 40 lakh people who were left out in draft National Register of Citizens (NRC) of Assam, giving second opportunity to citizens keeping in mind the magnitude of the issue. Bench will now hear the matter on October 23, 2018.
- ✎ Assam government in July 2018 released 2nd and final draft of state's National Register of Citizens (NRC). The draft left out approx 40 Lakh people living in state, not marking them as legal citizens of India.

269. ▶ Supreme Court ruled that *None of The Above* (NOTA) option will not be applicable for voting in Rajya Sabha elections. SC held that NOTA option is meant only for universal adult suffrage and direct elections and not for the polls held by the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote as done in Rajya Sabha.
270. ▶ Supreme Court ruled that no Bharat Stage-IV vehicle shall be sold across the country with effect from April 1, 2020. Bharat Stage VI (BS-VI) emission norm would come into force from April 1, 2020.
- ▶ Bharat stage emission standards were instituted by Government to regulate the output of air pollutants from motor vehicles. BS-IV norms were in force across country since April 2017
 - ▶ In 2016, Government decided to switch over to BS-VI grade fuel directly from BS-IV skipping BS-V.
271. ▶ Supreme Court struck down Section 497 of Indian Penal Code (IPC) 1860 that made adultery punishable offence for men.
- ▶ Section 497 of IPC (Adultery) says that whoever has sexual intercourse with wife of another man (without consent of that man), such intercourse not amounting to offence of rape, is guilty of offence of adultery. Such person shall be punished with imprisonment and / or Fine. In such case the wife shall not be punishable as an abettor.
272. ▶ Supreme Court struck down a rule that disallowed females in 10-50 age group from entering the Sabarimala temple in Kerala. Chief Justice Dipak Misra-headed Constitution bench in a 4-1 verdict said temple rule violated their right to equality and right to worship.
273. ▶ Tamil Nadu CM Edappadi K. Palaniswami has inaugurated India's tallest Film Studio named 'MGR Centenary Film Studio', as 56 feet tall, 110 metres long and 100 feet wide studio. The studio is named after former Chief Minister M.G. Ramachandran.
274. ▶ Tamil Nadu Govt. banned sale of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), known as e- cigarettes.
- ▶ It comes after recent central government notification, asking all states / UTs to ban e-cigarettes.
 - ▶ ENDS are devices that heat solution to create aerosol, which also frequently contains flavours, usually dissolved into propylene glycol and glycerin. e-cigarettes (electronic cigarettes) are most common prototype of ENDS.
275. ▶ Tamil Nadu government announced Scheme for protection of exotic Neela kurinji (*Strobilanthus kunthianus*) plants that flower only once in 12 years.
- ▶ This plant species is native to Shola forests in Western Ghats. It is also seen in Shevroys Hills in Eastern Ghats, Anamalai hills and Agali hills in Kerala and Sanduru hills in Karnataka.
 - ▶ It grows at height of 30 to 60 cm on hills slopes at an altitude of 1300 to 2400 meters where there is no tree forest. The flowers are purple-blue in colour and blooms once in 12 years.
276. ▶ Tea Board of India will launch an app aimed at guiding small growers, whose share in total tea production is increasing. Name of the app is Chai Sahay (tea help). It aims to establish two-way communication between manufacturer and customers.
277. ▶ Telangana Government launched Disaster Response Force (DRF) vehicles in Hyderabad, as state's own dedicated disaster force trained in tackling of urban flooding, tree falls, structural collapses and any other site of normal emergencies.
278. ▶ Telangana government launched first-of-its-kind life insurance programme worth Rs 5 lakh for farmers in state, called Rythu Bandhu Life Insurance Bonds, with cost approx 650 Crores. Insurance amount will be given to farmer's family within 10 days, in case of death of Farmer. Some Limitations -
- ▶ It is limited to farmers aged 18 - 60 years.
 - ▶ Limited to landowners who received monetary assistance of Rs 4000 from the state government to bear farming costs under the 'Rythu Bandhu' programme earlier this year.
 - ▶ Tenant farmers have been left out of it.
279. ▶ Telangana government will set up a biotech and pharma facility, B-Hub, India's first organised cluster for life sciences Research & Development at Genome Valley, To support manufacturing activities for bio-pharma R&D. Also, a web portal for life sciences sector has been launched.
280. ▶ To combat human trafficking, West Bengal government rolled out Swayangsiddha scheme (means self-reliance), to be executed by West Bengal Police. It aims to empower young boys and girls to make informed choices so that they are less vulnerable to trafficking and child marriage.
281. ▶ To tackle counterfeit drugs in India, NITI Aayog and IT Firm Oracle signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) will pilot a real drug supply-chain using blockchain distributed ledger and Internet of Things (IoT) software.
- ▶ It will allow sharing of information across drug supply chain securely, with every exchange getting recorded. There will be no tampering of any record of drug movement and no data will be deleted.
282. ▶ Traditional *Marbat* festival observed in Nagpur (Maharashtra).
283. ▶ Traditional annual Hindu festival of Onam held in Kerala. It is celebrated to commemorate King Mahabali, whose spirit is said to visit Kerala at the time of Onam.

284. ▶ Transplant Authority of Tamil Nadu (TRANSTAN) made Aadhaar mandatory for Indian patients to register in the Tamil Nadu Network for Organ Sharing. While foreigners are asked to submit a No Objection Certificate (NoC) from the respective Embassies.
285. ▶ Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (Ministry of Tribal Affairs) signed MoU with National Medicinal Plants Board (Ministry of AYUSH), to promote Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (MAPs) forest produce for livelihood development of tribal people through promotion of primary level value addition to MAPs produce from forest area at grassroots level.
286. ▶ UNICEF and NASSCOM Foundation signed an agreement to strengthen child rights through "meaningful business interventions.
287. ▶ Union Territory of Puducherry won top position in National Clean School Award after seven schools from Puducherry were awarded for cleanliness.
- ▶ Tamil Nadu bagged second position in National Clean School Award. The third position was shared by Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.
 - ▶ 52 schools from across country were bestowed with National Clean School Award in recognition of their efforts in carrying forward Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.
288. ▶ Unique Identity Authority of India (UIDAI) announced phased roll-out of face recognition for carrying out Aadhaar authentication as an additional security layer, from September 15, 2018. It also announced new feature *live face photo*, as live feed of person facial features whose Aadhaar is submitted. It will be in addition to fingerprint or iris scans for Aadhaar authentication.
- ▶ It will curb possibility of fingerprint cloning or spoofing and also seeks to tighten audit process and security around issuance and activation of mobile SIMs.
289. ▶ Uttar Pradesh Police will soon launch first of its kind dial-FIR scheme, where a common man can register regular crimes without going to a police station. Under it, an online photographic dossier of criminals that will be provided to policemen on 22,000 new i-pads.
290. ▶ Uttarakhand Assembly passed resolution seeking status of "rashtra mata — mother of the nation" for cow, to strengthen efforts to conserve the species across country.
291. ▶ Uttarakhand High Court (HC) banned commercial use of elephants in state and directed the state forest department to rescue the elephants deployed for commercial purposes within 24 hours. Uttarakhand also became first state to give identity cards to gau rakshaks, to differentiate people who protect cows from those who resort to violence in name of cow vigilantism.
292. ▶ Uttarakhand High Court declared fatwas as unconstitutional and illegal, banning all religious bodies and statutory panchayats in state from issuing fatwas. The ruling came, as the court declared illegal a fatwa banishing the family of a rape victim from their village.
293. ▶ Uttarakhand High Court directed state government to provide reservation to transgenders in educational institutions and public appointments, for welfare of transgender persons in state.
294. ▶ Uttarakhand ranked as best state in construction of maximum number of roads under PMGSY during 2017-2018, constructing 1839 kilometre roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana against a target of 1,500 km for 2017-18.
295. ▶ Various Welfare schemes for North eastern Region -
- ▶ North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme (NESIDS) - It is a 100% Central Sector Scheme to be implemented till March 2020, with sum of 1600 crores.
 - ▶ Schemes of North Eastern Council (NEC) and North East Road Sector Development Scheme (NERSDS) - With total cost of 4500 crore for upto 2019-20.
 - ▶ North East Venture Fund (NEVF), set up by North Eastern Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (NEDFi), with capital commitment of 100 crores. Out of this, 25 crores has been committed by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI).
296. ▶ Various changes in names as tribute to Former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee who passed away recently -
- ▶ Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) announced its decision to rename its School of Management and Entrepreneurship as Atal Bihari Vajpayee School of Management and Entrepreneurship.
 - ▶ Chhattisgarh Govt. renaming upcoming capital of the state Naya Raipur as Atal Nagar.
 - ▶ Uttar Pradesh Govt. will name proposed Bundelkhand Expressway as 'Atal Path'.
 - ▶ AIIMS Rishikesh auditorium, a ghat on Sabarmati River in Gujarat and cyber tower in Mauritius to be named after him.
 - ▶ Andhra Pradesh to name AIIMS Mangalagiri after Him.
 - ▶ Himachal Pradesh to rename Rohtang Tunnel after him.
 - ▶ Madhya Pradesh govt. to rename Habibganj railway station after him.
 - ▶ Assam to name the yet-to-be-inaugurated Bogibeel bridge after him, as Atal Setu.
297. ▶ Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated 2 coastal tourism circuit projects in Andhra Pradesh under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
- ▶ First includes beautification of Nellore tank and Pulicat Lake, facelift to Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary, construction of restaurant and development of Kotha Koduru, Ubbalamadugu, Mypadu, Rama Theertham, and Isukapalli project.
 - ▶ Second coastal circuit is aimed at developing Kakinada port, Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, Hope Island, construction of cottages and wooden huts at Aduru, Pasarlapudi and S Yanam and development of Kotipalli project.

298. ▶ Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated Indian Culinary Institute (ICI) in Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh), promoted by Ministry of Tourism. Main objective of ICI is to institutionalize mechanism to support efforts intended to preserve, document, promote and disseminate Indian Cuisine.
299. ▶ West Bengal Government removed annual family income ceiling in eligibility criteria to be beneficiary under state's Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme.
- ✎ Currently only girls belonging to families with annual family income not more than Rs 1.20 lakh were entitled to get benefits of this scheme. State government will also set up *Kanyashree University* soon.
 - ✎ Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme -
 - ✎ It is conditional cash transfer scheme aimed at improving status and well-being of girl child by incentivising schooling of teenage girls and delaying their marriages until age of 18, launched in October 2013.
 - ✎ Targeted Beneficiaries are girl children within age 13 - 19 years.
 - ✎ Girls regularly attending institutions for education or vocational or sports training.
 - ✎ Girls of Child Care Institutes registered under Juvenile Justice Act (JJ), 2000 within age of 18-19 years.
 - ✎ Components Include -
 - ✎ Annual Scholarship of INR 500 for unmarried girls aged 13-18 years enrolled in classes VIII-XII and One time Grant of Rs 25,000 for girls turned 18 at time of application.
 - ✎ Over 50 lakh girls from the state have been benefited by scheme and removal of ceiling will help another three lakh more girls annually. It was awarded United Nations Public Service Award in June 2017.
300. ▶ World Bank released World Development Report 2019, with Theme *The Changing Nature of Work*. As part of report, World Bank launched a Human Capital Project (HCP), claimed to be a program of advocacy, measurement, and analytical work to raise awareness and increase demand for interventions to build human capital.
- ✎ There are three components of HCP - Human capital measurement metric called Human Capital Index (HCI), a programme of measurement and research to inform policy action, and a programme of support for country strategies to accelerate investment in human capital.
 - ✎ Human Capital index (HCI) -
 - ✎ HCI is constructed for 157 countries. It measures amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18. HCI has three components -
 - ✎ Survival, as measured by under-5 mortality rates.
 - ✎ Expected years of Quality-Adjusted School
 - ✎ Health environment using two proxies of *adult survival rates* and *rate of stunting for children under age 5*.
 - ✎ How World Bank's HCI is different from UNDP's Human Development Index (HDI) -
 - ✎ HIC uses survival rates and stunting rate instead of life expectancy as measure of health, and quality-adjusted learning instead of merely years of schooling as measure of education.
 - ✎ Two significant changes from HDI are exclusion of income component and introduction of quality adjustment in learning. Exclusion of income element and introduction of quality adjustment makes HCI far less representative of Human Capital Development than Index claims it to be.
 - ✎ Observations of 1st HCI Report -
 - ✎ For 56% of world's population, HCI is below 0.50, for 92% it is at or below 0.75. Hence only 8% of the population can expect to be 75% as productive as they could be.
 - ✎ Advanced economies such as North America and Europe mostly have HCI value of above 0.75, while South Asia and Sub Saharan Africa have lowest HCI.
 - ✎ Top 5 - Singapore (1), South Korea (2), Japan (3), Hong Kong (4), Finland (5)
 - ✎ Bottom 5 - Chad (157), South Sudan (156), Niger (155), Mali (154), Liberia (153)
 - ✎ Neighbours - China (46), Bangladesh (106), Pakistan (134), Sri Lanka (74), Nepal (102)
 - ✎ Report in Context of India -
 - ✎ HCI for India is estimated at 0.44, **ranked 115th**.
 - ✎ There has been improvement in HCI components in India over last five years.
 - ✎ Probability of Survival to Age 5 is 96 %.
 - ✎ In India, a child who starts school at age 4 can expect to complete 10.2 years of school by her 18th birthday.
 - ✎ Harmonized Test Scores: Students in India score 355 on a scale where 625 represents advanced attainment and 300 represents minimum attainment.

- ✎ Across India, 83 per cent of 15-year olds will survive until age 60.
- ✎ In India, HCI for girls is marginally higher than for boys.
- ✎ Further, India finds the report Insignificant as -
 - ✎ Quality adjusted learning has been measured in case of India by using the data as old as 2009.
 - ✎ Purpose of Index is to create political incentive for increased spending on health and education. Unfortunately, indicators used are so slow moving that none can really be excited about setting out programme of Index improvement.
 - ✎ HCI score for India does not reflect the key initiatives that are being taken for developing human capital, Including -
 - ✎ *Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan*
 - ✎ *Ayushman Bharat Programme* (world's largest Health Insurance initiative providing 500 million citizens with adequate health coverage)
 - ✎ Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan that triggered Sanitation coverage expansion from 38% in 2014 to 83% in 2018, under *Swachh Bharat Mission*.
 - ✎ *Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana* that provided over 4 Crore women with LPG connection to replace firewood and coke based cooking stoves.

301. ▶ World Economic Forum (WEF) launched new Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution in India, based in Maharashtra, as fourth center in chain-ones as part of WEF's global network along with San Francisco (US), Tokyo (Japan) and Beijing (China).

✎ It will facilitate to bring together government and business leaders to pilot emerging technology policies. It has selected drones, artificial intelligence and blockchain as the first three project areas.

✎ First project will focus on expanding access to data to accelerate adoption of AI in socio-economic areas like education, healthcare and agriculture. 2nd will focus on application of smart contracts to boost productivity and transparency while reducing inefficiency.

302. ▶ World's first-ever thermal battery plant will be set up in Andhra Pradesh, by Bharat Energy Storage Technology Private Limited (BEST). First-of-its-kind batteries will aim to boost renewable sources of energy production and reduce dependence on non-renewable fossil fuel-based energy generation.

✎ In first phase, batteries suited for telecommunications, mini or microgrids and electric buses would be manufactured. Batteries will run for up to 800kms on a single charge.

✎ Thermal plant is expected to start commercial operations by May 2019.

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