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Current Affairs [PDF] -October 16-31, 2018

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Contents

News Headlines: October 16-31, 2018 3
October 16, 2018 14
October 17, 2018 16
October 18, 2018 17
October 19, 2018 19
October 20, 2018 22
October 21-22, 2018 24
October 23, 2018 27
October 24, 2018 31
October 25, 2018 35
October 26, 2018 37
October 27, 2018 39
October 28, 2018 45
October 29, 2018 46
October 30, 2018 46
October 31, 2018 47
Multiple Choice Questions 51

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News Headlines: October 16-31, 2018

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 16, 2018

India

- Music composer 'Khayyam' wins Hridaynath Award for Lifetime Achievement in Mumbai
- Foundation stone for the "Museum of Prime Ministers" laid at the Teen Murti estate in New Delhi
- Foreign tourists can now visit Andaman and Nicobar Islands without any restrictions
- Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) plan to combat air pollution comes into force in Delhi-NCR
- Earth Sciences Minister Dr Harshvardhan unveils an Air Quality early warning system for Delhi region
- 'Library on Wheels' launched on Mumbai-Pune Deccan Queen and Mumbai-Manmad Panchvati Express trains
- DRDO website -'The Kalam Vision – Dare to Dream' – dedicated to former president Dr APJ Abdul Kalam launched
- launches Youth Road Safety Learners Licence programme, target is to reduce road accidents by 50% by 2020
- International Day of Rural Women (October 15) celebrated as Mahila Kisan Diwas in India
- IRCTC launches AskDisha, a chatbot powered by artificial intelligence, to troubleshoot customers' travel-related queries
- Tamil Nadu Victim Compensation Scheme for Women Victims/Survivors of Sexual Assault/Other Crimes, 2018, notified by the state government

Economy & Corporate

- Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation rises to 5.13% in September 2018, was 4.53% in August 2018 and 3.14% in September 2017
- India's trade deficit narrows to $13.98 billion in September from $17.4 billion in August
- Union Power Ministry announced award of Rs 100 crore for states who complete the household electrification early under the Saubhagya scheme
- Tata Motors commences bookings of its upcoming SUV Harrier
- Nokia appoints Alia Bhatt as brand ambassador in India

World

- Saudi Arabia agrees to let Turkish investigators enter its consulate in Istanbul, where missing journalist Jamal Khashoggi was last seen entering on October 2
- International Day of Rural Women observed on October 15 with its theme as: "Sustainable infrastructure, services and social protection for gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls"
- Global Handwashing Day observed on October 15 with its theme as: "Clean Hands- a recipe for health"
- Indian parliamentary delegation participates in the meeting of Asia pacific geopolitical group of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Geneva
- Indian-American Professor Abhay Ashtekar wins Einstein Prize conferred by the American Physical Society (APS)
- Bengali movie "Mayurakshi" wins Best Feature Film Award at Singapore South Asian International Film Festival
- Main border crossing between Jordan and war-torn Syria reopens after a three year closure
- Opposition alliance led by deposed premier Nawaz Sharif's PML-N gains 5 more parliamentary seats in by-polls, reducing the ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party's margin in National Assembly
- China launches twin BeiDou-3 navigation satellites into space to strengthen its satellite navigation network

Sports

- Patrick Baumann, the Secretary General of the International Basketball Federation (FIBA), dies in Buenos Aires at 51

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- Former chief selector of Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) Sanath Jayasuriya charged by ICC for breaching its anti-corruption code
- Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires: Indian men's hockey team win silver after losing 2-4 to Malaysia in final, women's hockey team win silver after 1-3 defeat loss to Argentina in final

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 17, 2018

India

- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman meets UAE's Minister of State for Defence Affairs Mohammed Ahmed Al Bowardi in New Delhi
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj meets her Tanzanian counterpart Augustine P. Mahiga in New Delhi
- A victim of child sexual abuse can file a complaint at any time irrespective of his/her present age: WCD Ministry
- launches 'Swasth Bharat Yatra' national campaign to sensitise people about eating safe food
- Uttar Pradesh cabinet approves proposal to rename Allahabad as Prayagraj
- QS Quacquarelli Symonds releases its first standalone ranking of India's higher education institutions; IIT-Bombay tops the list

Economy & Corporate

- India attracted $22 billion of FDI flows in the first half of 2018: Investment Trends Monitor report of UNCTAD
- RBI releases guidelines to facilitate payments among different mobile wallets
- Govt hikes General Provident Fund interest rate to 8% for Oct-Dec quarter
- CVC shares report on top 100 bank frauds with RBI, ED and CBI
- Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) lists its bonds on debt market platform of the NSE

World

- World Food Day observed on October 16 with its theme as: 'Our actions are our future – A zero hunger world by 2030 is possible'
- Paul Allen, who co-founded Microsoft with Bill Gates, dies of cancer at 65
- Minister of Railways and Coal Piyush Goyal wins University of Pennsylvania's Carnot Prize for his leadership in reforming India's power sector

Sports

- Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires: India's Suraj Panwar wins silver medal in Men's 5000m Race Walk event

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 18, 2018

India

- MJ Akbar resigns as the Minister of State (MoS) for External Affairs
- Navy concludes trials of the Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) that can rescue stranded personnel from a disabled submarine
- Armies of India and China to organise annual bilateral military exercise 'Hand in Hand' in December
- Rajasthan: BJP MLA Manvendra Singh joins Congress
- Goa: Two Congress MLAs Subhash Shirodkar and Dayanand Sopte join BJP
- CSIR develops affordable Water Disinfection System "OneerTM"
- NITI Aayog launches guidelines for Public-Private Partnership (PPP) in treatment of non-communicable diseases

Economy & Corporate

- Central Vigilance Commission hands over its Analysis Report on "Top 100 Bank Frauds" to Union Minister Jitendra Singh
- Welspun Group Chairman Balkrishan Goenka assumes charge as the President of industry chamber Assocham
- Minister of Railways and Coal Piyush Goyal wins University of Pennsylvania's Carnot Prize for his leadership in reforming India's power sector

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World

- 12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Brussels on October 18-19; theme: 'Global Partners for Global Challenges'
- US tops 2018 Global Competitiveness Index of World Economic Forum; India 58th among 140 economies
- Northern Irish writer Anna Burns wins 2018 Man Booker Prize for 'Milkman'
- Canada becomes 2nd country after Uruguay to legalise possession and use of recreational cannabis
- EU, Bill Gates launch $115mn clean energy fund called Breakthrough Energy Europe (BEE)
- Ralph Fiennes to receive European Achievement in World Cinema Award at the European Film Awards 2018
- United States announces withdrawal from UN's Universal Postal Union
- International Day for the Eradication of Poverty observed on October 17; theme: "Coming together with those furthest behind to build an inclusive world of universal respect for human rights and dignity"
- International Sawfish Day observed on October 17

Sports

- Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires: Praveen Chitravel wins bronze medal in Men's Triple Jump

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 19, 2018

India

- Armies of India and Japan to hold two-week-long joint exercise 'Dharma Guardian' from November 1 in Mizoram
- Sri Lankan PM Ranil Wickremesinghe arrives in New Delhi on 3-day official visit to India
- Former UP and Uttarakhand CM Narayan Datt Tiwari of Congress dies in New Delhi at 93
- After Katrani rice, Jardalu mango and Magahi paan (betel vine), Bihar's Shahi litchi gets Geographical Indication (GI) tag
- North Central Railways (NCR) launches two mobile apps, 'NCR RASTA' and 'Yatri RASTA', for its employees and passengers, respectively, for locating assets and stations
- National Commission for Women launches dedicated e-mail address to report instances of sexual harassment at workplace
- New Ambassadors present credentials to President¬ –– Jasem Ibrahem Al-Najem: Kuwait, Francois Delhaye: Belgium, Carlos Jose Pereira Marques: Portugal & Ung Sean: Cambodia
- 4th International Buddhist Peace Conference held in Nagpur

Economy & Corporate

- World Steel Association (worldsteel) elects JSW Steel CMD Sajjan Jindal as its Treasurer
- Samsung launches flagship Galaxy Tab S4 for Rs 57,900 in India
- Merchandise Trade deficit during April-September 2018 at USD 94.32 billion

World

- Bhutan elections: Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT) wins 30/47 seats in National Assembly, the lower house of the parliament
- US-based Breakthrough Prize Foundation announces 9 recipients of the 2019 Breakthrough Prize in fundamental physics, life sciences and mathematics
- Legendary Turkish photographer Ara Guler dies in Istanbul aged 90
- UN's Syria envoy Staffan de Mistura to step down at the end of November
- Livestock — largely cattle raised for meat and milk — responsible for 14.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions-UN Food and Agriculture Organisation
- MoS for HRD Satya Pal Singh participates in 7th Meeting of Education Ministers of SCO Member States held in Astana, Kazakhstan

Sports

- Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires: India return with 3 gold, 9 silver and 1 bronze
- Veteran commentator and cricket statistician Vijayan Bala launches book "Indian Sports:

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Conversations and Reflections"

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 20, 2018

India

- Manipur: Indian Army hands over 15 trained horses to Myanmar Army at Moreh town
- Senior advocate Maninder Singh resigns from his post of Additional Solicitor General
- Odia filmmaker Amiya Ranjan Patnaik dies in New Delhi at 63

Economy & Corporate

- India foreign exchange reserves plunge by USD 5.143 billion to USD 394.465 billion during the week to October 12
- RBI against separate regulator for payments system; issues dissent note
- RBI eases liquidity norms for NBFCs which do not finance infrastructure

World

- Indian Vice President attends 12th ASEM Summit with the theme "Global Partners for Global Challenges", in Brussels
- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman attends 12th ADMM-Plus (ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting–Plus) in Singapore
- Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT) party to form new government in Bhutan after winning 30 seats in 47-member National Assembly
- United States merges the US Embassy and US Consulate General in Jerusalem into a single diplomatic mission
- Indian-American Minal Patel Davis honoured with 'Presidential Medal for Combating Human Trafficking'

Sports

- Pakistan (282/10, 400/9 declared) beat Australia (145/10, 164/9) by 374 runs in 2nd test at Abu Dhabi; win 2-match series 1-0
- Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires: Russia finish on top with 29 gold, 18 silver and 12 bronze medals; Japan 2nd and China 3rd

Current Affairs News Headlines: October 21, 2018

India

- PM Modi meets Sri Lankan PM Ranil Wickremesinghe in New Delhi
- Four unnamed Himalayan peaks near Gangotri glacier in 6100-6500 m height range named after former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee
- Hindustani classical music instrumentalist Pandit Vishwa Mohan Bhatt selected for Ustad Chand Khan Lifetime Achievement Award given by Sursagar Society of Dilli Gharana
- J&K: BJP emerges as a clear winner in the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) elections getting 43 out of 75 seats
- Karnataka: Lingayat seer Siddalinga Swami dies in Gadag at 69
- Kerala: Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) MLA P. B. Abdul Razak dies in Kasargod at 63

Economy & Corporate

- Nissan Motor India launches sport utility vehicle (SUV) Kicks

World

- Europe and Japan jointly send BepiColombo spacecraft on 7-year journey to Mercury
- Saudi Arabia admits, dissident journalist Jamal Khashoggi killed inside its consulate in Istanbul on October 2
- China's amphibious aircraft AG600, claimed by Beijing as the world's largest, carried out its first take-off and landing on water
- World's longest sea bridge of 55 km length connecting Hong Kong and Zhuhai in Macao to open for traffic on October 24

Sports

- Xi'an international marathon in China: Liyew Kebede of Ethiopia wins men's race in 2:16:40,

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Bayartsogt Munkhzaya of Mongolia wins women's race in 2:31:01
- Former Asian Football Confederation (AFC) general secretary Peter Velappan dies in Kuala Lumpur at the age of 83
- Mumbai (180/6 in 35) beat Delhi (177/10 in 45.4) by 4 wickets to win Vijay Hazare Trophy cricket title at M. Chinnaswamy stadium in Bengaluru

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 22, 2018

India

- National Police Memorial inaugurated by PM in New Delhi on Police Commemoration Day (October 22)
- –National Police Commemoration Day marks martyrdom of 10 policemen killed in an ambush by Chinese troops in 1959 in Hot Spring area of Ladakh
- –75th anniversary of formation of Azad Hind Government by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose celebrated
- –PM announces the launch of an award named after Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to honour those involved in disaster response operations
- –Six-day 27th Fusion Energy Conference being organised by IAEA in Gandhinagar from October 22 to 26
- –Telugu film actor Vizag Prasad dies in Hyderabad at 75
- –US-based Dalit writer Sujatha Gidla wins Shakti Bhatt Prize for "Ants Among Elephants: An Untouchable Family and the Making of Modern India"

Economy & Corporate

- –Russia's state atomic energy corporation Rosatom ships equipment for Kudankulam nuclear plant unit 4 to India

World

- –US to pull out of the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty signed with Russia in 1987
- –Former Dutch Prime Minister Wim Kok dies at 80
- –Danny Leiner, best known for directing films like "Dude, Where's My Car" and "Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle", dies at 57

Sports

- –Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei beats Saina Nehwal 13-21, 21-13, 21-13, 13-21, 21-6 in final to win women's singles title at Denmark Open Badminton
- –Denmark Open Badminton: Tai Tzu Ying of Taiwan defeats Saina Nehwal in women's singles final
- –Airtel Delhi Half Marathon: Ethiopians Tsehay Gemechu (Women's) and Andamalak Belihu (Men's) win titles
- –India (326/2 in 42.1) beat West Indies (322/8 in 50) by 8 wickets in 1st ODI at Guwahati
- –Spanish rider Marc Marquez (Repsol Honda) wins his 7th MotoGP World Championship title
- –India beats Pakistan 3-1 at the Asian Champions Trophy hockey tournament in Muscat
- –Daria Kasatkina wins women's singles title at Kremlin Cup tennis in Moscow

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 23, 2018

- 19th Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for Excellence in Public Administration presented to eminent jurist Fali S. Nariman in New Delhi
- President inaugurates 'Vishwa Shanti Ahimsa Sammelan' organised by the Bhagwan Rishabhdev Murti Nirmaan Samiti, in Satana Taluka, Maharashtra; presents first international 'Bhagwan Rishabhdev Award' to Teerthanker Mahaveer University, Moradabad (UP)
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj meets Foreign Minister of Croatia Marija Pejčinović Burić in New Delhi
- India's Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale meets Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi in Nay Pyi Taw
- India, Myanmar sign MoU on operationalisation of Sittwe Port
- UN-backed Green Climate Fund approves USD 43.4 million grant for enhancing climate resilience

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people living in coastal regions of AP, Maharashtra and Odisha
- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and China's Minister of Public Security Zhao Kezhi, co-chair the first India-China High-Level meeting on Bilateral Security Cooperation in Delhi
- Suresh Nambath appointed as next Editor of The Hindu

Economy & Corporate

- Direct Tax-GDP ratio was 5.98% in 2017-18: CBDT
- India has 81,000 individuals with disclosed income of above Rs 1 crore per annum: CBDT
- The Insolvency Law Committee, set up to recommend amendments to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code of India 2016, submits its 2nd report to the government
- India 2nd largest insurance gap (underinsurance) in the world of USD 27 billion after China: Lloyd's of London
- Hero MotoCorp launches scooter Destini 125 for Rs. 54,500

World

- UAE and USA holding two-week military exercise 'Iron Magic 19' near Dubai
- Russia and Pakistan holding military exercise 'Druzhba-III' in Pakistan
- Paul Biya, who has ruled Cameroon since 1982, wins presidential election
- Norwegian resistance fighter Joachim Ronneberg, who sabotaged Nazi Germany's nuclear weapons project, dies at 99
- Japan's Osamu Shimomura, who won 2008 Nobel Prize in Chemistry, dies at 90
- Earl Bakken, co-founder of medical device company Medtronic, dies in Hawaii at 94

Sports

- China Open Badminton: Indonesia's Anthony Ginting beats Japan's Kento Momota in final 23-21, 21-19 to win Men's Singles title
- Ferrari's Kimi Raikkonen wins Formula 1 US Grand Prix at Austin

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 24, 2018

India

- SC fixes 2-hour period (8 PM-10 PM) for bursting firecrackers on festivals, bans online sales
- Foreigners applying for Indian visa will now have to declare their criminal records
- Delhi High Court directs CBI to maintain status quo on the criminal proceedings initiated against its special director Rakesh Asthana, who has challenged the FIR lodged against him on bribery allegations
- SC refers to a five-judge Constitution Bench the PIL seeking collegium-like system for selection of the CEC and the ECs
- International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs (STAPCOR–2018) being held at Bangaram Island of of Lakshadweep from October 22 to 24

Economy & Corporate

- IBBI notifies the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Mechanism for Issuing Regulations) Regulations, 2018
- US Govt.'s Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) signs USD 125 million commitment with Greater Pacific Capital (GPC) to support growth capital to small and medium-sized enterprises in India
- Invest India, the country's investment promotion body, wins UN Award for excellence in promoting investments in sustainable development at the World Investment Forum, Geneva

World

- The first trilateral meeting between India, Afghanistan and Iran of the Coordination Council of the Chabahar Agreement held in Tehran
- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman meets her Indonesian counterpart Gen (Retd) Ryamizard Rycudu in Jakarta
- India had the most outward migrants in 2017 (17 million), followed by China (10 million) and Bangladesh (7.5 million): 'Asian Economic Integration Report 2018' of ADB

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- Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh meets Israeli President Reuven Rivlin in Jerusalem
- UNICEF Ambassador for South Asia Sachin Tendulkar gives away prizes to the winners of South Asia Regional WASH innovation in Thimphu (October 22)
- China opens world's longest sea bridge of 55 km linking Hong Kong, Macau and Zhuhai (mainland China)
- Vietnam's National Assembly (Parliament) elects Communist Party General Secretary Nguyen Phu Trong as President

Sports

- World Wrestling Championship in Budapest: India's Bajrang Punia wins silver in Men's 65 kg Freestyle

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 25, 2018

India

- Alok Kumar Verma and Rakesh Asthana divested of their roles as Director and Special Director of CBI respectively; Joint Director M. Nageshwar Rao appointed Interim Director
- PM Modi awarded Seoul Peace Prize by South Korean government for his contribution to international cooperation and fostering global economic growth.
- A Group of Ministers, headed by Home Minister Rajnath Singh, constituted by govt. to strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks to deal with and prevent sexual harassment at workplace
- Cabinet approves National Monitoring Framework on Sustainable Development Goals
- Only Bharat Stage VI compliant vehicles to be sold from April 2020: SC
- to set up Indian Institutes of Skills (IIS) at different locations in the country
- Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) to supply Barak 8 LR-SAM Air and Missile Defence Systems to Indian Navy for USD 777 million
- Reliance Naval and Engineering (RNEL) launches training ship ICGS Varuna for the Indian Coast Guard (ICG)
- Saurabh Kumar appointed India's ambassador to Myanmar
- PM launches "Main Nahin Hum" portal and app for IT professionals on the theme "Self4Society"
- Global Agriculture Leadership Summit 2018 in New Delhi on October 24-25; theme: 'Connecting Farmers to Market'

Economy & Corporate

- CCEA approves creation of special Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)
- CCEA approves increase in supervisory visit charges for ASHA Facilitators from Rs. 250/-per visit to Rs. 300/- per visit
- Cabinet approves appointment of Adjudicating Authority and establishment of Appellate Tribunal under Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, 1988
- China lifts ban on import of Indian rapeseed meal, a protein source used in animal feed
- Zydus Wellness Ltd and Cadila Healthcare Ltd to jointly buy the India business of Kraft Heinz Co for $627.18 million

World

- United Nations Day celebrated on October 24 with its theme as 'Traditions of Peace and Non-violence'
- Pakistan secures loans up to USD 6 billion from Saudi Arabia on the sidelines of the ongoing Future Investment Initiative conference in Riyadh
- Indonesia woman delivers a baby girl on board an Etihad Airways flight from Abu Dhabi to Jakarta; flight diverted to Mumbai to tackle the medical emergency

Sports

- 2nd ODI between India 321/6 (50) and West Indies 321/7 (50) at ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium in Visakhapatnam ends in tie; Virat Kohli (157) crosses 10000 runs in ODIs

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Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 26, 2018

India

- Alok Verma remains CBI Director, Asthana Special Director; M. Nageshwar Rao given only interim charge: CBI
- Malayalam author Benyamin wins Rs. 25 lakh JCB Prize for literature for his novel "Jasmine Days"
- President dismisses plea to disqualify 27 MLAs of AAP in Delhi for allegedly holding office-of-profit
- authorises 16 collectors in 7 states to register as Indian citizens the members of minority community from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh
- 10th Nuclear Energy Conclave organised in New Delhi on the theme: 'Nuclear Power-Towards a Clean & Base Load Energy'
- Winners of Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony announced: 2014: Rajkumar Singhajit Singh (Manipuri dancer); 2015: Chhayanaut (a cultural organization of Bangladesh); 2016: Ram Vanji Sutar (Sculptor)
- HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar launches web portals for two schemes — IMPRESS (Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences) and SPARC (Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration) — with an aim to build an ecosystem of research in educational institutions.
- India wins Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management Award, 2018
- India, Bangladesh sign agreements for enhancing inland and coastal waterways connectivity

Economy & Corporate

- Fiscal deficit for the April-September period at 95.3% of the full year's target of Rs 6.24 lakh crore
- IDFC Bank to be renamed as IDFC First Bank after merging with NBFC Capital First
- India Mobile Congress in New Delhi from Oct 25 to 27 with its theme as: New Digital Horizons. Connect. Create. Innovate."
- Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board to issue 'masala bonds' worth Rs 5,000 crore to mobilise funds for development works

World

- Sarod maestro Amjad Ali Khan and his sons perform at the UN Day Concert in New York on Oct 24
- European Parliament awards Sakharov Human Rights Prize to Ukrainian filmmaker Oleg Sentsov jailed in Russia
- NATO holding Trident Juncture military exercise in Norway from Oct 25 to Nov 7
- Ethiopia: Parliament elects Sahle-Work Zewde as country's first female President
- Iraq: Adel Abdul Mahdi sworn in as new PM
- Rodrigo Rato, who was MD of IMF in 2004-07, starts serving 4.5 year sentence for corruption in Spain
- National University of Singapore tops ranking of Asia's 500 best universities by QS Quacquarelli Symonds
- North Korea, South Korea and the UN finish withdrawing firearms from border village Panmunjom
- World Development Information Day & World Polio Day observed on October 24

Sports

- Belgium tops FIFA rankings followed by France: India 97th

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 27, 2018

India

- SC asks CVC to complete within two weeks its inquiry into allegations against CBI Director Alok Kumar Verma; bars interim director M Nageswara Rao from taking any major policy decision
- CVC to observe Vigilance Awareness Week 2018 from Oct 29 to Nov 3; theme: 'Eradicate Corruption-Build a New India'
- First World Agriculture Prize, instituted by the Indian Council of Food and Agriculture, presented to Prof. M.S. Swaminathan in New Delhi by VP
- Earth Heroes Awards 2018 instituted by the Royal Bank of Scotland (RBS) awarded in New Delhi by VP

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- Krishi Kumbh being organised in Lucknow on Oct 26-28 with Haryana and Jharkhand as partner states and Japan and Israel as partner countries
- 5th edition of the 'Women of India National Organic Festival' being organised at IGNCA, New Delhi from Oct 26 to Nov 4
- First indigenously overhauled Su-30MKI handed over to IAF in Nashik
- Pankaj Bandyopadhyay, founding member of the Trinamool Congress (TMC), dies in Kolkata at 72

Economy & Corporate

- Rupee depreciates by 20 paise to close at 73.47 against the US dollar
- India's foreign exchange reserves declined by $942 million to $393.523 billion in the week to October 19
- BSNL signs agreement with Nokia to jointly deploy smart poles that will detect pollution levels
- Govt allows sale of 25% of actual output from captive coal mines in open market
- Export Summit organised by Confederation of Indian Industry in New Delhi
- Varun Dhawan appointed brand ambassador for Maruti Suzuki Arena showrooms

World

- 2018 UN Human Rights Prize winners: Asma Jahangir (Pakistan's late human rights activist), Rebeca Gyumi (Tanzanian activist), Joenia Wapichana (Brazil's first indigenous lawyer) and Front Line Defenders (Ireland's human rights organisation)
- Paraguay's Clara Sosa crowned Miss Grand International 2018 in Myanmar; India's adjudged the first runner-up
- Sri Lanka: Former President Mahinda Rajapaksa takes oath as new PM
- 2nd International Day of Diplomats celebrated in Brasilia on October 24

Sports

- World Wrestling Championship in Budapest: India's Pooja Dhanda wins bronze medal in women's 57kg freestyle

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 28, 2018

India

- Gujarat: Ferry service connecting Ghogha in Saurashtra and Dahej in south Gujarat through the Gulf of Cambay launched
- Chhattisgarh: 4 CRPF personnel martyred in an IED blast in Bijapur district
- Punjab: India's first gallery of robotic dinosaurs inaugurated at Pushpa Gujral Science City in Kapurthala
- IRS officer Sanjay Kumar Mishra appointed the new Director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED)
- United Nations Young Changemakers Conclave held in Mumbai

Economy & Corporate

- India Mobile Congress 2018 organised in New Delhi on October 25-27 with its theme as 'New Digital Horizons – Connect. Create. Innovate'
- Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approves upgradation of 17 Dornier Aircraft of the Indian Coast Guard for Rs 950 crore

World

- Pakistan's Supreme Court reimposes ban on broadcasting Indian films and television shows on the country's local channels
- Pakistan is responsible for three times the terror risk to humanity that Syria poses: 'Humanity at Risk – Global Terror Threat Indicant (GTTI)' study by Oxford University and Strategic Foresight Group (SFG)
- India donates $300,000 to train commanders for UN peacekeeping
- Sri Lanka: President Maithripala Sirisena suspends the parliament till November 16
- World Day for Audiovisual Heritage observed on October 27

Sports

- Tennis: Romania's Simona Halep becomes first recipient of Chris Evert WTA World No.1 Trophy

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- Cricket: India C (352/7 in 50) captained by Ajinkya Rahane beat India B led (323/10 in 46.1) by Shreyas Iyer by 29 runs to win Deodhar Trophy in Delhi
- West Indies (283/9 in 50) beat India (240/10 in 47.4) by 43 runs in 3rd ODI at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium in Pune; 5-match series level at 1-1
- India's Sourav Kothari beats Peter Gilchrist of Singapore to clinch the 2018 World Billiards Championship title at Leeds in UK

Current Affairs – NEWS HEADLINES: October 29, 2018

India

- BJP leader Madan Lal Khurana, who was CM of Delhi in 1993-96, dies at 82
- Former ISRO Chairperson G. Madhavan Nair joins BJP
- 'The Upside-Down King: Unusual Tales about Rama and Krishna' is the title of new book by Sudha Murty

Economy & Corporate

- UIDAI allows banks to use Aadhaar eKYC to authenticate beneficiaries of government subsidies and welfare schemes

World

- PM Modi meets Japan's PM Shinzo Abe at Yamanashi, Japan
- Michael D. Higgins re-elected as the President of Ireland
- African American playwright Ntozake Shange dies at 70
- US: Gunman kills 11 people in attack on Jewish synagogue in Pittsburgh

Sports

- Kenya's Abraham Kiptum sets new world best time of 58 min 18 sec for men's half-marathon in Valencia, Spain
- Ukraine's Elina Svitolina beats Sloane Stephens of US in final 3-6, 6-2, 6-2 to win Women's Singles title at the WTA Finals in Singapore; Women's Doubles title won by Timea Babos (Hungary) and Kristina Mladenovic (France)
- China's Xinyun Han beats India's Karman Kaur Thandi to win Women's Singles title at USD 25000 ITF event in Nanning
- Khalin Joshi wins Panasonic Open India tournament at the Delhi Golf Club

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 30, 2018

India

- SC prohibits plying of 15-yr old petrol, 10-yr old diesel vehicles in NCR
- Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF) organised in Jodhpur from October 24 to 28
- Autobiography of actor-producer Sanjay Khan 'The Best Mistakes Of My Life' launched
- 'Prominent Sikhs of India', authored by Dr. Prabhleen Singh and published by Panjab University, released
- Odisha Disaster Preparedness Day observed on October 29, CM Naveen Pattnaik launches early warning dissemination system (EWDS)
- Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur inaugurates Gujarat's 1st Mega Food Park in Surat district
- WCD Minister Maneka Gandhi asks NCW to set up a cell dedicated to cases related to NRI marriages
- Padma Shri awardee Urdu writer Professor Qazi Abdussattar dies in New Delhi at 85
- CSIR develops less polluting Firecrackers named – SWAS (safe water releaser), SAFAL (safe minimal aluminium) and STAR (safe thermite cracker)

Economy & Corporate

- RBI allows banks to get fire audit of currency chests done from approved agencies in case of shortage of staff at district fire offices
- Telecom Commission rechristened as Digital Communications Commission
- Japan and India conclude a Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA) of USD 75 billion
- Hitachi Payments to invest 26% in SBI Payment Services Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SBI

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- Tech Mahindra, Japan's Rakuten to set up 5G labs in Tokyo, Bengaluru
- Facebook launches Digital Literacy Library in 6 Indian languages — a collection of lessons on digital safety in Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam
- India's first engine-less semi-high speed train – "Train 18" – rolled out by the Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai

World

- India and Japan sign 6 agreements after PMs Narendra Modi and Shinzo Abe held talks in Tokyo
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj meets Emir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al-Thani in Doha
- An Indonesian Lion Air plane carrying 188 passengers and crew crashes into Java Sea 13 minutes after taking off from Jakarta
- China-France Oceanography Satellite (CFOSAT) launched to help scientists better predict dangerous cyclones and climate change
- Jair Bolsonaro elected new President of Brazil
- Bangladesh: Election Commission scraps registration of fundamentalist Jamaat-e-Islami party
- World Stroke Day observed on October 29
- IBM buys Linux operating system owner Red Hat for $34 bn

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Sports

- India (377/5 in 50) beat West Indies (153 in 36.2) by 224 runs in 4th ODI at Mumbai, take 2-1 lead in the five-match series
- Red Bull driver Max Verstappen wins Formula 1 Mexican Grand Prix at Mexico City while Ferrari drivers Sebastian Vettel and Kimi Räikkönen finished 2nd and 3rd respectively; Lewis Hamilton of Mercedes wins 2018 F1 drivers' championship
- India, Pakistan declared joint winners of Men's Asian Champions Trophy Hockey in Muscat after final cancelled due to rain
- Isle of Man Chess tournament: Poland's Radoslav Wojtaszek and Russia's Alina Kashlinskaya win Men's and Women's titles respectively

Current Affairs – News Headlines: October 31, 2018

India

- PM Modi meets Italy's PM Giuseppe Conte in New Delhi
- India-Italy Technology Summit organised by the DST in partnership with CII in New Delhi
- Chhattisgarh: 2 police personnel, Doordarshan cameraman killed in Naxal attack in Dantewada district
- HC Chief Justices Hemant Gupta, Ajay Rastogi, M R Shah and R Subhash Reddy recommended for elevation to Supreme Court by SC Collegium
- Board members of United States India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) meet PM Modi in New Delhi
- Navy ship INS Tarangini returns to Kochi after 7-month voyage covering 15 ports in 13 nations around the world
- SC allows southern states to choose the time for bursting firecrackers during Diwali subject to the limit of two hours
- Odisha Govt. launches 'Soura Jalanidhi' scheme to increase use of solar energy in irrigating land
- Odisha: Congress MLA Krushna Chandra Sagaria resigns from the State Assembly
- Assam: 5th National Summit: Good & Replicable Practices and Innovation in Public Healthcare Systems in India being held at Kaziranga from Oct 30 to Nov 1

Economy & Corporate

- 19th meeting of Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) held under Chairmanship of Finance Minister in New Delhi
- Country's first container vessel movement on waterways begins with the transport of container cargo of PepsiCo from Kolkata to Varanasi on vessel MV Rabindranath Tagore

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- Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry approves construction of 215,000 affordable houses for the poor in 6 states under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (Urban)
- Foundation for the country's largest dry dock laid at Cochin Shipyard by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan

World

- NASA's Parker Solar Probe breaks record, reaches closest ever to the sun

Sports

- 51st Governing Body Meeting of the Sports Authority of India held in New Delhi

October 16, 2018

Music composer Khayyam wins Hridaynath Award for Lifetime Achievement

Veteran composer, lyricist, writer and national award winning music director Mohammed Zahur Khayyam Hashmi, famously known as Khayya was 2018 Hridaynath Award for Lifetime Achievement. The award will be conferred by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Mumbai. This year, the award ceremony coincides with81st birthday of Hridaynath Mangeshkar after whom award is named.

Khayyam

He had started his music career in Ludhiana in 1943 at age of 17. Later, he had teamed up as Sharma of music-director duo 'Sharmaji-Varmaji' to compose music for films like "Heer Ranjha" (1948) and others. His earliest notable solo works were for Footpath (1953), "Biwi" and "Phir Subah Hogi" (1958). The 1961 blockbuster "Shola Aur Shabnam" had firmly established Khayyam as top-notch music director followed by films with superhit music like Mohabbat Isko Kehta Hain (1965) and Aakhri Khat (1966). Later, he composed music for films like "Kabhi Kabhi" (1976), "Trishul" (1978), "Noorie" (1979), "Thodisi Bewafai" (1980), "Dard" and "Ahista Ahista" (1981), "Dil, Akhir Dil Hai" and "Bazaar"(1982), "Razia Sultan" (1983). In 1981, he composed music for the sensitive blockbuster film "Umrao Jaan", which is considered as jewel in crown of Khayyam's compositions for which he bagged National Award and also Filmfare Award and others.

Hridaynath Mangeshkar Award

The award was established in 2011 by Mumbai-based socio-cultural organisation Hridayesh Art in honour of music composer and singer Hridaynath Mangeskar. It felicitates and recognises successful individuals across country from various walks of life. It carries monetary award of Rs 2 lakh and a memento.

The previous recipients of the award include eminent personalities like Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Amitabh Bachchan, Hariprasad Chaurasia, A R Rahman. Hridaynath Mangeskar is son of renowned musician Deenanath Mangeshkar and is younger brother of Indian music legends Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle.

Ask Disha: IRCTC launches AI chatbot to answer user queries

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered chatbot– Ask Disha ((Digital Interaction to Seek Help Anytime) to help its users answer various queries. The chatbot is special computer programme designed to simulate conversation with users, especially over the internet. It has gone live on IRCTC's next-gen e ticketing website and soon will be integrated on the IRCTC Rail Connect Android app.

Ask Disha

The first-of-its-kind initiative by IRCTC is aimed at facilitating accessibility by answering users' queries pertaining to various services offered to railway passengers. The chatbot is voice enabled and will support several regional languages in the near future. It will offer greatly improved and intuitive customer support by answering customer queries pertaining to all aspects of the services that IRCTC provides. Users can also ask questions to AI chatbot by visiting IRCTC website. As soon as the users start typing their queries, AI chatbot automatically starts showing some options based on typed phrases. Users can then either pick one of queries from displayed options or type in complete question if their query is not being displayed on the screen. The essential features of AskDisha include ability to quickly answer to customer queries, ability to provide round-the-clock customer support, ability to multitask, zero waiting time for query to get answered and overall ability to provide customer with stress-free experience and overall customer satisfaction.

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Foreign tourists can now visit Andaman and Nicobar Islands without any restrictions

Government has allowed foreign tourists to visit Andaman and Nicobar Islands without any restrictions. In this regard, Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has modified its earlier order which made it mandatory for foreign tourists to register with Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO) within 24 hours of their arrival.

Key Facts

The step was taken on suggestion made by Union Tourism Ministry to boost foreign tourist arrivals in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. This order follows earlier directive which allowed foreigners to visit 29 inhabited and 11 uninhabited islands in Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which were prohibited for visitors under Foreigners (Restricted Area) Order, 1963, without any restrictions.

However, citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals having their origin in these countries will continue to require Restricted Area Permit (RAP) to visit Union Territory. Moreover, separate approvals of competent authority will continue to be required for visiting reserved forests, wildlife sanctuaries and tribal reserves as at present. Ministry of Tourism has also proposed that travel restrictions be removed from border areas in Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh.

International Day of Rural Women: October 15

The International Day of Rural Women is observed every year on October 15 to recognize the crucial role and contribution of rural women. The 2018 theme of the day was "Sustainable infrastructure, services and social protection for gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls".

The observance of day highlights role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women in enhancing rural and agricultural development, eradicating rural poverty and improving food security and ensuring sustainability of rural households and communities, improving rural livelihoods and overall wellbeing.

Background

The International Day of Rural Women was instituted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) by passing resolution 62/136 in December 2007. It was first observed on15 October 2008. According to UN, empowerment of rural women is pre-requisite for fulfilling vision of the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) which aims at ending poverty and hunger, achieve food security and empower all women and girls.

Rural women, make up over a quarter of the total world population. Majority of them depend on natural resources and agriculture for their livelihood. They produce, prepare and process much of the food available, thereby giving them primary responsibility for food security. Thus, International Day of Rural Women recognises contribution and significant role played by these rural women in food security and poverty elevation.

Government launches Youth Road Safety Learners Licence Programme

Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has launched Youth Road Safety Learners Licence programme in New Delhi today. It is Public–private partnership (PPP) initiative in collaboration with Diageo India and Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE).

Youth Road Safety Learners Licence Programme

It is first-of-its-kind training programme in the country. It attempts to bring formal and structured training program for young, first-time drivers as they apply for learner's license. Its long-term objective is at improving road safety awareness amongst young adults by inculcating behavioural change and creating awareness about responsible driving habits.

This programme will help Government to achieve its target of reducing road accidents by 50% by 2020. It will help to main-stream road safety in formal education system. The programme has immersive and interactive module led by senior faculty members of IRTE covering varied aspects of responsible driving including defensive driving, ill effects of driving under influence of alcohol, speeding and wearing of helmets spread over two days..

Background

India accounts for 12.5% (over 1.45 lakh fatalities a year) of global road accidents, with one road accident occurring every four minutes. Alarmingly, 72% victims involved in such road mishaps are between age

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groups of 15-44 years with speeding, reckless and drunk driving being the top reason accounting for 1.5% of road traffic accidents and 4.6% of fatalities.

October 17, 2018

October 17: International Day for the Eradication of Poverty

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) is observed every year on October 17 to raise people's awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution worldwide, particularly in developing countries. The 2018 theme was 'Coming together with those furthest behind to build an inclusive world of universal respect for human rights and dignity'.

This year's significance

This year marks 25th anniversary of institution of this day, through declaration by UN General Assembly (UNGA) in its resolution 47/196 in December 1992. This year also marks the 30th anniversary of Call to Action by Father Joseph Wresinski which inspired observance of October 17 as World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty and recognition of day by UN as International Day for the Eradication of Poverty. This year also marks 70th anniversary of proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Background

The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) was instituted by UNGA by adopting a resolution on 22 December 1992 to promote awareness among people to eradicate poverty and destitution around the world particularly in developing countries. It was observed for the first time in 1993.

RBI issues guidelines for facilitating money transfer among e-wallets

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued guidelines for interoperability among prepaid instruments (PPI) such as e-wallets. Inter-operability is technical compatibility that enables payment system to be used in conjunction with other payment systems.

RBI Guidelines

The guidelines are aimed at promoting money transfer between e-wallets and digital transactions. They also elaborate requirements for achieving interoperability for mobile wallets, cards and norms for customer protection and grievance redressal.

The interoperability will be achieved in phased manner i.e. initially inter-operability of PPIs issued in form of wallets through UPI, and later between wallets and bank accounts through UPI, and interoperability for PPIs issued in form of cards through card networks.

The interoperability between mobile wallets and between bank accounts and e-wallets will be enabled through Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system. It will be facilitated to all KYC-compliant PPI accounts and entire acceptance infrastructure.

In case where PPIs are issued in form of cards, then cards will be affiliated to authorised card networks. PPI issuers must have board approved policy for achieving PPI inter-operability. This will allow PPI issuers, system providers and system participants in different systems to undertake, clear and settle payment transactions across systems without participating in multiple systems. Card networks are also allowed to onboard PPI issuers to join their network. Non-bank PPI issuers are permitted to participate as members/associate members of authorised card networks.

Significance

The interoperability of PPIs will allow transfer from one wallet to another through UPI. It will also allow transfer from wallets to bank also through UPI. Moreover, wallet companies can now issue cards and for this they don't need to partner with banks for UPI and card issuance. It will thus boost digital payments, improve financial penetration in long term.

World Food Day: October 16

The World Food Day is observed globally on 16 October to mark foundation of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations in 1945. It is observed as day of action dedicated to tackling global hunger and aims to raise public awareness about hunger challenges and encourage people around world to take action in fight against hunger. It also shows commitment to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 – to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030. Events organised to celebrate this day promotes worldwide awareness and action for those who suffer from hunger and for need to ensure food security and

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nutritious diets for all. The theme for this year was: '*Our actions are our future – A zero hunger world by 2030 is possible*'.

Background

World Food Day was instituted in November 1979 by FAO's Member Countries at its 20th General Conference of to raise awareness of issues behind poverty and hunger. The day was observed for the first time it on 16 October 1981 and idea of celebrating the WFD worldwide was mooted by Hungarian Delegation to FAO.

Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)

FAO is specialised agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Its parent organization is UN Economic and Social Council (UNESC). It is neutral forum serving both developed and developing countries where all nations meet as equals to negotiate agreements and debate policy. It was established on 16 October 1945 and its headquarters are in Rome, Italy. Its motto is "Let there be bread". It has 194 member states, along with the European Union (member organization). FAO meet the demands posed by major global trends in agricultural development and challenges faced by member nations. It helps countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices, ensuring good nutrition and food security for all.

Government launches Swasth Bharat Yatra national campaign for food safety

The Union Government launched national campaign 'Swasth Bharat Yatra' on occasion of World Food Day (observed on 16 October) to sensitise people about eating safe food and be healthy. The campaign has been launched in association with states and led by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

Swasth Bharat Yatra national campaign

Under it, pan-India cycle rally is being organized to create consumer awareness about eating safe and nutritious food for becoming healthy and combating food adulteration. . In this rally, about 7,500 cyclists are expected to participate in over 18,000 km travelling across six tracks through almost every state and UT over 100 days to propagate a powerful message 'Eat Right India'. The cyclathon will culminate in the national capital on January 27, 2019. This campaign will not only mobilise masses but also create large pool of local community to sustain this movement.

ICFRE inks two MoUs to launch Prakriti programme

Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun has signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) to launch 'Prakriti' programme. The two MoUs have been signed for a period of 10 years.

MoUs signed

These MoUs aim to make Indian youth more sensitive towards national and global issues of environment and help them become responsible citizens. It also seeks to mobilise cadre of youth for raising a peoples' movement, which is committed to the conservation of forest and environment. The collaboration forged through these MoUs will enable transfer of knowledge to students and teachers of KVS and NVS on environment, forest, environmental services and contemporary areas of forestry research through lectures and interactive sessions by ICFRE scientists.

Prakriti programme

The main objective of Prakriti programme is to provide platform for school children to learn practical skills towards sustainable use of resources. It also aims to promote awareness about forests and environment and stimulate interest among students of KVS and NVS in maintaining balanced environment. It also seeks to provide students with skills that reflect care and protection towards forests, environment and society.

Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE)

It is autonomous organization under Ministry of Environment and Forests. It is headquartered in Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Its functions are to conduct and promote forestry research, transfer technologies developed to states of India and other user agencies and to impart forestry education. It has 9 research institutes and 4 advanced centres to cater to research needs of different bio-geographical regions.

October 18, 2018

Global Hunger Index 2018: Key Findings

The 2018 global hunger index is prepared by Welthungerhilfe together with Concern Worldwide. The

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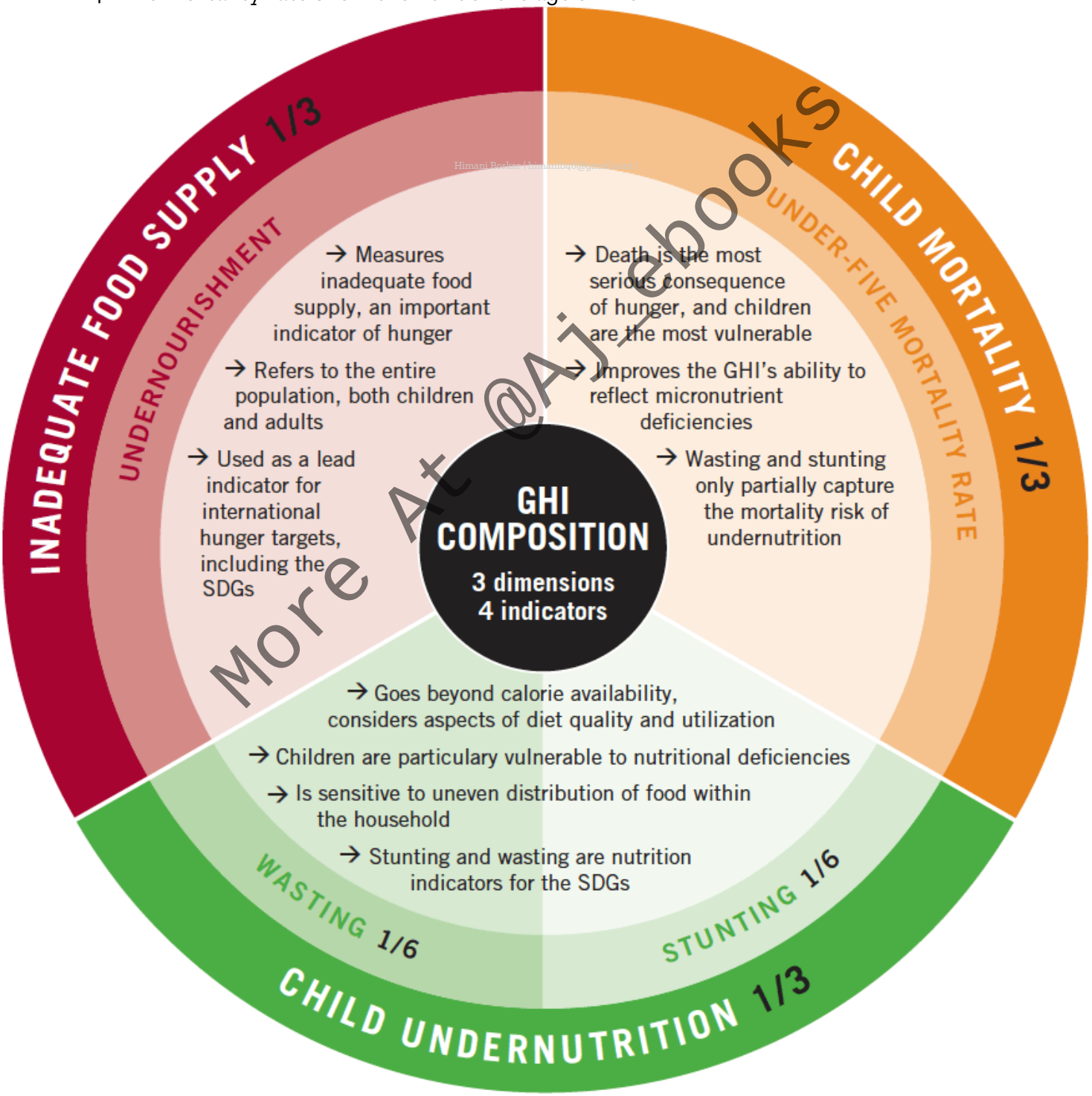
International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) has stepped aside from its involvement in the report.

Calculation of the Index:

- The Index ranks countries on a 100-point scale, with 0 being the best score (no hunger) and 100 being the worst.
- Values from 0 to 9.9 reflects low hunger, values from 10.0 to 19.9 reflects moderate hunger, values from 20.0 to 34.9 reflects serious hunger, values from 35.0 to 49.9 reflects alarming hunger, and values of 50.0 or more reflects extremely alarming hunger levels.
- The index is based on the following four parameters
    1. The proportion of the undernourished as a percentage of the population
    2. The proportion of children under the age of five suffering from wasting;
    3. The proportion of children under the age of five suffering from stunting;
    4. The mortality rate of children under the age of five.



Findings of the 2018 report

India has been ranked at the 103rd position among 119 countries. India is among the 45 countries that

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have "serious levels o f hunger.

- India is ranked below many neighbouring countries, including China (25th spot), Nepal (72), Myanmar (68), Sri Lanka (67) and Bangladesh (86). GHI scores for South Asia and Africa south of the Sahara reflect serious levels of hunger.
- The world has made gradual, long-term progress in reducing overall hunger, but this progress has been "uneven". Areas of severe hunger and undernutrition stubbornly persist reflecting human misery for millions.
- Around 124 million people suffer acute hunger in the world which is a striking increase from 80 million two years ago.
- The reality of hunger and undernutrition continues to have a massive impact on the next generation.

About 151 million children are stunted and 51 million children are wasted across the globe.

October 19, 2018

Former UP and Uttarakhand CM Narayan Datt Tiwari passes away

Former Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand Chief Minister Narayan Dutt Tiwari passed away in New Delhi. He was 93-year-old. He is only Politician who has served as CM of two states. He was known as Vikas Purush and was instrumental in developing the industrial sector in Uttarakhand.

Narayan Dutt Tiwari

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Born on October 18, 1925 in Baluti, United Provinces in then British India (now in Uttarakhand, India). He was three-time CM of Uttar Pradesh and was first elected CM of Uttarakhand as well. His first stint as UP CM was from January 1976 to April 1977 and then again from August 1984 to September 1985 and from June 1988 to December 1988. He was elected to Lok Sabha in 1980 and Rajya Sabha in 1985.

He was also Union minister and had held a variety of portfolios. He was Union Minister of External Affairs in late Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet and thereafter he became Minister for Finance and Commerce and held the ministry till June 1988. He was Chief Minister of Uttarakhand from 2002 to 2007 (after Uttarakhand was carved out of UP in November 2000). He also had served as Governor of Andhra Pradesh from 2007 to 2009.

He was first elected to UP Assembly on Praja Samajwadi Party ticket from Nainital in 1952 and 1957. He joined Congress in 1963 and elected to UP Assembly from Kashipur in 1965. He was first president of Youth Congress in 1969. He had floated the All India Indira Congress (Tiwari) in 1995 along with Arjun Singh after he had left Congress. He also had won the Lok Sabha polls in 1996 and 1999.

PM Narendra Modi chairs 6th meeting of NDMA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired sixth meeting of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) at New Delhi. In this meeting, he reviewed activities of NDMA to effectively manage and respond to disasters affecting country. He also reviewed ongoing projects undertaken by NDMA. During this meeting, he emphasized on need for better coordination between various stakeholders and undertake more joint exercises to bring about effective response to save life and property. He also stressed upon need to bring in global expertise in the field of disaster management.

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)

It is a statutory body under the aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). It was established in 2009 and its provisions are envisaged in Disaster Management Act, 2005. Its mandate is to coordinate the response to natural or man-made disasters and capacity-building in case of disaster resiliency and crisis response. It is also responsible for framing policies, laying down guidelines and best-practices and coordinating with State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) to ensure a holistic and distributed approach to disaster management. It is governed by 9 member board chaired by Prime Minister of India (thus, he is ex-officio chairman of NDMA).

NCR RASTA and Yatri RASTA: North Central Railways launches two mobile apps

The 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.

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Key Facts

Both these apps are aimed at helping to fulfil twin objectives of better passenger service and asset maintenance by using cutting-edge technology and for handling emergencies.

NCR RASTA app: It is for use of railway officers and staff and has exact mapping of all railway assets. It will enable railway staff to reach desired asset using Google Navigation in case of any emergency.

Yatri RASTA app: It will allow general public to locate railway stations easily. It is already available for smartphones running on Android and can be downloaded free of cost from Google Play Store.

North Central Railway (NCR)

NCR is one of the seventeen railway zones in India. It is headquartered at Allahabad and comprises three divisions Allahabad, Jhansi and Agra .It is known as Workhorse of Indian Railways and is also referred as heartbeat of Indian Railways. It spans over parts of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh with about 3062 route km. of Broad Gauge comprising predominately, double line-electrified sections defining sides and diagonals of Golden Quadrilateral. The largest railway station in NCR is Kanpur Central.

Dharma Guardian: First India, Japan joint military exercise to be held in Mizoram

The first joint military exercise named "Dharma Guardian" between India and Japan will be held at the Army's Counter-Insurgency Warfare School at Vairengte (Mizoram) from November 1 to 14, 2018. The exercise is aimed at developing mutual understanding and respect between militaries of both countries, as also facilitate in tracking worldwide phenomenon of terrorism.

Dharma Guardian

In this exercise, Indian Army will be represented by 6/1 Gorkha Rifles, while Japanese Ground Self-Defence Force will field its 32 Infantry Regiment. The emphasis of this exercise will be on building interoperability. Armies of both countries will jointly train, plan and execute series of well-developed tactical drills for neutralization of likely threats that may be encountered in urban warfare scenario. Moreover, experts from both sides will also hold detailed discussions to share their expertise on varied operational aspects.

Comment

In recent times, India and Japan have been steadily stepping up their bilateral defence ties, with more military exchanges, training programmes and top-level visits as well as collaboration in maritime security and defence production, with eye firmly on an aggressive and expansionist China. Exercise Dharma Guardian will be another step to deepen bilateral strategic ties. Such exercise will be effective diplomatic tool to enhance overall strategic ties and military-to-military cooperation between both friendly countries.

Bihar's Shahi litchi gets Geographical Indication tag

Shahi Litchi from Bihar has received Geographical Indication (GI) tag from Chennai based Geographical Indication Registry and Intellectual Property India. The GI registration was done in name of Muzaffarpur-based Litchi Growers Association of Bihar, which had applied for the tag. Shahi Litchi which famous for its sweet, juicy, unique flavour and aroma is mostly grown in Muzaffarpur and adjoining areas of East Champaran, Vaishali, Samastipur and Begusarai districts of state. Bihar produces 40% of the litchis grown in India on 38% of the area.

Significance

The GI tag for Shahi Litchi will improve demand for fruit and reduce fear of fake and poor quality litchis. It will also help and benefit thousands of litchi growers who will gain access to more markets and get better price for their produce in the country and abroad.

Shahi Litchi is fourth agricultural product from Bihar after Katrani rice, Jardalu mango and Magahi paan (betel vine), to get GI tag. In addition to four GI tags in agricultural field, some art form from Bihar such as Madhubani painting, applique – Khatwa patch work, Sikki grass work, Sujini embroidery work and Bhagalpur silk have also been accorded GI tag under handicraft category.

Geographical Indication (GI)

GI tag is name or sign used on certain products which correspond to specific geographical location or origin. It is used for agricultural, natural and manufactured goods having special quality and established reputation. The goods and products having tag are recognised for their origin, quality and reputation and gives it required edge in global market. It also ensures that none can use their name, giving them exclusivity. The registration of GI is valid for 10 years after which it needs to be renewed. Violation of GI

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tags is punishable offence under law. The purpose of GI tag enables stakeholders to authenticate their production while earning a premium and derive an improved livelihood.

GI is covered as element of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under Paris Convention for Protection of Industrial Property. At international level, GI is governed by WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS). In India, GI tag Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection Act), 1999 governs it. This Act is administered by Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, who is also Registrar of Geographical Indications and is based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

12th ASEM Summit held in Brussels, Belgium

The 12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit was held in Brussels, Belgium. The theme of summit was 'Global Partners for Global Challenges'. It was chaired by European Council President Donald Tusk. The summit was attended by heads of state of 51 European and Asian countries, representatives of European Union and Secretary General of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). India was represented by Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu. This edition of summit has prioritised issues related to trade and investment, connectivity, sustainable development, climate change, terrorism, migration, maritime security and cyberspace.

Asia-Europe Meeting Summit (ASEM)

ASEM is informal political dialogue and cooperation forum that brings 53 entities – including 51 countries (including India) from Asia and Europe and two regional bodies European Union (EU) and ASEAN. It represents around 62.3% of the world's population, 57.2% of the global GDP and almost 60% of the world's trade.

ASEM was officially established in March 1996 at the first summit in Bangkok, Thailand. The dialogue addresses political, economic and cultural issues between the two regions. It also seeks to strengthen relationship between the two regions in a spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership. Three main pillars ASEM process are Political & Security, Economic & Financial and Social, Cultural & Educational.

NCW launches dedicated e-mail address to report instances of sexual harassment at workplace

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has come out with dedicated e-mail address (ncw.metoo@gmail.com) to report instances of sexual harassment at workplace. On receiving complaint mail, NCW will take forward complaints of sexual harassment at workplace received so that appropriate action may be taken, as per law.

Key Facts

The launch of dedicated e-mail address comes after several such complaints were made by women from various fields to NCW by women who have narrated their ordeal under the '#Metoo' movement on social media. It is also pursuance of NCW's objective of zero tolerance of sexual harassment of women at all workplaces and commitment to ensure safety and dignity of women including at all workplaces. Recently NCW had received many formal written complaints from various women about instances of sexual harassment at their workplace.

National Commission for Women (NCW)

NCW is a statutory body established under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990. It was established in January 1992 to review the constitutional and legal safeguards for women. It recommends remedial legislative measures, advise Government on all policy matters affecting women and facilitate redressal of grievances related to women.

Sajjan Jindal elected as Treasurer of World Steel Association

JSW Steel CMD Sajjan Jindal was elected as treasurer of World Steel Association (WSA). He was appointed for one-year period (2018/2019) by Board of Directors of WSA at Worldsteel General Assembly held in Toyko, Japan. The board also has appointed Tata Steel MD T V Narendran and ArcelorMittal Chief L N Mittal as its members. Andre Johannpeter, Executive VC of Gerdau S A was elected as the Chairman. YU Yong (Chairman HBIS Group) and Kosei Shindo (Representative Director, Nippon Steel and Sumitomo Metal Corporation) were elected as Vice-Chairman.

World Steel Association (WSA)

WSA is a non-profit organisation and is one of the largest industry associations in world. It was founded in July 1967 and is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium. Its members represent approximately 85% of the

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world's steel production. It includes over 160 steel producers with 9 of the 10 largest steel companies, national and regional steel industry associations, and steel research institutes.

October 20, 2018

Bhutan general elections: Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa party got majority

Dravk Nyamrup Tshogpa Party has won the recent general elections held in Bhutan. This party won 30 of the National Assembly's 47 seats. The National Assembly is the Lower House of Bhutan Parliament. This was overall third general election since democracy was adopted in Bhutan in 2008 and the first general elections held same year itself.

Key Facts

In 2018 general elections of Bhutan, Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa emerged largest single majority party by winning 30 seats, while Druk Fenasum Tsogoga got only 17 seats. Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay of ruling People's Democratic Party was defeated in this election. In this general election, there was 71% voter turnout. This poll percentage was higher than 66% in 2013. Late Tshering, President of Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa, will be next Prime Minister of Bhutan.

7th Meeting of Education Ministers of SCO Member States held in Astana, Kazakhstan

The seventh meeting of education ministers of member states of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was held in Astana, capital city of Kazakhstan. The meeting was organised with assistance of Kazakhstan Government and its Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Rector's Office of University of SCO (USCO).

Key Facts

Participants in the meeting included education ministers from India, Kazakhsta, China, Kyrgyzisthan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. India was represented by Minister of State (MoS) Human Resource Development Satyapal Singh. During the meeting, heads of delegations focused on ensuring implementation of agreements reached in June 2018 at Qingdao SCO Heads of State Council summit, with aim of further expanding bilateral and multilateral cooperation as regards exchanges of lecturers and students, joint research projects, academic visits, language studies, professional education and youth exchanges.

Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

SCO is Eurasian economic, political and security organisation headquartered in Beijing, China. The declaration on establishment of SCO was singed in Shanghai (China) in June 2001 by six founding states – Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The main objective of SCO is military cooperation between members. It also works towards intelligence-sharing, counter-terrorism operations in Central Asia. It is primarily centred on its member nations' Central Asian security-related concerns, often describing main threats it confronts as being terrorism, separatism and extremism.

The full members of the organization are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Pakistan. India and Pakistan were granted SCO membership in June 2017. Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia currently enjoy observer status of SCO. Sri Lanka, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia and Nepal are dialogue partners of SCO.

Minal Patel Davis honoured with Presidential Medal for Combating Human Trafficking

Indian-American Minal Patel Davis was honoured with Presidential Medal for Combating Human Trafficking'. She was presented with award by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for her extraordinary contribution towards combating human trafficking. It is US's highest honour in the field.

Minal Patel Davis

She is special advisor on Human Trafficking to Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner. She was appointed to this post in July 2015 and since then she has made local impact on human trafficking in America's fourth largest city. She has achieved this from policy-level perspective and by helped in advancing systems change. She is currently implementing Mayor Turner's Anti-Human Trafficking Strategic Plan, which is first comprehensive municipal response to human trafficking by US city. She was also past speaker at United Nations World Humanitarian Summit. She holds MBA from the University of Connecticut and BA from New York University.

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Singapore hosts 12th ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting and 5th ADMM-Plus

The 12th ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and 5th ADMM-Plus was held on October 19 and 20, 2018 Singapore. ADMM and ADMM-Plus serves as key Ministerial-level platforms in regional security architecture for promoting strategic dialogue and practical cooperation between ASEAN and its partners. The conferences were attended by defence ministers from India, Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and US. India was represented by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. This was second time Singapore has chaired ADMM since its establishment in 2006 and first time to chair ADMM-Plus since its establishment in 2010.

Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

ASEAN is regional intergovernmental organisation comprising 10 Southeast Asian countries, which promotes intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates economic, political, security, military, educational, and sociocultural integration. 10-member ASEAN comprise of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei and Laos. India is a full dialogue partner of the ASEAN.

ADMM-Plus

ADMM-Plus is platform for ASEAN and its eight dialogue partners to strengthen security and defence co-operation for peace, stability, and development in the region. Its objective is to promote mutual trust and confidence between defence establishments through greater dialogue and transparency. The inaugural ADMM-Plus was convened in Hanoi, Vietnam in 2010. The defence ministers then had agreed on five areas of practical cooperation, including maritime security, counter-terrorism, peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance.

US merges its embassy and Consulate General in Jerusalem into single diplomatic mission

United States has decided to merge its Consulate General with its new embassy in Israel into single diplomatic mission in Jerusalem. This decision was taken as part of US's global efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness of its operations. It also comes after US under President Donald Trump administration recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017 and moved its Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in May 2018. The consulate general in Jerusalem was top mission of US for Palestinians, who want East Jerusalem for their capital. Post this merger, US will establish new Palestinian Affairs Unit inside embassy in Jerusalem to continue reporting, outreach and programming in West Bank and Gaza as well as with Palestinians in Jerusalem.

Background

The status of Jerusalem is one of thorniest disputes between Israel and Palestinians. Palestinians, with broad international backing, seek East Jerusalem as capital of state they want to establish in occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. But, Israel regards all of city, including eastern sector it captured in 1967 Middle East war and annexed, as its eternal and indivisible capital, but this is recognized internationally.

AG600: China's first amphibious aircraft completes first water takeoff

China's first home-grown amphibious aircraft AG600 (code-named Kunlong) successfully carried out its first take-off and landing on water. It is claimed to be as the world's largest amphibious aircraft. In this maiden flight, the seaplane took off from Zhanghe Reservoir in Jingmen, Hubei's province and stayed airborne for about 15 minutes

AG600 amphibious aircraft

AG600 is third member of China's large aircraft family following large freighter Y-20 and large passenger aircraft C919. It has been developed and built by state-owned aircraft giant Aviation Industry Corporation of China. It had made its maiden flight at the coastal city at Zhuhai in December 2017.

AG600 can land and take off from water. It has wingspan of 38.8 metres. It is powered by four turboprop engines. It has been designed and built by China's state-owned manufacturer Aviation Industry Corp of China. It is capable of carrying 50 people and can stay airborne for 12 hours.

It has operational range of 4,500-km. This aircraft has military applications and also can be used for firefighting and marine rescue. Its flight capabilities put all of China's artificial island-building projects in disputed South China Sea (SCS) well within its range

Cope India air exercise: India, Japan, US planning to host joint trilateral air exercise

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India and US have agreed to elevate their bilateral 'Cope India' air exercise to trilateral format by including Japan. The next edition of this exercise is scheduled to be held in December 2018 for which final planning conference to finalise its modalities will held in Kalaikunda, West Bengal.

Key Facts

During the annual Defence Ministerial Meeting held in August 2018 between Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her Japanese counterpart Itsunori Onodera, it was agreed that Japan will send observers for the next round of Cope India exercises between India and US to be hosted by Indian Air Force.

To begin with, trilateral Cope India air exercise will be a small-level exercise involving transport aircraft. It will be scaled up in subsequent editions. Japan will be sending observers to this exercise. The three countries already are conducting trilateral naval war games under expanded Malabar naval exercise. But the level of interoperability in these exercises, both bilateral and trilateral are expected to go up after India had signed Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement with US.

Cope India

It is series of international Air Force exercises between Indian Air Force (IAF) and United States Air Force conducted on and over Indian soil. The first such exercise was conducted at IAF air force station in Gwalior from February 2004. The exercise included flight tests, practice and demonstrations as well as lectures on subjects related to aviation. The exercise was repeated in 2005, 2006, and 2009.

India's longest river bridge will be built on Brahmaputra river in Assam

India's longest river bridge with total length of 19.3 kilometers will be built on Brahmaputra river in Assam. This bridge will connect Dhubri of Assam to Fulbarani of Meghalaya. This bridge will reduce the distance between these two places by 203 kms and also travel time. At present, India's largest river bridge is Dhola-Sadia bridge, its length is 9.15 kilometers.

Key Facts

This bridge will have total length will be 19.3 kilometers and will be four-lane. Its construction will be completed by 2026-27 and will be public-funded work. Japanese Finance Agency (JICA) has approved the loan for this project as part of road infrastructure improvement package in the north-east after assessing the economic benefit of the big project. At present, the road connecting Assam and Meghalaya is about 200 kilometers long. This bridge will reduce travel time to 15-20 minutes to cross the river after it becomes operational from two and a half hours. Two northeastern states of Assam and Meghalaya will be connected by NH127B with the help of this bridge. On completion this bridge will push economic activities and development on both sides of the river. It will also improve connectivity from West Bengal to Assam.

October 21-22, 2018

75th anniversary of establishment of Azad Hind government observed

75th anniversary of establishment of Azad Hind government observed October 21, 2018. On this occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisted National flag and unveiled plaque at the Red Fort, Delhi.

Azad Hind Government

Azad Hind Government was founded in Singapore on October 21, 1943. It was India's first independent government established by Indian nationalists-in-exile during latter part of WWII in Singapore with monetary, military and political assistance from Imperial Japan.

It was a part of political freedom movement originating in 1940s outside India with purpose of allying with Axis powers during Second World War (WWII) to free India from British Rule. It was inspired by ideas of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, who was leader of Azad Hind Government and also Head of State of this Government-in-exile.

This government has recognized the countries such as Germany, Japan, Philippines, Korea, China, Italy and Ireland. Japan provided the Andaman and Nicobar islands to this temporary government, later these islands were renamed Shaheed Island (Andaman) and Swaraj Island (Nicobar).

It was also having its armed force Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army (INA), whose purpose was to free India from British control. Subhash Chandra Bose was the supreme commander of this army. Ras Bihari Bose had played important role in its establishment. This force had played crucial role in bequeathing a much needed impetus to India's struggle for Independence.

It had proclaimed authority over Indian civilian and military personnel in Southeast Asian British colonial

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territory and prospective authority over Indian territory to fall to Japanese forces and INA during Japanese thrust towards India during WWII. This government had its own currency, court and civil code.

Japan provided Andaman and Nicobar islands to this temporary government, later these islands were renamed Shaheed Island (Andaman) and Swaraj Island (Nicobar). Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose gave a famous slogan Delhi Chalo (Come to Delhi) after formation of this government. Azad Hind Fauj along with this slogan reached India on March 21, 1944. Ram Singh Thakur was composed by the inspirational song "Kadam Chacha Ho Jaay" of Azad Hind Fauj.

PM announces national award in Netaji's name for disaster relief workers

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced launch of national award in name of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to honour those involved in disaster response operations. It was announced on the occasion of 75th anniversary of Bose's declaration of formation of Azad Hind Government, India's first independent government on October 21, 1943.

Key Facts

The national award named after Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose will be given every year to police personnel who do excellent work in rescue and relief operations during any kind of disaster. It will be announced every year on January 23 i.e. on Netaji's birthday.

The award will help to recognize exemplary services rendered by National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel in rescue and relief works during the time of any disaster. NDRF and SDRF are constituted with personnel from Central paramilitary forces and State police organisations respectively. These forces are mandated under Disaster Management Act, 2005 for effective management of disasters and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose

He was great Indian freedom fighter born on 23 January 1897 in Cuttack, British India (now in Odisha). Initially, he had joined Congress and was the president of the Congress during 1938-39. Later, due to differences in Congress, he resigned from Congress and established Forward Bloc. He tried to liberate the country through the Azad Hind Fauj.

Azad Hind Fauj was founded in Singapore on October 21, 1943. It was established by exiled Indians. The role of Ras Bihari Bose was very important in its establishment. It was founded by ideas of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. It was armed force, whose purpose was to free India from British control. Subhash Chandra Bose was supreme commander of this army.

Police Commemoration Day: October 21

The Police Commemoration Day is observed every year on October 21st to pay homage to police martyrs. The day commemorates supreme sacrifices of ten policemen while defending borders with China in 1959. This year the day was observed in all Police Lines throughout the country to mark memory of these gallant police personnel killed on duty during the year.

Background

Police Commemoration Day was instituted at Annual Conference of Inspectors General of Police of States and Union Territories held in January 1960. Since 2012, Police Commemoration Day Parade is being held at national level at the Police Memorial, Chanakyapuri. So far since Independence, 34,418 police personnel have sacrificed their lives for safeguarding the integrity of nation and providing security to people of this country.

Why Police Commemoration Day is celebrated?

Till autumn of 1959, Indian Police personnel were responsible for manning 2,500 mile long border of India with Tibet (now China). On October 20, 1959, three reconnaissance parties were launched from Hot Springs in North Eastern Ladakh in preparation for further movement of Indian expedition which was on its way to Lanak La. While members of two parties returned to Hot Springs by afternoon of that day, third one comprising of two Police Constables an Porter did not return. All available personnel were mobilized early next morning in search of missing personnel. At about mid-day, Chinese Army personnel were seen on hillock who opened fire and threw grenades at party led by. Since there was no cover, most personnel were injured. Ten brave Police Personnel attained martyrdom and seven others sustained injuries. The seven injured were taken prisoners by Chinese while the remaining managed to escape.

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PM inaugurates National Police Memorial in New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and dedicated National Police Memorial (NPM) to nation in New Delhi on the occasion of National Police Commemoration Day (Observed on October 21). The memorial has been created to recognise supreme sacrifices made by police personnel since independence.

National Police Memorial (NPM)

The memorial has been built on 6.12-acre land in central Delhi's Chanakyapuri area. It built a few years ago, has now been refurbished and central structure has been enhanced by replacing old rock structure. This memorial represents all State/UT Police Forces and Central Police Organisations of the country.

The central sculpture of NPM is 30-feet monolith made of single piece of granite procured from Khammam district of Telangana and weighs 238 tonnes. Its design was conceptualised by Advaita Gadanayak of National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA).

Its weight and colour symbolise gravitas and solemnity of the supreme sacrifice of police forces. The sculpture has 60 foot long river at its base which reflects the continuous self-service of the policeman and woman, to maintain peace and public order. Moreover, the Wall of Valour engraved on it has names of all 34,844 martyrs engraved on granite.

The memorial also has country's first national police museum which captures history, artefacts, uniform and gear of central and state police forces. The museum is underground facility in the premises of the national police memorial. The museum project was steered by Intelligence Bureau (IB) in coordination with central armed police forces (CAPFs) that function under Union Home Ministry.

27th Fusion Energy Conference held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat

The 27th Fusion Energy Conference (FEC 2018) was held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. The six-day event is organised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and hosted by Department of Atomic Energy and Gandhinagar-based Institute of Plasma Research.

FEC 2018

The aim of FEC 2018 was to provide forum for discussion of key physics and technology issues as well as innovative concepts of direct relevance to the use of nuclear fusion (reaction that powers Sun and stars) as a source of energy. During this conference, experts from across the world discussed innovative concepts on using nuclear fusion as source of energy. They also discussed new challenges being faced by fusion community in the light of a number of next-step fusion devices being implemented currently. Among participants included international bodies like ITER Organisation and European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). The research institutes involved in developing smaller plasma devices also participated.

US-based Dalit writer Sujatha Gidla wins 2018 Shakti Bhatt Prize

US-based Dalit writer Sujatha Gidla (55) has won 2018 Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize for her debut book "*Ants Among Elephants: An Untouchable Family and the Making of Modern India*". Her book was shortlisted by award panel from of other six contestants. It takes readers through four generations of her family at centre and mainly her uncle K G Satyamurthy, a Maoist leader who founded Left-wing guerrilla movement called People's War Group to overthrow Indian state. It also showcases undramatised lives of poverty, patriarchy, and rebellion, and encounter with subaltern Communism.

Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize

The Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize is funded by the Shakti Bhatt Foundation. It was set up in 2008 in memory of young writer and editor Shakti Bhatti. It honours first-time writers from Indian sub-continent for their outstanding work of fiction or non-fiction. It carries cash prize of Rs. 2 lakh. Sri Lankan author Anuk Arudpragasam had won the prize in 2017 for his debut novel "The Story of a Brief Marriage" set in the backdrop of the civil war

Green Climate Fund approves $1 billion to assist poor countries to tackle climate change

Green Climate Fund (GCF) has approved more than $1 billion new investments for 19 new projects to help developing countries tackle climate change. The decision was taken during four-day meeting of GCF in Manama, Bahrain. The funding was approved for projects linked to geothermal energy in Indonesia, greener cities in Europe and Middle East and protection for coastal communities in India.

Green Climate Fund (GCF)

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GCF is UN-backed fund considered as key vehicle for climate-related development programs. It is guided by the principles and provisions of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It aims to help developing countries to finance clean energy projects other mitigation efforts, practices and adaptation to counter climate change. It was formally established by UNFCCC decision in Durban, South Africa in December 2011. It is based in new Songdo district of Incheon, South Korea. It is governed by a Board of 24 members and initially supported by a Secretariat. GCF was central to the Paris climate agreement signed in 2015. GCF's assist developing countries in adaptation and mitigation practices to counter climate change by redistributing money contributed by the developed countries. It supports projects, programmes, policies and other activities in developing country Parties using thematic funding windows. It was intended to be the centrepiece of efforts to raise Climate Finance of $100 billion a year by 2020.

US to pull out of Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty signed with Russia

United States (US) President Donald Trump has announced that US will unilaterally pull out of three-decade-old Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty signed with Russia during Cold War.

Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty

It was crucial Cold War-era treaty banning development, testing and possession of short and medium range ground-launched nuclear missiles with range of 500-5,000 km. The treaty was signed in December 1987 between then US President Ronald Reagan and his USSR counterpart Mikhail Gorbachev.

The treaty banned all nuclear and conventional missiles, as well as their launchers, with ranges of 500–1,000 km or (short-range) and 1,000–5,500 km (intermediate-range). This treaty was central to ending arms race between two superpowers during cold war and protected America's NATO allies in Europe from Soviet missile attacks. It was designed to provide measure of some strategic stability on continent of Europe.

Reasons of US withdrawal

US President Trump has alleged that Russia has violated treaty and has been violating it for many years. This violation comes after Russia's alleged development and deployment of Novator 9M729 missile (also known as SSC-8), that could strike Europe at short notice.

Accusations of Russia violating this treaty pre-dates Trump presidency and go back to 2008 during President Obama administration. Under former President Barack Obama raised issue of Russia testing ground-launched cruise missile with Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2014. But Russia had denied allegations and raised counter-allegations of the US installing missile defence systems in Europe. While two countries failed to find resolution using dispute resolution mechanism in treaty, US continued to remain party to treaty under pressure from its European allies.

Implications

The unilateral withdrawal from this treaty will allow US new nuclear weapon options in Pacific in its efforts to counter China's growing influence. There are also concerns that unilateral termination of this treaty could mark beginning of new arms race between US and Russia.

October 23, 2018

Iron Magic 19: UAE, US to conduct military exercise near Dubai

The joint military exercise Iron Magic 19 between United Arab Emirates (UAE) and United States (US) kicked off near Dubai. The two-week military exercise is part of series of joint military exercises held throughout the year between UAE armed forces and armed forces of other countries.

Iron Magic 19

The exercise seeks to reinforce cooperation, joint actions and exchange of expertise in military areas between both countries. This will contribute to maximizing combat capabilities and increasing coordination between UAE and the US armed forces.

The bulk of UAE military hardware, such as F-16 fighter jets, Mirage jets and Apache Longbow attack helicopters are mostly manufactured by companies from US, Britain and France. UAE, a major oil supplier, has established growing defence industry in recent years, mainly in armoured vehicles and naval military equipment.

GCF approves $43 million to boost climate resilience for India's coastal communities

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UN-backed fund Green Climate Fund (GCF) has approved US $43.4 million for enhancing climate resilience for millions of people living in India's coastal communities as part of its efforts to combat extreme impacts of climate change. The grant is part of more than US $1 billion approved by 21st meeting of GCF Board held in Bahrain's capital Manama for 19 new projects to help developing countries tackle climate change.

Key Facts

This GCF funded multi-dimensional project in India will focus on selected vulnerable areas of *Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha states.* It will help to enhance resilience and adaptability and also lead to emissions reduction while providing support to local communities for their livelihoods.

This project will be supported through United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The project activities will focus on restoration and conservation of over 15,000 hectares of mangroves, coral reefs, seagrasses and saltmarshes. Communities, including local youth, will be trained to work with scientists in monitoring ecosystem health and coastal ecology.

The innovative project will create online decision-support tool available via mobile phone for use by government officers, academic institutions, community members and scientists for strengthening climate risk-informed coastal management and infrastructure planning. The project will also build local knowledge of climate change and the associated risks via training and public education programmes.

Himani Borkar | himanib46@gmail.com |

Significance of project

It will help communities to establish more climate-resilient livelihoods, thus contribute to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions – over 3.5 million tonnes of CO_2 will be absorbed through restored ecosystems. It will also have considerable long-term environmental benefits including healthier ecosystems, better biodiversity conservation and improved buffering against climate change-driven extreme weather. It will be also essential step for India in reaching its goals outlined in Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Background

India's coastal areas are quite vulnerable to climate change. Its coastline is expected to be among regions most affected by climate change globally. Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea are both predicted to be subject to extreme climate variability, with extreme weather events and frequency and intensity of cyclones projected to increase, particularly on eastern coastline. India has about 6,740 km2 of mangroves, including some of largest mangrove forests in the world. Mangrove cover along India's coastline has decreased by 50% in some areas, largely because of human pressures, including alteration of flow of freshwater from upstream. Sea-level rise is predicted to result in further reductions.

India, Myanmar sign MoU on operationalisation of Sittwe Port

India and Myanmar inked MoU for appointment of private port operator for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of Sittwe Port, Paletwa Inland Water Terminal and associated facilities included in Kaladan Multi Model Transit Transport Project. The MoU was signed Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale on behalf of Government of India (GoI) and by U Win Khant, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Transport and Communications on behalf of Myanmar Government.

Key Facts

Sittwe port in Myanmar will connect India's landlocked north-east region to Bay of Bengal through Mizoram. It will also provide alternate route to Kolkata. Following this MoU, process of identifying bidders to maintain these facilities will be initiated by floating Request for proposal (RFP). Subsequent to commencement of operations at this port, it will offer new infrastructure for trade including between India and Myanmar. It is also significant step in implementation of India's Act East Policy as it will boost connectivity, contributing to job creation and development in whole region, particularly in Myanmar's strife-torn Rakhine and Chin States.

Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project

This project aims to connect seaport of Kolkata (India) with Sittwe seaport in Myanmar by sea; it will then link Sittwe seaport to Lashio in Myanmar via Kaladan river boat route and then from Lashio to Mizoram in India by road transport. This project will reduce distance from Kolkata to Mizoram by approximately 1000 km and cut travelling time to 3-4 days for transport of goods. It will provide alternative to current route

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from North East to Kolkata port via chicken neck which faces heavy traffic and transportation of cargo via this route takes many days to reach port.



Benefits to India

It will provide alternative route to India to ship goods to the landlocked north-eastern States as it will provide access to the sea to landlocked northeastern states via Myanmar. It will significantly lower cost and distance of movement from Kolkata to Mizoram and beyond. It will also reduce dependency on only route narrow strip dubbed as Chicken's Neck in West Bengal, sandwiched between Bhutan and Bangladesh. It will be also instrumental for India's Act-east policy and strengthen India's trade and transport links with Southeast Asia. It will not only serve economic, commercial and strategic interest of India but also contributes to development of Myanmar and its economic integration with India.

Ministry of Environment launches Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign

Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has launched *Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign* aimed to reduce adverse environmental conditions especially pollution in the country after post Diwali celebrations due to excessive bursting of crackers which contributes significantly to air and noise pollution.

Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign

This campaign was initiated in 2017-18 to enlighten children about harmful fire crackers and motivate them to celebrate Diwali in environment-friendly manner and not to buy fire crackers, instead buy gift, food items, or sweets for poor and underprivileged children living in their locality.

Under this campaign, the MoEFCC will undertake various activities for creating awareness among various stakeholders and encourage people to participate in combating air pollution. This campaign was extremely successful and the air quality had not deteriorated post Diwali in 2017 unlike what was experienced in 2016.

2018 Campaign: Following its earlier precedence, MOEFCC has initiated similar campaign, but has *extended pan-India*. It also merged this year's campaign with *"Green Good Deed" movement* that has been initiated as social mobilization for conservation and protection of environment. All schools and colleges have been encouraged to be part of this campaign.

Background

Air pollution is serious health issue in the country especially in northern parts during winter seasons. The air pollution in northern region is mainly due to dust, burning of kharif crop residue on large scale in certain states, burning of garbage, construction activities and prevailing climatic conditions. This air pollution has serious impacts on health of children aged people and people suffering from respiratory

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ailments. Diwali festival also falls during same period and as matter of traditional practice people have been celebrating this festival by bursting crackers. Crackers contains combustible chemicals that include potassium chlorate powdered magnesium, aluminum, salts of barium, copper, sodium, lithium, strontium etc. and emits hazardous smoke of these chemicals along with sound. This smoke and sound has health impacts on children, aged people and also animal and birds. Apart from hazardous smoke, large amount of waste is also generated after bursting of crackers. Thus, keeping in view the above detrimental effects and and importance of the festival, MoEFCC had initiated a Harit–Diwali campaign.

Fali S. Nariman awarded 19th Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for Excellence in Public Administration

Eminent jurist Fali S. Nariman (89) was awarded 19th Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for Excellence in Public Administration. He was presented the award by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu at a function held in New Delhi.

Fali S. Nariman

He is one of India's most distinguished constitutional lawyers and he has argued several leading cases. He was the senior advocate to Supreme Court of India since 1971 and has remained President of Bar Association of India since 1991. He is internationally recognised jurist on international arbitration. He was Additional Solicitor General of India from May 1972- June 1975. He has been awarded Padma Bhushan (1991), Padma Vibhushan (2007)and Gruber Prize for Justice (2002). He was nominated by President as member of Rajya Sabha, Upper House of Parliament for single term (1999–2005).

Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award

The award was instituted in 1999 by Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management in memory of India's second Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri. It is awarded annually to Indian who is exceptionally outstanding and distinguished business leader, management practitioner, public administrator, educator or institution builder for his/her sustained individual contributions and achievements. The award consists of cash award of Rs. 5,00,000 plus citation and plaque. In 2017, it was awarded to Bindeshwar Pathak, founder of Sulabh International.

Druzhba-III: Russia and Pakistan holding military exercise in Pakistan

The Druzhba 2018 (Friendship 2018) joint bilateral military exercise between Pakistan and Russian special forces has begun in Pakistan. This exercise will be organized in north-western hill region in Nowshera district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan. The two week long joint military exercise is aimed at bolstering and building military cooperation between the two countries

Druzhba military exercise

Druzhba military exercise between Russia and Pakistan was started in 2016. "Druzba" is Russian word, which means "friendship". Its first edition was held in October, 2016 at Army High Altitude School in Rattu, northern Pakistan. The second edition was held in Russia at Minralney Vody in North Caucasus at an altitude of 2,300 meters above sea level.

Druzhba 2018

This will be the third joint military drill between both countries under the bilateral training cooperation agreement. In this edition of exercise, servicemen from two countries' armed forces will perform tasks at altitude of 1,400 meters above the sea level. Over 70 soldiers from Russia's southern military district are participating. It will also involve experience sharing and develop coordination in carrying out practice combat tasks in a mountainous environment, including operations against illegal armed groups.

Russia-Pakistan Defence ties

The relation between Russia and Pakistan has become strong in the past few years and has moved apart from their past bitter Cold War hostilities. One of the main reasons for this is tough attitude of US with Pakistan, which has led Pakistan to lean towards Russia and China. Pakistan is also keen to strengthen defense relations with Russia. Russia also started selling weapons to Pakistan. It has sold four Mi-35M fighters and cargo helicopters to Pakistan.

India, China sign agreement on security cooperation

India and China have signed agreement on internal security cooperation. It is first such agreement to be signed between the two countries. The agreement was signed by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and China's State Councilor and Minister of Public Security Zhao Kezhi in New Delhi.

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Key Facts

The agreement on internal security cooperation aims to strengthen and consolidate assistance in counter-terrorism, organised crimes, drug control, human trafficking and exchange of information, marking a new beginning between the two countries. It covers areas of intelligence sharing, exchange programme, sharing of best practices, cooperation in disaster mitigation besides others.

First high-level meeting

The agreement followed first high-level meeting on bilateral security cooperation co-chaired by Rajnath Singh and Zhao. During this meeting, two sides discussed counter-terrorism cooperation and welcomed increased cooperation between the two countries in the area of security during the meeting.

Zhao was heading delegation of over 30 Chinese diplomats during his visit to India from October 21 to 25, 2018. As China's State Councilor and Minister of Public Security, responsible for day-to-day law enforcement in China and commands about 19 lakh personnel. While, India's Rajnath Singh is the head of eight central armed police forces with a combined strength of about 10 lakh personnel.

Asian Economic Integration Report 2018: Key Highlights

The **Asian Economic Integration Report 2018** was presented by **Asian Development Bank**. The report is an annual publication of ADB with a focus on progress in cooperation and migration.

Key highlights of the report

- The report revealed that India hosts the highest number of outward international migrants in 2017.It was followed by China and Bangladesh.
- About one third of international migrants were from Asia in 2017.
- The number of Asian migrants headed to regional destinations declined shortly.
- FDI in the Asian region remain stable with 517.5 billion in 2017.
- Asia's share of global inward foreign FDI reach up to 36.2 percent in 2017.
- Labor demand is the main factor behind the international migration on such a large scale. 72.7 percent of the migrants enter the labor market in host countries.
- This year in the report there was a special chapter "Toward Optimal Provision of **Regional Public Goods** in Asia and the Pacific". The chapter stressed on that the optimal provision of Regional public goods can be a solution for development challenges in the era of economic interdependence.
- **Regional public goods** are those are produced and collectively consumed by a public sector or by both private and public sector as appropriate and have potential to generate shared benefits among the countries. These includes climate change, anti corruption, good governance, human development, cross border infrastructure, cross border disease surveillance, and all other goods that have benefits beyond a single territory.

About ADB

The Asian Development Bank is a regional development Bank established in **1966** with **Headquarters in** Manila, Philippines. The bank is composed of 67 members out of which 48 are from Asia Pacific region. **Takehiko Nakao** is Present President of the Asian Development Bank. The bank helps its member countries by providing loans, grants and technical assistance to enable social and economic development and to eradicate poverty.

October 24, 2018

Invest India wins UN Award for excellence in promoting investments in sustainable development

Invest India, the country's investment promotion body, has won United Nations (UN) Award for excellence in promoting investments in sustainable development. The award was presented by Armenian President Armen Sarkissian to CEO of Invest India Deepak Bagla at the World Investment Forum, Geneva.

Key Facts

Invest India received this award for excellence in servicing and supporting major global wind turbines company in establishment of blade manufacturing plant in India while committing to train local staff and produce 1 gigawatt (GW) of renewable energy. Implementation of this project is expected to reduce India's wind energy cost significantly.

Apart from Invest India, agencies from Lesotho (Lesotho National Development Corporation -LNDC), Bahrain (Bahrain Economic Development Board-EDB Bahrain) and South Africa (Invest South Africa) also

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won top honours at UN Investment Promotion Awards for excellence in boosting investment into sectors having social and economic benefits and will help meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

UN Investment Promotion Award

The awards are given annually by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) since 2002 as part of its investment promotion and facilitation programme. It honours investment promotion agencies (IPAs) and their governments for their achievements. It also seeks to showcase best practices in attracting investment into Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-related projects that can inspire investment promotion practitioners in developing and developed countries. The 2017 winners were Ethiopian Investment Commission, COFIDES of Spain, and Board of Investment of Mauritius.

Invest India

It is official Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of Central Government. It is mandated to facilitate investments in the country. It is first stop for potential global investors in country. It has been set up as non-profit venture under Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industries.

It serves as first stop for potential global investors in India. It provides sector and state-specific inputs and other supports to investors through entire investment cycle. Moreover, all efforts like hand-holding and facilitation support are made by Invest India under Make in India programme.

PM Narendra Modi awarded 2018 Seoul Peace Prize

Seoul Peace Prize Committee has decided to confer 2018 Seoul Peace Prize on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He is the fourteenth recipient of this award. The award will be presented to him by Seoul Peace Prize Foundation at mutually convenient time.

Key Facts

PM Modi was selected for this prestigious award in recognition of his dedication for improving international cooperation, raising global economic growth, accelerating Human Development of people in India by fostering economic growth and furthering development of democracy through anti-corruption and social integration efforts. It also recognized PM Modi's contributions to growth of Indian and global economies, credited 'Modinomics' for reducing social and economic disparity between rich and poor. It also lauded PM's initiatives to make government cleaner through anti-corruption measures and demonetization. It also credited PM for his contribution towards regional and global peace through proactive foreign policy with countries around world under Modi Doctrine and Act East Policy.

Seoul Peace Prize

It was established in 1990 to commemorate success of the 24th Olympic Games held in Seoul, South Korea. It was established to crystallize Korean people's yearning for peace on Korean Peninsula and in the rest of the world. It is *awarded biennially* to those individuals who have made their mark through contributions to harmony of mankind, reconciliation between nations and world peace. The awardee receives diploma, plaque and honorarium of US $200,000. Past laureates include distinguished global personalities like German Chancellor Angela Merkel, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and renowned international relief organizations like Doctors Without Borders and Oxfam.

STAPCOR 2018: International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs held at Bangaram Island, Lakshadweep

International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs (STAPCOR – 2018) was held at Bangaram Island, Union Territory of Lakshadweep from 22nd to 24th October, 2018. The theme of the conference was "Reef for Life". It was inaugurated by Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Dr. Harsh Vardhan.

STAPCOR – 2018

It was jointly organized by Department of Environment and Forest, Union Territory of Lakshadweep Administration with the technical support of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and in association with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Environmental Information System (ENVIS) in consonance with declaration of year 2018 as 3rd decadal International year of Reefs. About 150 delegates both international and national had participated in this mega event. The delegates and keynote speakers for technical deliberations in this conference were from United State of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), Kuwait, Italy, France,

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Maldives and Sri Lanka.

International Year of the Reef

International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) has declared year 2018 as International Year of the Reef (IYOR 2018). It is designed to raise awareness about the threats to coral reefs and the associated ecosystem.

Coral reef

It is underwater marine ecosystem characterized by reef-building corals. Reefs are formed of colonies of coral polyps held together by calcium carbonate. Corals secrete hard carbonate exoskeletons that support and protect them. Most coral reefs are built from stony corals, whose polyps cluster in groups. Coral belongs to class *Anthozoa* in animal phylum *Cnidaria*, which includes sea anemones and jellyfish. Corals are often called "rainforests of the sea" as they form some of Earth's most diverse ecosystems. They occupy less than 0.1% of world's ocean area, but provide a home for at least 25% of all marine species.

Coral reefs flourish in ocean waters that provide few nutrients. They are most commonly found at shallow depths in tropical waters, but deep water and cold water coral reefs exist on smaller scales in other areas. Great Barrier Reef, located in Coral Sea, off the coast of Queensland in north-east Australia is largest Coral reef in the world. The major reef formations in India are restricted to Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Kachchh, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands. Coral reefs are fragile, partly because they are sensitive to water conditions.

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Conditions required for their growth: Warm tropical oceans located between 30 degree north and 25 degree south latitudes where a minimum temperature of 20 degree is found and this temperature favour the growth of coral organisms, oceanic water free of sedimentation, transparent parts of ocean bodies, relatively low salinity ocean bodies.

Threats: They are under threat from excess nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), rising temperatures due to global warming, oceanic acidification, sunscreen use overuse, overfishing (eg. from blast fishing, cyanide fishing, spearfishing on scuba),and harmful land-use practices, including runoff and seeps (e.g., from injection wells and cesspools).

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India, Iran, Afghanistan hold first trilateral on Chabahar port project

The first trilateral meeting between India, Afghanistan and Iran of Coordination Council of Chabahar Agreement was held in Tehran, capital city of Iran. India, Iran and Afghanistan in May 2016, had signed agreement which entailed establishment of transit and transport corridor among three countries using Chabahar Port as one of regional hubs.

Highlights of Meeting

Detailed discussions were held between three sides on full operationalisation of trilateral Agreement for international transit and transport through Chabahar port. They shared view that full operationalisation of Chabahar port will promote connectivity and economic development of Afghanistan and region. They also reviewed its implementation.

They also decided to constitute follow-up committee that will hold its first meeting within two months in Chabahar port. This committee will discuss and aim to finalise protocol to harmonise transit, roads, customs and consular matters for making the route attractive and decrease logistic costs. It was also decided to hold next meeting of the coordination council in India in the first half of 2019.

Comment

The meeting assumes significance as strategically-located Chabahar port on energy-rich Iran's southern coast was coming under ambit of US sanctions on Iran. The sanctions were announced after US under President Donald Trump administration withdrew from 2015 Iran nuclear deal that lifted most of embargoes on Iran imposed for its suspected nuclear weapons programme. India is committed to Chabbar project despite threat of US sanctions on nations doing business with Iran including buying oil or investing in the country. It also has conveyed to US importance of Chabahar project, saying it can be major link for trade with war-ravaged Afghanistan.

Chabbar project

Chabahar is strategically located in Sistan-Balochistan province on energy-rich Iran's southern coast in Gulf of Oman. It is less than 100 nautical miles from Chinese built port of Gwadar in Pakistan. India in

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2003 had first proposed developing Chabahar port. The port is seen as golden gateway for India to access landlocked markets of Afghanistan and Central Asian markets bypassing Pakistan. India and Iran had signed lease agreement for operation of Shahid Beheshti port or phase 1 of Chabahar in February 2018. Under the terms of this agreemetn, India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL), an Indian company was to take over interim operations of tport Chabahar and operate terminal for 18 months.



China opens world's longest sea bridge linking Hong Kong, Macau and Zhuhai

China inaugurated Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, world's longest sea bridge with total length of 55 km. The new sea bridge will connect the east and west sides of Pearl River Delta of the South China Sea, connecting two Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau with Zhuhai i.e. mainland China.

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge

It includes dual three-lane, oversea stretch (22.9 km) and undersea tunnel (6.7 km) which reaches depth of 44 m. The rest 25.4 km of the bridge runs over land. The two ends of tunnel of bridge are connected to two artificial islands, each million sq ft, constructed in shallow areas of Pearl River Estuary to allow transit between bridge and tunnel sections.

The 6.7 km undersea tunnel is made of chain of 33 submerged hollow blocks, each 38 m wide, 11.4 m high and weighing 80,000 tonnes. The bridge contains 400,000 tonnes of steel. It is designed to withstand magnitude-8 earthquake and strikes by super-sized cargo ships.

The project was initially conceived in 2003, and construction began on December 2009. Its total cost was 120 billion yuan ($17.3 billion). This has been shared in different proportions by Hong Kong, Macau and Zhuhai governments. It is estimated that 29,000 vehicles would cross the bridge every day.

Significance

China considers this mega structure as key component of its plans to develop Greater Bay Area. This area

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will be business hub comprising Hong Kong, Macau and nine cities of Guangdong province (mainland China). This bay area is being developed with aim to rival New York (US) and Tokyo (Japan) in terms of technological innovation and economic success. This bridge will play vital role in facilitating creation of a single market by connecting.

The bridge will put three cities within hour's commute of each other and is expected to boost economic development. It will cut travel time from Hong Kong International Airport to Zhuhai from 4 hours to 45 minutes. It will also bring down trip between Kwai Chung Container Port (Hong Kong) and Zhuhai to 1 hour and 15 minutes from existing 3½ hours.

Criticisms

This bridge is considered is another move of China to assert more control over Hong Kong and Macau special administrative regions. Both provinces are former European colonies (Hong Kong was under British control and Macau was under Portuguese control), handed back to China in late 1990 and are run under "*one country, two systems*" *principle*, which allows them to retain their economic and democratic systems of government (multi-party system) independent of China for 50 years. Concerns of affecting ecology of area especially to White Chinese dolphin also have been raised. Safety concerns of bridge also have been raised after reports that artificial islands has drifted.

October 25, 2018

QS Asia Rankings 2019: Eight Universities from India among top 100

QS Asia University Ranking is an annual publication of university rankings by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS). Universities are assessed based on the academic reputation, employer reputation, student-faculty ratio, international faculty and students, staff with PhD, papers per faculty and citations per paper, among other parameters.

India and QS Asia rankings

- The Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IIT-Bombay) has topped the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) Asia University Rankings from India followed by IIT Delhi and IIT Madras.
- Eight Indian universities have figured among the top 100 in the list of Asia's top 50 universities. IIT-Bombay, IIT-Delhi, IIT-Madras, IISC Bangalore, IIT-Kharagpur, IIT-Kanpur, Delhi University and IIT-Roorkee are the Indian institutions in the top 100.
- There are 75 universities from India in the top 500 Asia list No Indian University managed to come under the top 10 slot or even Top 20 slot.
- India is making good progresses with forty new universities ranked and fourteen moving up the table.

The National University of Singapore is ranked as Asia's best university, followed by University of Hong Kong, Nanyang Technological University, Tsinghua University and Peking University.

HRD Ministry launches IMPRESS Scheme to promote Research in Social Sciences

On October 25, 2018, the Central Government has announced formal launch Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences (IMPRESS) scheme to promote research in Social Sciences. The objective of this scheme is to identify and fund research proposals in social sciences with maximum impact on the governance and society. The government support would include a total funding of Rs.414 crore on 1500 projects for policy themes in the social sciences at the cost of Rs. 20-25 Lakh per project.

Thematic Areas

Under the scheme, support is to be provided for projects on 11 broad thematic areas as follows:

1. State and Democracy
2. Urban transformation,
3. Media, Culture and Society
4. Employment, Skills and Rural transformation
5. Governance, Innovation and Public Policy
6. Growth, Macro-trade and Economic Policy
7. Agriculture and Rural Development
8. Health and Environment
9. Science and Education

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10. Social Media and Technology
11. Politics, Law and Economics.

The Sub-Theme areas will be decided on the basis of Expert Groups' advice before notifying the scheme and calling for applications.

- To ensure selection of projects through a transparent, competitive process on online mode.
- To provide opportunity for social science researchers in any institution in the country, including all Universities (Central and State), private institutions.
- ICSSR funded/recognised research institutes will also be eligible to submit research proposals on the given themes and sub-themes.

Nodal Agency

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

Modalities for implementation:

There will be calls for proposals and the process of evaluation of the proposals and selection will be completed within 90 days from the date of call for proposals. The experts for evaluation of proposals will be persons of eminence and selected using objective criteria. There will be a regular monitoring of the progress of projects using the online portal, in which the progress can be directly updated by the Project Coordinator. Also, there will be a third party evaluation of the project.

HRD Ministry launches SPARC Scheme to Promote Research in Science

On October 25, 2018, the Union Ministry of HRD has launched Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) scheme, which aims to improve the research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in the world.

Features of the scheme

Under the scheme 600 joint research proposals will be awarded for 2 years. The scheme will facilitate strong research collaboration between Indian research groups with the best in class faculty and renowned research groups in the leading universities of the world, in areas that are at the cutting edge of science or with direct social relevance to the mankind, specifically India.

Thrust Areas

The scheme will improve research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in the world to jointly solve problems of national and international relevance. Five thrust areas identified are as follows:

1. Fundamental Research.
2. Emergent Areas of Impact.
3. Convergence
4. Action-Oriented Research
5. Innovation-Driven

SPARC scheme proposes to enable productive academic cooperation by supporting the following critical components that can catalyze impact making research. This Scheme is expected to have a major impact in providing the best international expertise to address major national problems. The scheme exposes Indian academicians to the best collaborators abroad to enable international faculty to stay in India for a longer duration. The scheme provides Indian students an opportunity to work in the world class laboratories, to develop strong bilateral relationships in research, and improve the international ranking of Indian Institutes.

2nd International Conference on Primary Health Care, Kazakhstan

The second conference on PHC inaugurated on 25 October 2018 in Astana, Kazakhstan. The conference is a collective initiative of Government of Kazakhstan, WHO and UNICEF.

Highlights of the event

- The conference took place in the memory of 40 years of Alma Ata Declaration on Primary health care. (Alma Ata Declaration was adopted at international conference on primary health care held in Kazakhstan in 1978).
- The conference will be held in the palace of Independence in Astana.

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- The main aim is to achieve Universal Health Coverage and Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.
- Astana declaration: Not just the health but affordable health for all.
- The theme of the conference is : "The future of Primary Health Care"

WHO: It is a UN specialized agency established on April 1948 with an aim of providing health care to the member countries and underdeveloped countries.

Primary Health Care

PHC is the essential health care that makes affordable universal health care accessible to all the individuals of the community. It is not only the primary health care but the low cost health care for the poor and marginalized people. It is a inclusive and people-centered health care model. Primary health care is essential to the health care. It is essential to the success and sustainability of the healthcare system. It is essential to achieve sustainable development goals.

In India, the recent initiative of AAYUSHMAN BHARAT is a step in improving primary health care with establishing health and wellness centers all around the country and providing health insurance. Community health workers and ASHA workers are also involved in the task of improving primary health care of the country.

Being the first access point of the medical care to the needy primary health care and being the foundation of all the health care services there is an urgent need to strengthen the PHC in 21st century.

October 26, 2018

World Development Information Day: October 24

World Development Information Day (WDID) is observed every year on October 24 to draw attention of world to development problems and necessity of strengthening international cooperation to solve them. This day also coincides with United Nations Day (October 24).

Background

The UN Conference on Trade and Development on May 17, 1972 had proposed measures for information dissemination and mobilization of public opinion relative to trade and development problems. These measures came to be known as resolution 3038 (XXVII), which was passed by UN General Assembly in 19, 1972 and instituted World Development Information Day on October 24. It was celebrated for the first time on October 24, 1972. This resolution was passed by UN General Assembly (UNGA) on December 19, 1972. The purpose of day is to improve dissemination of information and mobilization of public opinion, particularly among young people. It will lead to greater awareness of problems of development, thus, promoting efforts in sphere of international cooperation for development.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

UNCTAD is principal organ of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) dealing with trade, investment, and development issues. It was established in 1964 and its permanent secretariat is in Geneva. Its primary objective is to formulate policies relating to all aspects of development including trade, aid, transport, finance and technology. It ordinarily meets once in four years.

World Polio Day: October 24

The World Polio Day is observed annually across world on 24 October to create awareness about hazards of the crippling Polio disease. The day was instituted by Rotary International to commemorate birth of Jonas Salk who had led first team of researchers which had developed vaccine against poliomyelitis (polio virus). This development had led to widespread use of this inactivated poliovirus vaccine and subsequently use of oral poliovirus, developed by Albert Sabin. It also had led to establishment of Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in 1988 which has helped to reduce polio worldwide by 99%.

Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI)

GPEI launched in 1988 has played pivotal role in eradication of wild poliovirus. When it was launched wild poliovirus existed in 125 countries. Now, it exists in two countries Pakistan and Afghanistan. Till 2012, Nigeria, Africa's most populous country was reservoir of more than half of the Polio cases in the world. But in 2015, it was removed from list of Polio endemic countries by World Health Organization (WHO).

Poliovirus

Poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious viral disease, which mainly affects young children below age of 5.

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The virus is transmitted from person-to-person. It mainly spreads through the faecal-oral route (e.g. contaminated water or food). After entering body, it multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis. Its initial symptoms include fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness in the neck, and pain in the limbs. In some cases, it causes permanent paralysis. There is no cure for polio, however it can only be prevented by immunization. Polio vaccine is given multiple times, almost always protects a child for life.

United Nations Day: 24 October

The United Nations Day is observed every year on 24th October to mark anniversary of entry into force of UN Charter in 1945. With ratification of this founding document by majority of its members, including five permanent members of UN Security Council, United Nations officially came into existence. Since then, 24th October is celebrated as UN Day. On this day all member states of UN contribute finances to its operation to help further its goals.

United Nations

UN is successor of ineffective League of Nations and was established in 1945 after World War II in order to prevent another such conflict. Now, it has become world's only truly universal global organization and is foremost forum to address issues that transcend national boundaries and cannot be resolved by any one country acting alone. Its prime role is to maintain world peace, human rights, promote social and economic development and provide aid around the world in cases of famine, natural disaster and armed conflict. The main organs of UN are: General Assembly (UNGA), Security Council (UNSC), Economic and Social Council (UNESOC), International Court of Justice (ICJ), UN Secretariat, Trusteeship Council.

Background

United Nations Day was established by UNGA by adopting Resolution 2782 in 1971. The day is devoted making people aware of achievements of United Nations Organization. This day is part of United Nations Week, which runs from 20 to 26 October.

India wins Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management Award, 2018

India has won Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) Award, 2018. The award was announced at Annual General Members Meet held at Georgetown, Guyana. Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) under Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions is institutional member of Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM).

Key Facts

Unnayan Banka initiative for reinventing education using technology of Banka District, Bihar was awarded under Category "Innovation Incubation". Unified Agriculture Markets of Karnataka Government was awarded in 'Innovation in Public Service Management'. This initiative has also been awarded overall Gold Award for CAPAM Awards, 2018.

Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM)

CAPAM is non-profit association representing international network of over 1100 senior public servants, heads of government, leading academics and researchers located in over 50 different countries across the Commonwealth. It is guided by international leaders who believe in value of networking, knowledge exchange and promotion of good governance for betterment of citizens in Commonwealth countries. CAPAM announces its International Innovations Awards (IIA) Programme bi-annually, since 1998. These awards celebrate spirit of innovation in public service by recognizing organizations that have made significant contributions to improve governance and services in the public sector.

India Mobile Congress 2018 held in New Delhi

The second edition of India Mobile Congress (IMC-2018) was held New Delhi from October 25-27, 2018. It was organised by Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI). The theme was "*New Digital Horizons. Connect. Create. Innovate*".

IMC 2018

It saw participation of more than 200,000 professionals from telecom industry, encompassing 5G, start-up ecosystem, Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Smart Cities and allied industry sectors. The exhibition featured more than 1,300 exhibitors. It saw greater International presence with participation of policy makers and regulators from partner countries from ASEAN

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(Association for Southeast Asian Countries) and BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) besides US, Canada and European Union (EU).

India Mobile Congress (IMC)

IMC was launched in 2017 to provide platform for policy makers, industry and regulators to engage in meaningful deliberations to drive the future direction of telecom sector. The first IMC held in September 2017 was attended by around 2,000 delegates, 32,000 visitors, 152 speakers, 100 exhibitors and 100 start-ups.

Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board to issue masala bonds worth Rs 5,000 crore for development works

Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) is going to issue masala bonds worth Rs. 5,000 crore to mobilise funds for various development works. KIIFB has appointed Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings for rating the masala bonds issue. The bonds will be listed in London and Singapore stock exchanges. The funds will be raised in tranches over period of 10 years.

KIIFB

It is Kerala government owned financial institution. Its mandate is to mobilize funds for infrastructure development from outside state revenue. It is statutory body constituted by Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Act, 1999.

Masala bonds

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Masala bonds are rupee-denominated bonds through which Indian entities can raise money from foreign markets in rupee and not in foreign currency. Basically, it is debt instruments used by corporates to raise money from foreign investors in local currency. The issuance of rupee denominated bonds transfers risk associated with currency fluctuations to investors and not to the issuers. This is especially during depreciation of domestic currency and when borrowing is in foreign currency as company has to pay more while repaying its debt, or while servicing interest on such borrowings if the rupee weakened. From the issuer's perspective, masala bonds provides cheaper borrowings compared to raising funds in India besides helps in diversifying its sources of fund-raising. Besides, it also helps in internationalization of the rupee and in expansion of Indian bond markets. Its issuance in long term can help to check slide of rupee and also reduce current account deficit over time.

Government announces winners of Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony

Union Government (Ministry of Culture) has announced winners of Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony for year 2014, 2015 and 2016. The awardees were selected by award jury headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and included Chief Justice of India Justice (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi, former chief election commissioner N Gopalaswami and national vice president of BJP Vinay Sahasrabuddhe.

Awardees are

- **2014:** Rajkumar Singhajit Singh. He is doyen of Manipuri dance. He is also teacher, performer and choreographer.
- **2015:** Chhayanaut. It is cultural organization of Bangladesh established in 1961. It has played leading role in promoting Tagore's works in Bengali culture, music and literature not only within Bangladesh, but all across the world.
- **2016:** Ram Vanji Sutar. He is renowned sculptor. His first notable work was the 45-feet Chambal monument at the Gandhi Sagar Dam in Madhya Pradesh. He is also receipient of Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony

It is annual award instituted by Government of India in 2011 as part of commemoration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. The award is given for cultural harmony and carries monetary amount of Rs. 1 crore, citation in scroll, plaque as well as exquisite traditional handicraft or handloom item. The award is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or sex. It was conferred for first time on Indian Sitar Maestro Pt. Ravi Shankar in 2012 and second time on Shri Zubin Mehta in 2013.

October 27, 2018

Mahinda Rajapaksha sworn in as Prime Minister of Sri Lanka

Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena has sacked Ranil Wickremesinghe, incumbent prime minister of

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Sri Lanka and appointed former President Mahinda Rajapaksha as new Prime Minister.

In recent times, the politics of Sri Lanka is in turmoil because of the tension between President Sirisena and PM Vikramasinghe. In a sudden move, the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA), the Political Front of President Mittipala Sirisena, withdrew support from the coalition government with Ranil Vikramasinghe's Party United National Party (UNP). This coalition government was formed in 2015, when Sirisena became President by the support of Ranil Vikramasinghe.

This sudden move also indicates a constitutional crisis lurking in Sri Lanka. According to the 19th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, Vikramasinghe could not be removed from the post without the majority.

About Mahinda Rajapaksa

Mahinda Rajapaksa was born on November 18, 1949 in the southern province of British Sri Lanka. He was the 18th Prime Minister of Sri Lanka from April 6, 2004 to November 19, 2005. After that, he was the 6th President of Sri Lanka from November 19, 2005 to January 9, 2015.

Vigilance Awareness Week – 2018

The Central Vigilance Commission observes the Vigilance Awareness Week every year during the week in which birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (31st October) falls. The 2018 Vigilance Awareness Week is being observed from 29th October to 3rd November, 2018.

Theme of the Week

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The theme of Vigilance Awareness Week-2018 is

- Eradicate Corruption-Build a New India (in English)
- □□□□□□□□□□□ □□□□□- □□□□□□□□ □□□□ (in Hindi)

Activities

The CVC has asked various central government ministries and organizations to conduct relevant activities during this week. Some of the activities include:

- Taking Integrity Pledge by all employees
- Distribution of pamphlets/handouts on preventive vigilance activities, whistle blower mechanism and other anti-corruption measures
- Conducting workshops and sensitization programmes for employees and other stake holders on policies/procedures of the organization and preventive vigilance measures
- Publication of journals/newsletters on vigilance issues, systemic improvements and good practices adopted for wider dissemination and awareness, conducting various competitions such as debates, quiz etc. for the employees and their families on issues relating to anti-corruption and the use of organizational websites for dissemination of employees/customer oriented information.

Further, there will be outreach activities for public/citizens including display of hoardings, banners, posters and distribution of handouts etc. at prominent locations/places in offices/field units and also at places with public interface , organization of grievance redressal camps for citizens/customers by organizations having customer oriented services/activities and the taking of the online "Integrity Pledge" developed by the Commission.

Integrity Clubs in Schools

One of the highlights of the week will be establishment of Integrity Clubs in the schools and colleges to cultivate ethical values in the leaders of tomorrow.

Awareness Gram Sabhas

The objective of Awareness Gram Sabhas is to sensitize the rural citizens about the ill-effects of corruption. In 2017, 67,131 such Gram Sabhas were organized during the Vigilance Awareness Week.

Global Agriculture Leadership Awards – 2018 and First World Agriculture Prize

Since 2008, the Global Agriculture Leadership Summit & Awards are organised by Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) with support of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare; Ministry of Food Processing Industries and Ministry of Commerce. The 2018 Global Agriculture Leadership Summit was 11th in this series and it was held in Hotel Hyatt Regency, New Delhi recently in October, 2018.

Global Agriculture Leadership Awards – 2018

ICFA had established the Agriculture Leadership Awards in 2008 to recognize the leadership roles played by individuals and institutions positively impacting the lives of farmers and rural masses. During the

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recent summit, the Global Agriculture Leadership Awards – 2018 were announced and presented. The winners are as follows:

S No.	Category	Awardee Name
1.	International Leadership Award	Prof. Rudy Rabbinge, Special Envoy – Food Security, Government of Netherlands
2.	Africa Leadership Award	Mr. Anthony Selorm K Morrison, President & CEO, Chamber of Agribusiness, Ghana
3.	Research Leadership Award	National Research Development Corporation
4.	Academic Leadership Award	Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad
5.	Livelihood Leadership Award	Mr. Shailendra Chaudhary, MD, NERCORMP, Shillong
6.	Farming Leadership Award	Mr. Satishbabu Gadde, Andhra Pradesh
7.	Media Leadership Award	Mr. Ammar Zaidi, National Business Editor, PTI
8.	Development Leadership Award	Dr. PK Joshi, South Asia Director, International Food Policy Research Institute
9.	Agribusiness Leadership Award	Nagarjuna Agro Chemicals P. Limited, Hyderabad
10.	Industry Leadership Award	Sonalika Group, New Delhi
11.	Global Business Leadership Award	The Weather Company, IBM
12.	Technology Leadership Award	Tirth Agro Technology Private Limited, Rajkot
13.	Corporate Sustainability Award	PepsiCo Holdings India P. Limited, Gurgaon
14.	Lifetime Achievements Award	Padamshree Dr. KH Gharda, Chairman, Gharda Chemicals Limited
15.	Policy Leadership Award	Mr. N. Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh
16.	Program Leadership Award	The State Horticulture Mission, Government of Haryana
17.	Best Fisheries State	The State of Jharkhand
18.	Best Animal Husbandry State	The State of Bihar
19.	Best Horticulture State	The State of Nagaland
20.	Best Agriculture State	The State of Gujarat

Prof. Rudy Rabbinge, who has received International Leadership Award is Special Envoy – Food Security, Government of Netherlands. He has been awarded for his contribution in the field of food security and rural development.

Andhra Pradesh CM N. Chandrababu Naidu was awarded the Policy Leadership Award for his proactive policies for uplifting the farming community by focusing on irrigation, investment, global partnerships, marketing initiatives and zero budget natural farming.

Best States in Various Fields

The best fisheries State Award was given Jharkhand for efforts in augmenting the production potential of the state in fisheries segment. Further, Bihar is Best Animal Husbandry State, Nagaland is best Horticultural state, Gujarat is Best Agriculture State and Haryana has been conferred with Program Leadership Award.

First World Agriculture Prize – Prof. M.S. Swaminathan

The event witnessed bestowing of Prof. M.S. Swaminathan with the first World Agriculture Prize. This prize instituted by the Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) was presented by Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu at Vigyan Bhawan at a special session, named Swaminathan Global Dialogue on Climate Change and Food Security organised by the Indian Council of Food and Agriculture.

Prof. M S Swaminathan

Prof. Swaminathan is known as ***Father of Green Revolution in India*** and is renowned worldwide for his basic and applied research in genetics, cytogenetics, radiation and chemical mutagenesis, food and biodiversity conservation. The United Nations Environment Programme has hailed him as ***'The Father of Economic Ecology'*** owing to his commitment towards the ever-green revolution movement in agriculture.

The ICFA's World Agricultural Prize carries a cash component of $1,00,000 and will recognise individuals

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who have served humanity through agriculture. It will be an annual prize and would be presented to any individual or institution, importantly from Asian, African or Latin American countries who have played a seminal role in transforming agriculture globally and saving humanity from the curse of hunger.

Winners of United Nations Human Rights Prize – 2018

The United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights (UN Human Rights Prize) was announced recently by María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés, President of the 73rd Session of United Nations General Assembly. The winners of 2018 award are:

- Asma Jahangir – Pakistan's late human rights activist
- Rebeca Gyumi – A Tanzanian human rights activist
- Joenia Wapichana – Brazil's first indigenous lawyer
- Front Line Defenders – A human rights organisation of Ireland

About the UN Human Rights Prize

These awards were instituted by the General Assembly of United Nations in 1966 and are intended to honour and commend people and organizations which have done outstanding contribution to the promotion and protection of human rights embodied in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other United Nations human rights instruments. The first awards were given in 1968 and are given ***every five years*** since then.

About 2018 Winners

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Asma Jahnagir

Late Asma Jahangir (died Feb. 2018) was the fourth Pakistani woman to receive the prestigious award. She was an advocate from Pakistan, known for her persistent advocating for women's rights and discrimination against minorities. She was first woman to serve as president of the Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan. She was critical of Pakistan's military, intelligence and armed groups. She faced death threats, imprisonments and beatings several times. She co-founded and chaired the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan; helped passing of a legislation against bonded labour in Pakistan; and worked on blasphemy cases.

Rebeca Gyumi

Rebecca Gyumi is a Tanzanian advocate and founder of the ***Msichana Initiative*** in Tanzania. This is an NGO which advocates for girls' right to education. In 2016, Gyumi had won a landmark case on child marriages after petitioning against the 1971 Tanzania Marriage Act which allowed girls as young as 14 to get married.

Joenia Wapichana

Joenia Wapichana is an indigenous lawyer from northern Brazil, and she became first indigenous woman to be elected to the Congress. She was the first indigenous lawyer to speak in front of the Supreme Federal Court and more than a decade before that she became the first indigenous person to graduate from law school in the country.

Front Line Defenders

Front Line Defenders is an Ireland based charity that provides support to human rights defenders having lives and health at risk through advocacy, grants, security and training. It was founded in 2001 in Ireland's capital, Dublin.

Trivia: So far, only one Indian personality – **Baba Amte** has been awarded United Nations Human Rights Prize. Baba Amte was given this prize in 1988.

Fact Sheet: World Wrestling Championships – 2018

The 2018 World Wrestling Championships were fifteenth edition of World Wrestling Championships of combined events and were held from October 20 to 28 in Budapest, Hungary. Here are important facts:

About UWW World Wrestling Championships

- It is amateur wrestling world championship event organised by the United World Wrestling.
- It was started in 1904 with the Men's Greco-Roman wrestling tournament.
- From 1951, the Men's freestyle wrestling tournament began.

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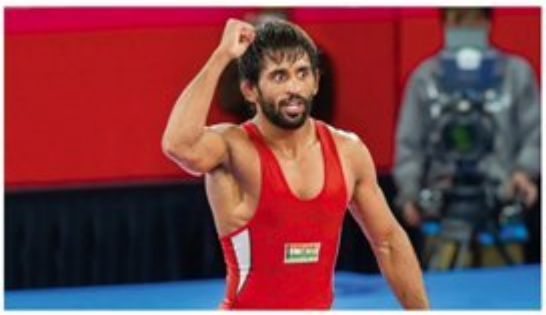
- From 1987, women's freestyle championship started.

The top medal winning countries

In the 2018 event, Japan won the most medals with 5 gold, 1 silver and 4 bronze. Russia comes second with 8 medals.

India's performance

India is at the 17th place with 2 medals – 1 silver and 1 bronze. Bajrang Punia bagged the silver medal. Pooja Dhanda won Bronze medal and became fourth Indian woman to win a medal at the World Wrestling Championship.




About Bajrang Punia

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Bajrang Punia from Haryana is India's freestyle wrestler who won a Bronze medal in 2013 world wrestling championships, bagged silver medal in 2015 commonwealth games, 2014 Asian games, and 2014 Asian wrestling championships. With the 2018 win, he has total four silvers in his kitty. He has also won a gold medal at the Asian Wrestling Championship 2017, 2018 commonwealth games, and 2018 Asian games.

Pooja Dhanda

Pooja Dhanda from Haryana won silver medals in the 2010 Summer Youth Olympics and 2018 Commonwealth Games. With 2018 Bronze win, she became the fourth Indian woman grappler to win a medal at the World Championship. Before her, Alka Tomar in 2006, Geeta Phogat and Babita Phogat in 2012 had won a bronze medal each at the Worlds Championships.

India Building World's Highest Railway Line

India railways announced its plan to link New Delhi and Ladakh by means of a railway line that will run along the India-China Border. The proposed *Bilaspur-Manali-Leh Line* would be the world's highest railway line once launched.

Key Facts of the Project

- The projected cost to construct the 465 km line will be Rs 83,360 crore.
- The railway line will be the world's highest at 5,360 metres above mean sea level which is comparable to China's Quinghai-Tibet Railway Line at 2,000 metres.
- The project comprise of 74 tunnels, 124 major bridges, 396 minor bridges and 30 stations on the line.
- Keylong station on the route will be constructed inside a tunnel at the height of 3000 metres which is a first in India.
- Notably, more than half the train route would be covered through tunnels, the longest of which is 27 km. Whole length of the tunnels would be 244 km.
- The route will link crucial locations between Bilaspur and Leh such as Sundernagar, Mandi, Manali, Keylong, Koksar, Darcha, Upshi and Karu as well as several other towns of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.
- After the completion, the railway line will halve the time taken to cover the distance between Delhi and Leh from the current 40 hrs to 20 hrs.

In addition to providing quick all-weather access to the armed forces, the railway line will also enhance tourism in the Ladakh region that is presently connected by road and air. The Ladakh-Himachal areas receives heavy snowfall and the road and air connectivity.

India To Become Third Largest Aviation Market : IATA

India will be among the top three aviation market by 2024 according to International Air Transport Association (IATA) in its 20- year air passenger forecast report. India is currently at seventh position in

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Global Aviation market.

Key Highlights Of Report

- The number of air passengers around the world will double to 8.2 billion in 2037.
- China will displace the US as the world's largest aviation market in the mid- 2020. India will take the third place after US around 2024 surpassing UK.
- By 2037, India is expected to add 414 million passengers to its existing 572 million passengers.
- Home passenger traffic in India is growing at around 18.28 per cent to reach 243 million in 2018-19 and will grow to 293 million in 2020.
- When it comes to International traffic, it grew by 10.43 per cent to reach 65 million in 2018 and will grow to 76 million in 2020.
- The biggest growth in terms of air traffic will come from Asia- Pacific region with more than half the number of total new passengers in next 20 years.
- The Asia-Pacific region is expected to see the fastest growth at the rate of 4.8%, followed by Africa (4.6%) and West Asia (4.4%).

International Aviation Traffic Association (IATA): It is the trade association for the world's airlines formed in 1945 and headquartered in Montreal, Canada. It represents around 280 airlines or 82% of total air traffic. It helps to formulate aviation sector policy and standards. It also provides training services in many areas of aviation.

Challenges To India Aviation Sector

The study identified several factors that can impact the future growth of Indian aviation industry:

Growth Policy

The growth policy of 6.1% annually is expected to result in a total market of 520 million Indian passengers in 2037.The protectionist and other negative policy will hold India's growth back to 4.9% and the total market will be 400 million in 2037.

Ease of Doing Business

India is now at 100th position among 132 countries on World Bank's Ease of Doing Report. The improvement in this area will impact sustainable growth of aviation sector.

Travel and Tourism Competitiveness

India has also risen from 52nd place to 40th place in 2017 World Economic Forum's Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index. The improvements in this area as well as in airport infrastructure will further enhance India's aviation market.

Fact Sheet: Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FAIDF)

To double farmers' income by 2022 the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved creation of FAIDF recently. The proposal for creation of fund was made in budget 2018-19.

Salient features of the fund

- The main aim is to boost fish production to achieve the target of producing 15 million tonnes of fish production by 2020 and 20 million tonnes by 2022-23 from current production of 11.4 million tonnes. The aim to achieve this target was set under Blue revolution.
- The nodal agencies for the fund will be National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), National Cooperatives Development Corporation (NCDC) and scheduled banks.
- The fund being raised by nodal loaning entities (NLE).
- The estimated fund size is about 7522 crore that will benefit country in both inland and marine fisheries areas.
- The fund will involve in attracting private investment and technologies in creation and management of fisheries all around the country.

Indian Fish Market

Fisheries in India is an important economic activity and emerging sector. India's fish production is estimated at around 12 million tonnes annually. India has become the second largest fish producing and aquaculture industry in the world. In aquaculture, India is second to china with a share of 6% in global aquaculture. The fisheries sector employed over 14.5 million people directly and many more indirectly. At present, Fish production contributes to around 1% to GDP of country and 5% to agricultural GDP of

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country. India exports one tenth of its Fish produced. The contribution of fish from the seas has lowered now and the share is rising from inland farming.

The Indian government has taken a lot of other efforts to boost up Indian aquaculture market such as Integrating all the existing schemes under Blue Revolution, Establishing 'Brood bank' for commercially important species to ensure production and supply of certified broods to hatcheries in the country, developing cold water fishery, improving the manpower requirements of the fisheries programs. Overall, fisheries is a sunrise sector having a lot of future growth possibilities. All the 3 sub sectors viz. Inland, Aquaculture and Marine fisheries have a lot of scope for improvement. The recent step of creating FAIDF is a praised step to boost the fisheries sector to the desired level.

Fact Sheet: Mammals of India (MaOI)

Mammals of India (MaOI) is a new model of repository on Indian mammals by the Scientists and Researchers from the National Centers for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bangalore. It is a citizen-scientific repository initiated in September 2018. It is a first such repository of Mammals in India.

Special Features Of MaOI

- It is an online, freely –accessible portal whose aim is to develop individual pages for all Indian mammals covering all related information about their distribution, breeding, variation, identification and conservation .
- The website **mammalsofindia.org** provides a facility to the citizen to upload photographic observations about mammals. 768 images, of 161 species of mammals, have been uploaded by October 25, 2018.
- The photographs of rare species such as Red Serow from Manipur, Lynx a species of wild cat from Jammu and Kashmir, Asian Golden Cat from West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh and Binturong, also known as bear cat, from East Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh have been uploaded on this portal.
- This is an exclusive portal for mammals in India which will help in having a good distribution map of mammals all around the country.
- MaOI is an initiative under Biodiversity Atlas project. The Biodiversity Atlas is a species-based bioinformatics platform.

India is a mega-diversity country with only 2.4% of the world's land area but accounts for 7-8% of all global species. There are about 426 species of mammals known from India, which is about 8.86% of the world species.

Citizen Science Projects in Conservation Of Indian Biodiversity

Citizen science projects are changing the scenario of collection of scientific information about biodiversity. These projects enable participants to make direct contribution to collection and research on information related to environmental issues. Citizens are the unpaid contributors in collecting information related to bio-diversity.

October 28, 2018

North East Festival and Experiencing the North East held in New Delhi

The sixth edition of North East festival is being organized till October 28, 2018 in New Delhi and the 15th edition of Indian International Centre festival is to be held from 27-31 October 2018

Key feature of North East Festival

- Cultural performances involving Bagrumba dance, Hozagir dance of Tripura, Bihu dance of Assam, Garo Wangla dance and Manipuri martial arts performances called Thang Ta.
- Fashion shows with traditional patterns and textiles.
- Presentation of organic food and vegetables grown in the region
- 150 craft stalls displaying exotic handloom and handicrafts products of north east region.
- Agriculture, horticulture and food processing stalls.
- There will be special performances by Nise Meruno, classical pianist and vocalist.

Key Features of Experiencing the North East

- The festival is a part of Destination North East Series being organised by North Eastern Council,

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Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER).

- The festival is organised by Indian International Centre as 15th anniversary of its annual festivals. The theme for this year is "Experiencing the North East".
- To showcase the richness of cultural heritage of North East there will be focus on presenting dance, music, theatre, exhibitions, and special cuisines to the visitors.
- There will be an exhibition specially focused on Bamboo products.
- A literary event called "These hills we come from'...Voices from North East
- Will took place focusing on literature of the region.
- There will be a showcase of Films of the region also there in the festival.

Thang Ta and sarit –sarak: These two are the martial art forms from the Indian state of Manipur. In Manipuri language thang means sword and ta means spear. Thang Ta is name for the ancient martial practice known as Huyen Lallong .The unarmed aspect of Thang Ta is named as sarit sarak.

October 29, 2018

SBI to issue and encash electoral bonds soon

The GoI has notified the sale of electoral bond by SBI through its 29 authorized branches from 1.11.2018 to 10.11.2018. 29. These SBI branches are in cities like New Delhi, Gandhinagar, Chandigarh, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Mumbai, Jaipur, Lucknow, Chennai, Kolkata and Guwahati. The concept of electoral bond was initiated in Union Budget 2017.Later on Electoral bond scheme 2018 was introduced.

What is Electoral Bond?

An Electoral Bond is just like a promissory note that will be payable to bearer on demand and free of interest. It can be purchased by a citizen of India or anybody incorporated in India.

Benefits of an Electoral bond

- Transparent political funding
- Protecting donors from harassment
- No disclosure of information to third parties
- Achieving Digital India vision
- Bringing donations under tax preview

Electoral Bonds Scheme 2018

The scheme introduced that the a party registered under the Representation of People's act, 1951 and securing not less than one percent of the votes polled in the preceding election is entitled to receive the electoral bonds. Electoral Bonds may be purchased by only citizen of India. An individual can buy Electoral Bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals. The bonds can only be encashed by an eligible political party only through a bank account with the authorized bank. Electoral Bonds are valid for **fifteen calendar days** from the date of issue. If the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period, no payment is made to any Political Party. The Electoral Bond deposited by an eligible Political Party in its account is credited on the same day. The bonds are issued in multiples of 1000, 10000, 1lakh, 10 lakh, 1 crore. The cash donation has been capped at Rs. 2000 and beyond that donations are via electoral bonds.

October 30, 2018

13th India-Japan Annual Summit

The annual bilateral summit of India –Japan held on 28, 29 October 2018 in Japan. The Indian prime minister visited Japan to attend the summit. The partnership between the two countries has been transformed a lot and it has now become as a 'special strategic and global partnership'.

Highlights

- Japan investors will invest around $2.5 US dollars in India.
- The two sides agreed for a 2+2 dialogue between our foreign ministers and defence ministers to further work towards world peace.
- An **India-Japan Business Platform** will be established to enhance the development of industrial corridors and industrial network in the region
- Both countries will cooperate for the first time in the areas of traditional medicinal systems such as Yoga and Ayurveda. This will facilitate a boost in the healthcare in both the countries.

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- Both the countries have agreed to synchronize upon sharing benefits of the Ayushman Bharat scheme and the Japanese healthcare programme.
- There will be commencement of talks on a **military logistics pact**, the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement, between the two nations that will ensure the access to each other's military bases and naval bases.
- Japan will invest more significantly in the up gradation of infrastructure in the Northeast which will also link India to Southeast Asia.
- The two countries will work together to extend access to education, health and other amenities to the people of the Indo-Pacific, including Africa.
- Japan-India Investment Promotion Roadmap enhanced the contribution of Japan in India's **Make in India** initiative with establishment of **Business Support Centre** in Ahmedabad.

India–Japan recent ties

Cooperation in Sri Lanka, in the development of LNG-related infrastructure and in Africa, in the area of health service – developing a cancer hospital in Kenya

Cooperation in Myanmar, to facilitate development efforts in the Rakhine State Cooperation in Bangladesh, for improving connectivity on the Ramgarh to Baraiyarhat stretch and constructing the Jamuna Railway Bridge over the Januma River. **The Act East Forum** established last year has served as a driving force to improve India-Japan cooperation in the North-East. The cooperation in the project for the construction of **International Cooperation and Convention center** in Varanasi. India and Japan are cooperating to construct the **Mumbai Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR).**

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Gandhian Thought and Swachhata Seminar Organized in Wardha

The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has organised a seminar on Gandhian thoughts and Swachhta to make India a Swacch Bharat by 2019 -150 the birthday celebration of Mahatma Gandhi.

- It was being organized in the Wardha district of Maharastra with a focus on achievement of the objectives of sanitation and Gandhian thoughts via Swacch Bharat Mission.
- The topics for address in the seminar were appropriate technologies in rural sanitation, organic waste management, and preventive sanitation.
- Gandhi's concept of **Swachh evam Swawalambhi Sankul** was the main focus of the seminar.
- The seminar ended with a visit to **Sevagram Ashram** to gain experience from Gandhiji's life.

Key facts about Swacch Bharat Mission

It is a program launched by Indian prime minister to make India Swacchh by 2019 which is the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (**SBA) was launched on 2 October 2014 with two submissions, **SBA (gramin) and SBA (urban)**. **The mission is jointly managed Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation** (MDWS) (for gramin) and the **Ministry of Urban Development** (for urban).

- The mission has components like Construction of Household Toilets, Community and Public Toilets, Solid Waste Management, Information, Education & Communication (IEC) and Public Awareness, Capacity Building and Administrative & Office Expenses (A&OE).
- The mission has well managed to reach great sanitation level in three years of launch.

It is a massive Jan Andolan (people's movement) and the rural sanitation coverage having increased from 39%, at the launch of the SBM in 2014, to over 95% today.

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October 31, 2018

Researchers developed a web-based tool to monitor fake news on Facebook, Twitter

A web-based tool to monitor the spread of fake news on social media platforms has been developed by the Researchers from the University of Michigan in the US. The tool uses a Platform Health Metric called the **Iffy Quotient** and will supposedly draw data from two external entities namely **NewsWhip and Media Bias/Fact Checker.**

Working of the tool

1. The News Whip will collect URLs from hundreds of thousands of sites each day and then it will gather information about the engagements of these sites on Facebook and Twitter.
2. The Iffy Quotient will fetch information by querying NewsWhip for the top 5000 most popular URLs

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Facebook and twitter.

3. Then the tool will check using the information at Media Bias/Fact checker whether the URL has been classified as iffy, ok, or unknown.

Newswhip

It is a social media engagement tracking firm to collect URLs of thousands of sites everyday and collect information whether these sites have involvement in Facebook and Twitter.

Media Bias/Fact Checker

It divides the URL into three categories, 'Iffy' if the website is on a questionable source or a conspiracy list and 'OK' if the websites on the lists such as Left Bias, Right Bias or Satire, and 'Unknown' if the website is not on any of the lists.

CSIR developed Less Polluting Firecrackers named – SWAS, SAFAL and STAR

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) scientists has developed less polluting green firecrackers named SWAS,SAFAL,STAR. Green crackers are so named because they do not contain harmful chemicals that would cause air pollution.

Features

- SWAS stands for safe water releaser, SAFAL stands for safe minimal aluminum and STAR stands for safe thermite cracker.
- These crackers are 15-20 percent cheaper than the conventional ones.
- STAR eliminates usage of Potassium nitrate and sulphur.
- SAFAL has less usage of aluminum as compared to commercial crackers.
- The new crackers have been developed by Central Electrochemical Research Institute (CECRI) based in Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu and National Environmental Engineering Research Institute in Nagpur.
- The firecrackers have a unique property of releasing water vapour.
- The researchers at CECRI have developed green crackers by modifying the chemical formulations for flower pots, 'jiljil' and used flower pots as a substitution for barium nitrate .
- The crackers will come in the market after the approval from Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organization (PESO), which is the nodal agency for safety requirements in manufacture, storage, transport of all types of explosives.
- It matches the sound intensity of commercial crackers in the range of 105-110 decibels.

About CSIR –NEERI

The CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute is a research institute created and funded by Government of India under the Ministry of Science and Technology. It works in the field of environmental science and engineering and is a part of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research. It was established in Nagpur in 1958.

The Indian fireworks industry has an annual turnover of over Rs 6000 crore .It provides employment opportunities to about 5 lakh families annually. CSIR tried to address pollution level and at the same time protecting the livelihoods of those involved in this industry.

Fact Sheet: Odisha Coastal Disaster Alert System

Odisha Government has launched an automatic public address system to warn citizens about cyclone and tsunami, floods.

Key features

- This is the first of its kind technology in field of Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS) in India.
- The EWDS of Odisha government has been implemented under the assistance of World Bank with a cost of around 82 crores.
- Around 122 towers have been installed along the 480 km long coastline of the odisha state to produce sound and sirens during emergency situations.
- Sound producing from the towers can be heard in communities within a radius of 1.5 km.
- The button will be pressed from the state emergency centre in Bhubaneswar during an emergency situation.

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- Six coastal districts named Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Puri and Ganjam have been covered under the system.
- It's a part of the last-mile connectivity programme under the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project an aimed at protecting people from the cyclone effects.
- The system will prove to be boon for the fisherman of the state.

Odisha and disasters

Odisha is vulnerable to many disasters. The state is prone to tropical cyclones, Storm surges and tsunamis. A large part of the state comes under Earthquake Risk Zone-II. The **super-cyclone of 1999** which claimed 10,000 lives in Odisha. In 2013.**Cyclone Phailin** hit the Indian coasts. **Cyclone Hudhud** hit Odisha in 2014.Recently **cyclone Titli** hit odisha coast in 2018.

Disaster preparedness of Odisha

- The Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) was established in 1999.OSDMA was the first disaster management authority centre established in India.
- Odisha has active State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA).
- Odisha, has built close to 800 multipurpose cyclone and flood shelters in cyclone prone areas.
- All vulnerable regions in Odisha have active Cyclone Management Centres.
- **Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF)** is a well known name in cyclone hit areas.

The continuous focus on developing manpower, skill, and infrastructure, state of Odisha has emerged as one of the most disaster-ready states in the world today

Defence Ministry signs contract with GRSE for supply of four survey vessels for Indian Navy

Union Defence Ministry has signed contract worth Rs 2,435.15 crore with public sector Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata for manufacturing of four survey vessels aimed at boosting to capabilities of Indian Navy. The project completion time is 54 months from date of signing contract. The first ship will be delivered within 36 months and remaining within interval of six months for each vessel.

Key Facts

- These survey vessels will 110 metre long with deep displacement capacity of 3,300 tonnes and complement of 231.
- They will be equipped with highly advanced state-of-the-art hydrographic equipment and sensors including Hello Hanger to accommodate one advanced light helicopter.
- The design and construction of these vessels will be as per Classification Society Rules and Naval Ship Regulations and also conform to latest MARPOL (Marine Pollution) Standards of International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

Applications

- These vessels will be used for full-scale coastal and deep-water hydrographic survey of ports and harbours, approaches and determination of navigational channels and routes.
- They will be also used to undertake surveys of maritime limits up to Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and extended continental shelf. They will be deployed for collection of oceanographic and geophysical data for defence applications.
- In their secondary role, they will also perform limited search and rescue, ocean research and operate as hospital ship and casualty holding ships.

Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE)

- It is defence PSU and one of India's leading state-owned shipyards, located in Kolkata, West Bengal. It builds and repairs commercial and naval vessels. It also has started building export ships.
- It was founded in 1884 as small privately owned company on eastern bank of Hooghly River. It was renamed as Garden Reach Workshop in 1916. It was nationalised by Government in 1960.
- It has *Miniratna status*. It is first Indian shipyard to build 100 warships. It is currently handling major project to make three Stealth Frigates for Indian Navy under P17A Project.
- 100 warships built by GRSE so far range from advanced frigates to anti-submarine warfare corvettes to fleet tankers, fast attack crafts, etc.

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19th meeting of FSDC held in New Delhi

The 19th meeting of Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was held in New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley. The meeting was attended by RBI Governor Dr. Urjit R. Patel, SEBI chairman, IRDAI Chairman along with heads and other senior officers of Government and financial sector regulators.

Key Highlights of Meeting

- **Economic Review:** It reviewed health of economy, both domestic and global, financial sector performance and issues due to rising oil prices. It also discussed issue of real interest rate, current liquidity situation, including segmental liquidity position in NBFCs and mutual fund space.
- **Cyber Security in Financial Sector:** It also reviewed developments regarding strengthening of Cyber Security in Financial Sector and progress made towards setting up of Computer Emergency Response Team in the Financial Sector (CERT-Fin) under Statutory Framework. It also deliberated on need for identifying and securing critical information infrastructure in financial sector.
- **Crypto Currency:** It also deliberated on issues and challenges of Crypto Assets and Currency. It was briefed about deliberations of *High-level Committee chaired by Secretary (Economic Affairs)* to devise appropriate legal framework to ban use o fprivate crypto currencies in India and encouraging use of distributed ledger technology (blockchain), as announced in Budget 2018-19.
- **RegTech and SupTech:** It also discussed market developments and financial stability implications of use of RegTech and SupTech by financial firms and regulatory and supervisory authorities. It also discussed implementation of recommendations of *Sumit Bose Committee* on measures, such as promoting appropriate disclosure regime for financial distribution costs.

Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)

- FSDC is super regulatory body for regulating financial sector which is vital for bringing healthy and efficient financial system in economy of the country. It was set up in 2010 by then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee
- **Mandate:** To strengthen and institutionalise mechanism of maintaining financial stability, financial sector development, inter-regulatory coordination along with monitoring macro-prudential regulation of economy and promoting financial sector development.
- **Composition**: *Union Finance Minister is chairman of FSDC*. Its members are heads of all financial sector regulatory authorities (i.e, RBI, SEBI, IRDA, PFRDA), Chairman of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board, Finance Secretary and Secretary, Department of Economic Affair; Secretary, Department of Financial Services and Chief Economic Adviser.

India among nations that face grave danger to soil biodiversity: WWF

According to recently released Global Soil Biodiversity Atlas prepared by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), India among nations that face grave danger to soil biodiversity. The atlas was released as part of WWF's biennial Living Planet Report (LPR) 2018. The key aspect of this year's report was threat to soil biodiversity and pollinators, the two key drivers of biodiversity. These two key drivers loss were due to over exploitation of natural resources and agriculture.

Highlights of report

- **Soil Biodiversity:** It encompasses presence of micro-organisms, micro-fauna (nematodes and tardigrades for example), and macro-fauna (ants, termites and earthworms).
- Millions of microbial and animal species live and make up soils, from bacteria and fungi to mites, beetles and earthworms. Soil biodiversity, thus is total community from genes to species, and varies depending on environment.
- The immense diversity in soil allows for great variety of ecosystem services that benefit species that inhabit it, the species that use it and its surrounding environment.
- **WWF's 'risk index' for globe**: It indicated threats from loss of above-ground diversity, pollution and nutrient over-loading, over-grazing, intensive agriculture, fire, soil erosion, desertification and climate change.
- India was coloured red on atlas and is among countries whose soil biodiversity faces the highest level of risk. Other countries in this category include Pakistan, China, several countries in Africa and

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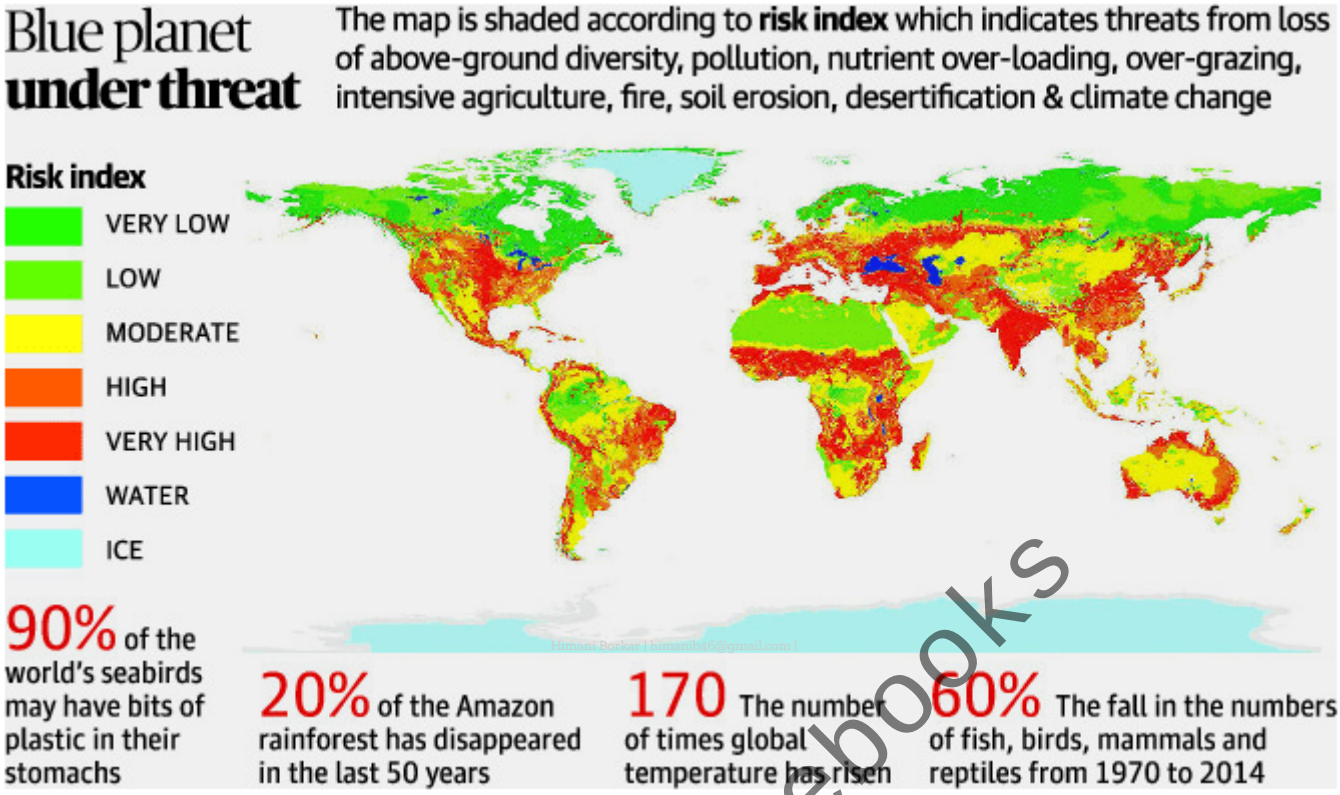
Europe, and most of North America.



- **India's per capita ecological footprint**: It was less than 1.75 hectares/person (it is in lowest band among countries surveyed). India's high population made it vulnerable to ecological crisis, even if per-capita consumption remained at current levels.
- **Pollinators:** 150 million bee colonies were needed to meet the pollination requirements of about 50 million hectares of agricultural land in India, only 1.2 million colonies were present.
- **Ecological loss:** Population of fish, mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles has dwindled by average of 60% from 1970 to 2014 and fresh-water species have declined by 83% in same period. Globally, extent of wetlands os estimated to have declined by 87% since 1970.

World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)

It is international non-governmental organization working field of the wilderness preservation and reduction of human impact on the environment. It was formerly named World Wildlife Fund. *It is world's largest conservation organization* with over five million supporters worldwide, working in more than 100 countries, supporting around 1,300 conservation and environmental projects. It founded in 1961 and is headquartered in Gland, Switzerland. WWF aims to stop degradation of planet's natural environment and build future in which humans live in harmony with nature. Currently, its work is organized around these six areas: *food, climate, freshwater, wildlife, forests, and oceans*. It publishes Living Planet Report every two years since 1998 and it is based on Living Planet Index and ecological footprint calculation.

Multiple Choice Questions

1. Which of the following cities is the venue of the India International Silk Fair (IISF-2018)?

[A] Guwahati
[B] Pune
[C] New Delhi
[D] Lucknow

Correct Answer: C [New Delhi]

Notes:
The India International Silk Fair (IISF-2018) has inaugurated by Union Minister Smriti Irani at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi on October 16. The fair will give a platform to exporters to display their products and to overseas buyers an opportunity to place orders and source their merchandise. In it, over 108 exhibitors of silk and blended silk will display their produce. Over 218 buyers from various countries will participate in the 3-day fair. Artisans from Jammu & Kashmir and north-east will showcase their unique

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products from their region which will be an added attraction for buyers. The IISF-2018 is expected to generate business of over $20 million for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) engaged in producing silk and blended silk garments, fabrics, accessories and floor covering. India is the second largest producer of silk in the world. The country's silk industry is agriculture based and labour intensive and provides gainful employment to around eight million artisans and weavers in rural areas.

2. Who has been honored as the India Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) 2018?

[A] Prema Gopalan

[B] Smita Ram

[C] Ramakrishna N.K.

[D] Rajiv Kumar

Correct Answer: A [Prema Gopalan]

Notes:
Prema Gopalan, founder of Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP), has been honored as the India Social Entrepreneur of the Year (SEOY) 2018 for her work in promoting women's entrepreneurship at the grassroots and ensuring rural livelihood. The SSP model comprises four ventures: a federated network of 5,000 self-help groups; a resilience fund for women-led businesses; a rural school of entrepreneurship and leadership for women; and a market aggregator that provides warehousing, branding, marketing and distribution services to last-mile business women. The SEOY award was jointly founded by Jubilant Bhartia Foundation and Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship in 2010. It recognizes promising and high-impact social entrepreneurs who implement practical and sustainable solutions. The Schwab Foundation for Social Entrepreneurship is a sister organization of the World Economic Forum (WEF).

3. Who has been appointed the new Chairperson of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR)?

[A] Stuti Kacker

[B] Priyank Kanoongo

[C] Shanta Sinha

[D] Kushal Singh

Correct Answer: B [Priyank Kanoongo]

Notes:
Priyank Kanoongo has been appointed the new Chairperson of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) for a period of 3 years. The post of chairperson fell vacant after Stuti Kacker's tenure ended on September 16, 2018. The NCPCR is a statutory body, which was set up by an Act of Parliament in 2007 under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005.

4. Which country to host the 2019 IAAF World Relays?

[A] Indonesia

[B] South Korea

[C] Japan

[D] China

Correct Answer: C [Japan]

Notes:
The 4th edition of International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) World Relays 2019 will be hosted by Japan Association of Athletics Federations (JAAF) at Nissan Stadium in Yokohama (near Tokyo), which is scheduled to begin from May 11-12, 2019. The 2019 edition of IAAF World Relays will serve as a qualifier for the 2019 IAAF World Athletics Championships in Doha and the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo. Top 12 teams in world rankings will be qualified for the competitions in Doha while the best eight will make their way to Tokyo.

5. Who led the Indian delegation at the 6th RCEP Inter-sessional Ministerial Meeting (IMM)?

[A] Ajit Doval

[B] Suresh Prabhu

[C] Sushma Swaraj

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[D] CR Chaudhary

Correct Answer: D [CR Chaudhary]

Notes:
The 6th RCEP Inter-sessional Ministerial Meeting (IMM) was held in Singapore on 12-13 October, 2018. The Ministers from 16 RCEP countries discussed modern, comprehensive and mutually beneficial economic partnership agreement among ASEAN and ASEAN's FTA partners. The Indian delegation was led by CR Chaudhary, the Minister of State for Commerce & Industry and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution. The meeting also reviewed developments since the 6th RCEP Ministerial Meeting held in August 2018 in Singapore. The RCEP stands for "Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership". It is a proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the 10 member states of the ASEAN (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) and the six Asia-Pacific states with which ASEAN has existing free trade agreements (Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand).

6. On which date, the 2018 Rashtriya Mahila Kisan Diwas is celebrated in India?

[A] October 16

[B] October 17

[C] October 15

[D] October 14

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Correct Answer: C [October 15]

Notes:
Rashtriya Mahila Kisan Diwas is celebrated every year on 15th of October to increase active participation of women in agriculture & allied sectors. Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh will address the function in New Delhi this afternoon. Women farmers, entrepreneurs, farming organizations, agricultural scientists and researchers from different states will participate in the event. In 2016, the Ministry had decided to observe 15th of October as Rashtriya Mahila Kisan Diwas. Women are contributing invarious aspects of agriculture including sowing, planting, fertilizing, plant protection, harvesting, weeding, and storage.

7. Paul Allen, who passed away recently, co-founded Microsoft with Bill Gates in which year?

[A] 1971

[B] 1983

[C] 1975

[D] 1980

Correct Answer: C [1975]

Notes:
Paul Allen (65), who co-founded Microsoft with his childhood friend Bill Gates, has passed away in Seattle on October 15, 2018. In 1975, they founded the Microsoft at Albuquerque in New Mexico to develop and sell BASIC interpreters for the Altair 8800 hobby-kit personal computer. It was Allen who came up with the name Microsoft and had left the company in 1983. After that, he became the billionaire philanthropist who invested in conservation, space travel, arts and culture and professional sports. Allen was on the list of America's wealthiest people who pledged to give away the bulk of their fortunes to charity. At the time of his death, he ranked 44th on Forbes' 2018 list of billionaires with an estimated net worth of more than $20 billion.

8. India's first agri and food business online learning platform has launched in which city?

[A] Kochi

[B] Agartala

[C] Warangal

[D] Nagpur

Correct Answer: C [Warangal]

Notes:
The SRiX Agri-Business Academy, which is an Indo-UK collaborative initiative, has been launched at SR Innovation Exchange (SRiX) Campus in Warangal. It is India's first agri and food business online learning platform and was launched by Andrew Fleming, the British Deputy High Commissioner at Hyderabad.

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SRiX is a technology business incubator under the Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India. It is focused on startups in Agriculture, Cleantech and IoT. Sarras Academies Ltd (a UK-based company) and SriX have joined hands to launch the Academy. This highlights the collaboration between Telangana and UK.

9. Which of the following is the official mascot of 2018 Men's Hockey World Cup?

[A] Olly

[B] Zabivaka

[C] Gauchito

[D] Rhino

Correct Answer: A [Olly]

Notes:
The 14th edition of the Men's Hockey World Cup will be held at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar from 28 November to 16 December, 2018. Turtle Olly has been declared as the official mascot of 2018 tournament at the Puri sea beach in Odisha. Alongside the promotion of the event, the mascot aims to raise awareness about the conservation of the Olive Ridley turtle, which is said to be on the verge of extinction in the state of Odisiha. From the games perspective, Olly personifies the spirit of sportsmanship and encourages the participants to play the sport with complete fairness and in the right spirit. In the 18-day mega event, 16 countries are participating including India.

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10. On which date, the 2018 International Day of Rural Women was observed, recently?

Edited

[A] October 15

[B] October 14

[C] October 16

[D] October 17

Correct Answer: A [October 15]

Notes:
The International Day of Rural Women is celebrated every year on 15th of October to recognize the crucial role of women and girls in ensuring the sustainability of rural households and communities, improving rural livelihoods and overall wellbeing. The 2018 theme "Sustainable infrastructure, services and social protection for gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls", places empowerment of rural women at the heart of fulfilling the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals, SDGs. To mark this day, UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres stated that the empowerment of rural women and girls is essential to building a prosperous, equitable and peaceful future for all on a healthy planet.

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11. ICICI was formed in 1955 at the initiative of which International organisation?

[A] World Bank

[B] IMF

[C] United Nations

[D] WEF

Correct Answer: A [World Bank]

Notes:
The ICICI Bank was originally established by ICICI Limited as a wholly owned subsidiary in 1994. Though, Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India (ICICI) was formed in 1955 as a joint-venture of the World Bank, the Government of India (GoI) and representatives of Indian industry. The principal objective was to create a development financial institution for providing medium-term and long-term project financing to Indian businesses. Recently, it is in news because the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has approved appointment of Sandeep Bakshi as Managing Director and CEO of the private sector lender ICICI Bank for 3 years. He succeeded Chanda Kochhar, who is facing enquiry over the charges of nepotism and conflict of interest. Ms Kochhar had quit the bank on October 4 before her current tenure was to end. She also resigned from all subsidiaries of the bank, including ICICI Securities where she had sought reappointment as the chairperson.

12. Who is the author of the book "Half the Night is Gone", which is shortlisted for The Hindu Prize

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2018?

[A] Meena Kandasamy.

[B] Nidhi Dugar Kundalia

[C] Amish Tripathi

[D] Amitabha Bagchi

Correct Answer: D [Amitabha Bagchi]

Notes:
The book titled "Half the Night is Gone", which is shortlisted for The Hindu Prize 2018 in the fiction segment, is authored by Amitabha Bagchi. It tells the story of a celebrated Hindi novelist Vishwanath, heartbroken by the recent loss of his son. The book raises questions of religion, literature and society that speak to our fractured times.

13. Who has been elected as new Chairman of Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI)?

[A] M S Jha

[B] Nimesh Shah

[C] Kailash Kulkarni

[D] A Balasubramanian

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Correct Answer: B [Nimesh Shah]

Notes:
Nimesh Shah, the MD & CEO of ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund, has been elected as new Chairman of Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI). He succeeded A Balasubramanian, CEO of Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund. Shah has been appointed as Chairman at a time when volatile equity markets and fears of liquidity at IL&FS are keeping investors jittery. As Chairman of AMFI, Shah's challenge will be to focus on investor-centric initiatives through which industry will be able to attract inflows and grow its Assets under Management (AUM).

14. Who has won the India's first medal in athletics at the Youth Olympic Games 2018?

[A] Simran

[B] Lakshya Sen

[C] Suraj Panwar

[D] Tababi Devi

Correct Answer: C [Suraj Panwar]

Notes:
Suraj Panwar has won the India's first medal in athletics at the Youth Olympic Games 2018 after claiming the silver in the men's 5000m race walk event at the Buenos Aires, Argentina. It was India's third overall medal in athletics in the history of the Youth Olympic Games.

15. The ancient city "Prayaga" was renamed as "Allahabad" by which Mughal emperor?

[A] Akbar

[B] Aurangzeb

[C] Humayun

[D] Shah Jahan

Correct Answer: D [Shah Jahan]

Notes:
Recently, the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet has officially adopted a proposal to rename the historic city of Allahabad as Prayagraj. The city was known as Prayag before 16th-century Mughal emperor Akbar built a fort near the confluence of the Ganga and the Yamuna and named it "Ilahabad". His grandson Shah Jahan renamed the entire city "Allahabad". An area near the confluence of the river continues to be known as Prayag. The confluence of two rivers is a 'prayag', and in Allahabad three rivers Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati meet. Hence, it is the king of 'prayags'. That is why it is 'Prayagraj'. Now, the proposal will now go to the Centre before the city is officially renamed even though an Uttar Pradesh minister seemed to suggest the change has already come into effect.

16. 'Swastha Bharat Yatra' national campaign has been launched for which purpose?

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[A] Safe Food
[B] Healthy Drink
[C] Hygienic Locality
[D] Secure Travelling

Correct Answer: A [Safe Food]

Notes:
The Government of India (GoI) has launched a nationwide campaign 'Swasth Bharat Yatra' from October 16 on the occasion of 2018 World Food Day (WFD to create consumer awareness about eating safe and nutritious food for becoming healthy. As per the campaign, a pan-India cycle rally is being organized by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to sensitize people about eating safe food and be healthy. About 7,500 cyclists are expected to participate in over 18,000 km relay cycle rally travelling across six tracks through almost every state and UT over 100 days to propagate a powerful message 'Eat Right India'. The cyclathon will culminate in the national capital on January 27. The 'Eat Right India' movement is a collective effort of key stakeholders and citizens and is aligned with Government's recent focus on public health through its three key programmes – 'Ayushman Bharat', 'Swachh Bharat Mission', and 'POSHAN Abhiyaan'.

17. *"Coming together with those furthest behind to build an inclusive world of universal respect for human rights and dignity"*. This was theme of which of the following days?
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[A] 2018 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty
[B] 2018 International Day of Rural Women
[C] 2018 International Day of Human Rights
[D] 2018 International Day for Older Persons

Correct Answer: A [2018 International Day for the Eradication of Poverty]

Notes:
The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty is observed every year on October 17 to recognize the struggles of the impoverished and to make their voices heard by governments and ordinary citizens. The 2018 theme is "Coming together with those furthest behind to build an inclusive world of universal respect for human rights and dignity". This year marks the 70th anniversary of the proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is important to recall the fundamental connection between extreme poverty and human rights, and that people living in poverty are disproportionately affected by many human rights violations.

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18. What is the theme of the 2018 World Food Day (WFD)?
[A] A millennium free from hunger
[B] Our Actions Are Our Future
[C] Break the Cycle of Rural Poverty
[D] Harvesting nature's diversity

Correct Answer: B [Our Actions Are Our Future]

Notes:
The World Food Day (WFD) is observed every year across the world on 16th of October to commemorate the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in 1945. The theme for WFD 2018 is "Our Actions Are Our Future ! A #ZeroHunger World by 2030 is possible". Zero hunger means working together to ensure everyone, everywhere, has access to the safe, healthy and nutritious food they need. To achieve it, we must adopt a more sustainable lifestyle, work with others, share our knowledge and be willing to help change the world – for the better.

19. Who will lead the Indian delegation at the 12th Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) summit 2018?
[A] Sushma Swaraj
[B] Ram Nath Kovind
[C] Narendra Modi
[D] Venkaiah Naidu

Correct Answer: D [Venkaiah Naidu]

Notes:

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The 12th Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) summit 2018 will be held in Brussels, Belgium from October 18 with theme "Global Partners for Global Challenges". Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu will lead the Indian delegation at the two-day summit. This will also be the first multilateral summit that Vice President will be attending after taking office in August 2017. Besides One to One meeting with the King of the Belgians, Mr. Naidu will have bilateral meetings with various Heads of State on the sidelines of the Summit. The ASEM summit is the highest platform for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe in the areas of trade, investment, security and tourism.

20. The festival of Fulpati has recently celebrated in which neighboring country of India?

[A] Myanmar

[B] Nepal

[C] Sri Lanka

[D] Bhutan

Correct Answer: B [Nepal]

Notes:

The festival of Fulpati has recently celebrated with traditional gaiety and religious fervour in various parts of Nepal. Fulpati is observed on the 7th day of Dashain festival. In Nepali, "Phool" means flower and "Pati" means leaves and plants. There is a tradition in Nepal to bring nine types of Fulpati into the home on the seventh day of Navaratri. It is believed that Fulpati represents nine Goddess and they brings health, wealth and prosperity to the homes. The tradition started during the period of King Prithvi Narayan Shah. The main function was held at Basantpur Durbar Square in Kathmandu, where Fulpati was brought to Dashainghar from Jamal in a traditional procession with Vedic rituals.

21. On which date, the 2018 World Trauma Day (WTD) is observed recently?

[A] October 15

[B] October 19

[C] October 16

[D] October 17

Correct Answer: D [October 17]

Notes:

The World Trauma Day (WTD) is observed every year on October 17 to highlight the increasing rate of accidents and injuries causing death and disability across the world and the need to prevent them. It emphasizes the importance of saving and protecting a life during the most critical moments and preparing and applying critical measures to deal with and avoid trauma fatalities.Trauma means "any injury caused to the body". The injury may be caused due to many reasons like road accidents, fires, burns, falls, acts of violence and crimes against the vulnerable population including women, children and elderly.

22. What is the theme of the 12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM-2018)?

[A] Working Together for a Sustainable and Secure Future

[B] Global Partners for Global Challenges

[C] 20 years of ASEM: Partnership for Future

[D] Biodiversity and Cultural Heritage

Correct Answer: B [Global Partners for Global Challenges]

Notes:

On October 18, the 12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) summit has started in Brussels, Belgium with theme "Global Partners for Global Challenges". The summit will prioritise issues related to connectivity, trade and investment, sustainable development, climate change, terrorism, migration, maritime security and cyberspace. The meeting will bring together Heads of state of 30 European and 21 Asian countries, besides top representatives of the European Union and Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu will lead the Indian delegation at the two-day summit. This will also be the first multilateral summit that Vice President will be attending after taking office in August 2017.

23. Who has won the 2018 Man Booker Prize for Fiction?

[A] Anna Burns

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[B] Val McDermid
[C] Leo Robson
[D] Leanne Shapton

Correct Answer: A [Anna Burns]

Notes:
Irish Author Anna Burns has won the prestigious 2018 Man Booker Prize for Fiction for her novel 'Milkman'. With this, she became the first Northern Irish author and the first woman since 2013 to win the prize. Milkman is an exploration of Northern Ireland's three decades of sectarian violence told through the voice of a young woman. The novel chronicles the struggles of a middle sister in a family as she confronts rumour, social pressures and politics amid violent sectarian divisions in her community.She had previously authored two novels – 'No Bones' and 'Little Constructions'.

24. Who has become the India's first silver-medallist in archery at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games?
[A] Swapana Kumar
[B] Jeremy Lalrinnunga
[C] Akash Malik
[D] Tababi Devi

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Correct Answer: C [Akash Malik]

Notes:
Akash Malik from Haryana has become the India's first silver-medallist in archery at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games. He lost a one-sided final to Trenton Cowles of the USA by 0-6 in the men's recurve final. With this, India concluded the youth Olympics with 13 medals, namely, 3 gold, 9 silver, and one bronze. In it, Jeremy Lalrinnunga won India's first ever Youth Olympics Gold medal.While Tababi Devi won the first ever youth Olympics medal for India in Judo and later also won a silver in the mixed team event under mixed-NOC. Further, Manu Bhaker became the first Indian girl to win a Youth Olympics Gold medal. Both Boys' and Girls' Hockey 5s teams won silver medals in their debut.

25. What is the India's rank in the WEF's Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) for 2018?
[A] 45th
[B] 77th
[C] 58th
[D] 69th

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Correct Answer: C [58th]

Notes:
India has been ranked as the 58th most competitive economy on the World Economic Forum (WEF)'s Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) for 2018. The WEF stated that India's rank rose by five places from 2017, the largest gain among G20 economies. On the list of 140 economies, the US topped the list followed by Singapore and Germany. As per the report, India leads the region in all other areas of competitiveness except for health, education and skills. It further added that India has invested more heavily on transport infrastructure and services. As per the report, India's greatest competitive advantages include its market size and innovation. Among the BRICS economies, China topped the list at 28th place. India, however, remained the "South Asia's main driving force". The GCI 4.0 is a composite indicator that assesses the set of factors that determine an economy's level of productivity – widely considered as the most important determinant of long-term growth.

26. Which of the following G7 countries has officially legalized recreational use of marijuana?
[A] France
[B] Germany
[C] United States
[D] Canada

Correct Answer: D [Canada]

Notes:
Canada has officially become the 2nd Country in the world to legalize the recreational use of marijuana

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nationwide after Uruguay. The Cannabis Act (or Bill C-45) came into force on 17th October 2018. The new regulations aim to protect public health and safety by allowing adults access to legal cannabis and is a social experiment that the rest of the world will be carefully watching. Marijuana is a psychoactive drug from the Cannabis plant intended for medical or recreational use. With this, Canada has also became the the first G7 nation to legalize the drug's recreational use. It must be noted that the use of medical marijuana has been legal in Canada since 2001. The Group of Seven (G7) is a group consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

27. Which country has successfully tested world's largest unmanned transport drone "FH-98"?

[A] Germany

[B] China

[C] Japan

[D] Indonesia

Correct Answer: B [China]

Notes:

On 16th October 2018, China has successfully tested the world's largest unmanned transport drone "Feihong-98 (FH-98)", which can carry a payload of 1.5 tonnes, at Baotou test site in North China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region. The Feihong-98 has a maximum takeoff weight of 5.25 tonnes, a flight height of 4,500m, a cruising speed of 180 km/hr and a maximum range of 1,200 kms. The FH-98 was adapted from the prototype of the Shifei Y5B, a China-developed transport plane. It is developed and modified by the China Academy of Aerospace Electronics Technology (CAAET).

28. On which date, the 2018 World Students' Day (WSD) is observed recently?

[A] October 15

[B] October 16

[C] October 19

[D] October 18

Correct Answer: A [October 15]

Notes:

The World Students' Day (WSD) is observed every year on 15th of October to mark the birth anniversary of former President of India and great scientist Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam. Dr. Kalam was also the great author. Among his books are: 'Wings of Fire', 'My journey', 'Ignited Minds – Unleashing the power within India' and 'India 2020 – A Vision for the New Millennium'. In 2015 the United Nations declared 15 October "World Students' Day". The day is a celebration of multiculturalism, diversity and cooperation among students across the globe.

29. Under which article of the Constitution, the President of India can accept resignation of Council of Ministers?

[A] Article 76

[B] Article 73

[C] Article 74

[D] Article 75

Correct Answer: D [Article 75]

Notes:

As per clause (2) of Article 75 of the Constitution, President Ram Nath Kovind has recently accepted the resignation of M J Akbar from the Union council of ministers on the advice of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He resgined from the post of Minister of State for External Affairs due to allegations of sexual harassment levelled against him by several women journalists.

30. The first-ever joint military exercise "Dharma Guardian- 2018" will be conducted between India and which country?

[A] South Africa

[B] Brazil

[C] Japan

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[D] Chile

Correct Answer: C [Japan]

Notes:
The first-ever Indo-Japan joint military exercise "Dharma Guardian- 2018" will be conducted at Counter Insurgency Warfare School, Vairengte from 01 November to 14 November. During the 14 day long exercise, due emphasis will be laid on increasing interoperability between forces from both countries. Both sides will jointly train, plan and execute a series of well developed tactical drills for neutralisation of likely threats that may be encountered in urban warfare scenario. Experts from both sides will also hold detailed discussions to share their expertise on varied operational aspects. The exercise will contribute immensely in developing mutual understanding and respect for each other's militaries and also facilitate tracking the worldwide phenomenon of terrorism.

31. Which of the following has become the first and only government corporation in India to launch a chat-enabled help-desk service program 'Ask Disha'?

[A] India Post
[B] SEBI
[C] IRDA
[D] IRCTC

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Correct Answer: D [IRCTC]

Notes:
The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has launched an Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered chatbot– Ask Disha (Digital Interaction to Seek Help Anytime) to answer customer queries pertaining to various services offered by IRCTC. It is a first-of-its-kind initiative, which is jointly developed and initiated by IRCTC and CoRover Pvt. Ltd. With this, IRCTC has become the first and only government corporation in India to launch a chat-enabled helpdesk service program. Ask Disha will take the stress out of travel bookings and help provide smooth travel experience to the domestic/foreign traveller on the Indian Railways network. It is a special computer programme designed to simulate conversation with users, especially over the internet. It will support several regional languages and will be voice-enabled and will soon be integrated with IRCTC Android App in the near future. The essential features of chatbot includes zero waiting time for the query to be answered and ability to provide round-the-clock customer support.

32. Which Indian social entrepreneur has been conferred with the IOC Sports and Active Society Development Grant award for 2018?

[A] Hanumappa Sudarshan
[B] Harish Hande
[C] Suheil Tandon
[D] Ajaita Shah

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Correct Answer: C [Suheil Tandon]

Notes:
Social Entrepreneur Suheil Tandon has been conferred with the IOC Sports and Active Society Development Grant award for 2018 for his contribution to sports for development. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) award ceremony was held during the Olympism in Action forum at Buenos Aires. Suheil is the founder of Pro Sport Development (PSD) and Executive Director of Martha Farrell Foundation (MFF). He is committed towards using sport as a tool for the holistic development of youth rather than just for their sporting development. He also uses sport as a tool to challenge unequal and harmful gender relations, with the goal of ending violence against women and girls. The sports-based programmes of PSD are empowering marginalized communities in India, especially children and youth, by creating a level-playing field.

33. BSNL has recently signed pact with which technological giant to leverage Industry 4.0 for manufacturing excellence?

[A] Microsoft
[B] Samsung
[C] Nokia

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[D] Lava

Correct Answer: C [Nokia]

Notes:
The Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Nokia Solutions and Networks India Pvt Ltd to leverage Industry 4.0 for manufacturing excellence at Nokia's Chennai factory. The project also marks India's first 'real-world' application of Industry 4.0 at the Nokia Conscious Factory in Chennai. The Industry 4.0 relies on low-latency, high reliability networks and capabilities in robotics and AI to drive new levels of automation and data exchange in manufacturing industries. This results in improved operational efficiency and reduces costs. In Industry 4.0, machines become smart, share data and includes Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing and others.

34. The famous Shahi litchi of which state has recently got the Geographical Indication (GI) tag?

[A] Bihar

[B] Uttar Pradesh

[C] West Bengal

[D] Assam

Correct Answer: A [Bihar]

Notes:
The famous Shahi litchi of North Bihar has got the Geographical Indication (GI) tag. It is the 4th product from the state after Jardalu mango, Katarni rice and Magahi paan to have got the GI tag. GI is a name or sign used on products to certify that they possess certain qualities for being made or produced as per traditional methods or enjoy a certain reputation due to its geographical origin. Shahi Litchi is mainly cultivated in Muzaffarpur, Samastipur, Vaishali, East Champaran and Begusarai and some parts of adjoining areas in agro-climatic areas of the state. According to agriculture scientists, due to high calcium content in the soil, litchi is better in these areas. A total of 3 lakh metric tonnes of different varieties of litchi were produced in Bihar in 2017-18, out of which 60 per cent were Shahi litchis.

35. The 5th edition of the Women of India Organic Festival will be held in which city?

[A] Guwahati

[B] New Delhi

[C] Pune

[D] Agartala

Correct Answer: B [New Delhi]

Notes:
The 5th edition of the Women of India Organic Festival will be held from October 26 to November 4 at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in New Delhi. It is being organised by the Women and Child Development (WCD) Ministry to promote women organic farmers and entrepreneurs. The move aims to empower women to boost organic culture and promote women organic farmers and entrepreneurs. Over 500 women entrepreneurs from across the country would take part in the fest with their organic products such as cereals, rice, pulses, skin-care products, fabric and jewellery.

36. Which cricket statistican has authored the book "Indian Sports: Conversations and Reflections"?

[A] Sanjay Manjrekar

[B] Jatin Sapru

[C] Sushil Doshi

[D] Vijayan Bala

Correct Answer: D [Vijayan Bala]

Notes:
The book titled "Indian Sports: Conversations and Reflections" has been authored by Vijayan Bala, the veteran commentator and cricket statistican. The book is a compilation of interviews of eminent sports-persons he has conducted since 1971. Bala, who has also been a member of BCCI's Statistical Committee apart from being an English teacher, has interviewed Olympians like Balbir Singh Senior, Abhinav Bindra, Sushil Kumar, Sakshi Malik, Col Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore to name a few. Among the cricketers of yesteryears, he has interviewed MAK Pataudi, GR Viswanath, Eknath Solkar while Gautam

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Gambhir, Unmukt Chand are some of the current day players interviewed by him.

37. Who is leading the Indian delegation at the 8th European Congress on SMEs?
[A] Alka Arora
[B] Sushma Swaraj
[C] Bhaskar Kalra
[D] Giriraj Singh

Correct Answer: A [Alka Arora]

Notes:
On October 17, the 8th edition of the European Congress on SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) has started at Kotawice, Poland with theme "Business-Self-Government Together for Economy". The SMEs from around 50 countries are participating in the 3-day event. From India, Ms. Alka Arora (Joint Secretary in Ministry of MSME) is leading the delegation of 32 Indian SMEs. In order to fructify the opportunities for Indian SMEs, the Congress will be anopportunity to make direct business relations between European and Indian SMEs. The visiting Indian delegation is also expected to showcase Indian products and services at the Expo in the Indian Pavilion.

38. Which of the following Indian research organisations has developed an affordable Water Disinfection System "OneerTM"?
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[A] BARC
[B] ISRO
[C] CSIR
[D] DRDO

Correct Answer: C [CSIR]

Notes:
The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (CSIR-IITR) , Lucknow has developed an innovative technology for "Drinking Water Disinfection System" with Trade name "OneerTM" . ONEER TM is useful for continuous treatment of water and eliminates all disease causing pathogens such as virus, bacteria, fungi, protozoa and cyst to provide safe drinking water to domestic and communities settings as per National and International standards prescribed for potable water (BIS, WHO etc.). It will provide access to safe and clean drinking water at a cost of just 2 Paise / Ltr. The technology will be helpful especially for rural people since it can be solar powered and this development is in line with the 'Make in India' Mission. The smaller unit of Oneer is particularly suitable for homes, street food vendors and small establishments.

39. Which of the following states is set to become the India's first smoke-free State?
[A] Karnataka
[B] Kerala
[C] Tamil Nadu
[D] Andhra Pradesh

Correct Answer: B [Kerala]

Notes:
Kerala is now set to become the India's first smoke-free State with public sector oil companies eyeing 100% LPG penetration here. It is estimated that one crore tonnes of emissions, from poisonous gases like firewood cooking, have been contained and 25 lakh trees have been saved with the introduction of LPG in villages. The target has almost been achieved in most villages, mofussil towns and cities in the State under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY). The Indian Oil has 50% of the market share while the remaining are shared by the HPCL and BPCL. The Indian Oil is also prepared to provide the State with new generation fuels like CNG and other green fuels. Piped gas supply of LPG is also being attempted by the company. As per PMUY, an adult woman member of a Below Poverty Line (BPL) family identified through the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) is given a deposit-free LPG connection with financial assistance of Rs 1,600 per connection by the Centre.

40. Who has been named for 2018 Hridaynath Award for lifetime achievement?
[A] Javed Akhtar

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[B] Amitabh Bachchan
[C] Mohammed Zahur Khayyam Hashmi
[D] Hariprasad Chaurasia

Correct Answer: C [Mohammed Zahur Khayyam Hashmi]

Notes:
Mohammed Zahur Khayyam Hashmi (91), the National Award winning music director, has been named for the 2018 Hridaynath Award for Lifetime Achievement. He is famous as 'Khayyam'. The award, which is instituted by the Hridayesh Arts, carries a cash prize of Rs 100,000 and a memento. The veteran composer, lyricist and writer Khayyam started his music career in Ludhiana in 1943 at the age of 17. His some notable works are as follows: "Umrao Jaan", "Kabhi Kabhi", "Trishul", "Razia Sultan", "Aakhri Khat", etc.

41. Which Union Minister of India will be honoured with the 2018 Carnot Prize of Kleinman Center for Energy Policy?
[A] D V Sadananda Gowda
[B] Nitin Gadkari
[C] Piyush Goyal
[D] Arun Jaitley

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Correct Answer: C [Piyush Goyal]

Notes:
Piyush Goyal, the Union Minister of Railways & Coal, will be honoured with the 2018 Carnot Prize of Kleinman Center for Energy Policy at the University Of Pennsylvania School Of Design. The 2018 Carnot Prize is a recognition of India's efforts towards eliminating energy poverty with sustainable energy solutions. It is the most prestigious award in the energy sector. The Prize is named after French physicist Nicolas Sadi Carnot who recognised that the power of the steam engine would "produce a great revolution" in human development. The Carnot Prize is intended to honour those leading revolutions in energy policy to further progress and prosperity. The Carnot Prize is the Kleinman Center's annual recognition of distinguished contributions to energy policy through scholarship or practice.

42. The first-ever joint maritime exercise will be conducted between ASEAN and which country?
[A] Brazil
[B] China
[C] Japan
[D] Russia

Correct Answer: B [China]

Notes:
The first-ever joint maritime exercise will be conducted between ASEAN and China in the South China Sea near the city of Zhanjiang in an effort to reduce tensions in the disputed region. This exercise will provide very good opportunities from the navies of ASEAN and China to work together using the CUES (Code for Unplanned Encounters at Sea). Four ASEAN members — Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines and Vietnam — have conflicting claims in the South China Sea with Beijing. China claims sovereignty over almost the entire area, including waters near the shores of smaller countries. Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore and Thailand are Asean's other members. The concerns have escalated dramatically in recent years as China started building artificial islands on reefs in disputed waters, and it has also constructed military facilities and airstrips.

43. Which of the following national parties will form new government in Bhutan?
[A] Druk Phuensum Tshogpa
[B] People's Democratic Party
[C] Bhutan Kuen-Nyam Party
[D] Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa

Correct Answer: D [Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa]

Notes:

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The Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa (DNT) will form new government in Bhutan after the party winning 30 seats in 47 member National Assembly, the lower house of the parliament. The Druk Phuensum Tshogpa (DPT) has got remaining 17 seats. This is the first time in Bhutan's decade old parliamentary democracy that a new party has been chosen to form the government. According to the Election Commission of Bhutan, 71.46% polling was recorded in the third general election. DNT President Dr. Lotay Tshering won from South Thimphu constituency with a huge margin and vowed to work for "nation building" in the country which is battling high foreign debt, mainly owed to India, as well as youth employment, rural poverty and criminal gangs.

44. Which of the following space agencies have successfully launched an unmanned Bepi Colombo spacecraft to Mercury?

[A] European Space Agency and JAXA

[B] ISRO and NASA

[C] JAXA and NASA

[D] ISRO and European Space Agency

Correct Answer: A [European Space Agency and JAXA]

Notes:

The European Space Agency and the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) have successfully launched an unmanned Bepi Colombo spacecraft into orbit from an Ariane 5 rocket for a joint mission to Mercury, the planet closest to the sun. The spacecraft has been named after Italian scientist Giuseppe "Bepi" Colombo. The unmanned spacecraft will have to follow an elliptical path that involves a fly-by of Earth, two of Venus and six of Mercury itself so it can slow down before arriving at its destination in December 2025. When it arrives, Bepi Colombo will release two probes – Bepi and Mio – that will independently investigate the surface and magnetic field of Mercury. Mercury's extreme temperatures, the intense gravity pull of the sun and blistering solar radiation make for hellish conditions. The probes are designed to cope with temperatures varying from 430 degrees Celsius (806 F) on the side facing the sun, and -180 degrees Celsius (-292 F) in Mercury's shadow. The ESA-developed Bepi will operate in Mercury's inner orbit, and JAXA's Mio will be in the outer orbit to gather data that would reveal the internal structure of the planet. The only other spacecraft to visit Mercury was NASA's Mariner 10 that flew past the planet in the mid-1970s.

45. Which country to host four nation summit on Syria crisis?

[A] Turkey

[B] Russia

[C] Israel

[D] Iran

Correct Answer: A [Turkey]

Notes:

On Oct. 27, Turkey will host the four nation summit on Syria crisis in Istanbul to discuss the conflict in Syria and efforts for a lasting solution to the war in the Arab country. The summit will be held between the leaders of Turkey, France, Germany and Russia. Russia is a main backer of Syrian President Bashar Assad's government while Turkey has been helping insurgents trying to remove him from power. Though, in September 2018, Russia and Turkey reached an agreement to set up a demilitarized zone around the northwestern Syrian province of Idlib preventing a government offensive on the last rebel stronghold in the country. Idlib and adjacent areas are the last stronghold of rebels. The area is also home to an estimated 3 million people, more than half of whom have already been displaced once during the war. Hence, all aspects of the Syrian conflict are expected to be discussed, including the situation on the ground, the Idlib agreement and efforts for a lasting solution to the conflict.

46. Which state has recently celebrated the Kati Bihu festival 2018?

[A] Meghalaya

[B] Assam

[C] West Bengal

[D] Jharkhand

Correct Answer: B [Assam]

Notes:

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The 3rd edition of Bihu festival, which is also known as Kati Bihu or Kongali Bihu, was celebrated to bring peace and prosperity in Assam. On the occasion of Kati Bihu, women, both in urban and rural areas, try to ward off evil and pray for a rich harvest by lighting earthen lamps. The festival derives its name from the Assamese month of Kati. This is a much sombre festival when compared to the other two Bihu festivals of the state – the Rongali and Bohagi Bihu. The festival is held at this time of the year since the granaries of the farmers usually remain empty and therefore it is known as Kongali (poor) Bihu. As a part of the festival, farmers also tie a special kind of lamp, known as Akash Bati, to poles and the poles are placed in the paddy fields.

47. The scientists of which space agency have found superflares flares from the Young Red Dwarf Stars imperiling planets?

[A] ISRO

[B] JAXA

[C] NASA

[D] Roscosmos

Correct Answer: C [NASA]

Notes:

By using Hubble Space Telescope, the scientists of NASA have found that violent flares from the Young Red Dwarf Stars may make planets orbiting it uninhabitable by affecting their atmospheres. Hubble is observing such stars through a large programme called HAZMAT – Habitable Zones and M dwarf Activity across Time. The purpose of the HAZMAT program is to help understand the habitability of planets around low-mass stars. The word "HAZMAT" describes substances that pose a risk to the environment, or even to life itself. "M dwarf" is the astronomical term for a red dwarf star. The programme is an ultraviolet survey of red dwarfs at three different ages – young, intermediate, and old. According to NASA, Stellar flares from red dwarf star, are particularly bright in ultraviolet wavelengths, compared with Sun-like stars. The flares are believed to be powered by intense magnetic fields that get tangled by the roiling motions of the stellar atmosphere. When the tangling gets too intense, the field breaks & reconnects, and unleashes tremendous amounts of energy. Red dwarf is the smallest, most abundant and longest-lived type of star in our galaxy.

48. Who has won the Wildlife Photographer Of The Year 2018?

[A] Thomas D Mangelsen

[B] Michael Nichols

[C] Marsel van Oosten

[D] Pal Hermansen

Correct Answer: C [Marsel van Oosten]

Notes:

Dutch photographer Marsel van Oosten has won the prestigious Wildlife Photographer Of The Year (WPY) 2018 for his stunning portrait of two endangered golden snub-nosed monkeys in China's Qinling mountains. The winning image – named as 'Golden Couple' – showcases a beautiful golden fur-blue face male monkey rested briefly on a stone seat, joined by female baby monkey. The golden snub-nose monkeys are little known outside of their native range of China's Qinling Mountains. They represent the poorly known primate diversity found in China, much of which is silently sliding toward extinction. The WPY is one of the most prestigious and also the largest wildlife photography competition in the world. Started in 1964, the winning entries and runners-up are published in a book format each year since 1992.

49. Which Indian photographer has won the 2018 Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year (Asia) Award for 'Pipe Owls'?

[A] Rajesh Bedi

[B] Sunjoy Monga

[C] A K Raju

[D] Arshdeep Singh

Correct Answer: D [Arshdeep Singh]

Notes:

Arshdeep Singh (10) from Jalandhar has made India proud by winning the 2018 Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year (Asia) Award (10 years and under age category) for his photograph 'Pipe Owls.

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The award ceremony was held at the Natural History Museum, London on 15th October 2018. The award winning photograph portrays two owlets closely sitting inside a pipe. The image was clicked when Arshdeep was travelling through Punjab's Kapurthala with his father.

50. Which Indian-American personality has been honoured with US Presidential award for Combating Human Trafficking?

[A] Minal Patel Davis

[B] Neil Jain

[C] Vivek R Sinha

[D] Jagdeep Rajput

Correct Answer: A [Minal Patel Davis]

Notes:

An Indian-American woman, Minal Patel Davis has been honoured with a Presidential award by U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for her extraordinary contribution towards combating human trafficking in Houston. She is the special advisor on Human Trafficking to Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner. Davis was appointed to the post in July 2015 since then she has made a local impact on human trafficking in America's fourth largest city from a policy-level perspective and by helped in advancing systems change.

51. Which of the following cities is the venue of the 4th Edition Of Global Partners' Forum?

[A] Kochi

[B] Chennai

[C] Kolkata

[D] New Delhi

Correct Answer: D [New Delhi]

Notes:

The Government of India (GoI) will host the 4th Edition Of Global Partners' Forum in New Delhi on December 12-13, 2018. This unique forum aims to unite PMNCH's 1,000+ partners around common strategies so that every woman, child and adolescent – no matter where they live – can survive, thrive and transform our world. The forum will be co-hosted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW) and PMNCH (The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health). A big focus of the forum will be to share stories of how countries are successfully collaborating across sectors and stakeholders to fast-track improvements in health and well-being of women, children and adolescents.

52. Who is the head of IRDA panel to study feasibility of paying claims in installments?

[A] Suresh Mathur

[B] Injeti Srinivas

[C] Vinod Paul

[D] Rakesh Srivastava

Correct Answer: A [Suresh Mathur]

Notes:

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has formed a panel to examine the feasibility of payment of general and health insurance claims in instalments. It will be headed by Suresh Mathur, ED (Health) in IRDAI. The panel will look into the need for allowing settlement of personal accident and benefit-based health insurance claims in instalments by general and health insurance companies.

53. In which year, the Azad Hind Government was formed by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose?

[A] 1943

[B] 1942

[C] 1940

[D] 1941

Correct Answer: A [1943]

Notes:

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On 21st October 1943, the Azad Hind Government was formed by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, who was the leader of Azad Hind Government and also the Head of State of this Provisional Indian Government-in-exile. It was a part of the freedom movement, originating in 1940s outside India with a purpose of allying with Axis powers to free India from British rule. Pertinently, the role of Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army (INA) had been crucial in bequeathing a much needed impetus to India's struggle for Independence.It is in news recently because the Government of India (GoI) has recently celebrated the 75th anniversary of the formation of Azad Hind Government on 21st October, 2018 by hoisting the National flag at the Red Fort, Delhi.

54. The 2018 Vishwa Shanti Ahimsa Sammelan (VSAS) has started in which state?

[A] West Bengal

[B] Maharashtra

[C] Gujarat

[D] Uttar Pradesh

Correct Answer: B [Maharashtra]

Notes:

President Ram Nath Kovind has inaugurated a 3-day 'Vishwa Shanti Ahimsa Sammelan (VSAS-2018)' at Mangi Tungi in Nashik district of Maharashtra on October 22. The VSAS, which is also known as World peace and ahimsa conference, has been organised by Bhagwan Rishabhdev Murti Nirmaan Samiti. The President will also give away the first international 'Bhagwan Rishabhdev Award' to Teerthanker Mahaveer University based in Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh. The award, which carries a cash prize of Rs. 11 lakh, a memento and a citation, will be given to the chancellor of the university, Suresh Jain. President Kovind will also release a book, titled 'Sarvoccha Digambar Jain Pratima', on the occasion. Thousands of people from different parts of the country are expected to take part in the conference.

55. Which US-based Dalit writer has won the 2018 Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize?

[A] Deepak Unnikrishnan

[B] Aanchal Malhotra

[C] Sujatha Gidla

[D] Sanam Maher

Correct Answer: C [Sujatha Gidla]

Notes:

US-based Dalit writer Sujatha Gidla has won the prestigious 2018 Shakti Bhatt First Book Prize for her book "Ants Among Elephant: An Untouchable Family And The Making Of Modern India". It is an account of growing up in an 'untouchable' family in modern India. The winner receives a cash award of Rs 2 lakh and a trophy. The prize is funded by the Shakti Bhatt Foundation & was set up in 2008 in memory of young writer Shakti.

56. The 27th IAEA Fusion Energy Conference (FEC 2018) has started in which city?

[A] Lucknow

[B] Gandhi Nagar

[C] Jaipur

[D] New Delhi

Correct Answer: B [Gandhi Nagar]

Notes:

The 27th IAEA Fusion Energy Conference (FEC 2018) has started in Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat on October 22. The 3-day event is organised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and hosted by the Department of Atomic Energy and Gandhinagar-based Institute of Plasma Research. The purpose of the Conference to serve as a platform for sharing the results of research and development efforts in both national and international fusion experiments that have been shaped by these new priorities, and to thereby help in pinpointing worldwide advances in fusion theory, experiments, technology, engineering, safety and socio-economics. Experts from across the world will discuss the new challenges being faced by the fusion community in the light of a number of next-step fusion devices being implemented currently.

57. Who heads the parliamentary standing committee on labour to examine the functioning of

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Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)?

[A] Vikram Usendi

[B] Kirit Somaiya

[C] Radheshyam Biswas

[D] Santosh Kumar

Correct Answer: B [Kirit Somaiya]

Notes:
The parliamentary standing committee on labour, which is headed by BJP MP Kirit Somaiya, will examine the functioning of retirement fund body Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), its coverage and recovery of arrears. It will review the implementation of labour laws, social security and welfare scheme for workers. The committee has selected a wide range of subjects related to labourers, including the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conventions binding on India and the measures taken by the government to implement them. It will also look into the working conditions and welfare of mine workers, and review the working of Directorate General of Mines Safety.

58. Which of the following banks has become the India's first PSU bank to introduce comprehensive wealth business services for its clients?

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[A] SBI

[B] PNB

[C] BOB

[D] Dena Bank

Correct Answer: A [SBI]

Notes:
The State Bank of India (SBI) has become the India's first PSU bank to introduce comprehensive wealth business services for its clients. The wealth hub was inaugurated by SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar at the Lalbagh branch in Mangalore. The bank has re-branded its wealth business as "SBI Wealth" offering best-in-class personalised banking and investment services to its elite High Net worth Individual (HNI) clients through a dedicated team of relationship managers. HNI clients would be offered best products across categories from leading fund houses. They will also have the flexibility to invest, transact and view their portfolio,through digital channels like internet banking, mobile and remote relationship model.

59. What is "poly-Oxime", that was developed recently by Indian researchers and was making news?

[A] A skin gel

[B] A pesticide

[C] A very strong nano-material

[D] A coolant

Correct Answer: A [A skin gel]

Notes:
Indian researchers have developed a new skin gel "poly-Oxime" that inhibits the absorption of the most commonly used pesticides such as Organophosphorous compounds, that can cause serious ill effects on health and, in worst cases, result in the death of pesticide handlers such as farmers. The 'poly-Oxime' does not act like a physical barrier but like a catalyst to deactivate organophosphate. The gel has been prepared by researchers at Bangalore-based Institute for Stem Cell Science and Regenerative Medicine (InStem) from a nucleophilic polymer. The 13-member team led by Dr. Praveen Kumar Vemula have formulated and patented the poly-Oxime gel made of chemically modified chitosan — found in the shells of crustaceans such as lobsters, crabs and shrimps. The gel deactivates these chemicals, preventing them from going deep into the skin and organs like the brain and the lungs. It has been found to be effective in tests done in rats and researchers hope to soon test it in humans.

60. Who is the author of the book "Nehru and Bose: Parallel Lives"?

[A] Arpita Ghosh

[B] Abhijit Mukherjee

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[C] Rudrangshu Mukherjee
[D] Sudip Bandyopadhyay

Correct Answer: C [Rudrangshu Mukherjee]

Notes:
The book "Nehru and Bose: Parallel Lives" has been authored by Rudrangshu Mukherjee. It brings to light the riveting story of two contrasting personalities – Subhas Chandra Bose and Jawaharlal Nehru – who would go on to define modern India. It tracks the growth of these two towering figures against the backdrop of the independence movement, delicately tracing the contours of a friendship that did not quite blossom as political ideologies diverged and delineates the shadow that fell between them for, Gandhi saw Nehru as his chosen heir and Bose as a prodigal son.

61. Which of the following is the India's first domestic cruise?
[A] Dhruv
[B] Angriya
[C] Parry
[D] Tarangini

Correct Answer: B [Angriya]

Notes:
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India's first domestic cruise 'Angriya' has recently been flagged off from Mumbai to Goa on October 20 to boost the country's lagging cruise service sector. The cruise has six decks and 104 cabins. It can ferry 399 passengers at a time. It has eight types of rooms – from dormitories to luxury rooms. The price range of the cruise will be from Rs 7,000 to Rs 12,000 for one-way. The ship will run four times a week, except during monsoons. It is named after India's first naval commander Admiral Sarkhel Kanhoji Angre, who served in Shivaji's armament, and who believed one should have a separate Navy to control the waters.

62. What is the India's rank in the valuable nation brand list, according to Brand Finance's Nation Brand report 2018?
[A] 7th
[B] 8th
[C] 9th
[D] 6th

Correct Answer: C [9th]

Notes:
India has been ranked as the 9th most valuable nation brand in the world, according to UK-based consultancy Brand Finance's Nation Brands 2018 report. Despite, India lost one spot to rank, its brand value increased by 5% to $2,159 billion. The US topped the list with a brand value of $25,899 billion, an increase of 23% from the previous year. China ranked 2nd position with a brand value of $12,779 billion, followed by Germany ($5,147 billion), UK ($3,750 billion), Japan ($3,598 billion) and France with $3,224 billion of brand value. The Brand Finance measures the strength and value of the nation brands of 100 leading countries using a method based on the royalty relief mechanism employed to value the world's largest companies. Its research covers nation brand strength, royalty rate, revenues, Weighted Average Cost of Capital (WACC) and brand valuation, among other things.

63. Who has been honoured with the 19th Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for Excellence in Public Administration?
[A] Fali S. Nariman
[B] Bindeshwar Pathak
[C] D K Srivastava
[D] Ajit Doval

Correct Answer: A [Fali S. Nariman]

Notes:
On October 22, renowned jurist Fali S. Nariman has been honoured with the 19th Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for Excellence in Public Administration for year 2018 by the Vice President of India M.

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Venkaiah Naidu. The award was instituted by the Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management in 1995 in the field of Public Administration, Academics and Management. Each year, the award honours an Indian who is an exceptionally outstanding and distinguished business leader, management practitioner, public administrator, educator or institution builder for his/her sustained individual contributions and achievements.

64. Sittwe Port, which is in news recently, is located in which country?

[A] Sri Lanka

[B] Myanmar

[C] India

[D] Bangladesh

Correct Answer: B [Myanmar]

Notes:

The Sittwe Port is a deepwater port at the mouth of the Kaladan River in Sittwe, the capital of Rakhine State in Myanmar. The port was constructed by India in 2016. Recently, it in news because India and Myanmar inked a crucial MoU for the appointment of a private Port Operator for the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of Sittwe Port, Paletwa Inland Water Terminal and associated facilities included in the Kaladan Multi Model Transit Transport Project (KMMTTP) in implementation of India's Act East Policy. That pact will boost connectivity and help in creating local job opportunities as the two sides discussed bilateral issues as well as topics of common interest, including developments in the strife-torn Rakhine state. The Sittwe port will connect India's landlocked north-east region to the Bay of Bengal through Mizoram. It will also provide an alternate route to Kolkata.

65. Which UN organization is supporting the Green Climate Fund (GCF), which has recently approved $43 million for India's coastal communities?

[A] UNHCR

[B] WHO

[C] UNCTAD

[D] UNDP

Correct Answer: D [UNDP]

Notes:

On October 21, the UN-backed Green Climate Fund (GCF) approved $43.4 million for enhancing climate resilience for millions of people living in India's coastal communities in Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha as part of its efforts to combat extreme impacts of climate change. The grant is a part of more than $1 billion approved by GEC board in its 21st meeting in Bahrain's capital Manama for 19 new projects to help developing countries tackle climate change. The new project will be supported through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and is an essential step for India in reaching its goals outlined in the Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

66. On which date, the National Police Commemoration Day (NPCD) is observed recently?

[A] October 24

[B] October 21

[C] October 22

[D] October 23

Correct Answer: B [October 21]

Notes:

The National Police Commemoration Day (NPCD) is observed every year on October 21 to remember the sacrifices of ten policemen who died in Chinese firing in 1959 in Ladakh's Hot Spring area. Indian Police personnel were responsible for manning the 2,500 mile long border of India with Tibet until the autumn of 1959. In 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the National Police Memorial (NPM) in New Delhi to the nation in recognition of the sacrifices made by soldiers from the paramilitary forces and state police since India's independence. The Prime Minister also announced an award in the name of Netaji Subash Chandra Bose, to honour the police and paramilitary personnel, involved in disaster response operations. The award would be announced every year, recognizing the bravery and courage displayed in saving lives of people, in the wake of a disaster. Since independence, 34,844 police personnel have lost their lives while protecting the country. This year, 424 lost their lives.

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67. Which of the following cricket teams has won the 2018 Vijay Hazare Trophy?
[A] Mumbai
[B] Delhi
[C] Bihar
[D] Kolkata

Correct Answer: A [Mumbai]

Notes:
The Mumbai cricket team clinched the 2018 Vijay Hazare Trophy after a gap of 11 years with a 4-wicket victory over Delhi at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. It's their 3rd title. Mumbai last won the trophy way back in 2006-07 when they defeated Rajasthan.

68. Japanese biologist Osamu Shimomura, who passed away recently, won the 2008 Nobel Prize in chemistry for discovery of ____?
[A] Green fluorescent protein
[B] Quasi crystals
[C] Cryo-electron microscopy
[D] Ubiquitin-mediated protein degradation

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Correct Answer: A [Green fluorescent protein]

Notes:
Japanese-born Marine biologist Osamu Shimomura (90), who won the 2008 Nobel Prize in chemistry, has passed away in Nagasaki, Japan on 19th October 2018. Shimomura and two American scientists shared the 2008 Nobel prize for the discovery and development of a jellyfish protein (or Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP)) that later contributed to cancer studies. He was born in northern Kyoto in 1928 and studied in Nagasaki, where he survived the Aug. 9, 1945, U.S. atomic bombing at age 16. In 1960, he moved to Princeton University, where he isolated the protein in samples of thousands of jellyfish taken from the U.S. West Coast. The protein known as GFP lets off a glow when it is illuminated with ultraviolet light and has become a key tool in studying biological processes in cells.

69. Which country has officially opened the world's longest sea-crossing bridge?
[A] Russia
[B] China
[C] Indonesia
[D] Japan

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Correct Answer: B [China]

Notes:
China has officially opened the world's longest sea-crossing bridge, which connects the Chinese city of Zhuhai to the semi-autonomous regions of Hong Kong and Macau. It includes an undersea tunnel allowing ships to pass through the Pearl River delta, the heart of China's manufacturing sector. The 34-mile-long bridge forms a physical link between the mainland and Hong Kong, an Asian financial hub that was handed over from British to Chinese control in 1997 with the assurance it would maintain its own legal and economic system for 50 years. The bridge is part of China's plan to create a Greater Bay Area, including Hong Kong, Macau and nine other cities in southern China. The area is currently home to 68 million people. In the past, travelling between Zhuhai and Hong Kong would take up to four hours – the new bridge cuts this down to 30 minutes. It costs about $20bn and build in almost a decade.

70. Who has won the 2018 Cameroonian presidential election?
[A] Dion Ngute
[B] Clement Atangana
[C] Maurice Kamto
[D] Paul Biya

Correct Answer: D [Paul Biya]

Notes:
In Cameroon, Paul Biya, who has ruled the country with an iron fist since 1982, won the 7th presidential

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term with a landslide victory in a controversial presidential election on October 23, 2018. According to the Constitutional Council of the country, Biya had won 71.3% of the ballot in the October 7 presidential election, marred by allegations of widespread fraud, a low turnout and violence in the poll run-up. The President of Cameroon is elected by first-past-the-post voting; the candidate with the most votes is declared the winner with no requirement to achieve a majority. Biya is currently the longest-ruling non-royal leader in Africa and the oldest ruler in Sub-Saharan Africa after Robert Mugabe stepped down during the 2017 Zimbabwean coup d'état.

71. Which Indian personality has been chosen for the 2018 Seoul Peace Prize?

[A] A. P. J. Abdul Kalam

[B] Kailash Satyarthi

[C] Narendra Modi

[D] Sonam Wangchuk

Correct Answer: C [Narendra Modi]

Notes:
Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been chosen for the 2018 Seoul Peace Prize in recognition of his dedication to improving international co-operation, raising global economic growth, and accelerating the Human Development of people in India. The Seoul Peace Prize Committee recognised Prime Minister Modi's contributions to the growth of the Indian and global economies, crediting 'Modinomics' for reducing social and economic disparity between the rich and the poor. The Committee lauded Mr Modi's initiatives to make the government cleaner through anti-corruption measures and demonetisation. The Committee also credited the Prime Minister for his contribution towards regional and global peace through a pro-active foreign policy with countries around the world under the 'Modi Doctrine' and the 'Act East Policy'.

72. Which of the following cities is the venue of the 2018 WETEX (Water, Energy, Technology, and Environment Exhibition)?

[A] New Delhi

[B] Dubai

[C] Paris

[D] New York

Correct Answer: B [Dubai]

Notes:
The 2018 WETEX (Water, Energy, Technology, and Environment Exhibition) has started at the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre in Dubai from October 23. It is considered as one of the leading sustainability exhibitions in the Middle East and North Africa region. More than 40 Indian exhibitors having expertise in the field of water, solar and renewable energy, electrical, oil and gas, wire and cables etc. are participating in the three-day exhibition. The India Pavilion at WETX 2018 is in line with the vision and commitment of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to have sustainable and inclusive growth for all with access to clean water, electricity and housing. The 2018 WETEX shows the latest solutions in conventional and renewable energy, water, sustainability, and conservation.

73. Which Indian personality has been crowned the Miss Deaf Asia 2018?

[A] Deshna Jain

[B] Shree Saini

[C] Anukreethy Vas

[D] Nishtha Dudeja

Correct Answer: D [Nishtha Dudeja]

Notes:
Nishtha Dudeja from Haryana has recently won the Miss Deaf Asia 2018 title at an international pageant held in Prague , Czech Republic. She is the first Indian to have won any title at the Miss Deaf World Pageant. Prior to this title, Nishtha had also won the 2018 Miss Deaf India title in Jaipur, Rajasthan on February 26. She is the brand ambassador for Sivantos India Pvt Ltd. (Formerly Siemens hearing Instruments Pvt Ltd.), the world's leading brand of hearing aids.

74. Which Indian scientist will be honoured with the ICFA's first-ever World Agriculture Prize?

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[A] M. S. Swaminathan
[B] Jayant Narlikar
[C] C. N. R. Rao
[D] Mitali Mukerji

Correct Answer: A [M. S. Swaminathan]

Notes:
Agricultural scientist Prof. M.S. Swaminathan will be honoured with the ICFA's first-ever World Agriculture Prize for his basic and applied research in genetics, cytogenetics, radiation and chemical mutagenesis, food and biodiversity conservation. The Agriculture prize will be launched with a special session, named "Swaminathan Global Dialogue on Climate Change and Food Security" on Oct 26, 2018, as part of the Global Agriculture Leadership Summit and AgroWorld 2018 in New Delhi.The prize has been instituted by the Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) with an aim to recognise individuals who have served humanity through agriculture. It will carry a cash component of $1,00,000. It will be an annual prize and would be presented to any individual or institution, importantly from Asian, African or Latin American countries who have played a seminal role in transforming agriculture globally and saving humanity from the curse of hunger.

75. Which Indian organisation has won the 2018 UN Award for excellence in promoting investments in sustainable development?

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[A] Tata Trusts
[B] Reliance Industries
[C] Invest India
[D] ISRO

Correct Answer: C [Invest India]

Notes:
India's investment promotion body, Invest India has won the 2018 UN Award for excellence in promoting investments in sustainable development at the World Investment Forum, Geneva. The awards were organised by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The other winners of the award were Bahrain Economic Development Board (BEDB) and the Lesotho National Development Corp (LNDC). Invest India received the award for excellence in servicing and supporting a major global wind turbines company in the establishment of a blade manufacturing plant in India while committing to train local staff and produce 1 gigawatt of renewable energy. Invest India is set up as a non-profit venture under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Government of India.

76. The International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs (STAPCOR 2018) was held in which union territory of India?

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[A] Dadra & Nagar Haveli
[B] Puducherry
[C] Daman & Diu
[D] Lakshadweep

Correct Answer: D [Lakshadweep]

Notes:
The International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs (STAPCOR 2018) was held at Bangaram Island, Lakshadweep with theme "Reef for Life" from October 22-24. It was organised by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) in co-ordination with the local administration. The Conference highlighted the importance of coral reefs and the need for its protection, emphasising on converting science into adequate policies for conservation. Around 150 delegates from the US, UK, Kuwait, Italy, France, Maldives and Sri lanka participated in this mega event.

77. 'Druzhba-III' has started between which of the following countries?
[A] India and Afghanistan
[B] Russia and Pakistan
[C] United States and Israel

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[D] India and Bangladesh

Correct Answer: B [Russia and Pakistan]

Notes:
The joint military training exercise 'Druzhba (Friendship)-III' has started between the armies of Russia and Pakistan in the mountains of northwestern Pakistan, which will continue till November 4. The servicemen from the two countries' armed forces will perform tasks at the altitude of 1,400 meters above the sea level. The purpose of the 15-days exercise is to boost ties between the two militaries and swap experience, especially in field of counterterrorism. This is third exercise as part of the Pakistan-Russia bilateral training cooperation. The exercise will include the destruction of conditional fighters (terrorists).

78. The 15th edition of International Dance Festival "Udbhav Utsav" was held in which city?

[A] Jaipur

[B] Gwalior

[C] Kanpur

[D] Patna

Correct Answer: B [Gwalior]

Notes:
The 15th edition of International Dance Festival "Udbhav Utsav 2018" was held in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh from October 20-25. It was inaugurated by Uzbekistan Ambassador to India Farhod Arziev. The main purpose of the competition-festival is to give opportunity to performers for creative communications, to present new talents and to facilitate acquaintance with pieces of national culture and arts in different countries. The dance troupes from Bulgaria, Turkey and Sri Lanka, apart from 25 teams from India, participated in the event.

79. Which of the following is the India's first engine-less train?

[A] Train 25

[B] Train 47

[C] Train 51

[D] Train 18

Correct Answer: D [Train 18]

Notes:
India's first engine-less train "Train 18" is set to hit the tracks for trials on October 29, which is designed and manufactured by the Chennai-based Integral Coach Factory (ICF) at a cost of Rs 100 crore. It is being regarded as a successor to the 30-year-old Shatabdi Express. The swanky 16-coach prototype without a locomotive (engine) will cut travel time by 15% compared to the Shatabdi.Train 18 is driven by a self-propulsion module sans a separate locomotive & is capable of running at a speed of up to 160 kmph. It comes with technical features for enhanced quick acceleration. The train 18 has diffused lighting, automatic doors and footsteps besides GPS-based Passenger Information System. The footstep in a coach's doorway slides outward when the train stops at a station enabling passengers to alight safely with comfort in view of the variation in height between a train's floor and the platform. Shatabdi was introduced in 1988 and is presently running on over 20 routes connecting metros with other important cities.

80. Who will head the Group of Ministers (GoM) to strengthen legal & institutional frameworks to deal with & prevent sexual harassment at workplace?

[A] Maneka Gandhi

[B] Nirmala Sitharaman

[C] Rajnath Singh

[D] Nitin Gadkari

Correct Answer: C [Rajnath Singh]

Notes:
The Government of India (GoI) has recently constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM) to examine the existing legal and institutional frameworks for dealing with matters of sexual harassment of women at the workplace. It will be chaired by the Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh. The GoM will recommend

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action required for effective implementation of the existing provisions, as well as for strengthening the existing legal and institutional frameworks for addressing issues related to sexual harassment at workplace. Beside this, the Ministry of Women & Child Development (MoWCD) has also launched an Electronic Complaints Box 'SHe-Box' that enables women, irrespective of their work status, to raise their voice against sexual harassment at workplace.

81. Which of the following is the project implementing agency of the scheme "Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences (IMPRESS)"?

[A] TRAI

[B] NDMA

[C] ICSSR

[D] ICCR

Correct Answer: C [ICSSR]

Notes:

In New Delhi, Minister of Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar launched the web portal of the Scheme "Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences (IMPRESS)" on October 25 to strengthen the research ecosystem in the country. The objective of IMPRESS is to identify and fund research proposals in social sciences with maximum impact on the governance and society. It will provide an opportunity for social science researchers in any institution in the country which includes all universities (Central and State), private institutions with 12(B) status conferred by UGC. The scheme will be implemented at a total cost of Rs. 414 crore till March, 2021. Under IMPRESS, 1,500 research projects will be awarded for two years to support social science research in the higher educational institutions. The Indian Council of Social Science and Research (ICSSR) will be the project implementing agency. The research work under both the scheme would start from January 2019.

82. Which of the following cities is the venue of the 11th Global Agriculture Leadership Summit 2018?

[A] Jaipur

[B] Pune

[C] New Delhi

[D] Kochi

Correct Answer: C [New Delhi]

Notes:

The 11th edition of Global Agriculture Leadership Summit 2018 in New Delhi from October 24 with theme "Connecting Farmers to Market". The purpose of the 2-day summit is to discuss the national and global marketing scenario and success models to provide the best marketing models and linkages to Indian farmers through policy reforms and collaborative efforts. In it, Agriculture Minister Somi reddy Chandramohan Reddy received the Global Agriculture Leadership Award in the 'Policy Leadership' category on behalf of Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu. The award is given in recognition of the path-breaking policies that address issues of farmers and other stakeholders pro-actively making substantial difference in their lives and contributing to the growth of agriculture. The Agriculture Leadership Awards were instituted in 2008 to recognise excellence and leadership roles played by individuals and organisations to empower farmers and bring about rural prosperity. The awards jury was chaired by pioneer of India's Green Revolution MS Swaminathan.

83. Which of the following countries hold their first trilateral meeting on Chabahar port project?

[A] Turkmenistan, Afghanistan and Iran

[B] Iran, Pakistan and Turkmenistan

[C] Pakistan, India and Iran

[D] India, Afghanistan and Iran

Correct Answer: D [India, Afghanistan and Iran]

Notes:

India, Afghanistan and Iran has recently hold their first trilateral meeting on Chabahar port project in Tehran during which they reviewed its implementation. The Indian delegation was led by TS Tirumurti, Secretary (Economic Relations). The Afghan and Iran delegations were led by respective deputy ministers of Transport. The meeting assumes significance as the strategically-located port on the

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energy-rich Iran's southern coast was coming under the ambit of US sanctions on Tehran. In it, it is decided to constitute a follow-up committee that would hold its first meeting within two months in Chabahar port. The committee would discuss and aim to finalise protocol to harmonise transit, roads, customs and consular matters for making the route attractive and decrease logistic costs. In May 2016, India, Iran and Afghanistan had signed a pact which entailed establishment of a transit and transport corridor among the three countries using Chabahar Port as one of the regional hubs. Chabahar is located less than 100 nautical miles from the Chinese built port of Gwadar in Pakistan.

84. Who will chair the High Level Steering Committee to review National Indicator Framework (NIF) for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

[A] Chief Statistician of India

[B] Finance Secretary

[C] Home Secretary

[D] Chief Economic Adviser

Correct Answer: A [Chief Statistician of India]

Notes:

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi has recently approved the 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. The committee will be chaired by Chief Statistician of India and Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI). The data source Ministries / Departments will be responsible for providing regular information to MoSPI on these indicators at required intervals and disaggregation for national and sub-national reporting of SDGs. Advanced IT tools will be used for close and effective monitoring.

85. The 73rd Anniversary of which of the following events was observed recently on 2018 United Nations Day (UND)?

[A] Adoption of UN flag

[B] UN Charter coming in force

[C] Establishment of UN Security Council

[D] First Election to UN General Assembly

Correct Answer: B [UN Charter coming in force]

Notes:

The United Nations Day (UND) is observed every year on October 24 to make known to the people about the aims and achievements of the United Nations (UN). The day also marks the 73rd anniversary of the UN Charter, which came into force in 1945. UN is an intergovernmental organization tasked to promote international co-operation and to create and maintain international order. It's a replacement for the ineffective League of Nations & was established on 24th October 1945 after World War II with the aim of preventing another such conflict. It's headquarters is located in NewYork. The UN Charter of 1945 articulated a commitment to uphold human rights of citizens and outlined a broad set of principles relating to achieving 'higher standards of living', addressing 'economic, social, health, and related problems,' and 'universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

86. Which city is venue of 5th edition of the Women of India National Organic Festival 2018?

[A] Bhopal

[B] New Delhi

[C] Gangtok

[D] Guwahati

Correct Answer: B [New Delhi]

Notes:

Maneka Sanjay Gandhi, Minister for Women and Child Development will inaugurate the 5th edition of the Women of India Organic Festival on October 26 at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts in New Delhi to boost organic culture and promote Women Organic Farmers and Entrepreneurs. The 10-Days long Organic festival will have producers and manufacturers of Organic Products from 26 Indian States. Over 500 women entrepreneurs from Leh to Kanyakumari and from Kohima to Kutch, will come

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together with their organic products including 1,200 varieties of rice, several varieties of millets, cereals, pulses, spices, chilli chocolates, marmalades, chutneys, juices, dry fruits, organic ice creams, ready-to-eat meals and snacks, mushrooms, herbs, cosmetics, water hyacinth crafts, etc. In addition to the organic extravaganza on offer, there will also be cultural performances during the 10-day festival, focusing on folk music and dance. Visitors will be able to enjoy and be a part of soulful Baul music and scintillating performances from the North-East, Punjab and Rajasthan, to name a few. To make the organic movement more accessible to public, the Ministry has changed the venue for the 2018 edition to IGNCA and has kept Entry and Parking Free for All.

87. Which country is hosting the International Arya Maha Sammelan (IAMS) – 2018?

[A] United States

[B] Sri Lanka

[C] India

[D] Israel

Correct Answer: C [India]

Notes:

The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind has inaugurated the International Arya Mahasammelan – 2018 in New Delhi on October 25. The Arya Mahasammelan is touted as being a platform for the Arya Samaj to project its views on major caste-related issues and problems concerning backward sections of society. The convention also aims to spread a message of human welfare originating from the Vedas, promote universal brotherhood and ensure safeguarding of social morals.

88. Which of the following is the national Coordinating Institute to implement the SPARC (Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration) programme?

[A] IIT-Khargapur

[B] IIT-Bombay

[C] IIT-Madras

[D] IIT-Indore

Correct Answer: A [IIT-Khargapur]

Notes:

On October 25, Minister of Human Resource Development Prakash Javadekar launched the web portal of of the Scheme "Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)" in New Delhi. The aim of the SPARC is to improve the research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian and foreign institutions. It is a scheme for promotion of academic and research collaboration. Under the scheme, the Union Government will provide Rs 418 crores for 600 joint research proposals. The Indian institutions which come in top 100 or a top 100 in category wise in NIRF and the best institutes in the world from selected 28 nations with overall top 500 ranking and top 200 subject wise institutes in QS world university ranking will be part of the scheme. IIT-Khargapur is the national Coordinating Institute to implement the SPARC programme. The research work under both the scheme would start from January 2019.

89. Which of the following are correct statements about Virat Kohli?

[A] He is the fastest batsman to score 10,000 ODI runs

[B] His last 1,000 runs came from just 11 innings, which is also a world record

[C] His strike rate at 92.5 is the highest among batsmen with 10,000 runs in one-day format

[D] All are correct

Correct Answer: D [All are correct]

Notes:

In Cricket, Indian captain Virat Kohli has recently become the fastest batsman to reach 10,000 runs in One-Day Internationals (ODIs) after scoring a second consecutive century against West Indies in Vizag on October 24. He broke the record of compatriot and batting great Sachin Tendulkar, who had reached the milestone in 259 innings. Kohli, who took only 205 innings to achieve the record, has become the fifth Indian to reach the 10,000 mark in ODIs. Apart from Kohli, Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and MS Dhoni have scored over 10,000 runs in ODIs. It must be noted that Kohli's last 1,000 runs came from just 11 innings, which is also a world record. His strike rate at 92.5 is the highest among

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batsmen with 10,000 runs in one-day format.

90. On which date, the 2018 World Development Information Day (WDID) is observed recently?
[A] October 24
[B] October 27
[C] October 26
[D] October 25

Correct Answer: A [October 24]

Notes:
The World Development Information Day (WDID) is observed every year on October 24 to draw the attention of the world to development problems and the necessity of strengthening international cooperation to solve them. The special day, which was established by UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 1972, coincides with the United Nations Day (UND) which also falls on 24 October. It aims to disseminate information and mobilize public opinion, particularly among young people, in order to create awareness of the problems of development, promoting efforts in the sphere of international cooperation for development.

91. Who will be conferred with the 2016 Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony?
[A] Satish Gupta
[B] Rajkumar Singhajit Singh
[C] Ram Vanji Sutar
[D] Sachida Nagdev

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Correct Answer: C [Ram Vanji Sutar]

Notes:
Renowned sculptor Ram Vanji Sutar, who has designed the Statue of Unity in Narmada district in Gujarat, will be conferred with the prestigious 2016 Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony. Beside Sutar, the Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony for the years 2014 and 2015 is being conferred on the doyen of Manipuri dance Sh. Rajkumar Singhajit Singh and Chhayanaut (a cultural organization of Bangladesh), respectively. The award recognizes Rajkumar's contribution in keeping the tradition of Manipuri dance alive and vibrant, promoting harmony through dance and also pays tribute to Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. Chhayanaut, established in 1961, was part of the movement for an independent Bangladesh and provided a platform for cultural expression and assertion of Bengali identity. The award was instituted by the Government of India (GoI) during the commemoration of the 150th birth anniversary of Rabindranath Tagore in 2011. It carries an award prize of Rs 1 crore, a citation in a scroll and a plaque.

92. The Transforming Education Conference for Humanity (TECH 2018) will be organized by UNESCO MGIEP in association with which state government?
[A] Andhra Pradesh
[B] Karnataka
[C] Kerala
[D] Tamil Nadu

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Correct Answer: A [Andhra Pradesh]

Notes:
The international ed-tech conference – Transforming Education Conference for Humanity (TECH 2018) will be organized by UNESCO MGIEP (Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development) in association with Government of Andhra Pradesh at Novotel, Vizag City from November 15 – 17, 2018. The aim of the 3-day conference is to showcase the role of games and digital learning in enabling a shift from "transmissive pedagogies" to "transformative pedagogies" to create peaceful and sustainable societies. The MGIEP is the UNESCO's Category 1 Research Institute in the Asia-Pacific region focused on mainstreaming socio-emotional learning in education systems.

93. India and its which neighboring country have recently signed pacts for enhancing inland and coastal waterways connectivity?
[A] Myanmar
[B] Sri Lanka

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[C] Nepal
[D] Bangladesh

Correct Answer: D [Bangladesh]

Notes:
India and Bangladesh have recently signed several agreements for enhancing inland and coastal waterways connectivity between the two countries for trade and cruise movements. The two countries have signed an agreement to use Chattogram and Mongla Ports in Bangladesh for movement of goods to and from India. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has also been signed for movement of passenger and cruise services. In addition to this, an addendum to 'Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade between the two countries has also been signed for inclusion of Dhubri in India and Pangaon in Bangladesh as new Ports of Call. These agreements will facilitate easier movement of goods and passengers between the two countries, giving an impetus to trade and tourism. The two sides also agreed to include Rupnarayan river (National Waterway-86) from Geonkhali to Kolaghat in the protocol route and to declare Kolaghat in West Bengal and Chilmari in Bangladesh as new ports of call.

94. Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved an MoU between India and which country to constitute a Joint Working Group (JWG) on fintech?
[A] Indonesia
[B] Singapore
[C] Maldives
[D] Sri Lanka

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Correct Answer: B [Singapore]

Notes:
The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its ex-post facto approval to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and Singapore in June 2018 on the constitution of a Joint Working Group (JWG) on FinTech. As per the pact, both countries will improve their regulatory connect to exchange best practices by sharing experience on policies and regulations related to fintech. The JWG will encourage collaboration of entrepreneurs and startups of both countries and develop fintech solutions for business/financial sectors. The MoU will benefit both countries to excel in the fields of development of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), Regulatory Sandbox, security in payment and digital cash flow. The collaboration will also lead to integration of RuPay-Network for Electronic Transfers (NETS), UPI-FAST payment link, Aadhaar Stack and e-KYC in ASEAN region and cooperation on regulations, solutions for financial markets and insurance sector. It will also encourage cooperation between India and Singapore on digital governance, financial inclusion and partnership in the ASEAN Financial Innovation Network (AFIN) agenda.

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95. Which noted author has bagged the first-ever JCB Prize for literature?
[A] Shubhangi Swarup
[B] Benyamin
[C] Anuradha Roy
[D] Perumal Murugan

Correct Answer: B [Benyamin]

Notes:
In New Delhi, Malayalam author Benyamin has bagged the first JCB Prize for literature for his book 'Jasmine Days', which explores the lives of South Asians in the Middle East. The novel was originally written in Malayalam and translated by Shahnaz Habib. It tells the story of a young woman in a city where the promise of revolution turns into destruction and division. It revolves around the Jasmine Revolution that sprang up in December 2010 and was quelled by January 2011. Benyamin was awarded a cash prize of Rs 25 lakh, along with a magnificent trophy created by Delhi artist duo Thukral & Tagra, titled 'Mirror Melting'. Habib received an additional prize of Rs 5 lakh.

96. Which Indian journalist has won the first place in the English category of Schizophrenia Research Foundation's (SCARF) media for mental health reporting award?
[A] Vikram Chandra
[B] Jyoti Shelar

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[C] Nalini Singh
[D] Radhika Roy

Correct Answer: B [Jyoti Shelar]

Notes:
The Hindu's Mumbai-based correspondent Jyoti Shelar has won the first place in the English category of Schizophrenia Research Foundation's (SCARF) media for mental health reporting award 2018 in Anna Nagar, Chennai. Her report on suicides by farmers and the resultant impact on the mental health of their families won her the award. The other two winners of the award are S Ramanathan of 'The Newsminute' and Disha Shetty of 'The Wire'. In the Tamil category, Usha Narayanan's interview with a medical professional on addressing issues due to domestic problems and N. Maheswari's review of a documentary film on autism were chosen for awards.

97. Under which sea, the world's oldest known intact shipwreck has been discovered by an international team of maritime archaeologists?
[A] Red Sea
[B] Caribbean Sea
[C] South China Sea
[D] Black Sea

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Correct Answer: D [Black Sea]

Notes:
An ancient Greek merchant ship dating back more than 2,400 years has been found virtually intact at the bottom of the Black Sea by an Anglo-Bulgarian team. An international team of maritime archaeologists believed that the 23m (75ft) wreck is the world's oldest intact shipwreck where it appears to have lain undisturbed for more than 2,400 years. The vessel is one of more than 60 shipwrecks identified by the Black Sea Maritime Archaeology Project including Roman ships and a 17th-century Cossack raiding fleet. The ship, which is lying on its side with its mast and rudders intact, was dated back to 400 BC — a time when the Black Sea was a trading hub filled with Greek colonies. The project team said the vessel, previously only seen in an intact state on the side of ancient Greek pottery, was found at a depth of more than 2,000 metres (6,500 feet). The water at that depth is oxygen-free, meaning that organic material can be preserved for thousands of years. The project's main investigator said that this would change the understanding of ship building and seafaring in the ancient world.

98. Which country has topped the list of countries for travel destination in 2019, as per Lonely Planet's Best in Travel 2019?
[A] Sri Lanka
[B] Germany
[C] Zimbabwe
[D] Jordon

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Correct Answer: A [Sri Lanka]

Notes:
Sri Lanka has been chosen as the best travel destination among the list of countries to visit in 2019, according to Lonely planet's Best in Travel 2019 book. The projection done by Lonely planet said that Sri Lanka topped the list primarily because travel has become much easier there since the civil war ended in 2009. Germany acquired 2nd position, followed by Zimbabwe, Panama, Kyrgyzstan and Jordon.

99. What is the theme of the 2018 Vigilance Awareness Week (VAW)?
[A] Combating Corruption – Technology as an enabler
[B] Eradicate Corruption-Build a New India
[C] My Vision-Corruption Free India
[D] Promoting Good Governance: Positive contribution of vigilance

Correct Answer: B [Eradicate Corruption-Build a New India]

Notes:
The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) observes the Vigilance Awareness Week every year during the week in which the birthday of Sardar Vallabh bhai Patel (31st October) falls. This year, the Vigilance

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Awareness Week is being observed from 29th October to 3rd November, 2018 on the theme "Eradicate Corruption-Build a New India". It seeks to motivate stakeholders to collectively participate in the fight against corruption and also aims at raising public awareness regarding the detrimental consequences of corruption.

100. Which state government has decided to ban the sale of glyphosate formulations?

[A] Uttar Pradesh

[B] Assam

[C] Punjab

[D] Meghalaya

Correct Answer: C [Punjab]

Notes:

The Punjab Government has decided to ban the sale of glyphosate, a herbicide which is extensively used in the State to control a wide variety of weeds in almost all the crops. This chemical has been observed to be a Group 2A cancer-causing material. Besides cancer, this chemical is also known for causing other health problems and has the potential to damage human DNA as per the opinion of experts from PGIMER, Chandigarh. Glyphosate is sold in the country under various trade names such as Round-up, Excell, Glycel, Glider, Glydon, etc.

101. Which of the following are the official partner countries in the Krishi Kumbh Mela 2018?

[A] Israel and Japan

[B] United States and Italy

[C] Russia and Nepal

[D] Afghanistan and Iran

Correct Answer: A [Israel and Japan]

Notes:

Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a farmers' conclave 'Krishi Kumbh 2018' in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh on October 26 via video conferencing. The 3-day event is being organized to promote modern technique and diversification in agriculture that could help farmers to double their income. In it, Israel and Japan are official partners while Haryana and Jharkhand as partner states. More than 1 lakh farmers, experts, scientists and entrepreneurs are expected to take part in the mega event.

102. Which of the following is the partner country at the 24th edition of Technology Summit 2018 in New Delhi?

[A] United States

[B] Japan

[C] France

[D] Italy

Correct Answer: D [Italy]

Notes:

India will host the 24th edition of Technology Summit 2018 in New Delhi from October 29. This is the first time that Italy has been selected as partner country for this prestigious event. Italian Prime Minister will be leading a 200-strong delegation for the Summit comprising business leaders, scientists, heads of research and scientific organisations and technocrats. The 2-day Summit is envisaged to serve as a wide-ranging knowledge-business partnership platform. The Summit will also facilitate a comprehensive convergence of key elements of knowledge economy (science, technology & innovation; research & development; and higher education) of India and Italy.

103. Which India's initiative has won the 2018 CAPAM (Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management) Award under the Category "Innovation Incubation"?

[A] Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

[B] Unnayan Banka

[C] Unified Agriculture Markets

[D] Ayushman Bharat

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Correct Answer: B [Unnayan Banka]

Notes:
India has won the 2018 CAPAM (Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management) Award in Georgetown, Guyana. The initiative entitled "Unnayan Banka- Reinventing Education Using Technology of Banka District, State of Bihar has been awarded under the Category "Innovation Incubation". Another initiative entitled "Unified Agriculture Markets" of Co-operation Department of Government of Karnataka has also been selected under the Category 'Innovation in Public Service Management'. This initiative has also been awarded the overall Gold Award for CAPAM Awards, 2018. The CAPAM Awards celebrate the spirit of innovation in the public service by recognizing organizations that have made significant contributions to improve governance and services in the public sector. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) under Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions is an institutional member of CAPAM. The CAPAM is a non-profit association representing an international network of over 1100 senior public servants.

104. President Ram Nath Kovind has recently rejected a petition to disqualify 27 AAP MLAs in office of profit case. As per which article of constitution, the state representatives cannot hold an office of profit?

[A] Article 192
[B] Article 193
[C] Article 191
[D] Article 194

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Correct Answer: C [Article 191]

Notes:
President Ram Nath Kovind has rejected a petition seeking disqualification of 27 MLAs of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for allegedly holding 'office of profit' by being appointed as chairpersons of Rogi Kalyan Samitis (RKS) attached to various government-run hospitals in the Capital. The decision was based on a recommendation by the Election Commission of India (EC) in July 2018, which stated that office was exempt from purview of 'office of profit' under provisions of the Delhi MLAs (Removal of Disqualification) Act, 1997. The Office of Profit is a position in the government which an MLA or an MP can't hold. The post can yield salaries, perquisites and various other benefits. As per Articles 102(1)(a) and 191(1)(a) of the Indian Constitution, MP and MLAs are barred from holding an office of profit as it can put them in a position to gain financial benefits. Even under section 9 of the Representation of People Act (RPA), holding an office of profit is grounds for disqualification.

105. Which country is hosting the military exercise of NATO "Trident Juncture 2018"?

[A] Sweden
[B] Finland
[C] Indonesia
[D] Norway

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Correct Answer: D [Norway]

Notes:
On October 25, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has launched its largest military exercise "Trident Juncture 2018" since the cold war in Norway in a hypothetical scenario that involves restoring the Scandinavian country's sovereignty after an attack by a "fictitious aggressor". The exercise is designed to test NATO's ability to plan and conduct a major collective defense operation — from troop training at the tactical level, to command large elements of a NATO force. The wargames bring together around 50,000 personnel from all 29 NATO allies, plus partners Finland and Sweden. Around 65 vessels, 150 aircraft and 10,000 vehicles will also participate in the drill, which takes place in central and eastern Norway, the North Atlantic and the Baltic Sea. It will go on till November 7.

106. The first polio vaccine was developed by which of the following researchers?

[A] Jonas Salk
[B] Alberto Houssay
[C] Edwin G. Krebs
[D] Gerty Cori

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Correct Answer: A [Jonas Salk]

Notes:
The World Polio Day (WPD) is observed every year on 24 October by the World Health Organization (WHO) to create awareness about the hazards of the crippling disease. The day also observed to commemorate the birth of American medical researcher and virologist Jonas Salk, who successful discovered and developed the first polio vaccine (or poliomyelitis) that came into use in 1955. The oral polio vaccine was developed by Albert Sabin and came into commercial use in 1961. The 2018 theme is 'End Polio Now'. Polio is a crippling and potentially fatal infectious disease. There is no cure, but there are safe and effective vaccines. Polio can be prevented through immunization. Polio vaccine, given multiple times, almost always protects a child for life. The strategy to eradicate polio is therefore based on preventing infection by immunizing every child until transmission stops and the world is polio-free.

107. Who of the following has become the first-ever female President of Ethiopia?
[A] Fernanda Espinosa Garces
[B] Ellen Johnson Sirleaf
[C] Donna Strickland
[D] Sahle-Work Zewde

Correct Answer: D [Sahle-Work Zewde]

Notes:
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Sahle-Work Zewde has been elected the first-ever female President of Ethiopia unanimously by members of the Federal Parliamentary Assembly on 25 October 2018. She succeeded Mulatu Teshome, who resigned in unclear circumstances. The President of Ethiopia, is largely a ceremonial one, with executive power effectively being exercised by the Prime Minister. Here, Presidents are elected by the House of Peoples' Representatives for six years, with a two-term limit. Sahle-Work's appointment makes her Africa's only serving female head of state, and the first female Ethiopian head of state since Empress Zewditu.

108. Asma Jahangir, who posthumously won the 2018 UN Human Rights Prize, was belonged to which country?
[A] Iran
[B] Afghanistan
[C] Pakistan
[D] Jordon

Correct Answer: C [Pakistan]

Notes:
Asma Jahangir, Pakistan's human rights activist and lawyer, has been posthumously awarded the 2018 UN Human Rights Prize along with three other winners. The other winners of the prize are Rebeca Gyumi of Tanzania, Brazil's first indigenous lawyer Joenia Wapichana and Ireland's human rights organisation Front Line Defenders. The United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights is an honorary award given for outstanding achievement in human rights. The award ceremony will take place on December 10 on World Human Rights Day (WGRD) in New York. Before Jahangir three Pakistani women, Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan (1978), Benazir Bhutto (2008) and Malala Yousufzai (2013 have been accorded the honour.

109. Clara Sosa, who has been crowned the Miss Grand International (MGI) 2018, is from which country?
[A] Philippines
[B] Paraguay
[C] Peru
[D] Puerto Rico

Correct Answer: B [Paraguay]

Notes:
Clara Sosa from Paraguay has been crowned the Miss Grand International 2018 (MGI) at the sixth edition of the pageant held in Myanmar. In it, Meenakshi Chaudhary from India has been crowned the first runner-up & Indonesia's Nadia Purwoko was declared the second runner-up. Sosa succeeded MGI

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2017 Maria Jose Lora of Peru. It is a beauty contest that aims to participate in creating peace and stopping war.

110. Which Indian sportswoman has won Bronze at the 2018 World Wrestling Championships (WWC) in Budapest?

[A] Geeta Phogat

[B] Pooja Dhanda

[C] Alka Tomar

[D] Babita Phogat

Correct Answer: B [Pooja Dhanda]

Notes:

Pooja Dhanda has won Bronze in the women's freestyle 57kg weight class at the 2018 World Wrestling Championships (WWC) in Budapest, Hungary. She defeated Grace Bullen of Norway 10-7 in the bronze-medal playoff bout. This was India's 2nd medal at the 2018 Championships, after Bajrang Punia won silver in 65 kg category in the ongoing event. With this, Dhanda became only the fourth Indian woman grappler to win a medal at the World Championship. Before Pooja, only three Indian women grapplers (Alka Tomar, Geeta Phogat and Babita Phogat) had won a bronze medal each at the Worlds Championships.

111. The political party registered under which section of the Representation of the People Act (RPA) of 1951 shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds?

[A] Section 29A

[B] Section 38A

[C] Section 21A

[D] Section 24A

Correct Answer: A [Section 29A]

Notes:

The Government of India (GoI) has recently notified that the State Bank of India (SBI) has been authorised to issue and encash Electoral Bonds through its 29 Authorised Branches from November 1 to 10, 2018. The bonds will be issued in multiples of Rs. 1,000, Rs. 10,000, Rs. 1 lakh, Rs. 10 lakh and Rs. 1 crore. As per provisions of the Electoral Bond Scheme 2018, Electoral Bonds may be purchased by a person who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India. Only the Political Parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (43 of 1951) and which secured not less than 1% of the votes polled in the most recent Lok Sabha or State election , shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds. Donors can donate the bonds to their party of choice which can then be cashed in via the party's verified account within 15 days. It must be noted that an electoral bond is designed to be a bearer instrument like a Promissory Note — in effect, it will be similar to a bank note that is payable to the bearer on demand and free of interest.

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112. Former Delhi CM Madan Lal Khurana has recently passed away. He also served as Governor of which state?

[A] Madhya Pradesh

[B] Rajasthan

[C] Uttar Pradesh

[D] Jharkhand

Correct Answer: B [Rajasthan]

Notes:

Madan Lal Khurana (83), the former Delhi Chief Minister, has passed awayin New Delhi on October 27, 2018. He was a member of Rashtriya Swayansevak Sangh (RSS) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). In addition to holding posts including national vice-president and Delhi president within the BJP, Mr. Khurana also served as Governor of Rajasthan in 2004. He was the Union Minister of Parliamentary affairs and Tourism in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.

113. The researchers of which country have develop web-based tool to monitor fake news on Facebook & Twitter?

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[A] France
[B] United States
[C] United Kingdom
[D] Germany

Correct Answer: B [United States]

Notes:
The researchers at the University of Michigan in the US have developed a web-based tool to help monitor the prevalence of fake news on social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. The tool uses a Platform Health Metric called the Iffy Quotient, which draws data from two external entities: NewsWhip and Media Bias/Fact Checker. NewsWhip, a social media engagement tracking firm, collects URLs on hundreds of thousands of sites every day and then gathers information on which of those sites have engagements on Facebook and Twitter. The Iffy Quotient queries NewsWhip for the top 5,000 most popular URLs on the two social media platforms. Then, the tool checks to see if those domain names have been flagged by Media Bias/Fact Check, an independent site that classifies various sources based on their reliability and bias.

114. Which Indian player has clinched the 2018 World Billiards Championship title at Leeds in UK?
[A] Subhash Agarwal
[B] Geet Sethi
[C] Sourav Kothari
[D] Pankaj Advani

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Correct Answer: C [Sourav Kothari]

Notes:
India's Sourav Kothari defeated Peter Gilchrist of Singapore 1134-944 to clinch the 2018 World Billiards Championship title at Leeds in UK. The former national and Asian Billiards champion Kothari was pipped at the post for the coveted World Billiards crown on two occasions in the last two years, including a loss to Gilchrist in the 2016 final in Bengaluru.

115. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) works under which union ministry ?
[A] Ministry of Defence
[B] Ministry of Finance
[C] Ministry of External Affairs
[D] Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

Correct Answer: B [Ministry of Finance]

Notes:
Sanjay Kumar Mishra, a 1984-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer of the Income Tax cadre, has been appointed as the principal special director in the central probe agency and entrusted with the "additional" charge of Enforcement Directorate (ED) director for three months. Mishra succeeded Karnal Singh. The post of ED director is an additional secretary rank post in the Union government. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is a law enforcement agency and economic intelligence agency responsible for enforcing economic laws and fighting economic crime in India. It is part of the Department of Revenue under Ministry of Finance. The ED enforces two major laws in the country to check black money– the criminal Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

116. Which Indian woman table tennis player has won silver at Under-21 Belgium Open?
[A] Archana Kamath
[B] Ayhika Mukherjee
[C] Moumita Dutta
[D] Poulomi Ghatak

Correct Answer: B [Ayhika Mukherjee]

Notes:
Indian table tennis player Ayhika Mukherjee has won a silver medal in the under-21 women's singles category of the ITTF Challenge Belgium Open. She lost 1-3 to Korea's Youjin Kim in the final. In the

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semifinals, Ayhika had defeated Hong Kong's Chengzhu Zhu 3-1 to enter the finals. Her compatriots Anthony Amalraj and Sanil Shetty too fought their way into the medals' bracket, bagging a bronze in the men's doubles.

117. The researchers of which IIT has launched India's first indigenously-developed microprocessor?

[A] IIT-Kharagpur
[B] IIT-Indore
[C] IIT-Bombay
[D] IIT-Madras

Correct Answer: D [IIT-Madras]

Notes:
The researchers at IIT-Madras have designed and booted up India's first indigenously developed microprocessor that can be used in mobile computing devices, embedded low power wireless systems and networking systems besides reducing reliance on imported microprocessors in communications and defence sectors. The 'Shakti' family of processors was fabricated at Semi-Conductor Laboratory (SCL) of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Chandigarh. Hence, it is claimed that the launch would help reduce reliance on import of microprocessors. The SCL is an autonomous body engaged in research and development in microelectronics to meet strategic needs of the country.

118. Which IIT has recently organised the 'Young Innovators Programme YIP 2018' ?

[A] IIT-Bombay
[B] IIT-Kharagpur
[C] IIT-Madras
[D] IIT-Kanpur

Correct Answer: B [IIT-Kharagpur]

Notes:
IIT Kharagpur has recently organised a science and technology competition 'Young Innovators Programme YIP 2018' for students of class 8 to 10 to make the younger generation more oriented towards scientific and technological innovations. The competition was attended by many schools in the country and also from Singapore. The students of different participating teams came up with solutions to problem statements in the areas of Clean Energy, Health and cleanliness, Resource management, Hardware Modelling, Product Designing and Disaster Management in the YIP 2018. The competition was topped by Kaanger Valley Academy of Raipur (Chattisgarh) for devising a low-cost home-made herbal mask to help breathe in a polluted environment. The first runner-up was The Crossword School from Guntur, Andhra Pradesh which developed an electronic device for instantly fixing potholes for smooth and safe surface transport which they named 'Pothole Warrior'.

119. India has recently donated 3 lakh Dollars for peacekeeping initiative of which organization on issues of conduct & discipline?

[A] UN
[B] International Peace Bureau
[C] WHO
[D] International Committee of the Red Cross

Correct Answer: A [UN]

Notes:
The Government of India (GoI) has recently donated $300,000 for a peacekeeping initiative at the United Nations (UN) that will focus on issues of conduct along with sexual exploitation and abuse and help develop the capacity of future commanders and managers to lead by example. The programme will, over a period of three years, help develop the capacity of future commanders and managers to lead by example and raise awareness of UN standards of conduct among their personnel. The programme will equip future commanders and managers to respond to allegations of misconduct including through collaborating with the various stakeholders in mission settings during the investigation and disciplinary process. India is also noted as the first contributor to the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse. The country is also a signatory to the Voluntary Compact on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and a member of the Circle of Leadership of the Secretary-General on the

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prevention and response to sexual exploitation and abuse.

120. India's largest Dry Dock will come in which of the following Shipyards?

[A] Mazagon Dock

[B] Cochin Shipyard

[C] Goa Shipyard

[D] Hindustan Shipyard

Correct Answer: B [Cochin Shipyard]

Notes:

On October 30, the Union Shipping Minister Nitin Gadkari and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will lay the foundation of India's largest Dry Dock at Cochin Shipyard in Kerala. The new Dry Dock is being constructed at a cost of Rs 1799 Crore. It will be 310 m long, 75m wide, with a depth of 13 m and drought of 9.5m. The dock will be designed to handle both ship building and repairs, and bear a load up to 600 T/m. It will be equipped with international safety standards. The dock will also have a water treatment plant and Green Belt Development. The project is expected to be completed by May 2021 and generate employment opportunities for about 2000 people. The Dry Dock will give an impetus to "Make in India" initiative under Sagarmala and raise India's share in global shipbuilding to 2%. With this, Cochin Shipyard will be able to build specialized and technologically advanced large vessels.

121. India has recently signed $75 bn currency swap agreement with which country?

[A] France

[B] Japan

[C] United States

[D] Russia

Correct Answer: B [Japan]

Notes:

The Government of India (GoI) has recently signed $75 bn bilateral currency swap agreement with Japan to bring greater stability in foreign exchange and capital markets in the country. The currency swap pact would enable the two major Asian economies to swap their local currencies – either Indian rupee or the Japanese yen against the US$ up to 75 billion. It will be used only when required, and will help meet short-term liquidity mismatches. The facility will also help in bringing down the cost of capital for Indian entities while accessing foreign capital market. The facility is entered between the central banks of both the countries. However, this is not the first time there has been such an offer from Japan. Japan had offered a $50 billion currency swap in 2013 as well and even before that, one for $3 billion in 2008.

122. Which North-Eastern state of India has recently signed pact with British Council on cultural & educational collaboration?

[A] Mizoram

[B] Tripura

[C] Arunachal Pradesh

[D] Nagaland

Correct Answer: C [Arunachal Pradesh]

Notes:

The Arunachal Pradesh Government has recently signed pact with British Council to strengthen educational & cultural cooperation between the state and the United Kingdom. The overarching MoU celebrates the British Council's 70th anniversary in India and seeks to strengthen the relationship for the next 70 years. As a result of the MoU, 50 faculty members from government higher education institutions of the state would be trained by the British Council every year, starting in December 2018. The MoU will also work towards improving English communication of state's civil servants, developing capacity-building initiatives in the state, supporting improvements in the teaching of Mathematics and Science, capacity-building programmes for faculty and senior administrators of higher education institutions and it will seek to increase student and academic mobility, for the state.

123. Which state is hosting the 5th National Summit on Good and Replicable Practices and Innovations in Public Health Care System in India?

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[A] Assam
[B] Uttar Pradesh
[C] Maharashtra
[D] Bihar

Correct Answer: A [Assam]

Notes:
The 5th National Summit on Good and Replicable Practices and Innovations in Public Health Care System in India has started at Kaziranga in Assam on October 30, 2018. The purpose of the 3-days summit is to share and learn the good practices and innovations being implemented by several states and organizations for the betterment of the health sector. Senior officials, public health experts, representatives of development partners, experts from academic institutions are participating in the summit.

124. Which state government will organise the 2018 Sangai Festival to boost tourism?
[A] Kerala
[B] Odisha
[C] Sikkim
[D] Manipur

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Correct Answer: D [Manipur]

Notes:
The Manipur government will celebrate the "2018 Sangai Festival" at three venues namely Keibul Lamjao, Imphal (Hapta Kangjeibung and Lamboikhongmangkhong) and Mao from 21st to 30th November. It is an annual cultural festival organised by Manipur Tourism Department to promote state as a world class tourism destination. This year, Thailand Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn will visit Imphal to attend the fest. For the first time in the history of Manipur, the U.S. Ambassador to India will also be present during the Festival. The fest will showcase the best of what the state has to offer to the world in terms of art and culture, handloom, handicrafts & fine arts, indigenous sports, cuisines & music, eco & adventure sports as well as the scenic natural beauty of the land. It is named after the State animal 'Sangai' the brow-antlered deer found only in Manipur.

125. Prof. Qazi Abdussattar, who passed away recently, was the noted Urdu writer from which state?
[A] Uttar Pradesh
[B] Telangana
[C] Andhra Pradesh
[D] West Bengal

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Correct Answer: A [Uttar Pradesh]

Notes:
Professor Qazi Abdussattar (85), a noted Urdu writer and former head of Aligarh Muslim University(AMU)'s Urdu department, has recently passed away in New Delhi on October 29, 2018. Born in Machretta village of Uttar Pradesh's Sitapur district in 1933, Abdussattar joined the AMU as a researcher in 1954. He started his career as a short story writer. His most famous short story "Peetal Ka Ghanta" drew acclaim in the Urdu literary world. His early writings focussed on the decline of zamidaari culture in Avadh region. Later, he made a mark as a writer of historical novels. His most famous works include "Darashiko", "Khalidbinwalid" and "Ghalib" which are considered as masterpieces in this genre.Winner of several national and international awards, Abdussattar was awarded Padma Shri in 1974. He was also the first recipient of Ghalib Academy Award in 1978.

126. Who has won the 2018 Presidential election of Brazil?
[A] Fernando Haddad
[B] Manuela d Avila
[C] Hamilton Mourao
[D] Jair Bolsonaro

Correct Answer: D [Jair Bolsonaro]

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Notes:
In Brazil, far-right candidate Jair Bolsonaro has won a sweeping victory in the 2018 Presidential elections. He is scheduled to take office on 1st January 2019 and will succeed Michel Temer. Mr Bolsonaro was elected with 55% of the popular vote against 45% for Fernando Haddad from the left-wing Workers Party. In his victory speech, the president-elect stated that he would defend the constitution, democracy and freedom. The President of Brazil is both the head of state and the head of government of the Federative Republic of Brazil. The president leads the executive branch of the federal government and is the commander-in-chief of the Brazilian Armed Forces.

127. Which Indian sportsperson has been declared the Best Player of the tournament at the 2018 Asian Men's Hockey Champions Trophy?

[A] Manpreet Singh

[B] Akashdeep Singh

[C] P. R. Sreejesh

[D] Faizal Saari

Correct Answer: B [Akashdeep Singh]

Notes:
In Men's Hockey, India and Pakistan were declared joint winners of the 5th edition of Asian Champions Trophy 2018 at Muscat in Oman on October 28, after the final was abandoned due to bad weather conditions. Meanwhile, Malaysia finished at the 3rd place after defeating Japan 3-2 in the penalty shootouts in the bronze medal match. India remained the only undefeated team in the tournament. Before this edition, both India and Pakistan had won the tournament twice each. Faizal Saari from Malaysia was the top scorer of the tournament with 8 Goals. From India, Akashdeep Singh and P. R. Sreejesh were declared the Best Player and Best Goal Keeper of the tournament, respectively.

128. Which of the following states is/are covered under the jurisdiction of Guwahati High Court?

[A] Meghalaya

[B] Arunachal Pradesh

[C] Manipur

[D] All of the above

Correct Answer: B [Arunachal Pradesh]

Notes:
On October 29, Justice A.S. Bopanna has recently taken oath as the new Chief Justice of the Guwahati High Court. He took charge from the acting Chief Justice AK Goswami. The Guwahati High Court was established on 1 March 1948 after the Government of India Act 1935 was passed. It has largest jurisdiction in terms of states, with its area covering the states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Mizoram. The principal seat of the High Court is at Guwahati in Assam.

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129. Who has been elected as the new President of Ireland?

[A] Michael D Higgins

[B] Enda Kenny

[C] Mary McAleese

[D] Peter Casey

Correct Answer: A [Michael D Higgins]

Notes:
Michael D Higgins has been re-elected as the President of Ireland after receiving 56% of the country's votes in the elections. He is serving the post of President since November 2011. His 2nd presidential inauguration will take place on 11th November 2018. The President of Ireland is the head of state of Ireland and the Supreme Commander of the Irish Defence Forces. He holds office for 7 years, and can be elected for a maximum of two terms. The presidency is largely a ceremonial office, but the President does exercise certain limited powers with absolute discretion. The President acts as a representative of the Irish state and guardian of the constitution.

130. On which date, the 2018 International Day of Diplomats is observed, recently?

[A] October 30

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[B] October 26
[C] October 24
[D] October 28

Correct Answer: C [October 24]

Notes:
The 2nd International Day of Diplomats was recently celebrated in Brasilia on 24th October 2018 to highlight the contributions of diplomats as everyday peacemakers. Diplomats from over a dozen countries including Austria, India, Brazil, Egypt, Netherlands and Zimbabwe came together to mark the day dedicated to all diplomats, no matter where do they come from or which country they represent. The celebration of International Day of Diplomats was started in Brasilia in 2017 by Indian-poet diplomat Abhay K on October 24. The day, which also coincides with the United Nations Day, is observed to recognise the hard work and sacrifices of diplomats and their families.

131. Which of the following states doesn't celebrate its foundation day on November 1?
[A] Kerala
[B] Karnataka
[C] Jharkhand
[D] Haryana

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Correct Answer: C [Jharkhand]

Notes:
The five states of India – Kerala, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, and Chhattisgarh – have recently celebrated their foundation day on November 1. In Kerala, the day marked the 62nd anniversary of the establishment of the state. Organised on linguistic principles, the modern borders of Kerala came into existence in 1956 when Travancore-Cochin state was merged with Malabar district of Madras and Kasaragod taluk of South Canara district. On this day, Karnataka celebrated its Foundation Day (Karnataka Rajyotsav) with pomp and gaiety. The state of Madhya Pradesh was formed on 1 November 1956 by merging the princely state of Bhopal with the neighbouring states. Chhattisgarh was formed on November 1, 2000, by partitioning 16 Chhattisgarh speaking southeastern districts of Madhya Pradesh. Haryana, which was formed on a linguistic basis on 1 November 1966, also celebrated its Foundation Day.

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