



# Monthly Current Affairs Magazine

*Issue #10 – September 2018*

## Features:

- ✓ Detailed Banking News
- ✓ Detailed Current Affairs from India and World
- ✓ All Important Appointments
- ✓ Major Days and Observances

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## Current Affairs related to Finance, Banking and Economy

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi launches India Post Payments Bank

- The Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi on September 1, 2018 launched the India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) at Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi. The initiative seeks to leverage the expansive network of the postal department to ensure financial inclusion for the masses.
- In fact, simultaneous launch events were held for the IPPBs at 650 branches and 3,250 access points.

### India, Singapore launch next round of free trade agreement review

- India and Singapore Saturday launched the next round of review for their existing free trade agreement with a view to further boost bilateral trade and investments between the countries, the commerce ministry said.
- The free trade agreement, officially dubbed as the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), came into force in 2005.

### USIBC to hold its first India Idea Summit in Mumbai

- The US-India Business Council (USIBC), a top American business advocacy group, to showcase the positive impact of the US-India relationship and focus on future opportunities for companies in the two nations.
- The two-day conference beginning September 5 will be inaugurated by the Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and Union Minister of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu will deliver the key note address.

### SBI launches new term loan for repair, renovation of homes in Kerala

- The State Bank of India (SBI) on Monday announced special term loan for repair and renovation of homes to help the flood affected citizens of Kerala.
- As part of this scheme, the bank offers loan of upto Rs 10 lakh at a reduced interest rate of 8.45 per cent per annum along with waiver of processing fee. The special rate will be applicable for home loan applications for repair and renovation submitted on or before November 30, 2018.

### India, ADB sign loan agreement to improve state highways in Karnataka

- India and Asian Development Bank have signed 346 Million dollar loan agreement to improve over 400 kilometers of state highways in Karnataka.
- The loan agreement for the Karnataka State Highways Improvement Project was inked between Joint Secretary in the Finance Ministry Sameer Kumar Khare and Country Director of ADB's India Resident Mission Kenichi Yokoyama.
- The project will help enhance connectivity and access to economic centres across 12 districts in Karnataka.

### Vodafone-Idea merger completed; creating India's largest telecom service provider

- The merger of Vodafone India and Idea Cellular completed on August 31, 2018, creating India's biggest telecom service provider with over 408 million subscribers.
- With this, Aditya Birla Group led Idea Cellular was renamed as the Vodafone Idea Limited. Both Vodafone and Idea brands will continue to operate.
- The New Board of Directors comprises 12 Directors including six Independent Directors. Kumar Mangalam Birla is the Chairman. The Board appointed Balesh Sharma as the CEO of the Vodafone Idea Limited.

### India, Cyprus sign key agreements in various fields

- India and Cyprus on September 3, 2018 signed key agreements in various areas to cement bilateral ties between both the countries following delegation level talks between President Ram Nath Kovind and Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades.
- Both the leaders held the discussion on issues of mutual importance for the two countries.
- One of MoUs was signed between Financial Intelligence Unit of India and Unit for Combating Money Laundering of Cyprus on combating money laundering. This agreement would further strengthen the institutional framework to facilitate investment cross-flows.

#### **Banks with over 10 branches to have internal ombudsman: RBI's Internal Ombudsman Scheme 2018**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on September 3, 2018 asked all scheduled commercial banks with more than 10 branches to appoint an Internal Ombudsman.
- However, the apex bank excluded Regional Rural Banks from its directive.
- An ombudsman is a person officially charged with investigating and addressing public complaints or violation of rights.
- The Scheme covers appointment and tenure; roles and responsibilities; procedural guidelines and oversight mechanism for the Internal Ombudsman.
- All Scheduled Commercial Banks in India having more than 10 banking outlets are required to appoint IO in their banks.
- The IO will examine customer complaints referring to the deficiency in service on the part of the bank that are partly or wholly rejected by the bank.

#### **Suresh Prabhu launches Coffee Connect app, Coffee KrishiTharanga services for coffee stakeholders**

- Union Minister for Commerce & Industry, Suresh Prabhu on September 4, 2018 launched Coffee Connect mobile app and digital mobile extension services 'Coffee KrishiTharanga' for coffee stakeholders.
- The 'Coffee Connect' mobile app has been developed to ease the work of field functionaries and to improve the work efficiency.
- The application provides solution by harnessing the power of mobility comprising the latest technology in easing the whole process of the field activities like digitisation of Coffee Growers & Estates with Geo Tagging, collecting the Plantation details.

#### **India Post Payments Bank replaces ATM/debit cards with QR cards**

- India Post Payments Bank (IPPB), which was launched on Saturday by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, does away with ATM cards and debit cards for both cash and cashless transactions. Instead, IPPB will issue new QR (Quick-Response) cards which work on biometric authentication and not on passwords or PINs.
- At present, IPPB offers 3 types of savings accounts—regular, digital and basic—besides a current account. Although each one of them has different features yet none offers an ATM or debit card.

#### **Airtel Payments Bank enables card-less cash withdrawal at ATMs**

- Airtel Payment Bank, India's first payments bank, has announced that its customers can now make card-less cash withdrawals at over 100,000 ATMs across India.
- Airtel Payments Bank has partnered with Empays, a global provider of cloud based payment solutions, under which it will enable Airtel Payments Bank's savings account holders to withdraw cash using just their mobile phone through the card-less cash technology of Empays, called IMT (Instant Money Transfer).

#### **i2iFunding receives NBFC-P2P certification from RBI**

- India's second largest peer-to-peer lending platform, i2ifunding.com on Thursday announced receiving of Certificate of Registration (CoR) as NBFC-Peer to Peer Lending Platform (NBFC-P2P) from Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- The central bank had issued master directions on in 2017, as per which each player in Peer-to-Peer Lending platforms are required to register as Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC-P2P).

## **MOVE: India's First Global Mobility Summit 2018 to be inaugurated by the Prime Minister**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate MOVE: India's ever first Global Mobility Summit organized by NITI Aayog at Vigyan Bhawan, New delhi on September 7, 2018.
- The focus of the summit is on raising awareness about various aspects of Mobility and bringing various stakeholders involved in enhancing mobility across different platforms.

## **2+2 Dialogue: India-US sign historic COMCASA agreement**

- India and the United States signed the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) during their first-ever 'two plus two' dialogue, which was held in New Delhi on September 6, 2018.
- The key agreement will open up the way for the sale of more sensitive US military equipment to India. It will help India obtain critical and encrypted defence technologies for the Indian defence platforms from the US.

## **Parliamentary panel wants RBI to relax capital adequacy norms for PSBs**

- A parliamentary committee has urged the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to relax the capital-adequacy norms for at least nine out of 21 public sector banks (PSBs) that may free up capital up to Rs 5.34 trillion, helping the expansion of lenders.
- The standing committee on finance, in its latest report, has criticised the capital-adequacy requirements set by the RBI and termed them "stringent."
- The committee noted that the Basel framework required the application of capital standards to "internationally active banks." Nine PSBs — Central Bank of India, Andhra Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC), Corporation Bank, Vijaya Bank, Bank of Maharashtra, United Bank of India, Dena Bank, and Punjab and Sind Bank — are not internationally active, it said, making a case of easing capital-adequacy norms for them.

## **Former RBI governor Bimal Jalan to head panel to select new Chief Economic Advisor**

- The Union Government has appointed former Reserve Bank of India governor Bimal Jalan as the head of the panel that has been tasked with selecting India's next chief economic advisor (CEA).
- The other members of the panel include secretary of the department of personnel and training C Chandramouli and economic affairs secretary Subhash Chandra Garg. The panel will screen the applications received and conduct interviews.

## **Parliamentary panel for raising PSB chiefs' retirement age to 70**

- As the 'decade of retirement' in public sector banks (PSBs) nears its end, a parliamentary committee has called for increasing the retirement age of their chief executive officers (CEOs) to 70 years from the current 60. This comes after PSBs raised with the panel the prospect of a leadership vacuum in the near future.
- "With a view to utilising the expertise of senior bankers, the retirement age of CEOs of PSBs can be raised to 70 years as in the case of their private sector counterparts," the Standing Committee on Finance said in its latest report.

## **RBI imposes Rs 10 mn fine on Union Bank for delay in fraud detection**

- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a Rs 10 million penalty on Union Bank of India for failing to detect and report fraud on time.
- "This is to inform that Reserve Bank has imposed a penalty of Rs 10 million on the bank for delay in detection and reporting of fraud. The penalty has been imposed in exercise of powers vested in RBI under ...Banking Regulation Act," Union Bank of India said in a regulatory filing Friday.
- RBI had issued a show cause notice to the bank on January 15, 2018 asking why a penalty not be imposed on Union Bank of India under the Act.

## **PM Jan Dhan Yojana to be made open-ended scheme with more incentives**

- The Union Government on August 5, 2018 decided to make the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) an open-ended scheme and added more incentives to encourage people to open bank accounts.
- The flagship financial inclusion scheme was launched in August 2014 for a period of four years. Banking on its successful implementation, the government has decided to make the scheme open-ended with more incentives.
- Under the new incentives, the overdraft limit for account holders has now been doubled to Rs 10000.
- The free accident insurance cover for those opening Jan Dhan accounts after August 28 too has been doubled to Rs 2 lakh.
- Further, there will be no conditions attached for over-draft of up to Rs 2,000.
- The upper age limit for availing the facility has also been hiked to 65 from the earlier 60 years.

#### **Haier signs MoU with UP to set up Rs 30 bn plant at Greater Noida**

- Chinese consumer durables maker Haier Friday signed an MoU with the Uttar Pradesh government for a 123-acre land parcel to set up its Rs 30.69 bn industrial park at Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh.
- The new facility would help the company expand its market share and reach in India, a top company official said.

#### **ICICI Bank launches lending to MSMEs based on their GST returns**

- Private sector lender ,ICICI Bank Ltd. announced the launch of a new working capital facility that enables MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise) to get an overdraft (OD) based on the turnover reported in their Good and Services Tax (GST) returns.
- Christened 'GST Business Loan', the facility is available to any MSME including non-customers of ICICI Bank, upto Rs 1 crore, a bank release said.

#### **IOC, Haryana sign MoU to set up Ethanol plant at Bohali**

- Fulfilling the commitment made by Haryana Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister O P Dhankar to manage the crop residue and prevent straw burning before the upcoming paddy season of 2018, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed here on Monday, in his presence by Indian Oil Corporation to setup a 100 Kilo Litre per day Ethanol Plant (Bio-Refinery) at Bohali village in Panipat at an expense of over Rs 900 crore.

#### **Infosys to digitize software tools for Australian Open, inks 3-yr deal**

- Software major Infosys Monday announced a strategic three-year partnership with the Australian Open tennis championship.
- This association with Tennis Australia reaffirms the company's strategic commitment to the region where it partners with some of the leading enterprises in driving their digital transformation agenda, he added.

#### **SpiceJet to be first Indian airline with dedicated cargo services on Sep 18**

- No-frills airline SpiceJet will launch its dedicated air cargo services from September 18.
- The carrier, which is working on ambitious business plans, Monday said it would operate the cargo services under the brand name 'SpiceXpress' and has a detailed plan for domestic as well as international routes.

#### **Government sets up panel of secretaries to look into e-Commerce issues**

- The Union Government on September 10, 2018 constituted a group of secretaries to look into the e-Commerce issues. The group will be chaired by the Secretary in the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP).
- The group will look into all the issues of e-commerce sector. The first meeting of the group is likely to be held soon.
- The decision to form the group came after concerns were raised on some proposals of the draft e-Commerce Policy.

### **BSNL, Unlimit ink partnership for IoT/M2M services in India**

- Unlimit, end-to-end IoT service provider in India on Tuesday announced its partnership with State-owned Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) to offer comprehensive Internet of Things (IoT) solutions and services to the enterprise customers across India.
- The partnership between Unlimit and BSNL will leverage seamless wireless network footprint pan India to provide its solutions and services across industries.

### **Bajaj Finserv RBL Bank supercard offers interest-free cash withdrawal**

- Bajaj Finserv, is offering Interest-free cash withdrawal in its exclusive SuperCard series.
- The Bajaj Finserv RBL Bank SuperCard offer customers to withdraw interest-free cash from any ATM, by paying just a minimal processing fee. The cash can be used by customers for any financial requirement and interest will not be charged for up to 50 days.

### **NITI Aayog, Intel and TIFR tie-up to set up Model International Center for Transformative AI**

- NITI Aayog, Intel, and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) on September 7, 2018 collaborated to set up a Model International Center for Transformative Artificial Intelligence (ICTAI).
- The research centre will be set up with an aim to develop and deploy Artificial Intelligence-led application-based research projects. Aiming to solve major challenges in India, the center will focus on application-based AI research in healthcare, agriculture and smart mobility.

### **Transport Minister, UP CM to lay foundation stone of Delhi-Saharanpur Highway**

- The Union Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari along with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath laid the foundation stone of Delhi-Saharanpur Highway in Baghpat on September 11, 2018.
- The 154km-long National Highway will be developed in three phases. In the first phase, a 61km-long stretch of the highway from Baghpat to Shamli will be developed, for which over Rs 700 crore has been allotted.

### **YES Bank launches Cashless Payment Solution for Udaipur Smart City**

- YES BANK, India's fourth largest private sector bank, launched a comprehensive cashless payment solution for Udaipur Smart City, in partnership with the Udaipur Municipal Corporation (UMC), in order to bolster Financial Inclusion and Digital India initiatives of the Government of India.
- The project was launched today by Hon. Mayor of Udaipur, Chandra Singh Kothari and Sidharth Sihag, Commissioner, Udaipur Municipal Corporation & CEO, Udaipur Smart City Ltd.

### **Union Cabinet approves new umbrella scheme 'Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan' (PM-AASHA)**

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 12, 2018 approved a new umbrella scheme 'Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan' (PM-AASHA).
- The scheme aims to ensure that farmers get remunerative prices for their produce as announced in the Union Budget for 2018. It will give a major boost to the pro-farmer initiatives of the Government. The Government had previously increased the MSP of Kharif crops by following the principle of 1.5 times the cost of production. The increase is expected to be translated to farmer's income by the way of robust procurement mechanism in coordination with the state governments.

### **The umbrella scheme 'PM-AASHA' comprises three sub-schemes:**

- Price Support Scheme (PSS)
- Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS)
- Pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PPPS)

### **Price Support Scheme (PSS)**

- Under the scheme, the physical procurement of pulses, oilseeds and Copra will be done by Central Nodal Agencies with the proactive role of the state governments.
- Further, in addition to NAFED, the Food Cooperation of India (FCI) will take up PSS operations in states and districts.

#### **Price Deficiency Payment Scheme this scheme (PDPS)**

- Under the scheme, it is proposed to cover all oilseeds for which minimum support price (MSP) is notified.
- In this, direct payment of the difference between the MSP and the selling/modal price will be made to pre-registered farmers selling his produce in the notified market yard through a transparent auction process. All payments will be done directly into the registered bank account of the farmer.

#### **Pilot of Private Procurement & Stockist Scheme (PPPS)**

- The Cabinet also decided that the participation of private sector in procurement operation needs to be piloted so that on the basis of the learnings the ambit of private participation in procurement operations may be increased.
- Therefore it was decided that for oilseeds, the states will have the option to roll out Private Procurement Stockist Scheme (PPSS) on pilot basis in selected districts and Agricultural Produce Market Committee's (APMC) of district involving the participation of private stockiest.
- The pilot district and selected APMC(s) will cover one or more crop of oilseeds for which MSP is notified.

#### **CCEA approves 100 percent electrification of Broad Gauge Routes of Indian Railways**

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on September 12, 2018 approved the proposal for electrification of balance un-electrified Broad Gauge Routes of Indian Railways.
- The Broad Gauge Routes comprise 108 sections covering 13675 route kilometers (16540 track kilometers) that will be electrified at a cost of Rs 12134.50 crore by 2021-22.

#### **India signs pacts with Rakhine State for capacity building, economic development**

- Indian Embassy on Wednesday signed two agreements with Myanmar's Rakhine State Government to facilitate capacity building and economic development in the province.
- The pacts will help promote agricultural mechanisation and support computer literacy among the youth of Rakhine State to prepare them for employment opportunities in the software sector.

#### **TCIL, MEA sign MOU for pan Africa e-Network project**

- Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd. (TCIL) signed an agreement with Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) for the implementation of e-VBAB (e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati) Network Project for a total value of Rs. 865 Crores.
- To continue providing Tele Education and Tele Medicine services from elite Indian Universities and Super Specialty Hospitals to African nations using Internet as transmission media, TCIL had already successfully executed Phase-1 of PAeNP from 2008 to 2017.

#### **Haryana CM announces sharp reduction in electricity tariff**

- Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has announced a sharp reduction in electricity tariff in the state.
- The chief minister announced in the state assembly varying slabs of rebates for households consuming up to 500 units of electricity per month.

#### **Ministry of Steel to present first-ever awards to secondary steel sector**

- In a first, the Ministry of Steel will be giving away awards to the secondary steel sector on September 13, 2018 at a function in New Delhi.

- The awards have been instituted in order to encourage the secondary steel sector, as it plays a key role as a growth engine for the national economy and employment generation.
- The strong performance of the secondary steel sector has given a significant boost to India's steel production.

#### **Government notifies rules for issue of shares**

- The Government on mandated that issue of further shares and transfer of all shares by unlisted public companies should be only through Demat Account with affect from October 2, 2018.
- This was notified by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs on September 11, 2018.

#### **UP to set up special police stations for probing financial frauds**

- In the backdrop of corporate fraud, embezzlement of funds and loan default cases grabbing media headlines on a daily basis, Uttar Pradesh Police has been given more teeth to deal with economic offenders.
- The state is setting up four dedicated police stations under the economic offences wing (EOW) of UP Police to investigate financial crimes.

#### **ASEAN leaders agree to tap 4th Industrial Revolution**

- Leaders of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) members gathered for the 2018 World Economic Forum on ASEAN, stressing the importance of fully tapping the Fourth Industrial Revolution for socioeconomic development.
- To tap great potential of the 4th industrial revolution and minimise its negative impact, the Cambodian Prime Minister Samdech Techo Hun Sen proposed ASEAN countries to enhance quality of education and training, sharpen skills of labourers, seek innovations, and introduce new business models.

#### **India, Bangladesh jointly inaugurate three projects**

- India, Bangladesh jointly inaugurated three projects related to power supply rehabilitation of existing railway section.
- These projects were jointly inaugurated Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina through video conference.

#### **Nabard launches Rs 80 bn Dairy Processing and Infra Development Fund**

- In a bid to support the modernisation of the dairy sector in the country, the Centre has set up a Dairy Processing and Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF) at the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard), with a corpus of Rs 80.04 billion.
- According to Nabard, the fund is expected to achieve an investment of Rs 100 billion in the dairy sector by 2019-20.

#### **India, Russia set trade target to \$50 billion by 2025**

- India and Russia on Friday discussed ways to increase trade, remove barriers in business and possibilities of working together on projects in third countries during 23rd Inter Governmental Commission (IGC) on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation.
- The IGC was meeting was led by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Borisov following a comprehensive discussion on all bilateral matters.

#### **Delhi signs MoU with Seoul on environment, transport**

- Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Seoul Metropolitan Government on environment, transport, education, solid waste management, infrastructure, public health among others.
- The MoU was signed in South Korea's capital Seoul, where Kejriwal is on a three-day trip.

### **Tata Power signs MoU to enter Afghanistan power sector**

- The Afghanistan government has brought on board India's utility major Tata Power for distribution, transmission and generation of power in the war-ravaged South-Asian country.
- The Afghanistan government-run power distribution firm, Da Afghanistan Bresha Sherkat (DABS), Wednesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) during the second India-Afghanistan International Trade and Investment show.

### **BIAL, Siemens ink MoU to co-operate on digital transformation of Kempegowda Airport**

- Siemens Postal, Parcel & Airport Logistics (SPPAL) and Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL) - operators of Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru (BLR Airport) - have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly drive the digital transformation of BLR Airport.
- The declaration of intent envisages co-operation in a number of areas, including the digitalisation of existing infrastructure through the use of Internet of Things (IoT) applications.

### **Assam Government to distribute over 1 lakh pump sets to double farmers' income by 2022**

- The Assam government has decided to distribute over 1 lakh pump sets to double the farmers' income by 2022.
- The pump sets will be distributed under NABARD's Rural Infrastructure Development Project. They will include 60 thousand diesel sets, 11 thousand solar and 30 thousand electrical operated pump sets.

### **State-owned Bank of Baroda, Dena Bank, Vijaya Bank to be merged: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley**

- India plans to merge three state-run banks, Bank of Baroda, Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank, the financial services secretary said on Monday, as part of efforts to clean up the country's banking system.
- The government will continue to provide capital support to the merged bank, expected to be India's third largest, Rajeev Kumar told reporters.
- Banking sector reforms are a major plank of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration to revive credit growth, which has slowed to multi-decade lows as banks struggle with bad loans.

### **PM Modi, Bangladeshi PM Sheikh Hasina jointly launch construction of Indo-Bangla Pipeline Project**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart Sheikh Hasina on September 18, 2018 jointly launched the construction of India-Bangladesh Friendship Product Pipeline Project through video conferencing.
- The project will go a long way in strengthening the Indo-Bangla ties. It is a new milestone in the history of cooperation between India and Bangladesh.
- The 130-kilometre pipeline will connect Siliguri in West Bengal in India and Parbatipur in Dinajpur district of Bangladesh.
- The six-kilometre Indian leg of the pipeline project will be implemented by the Assam-based Numaligarh Refinery Limited and the remaining 124 kilometres of the pipeline project will be implemented by Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation.

### **PayU India gets RBI approval to operate its own NBFC**

- PayU India has received Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) approval to operate its own non-banking financial company (NBFC).
- The move will help PayU promote inclusive growth in the country by catering to the diverse financial needs of various segments of the society.
- The approval from the central bank is subject to "certain pending RBI compliance", PayU said in a statement.

### **PM Narendra Modi launches projects worth over Rs 500 crore**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 18, 2018 inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of various development projects worth over Rs 557 crore in Varanasi.
- The Prime Minister inaugurated Atal Incubation Centre at BHU, which is the first incubation centre of its kind in the state that was established with the help of Bombay Stock Exchange. The centre will support startups and standups.

### **Government modifies operational guidelines for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana**

- The Union Government on September 18, 2018 released the new operational guidelines for implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).
- The new modified provisions include the provision of penalties for states and insurance companies for the delay in settlement of insurance claims under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana. The new operational guidelines address the current challenges faced while implementing the scheme by putting forth effective solutions.

### **New operational guidelines for Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana**

- The farmers will be paid 12 percent interest by insurance companies for the delay in settlement claims beyond two months of prescribed cut-off date.
- The State Governments will have to pay 12 percent interest for the delay in release of State share of subsidy beyond three months of prescribed cut-off date submission by insurance companies.
- The guidelines detail a Standard Operating Procedure for evaluation of insurance companies and removes them from the scheme, if found ineffective in providing services.
- It includes Perennial horticultural crops on pilot basis under the ambit of PMFBY.

### **Home Ministry launches 'e-Sahaj' portal for grant of security clearance to private firms**

- The Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba on September 18, 2018 launched an online portal – 'e-Sahaj' for grant of security clearance to private firms. The portal will enable individuals and private companies to submit applications and view their status online.
- The introduction of the online portal is expected to make the process of security clearance much faster, transparent and easy to monitor.

### **Sebi approves new KYC norms for FPIs**

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has approved new KYC norms for foreign portfolio investors. The new guidelines will be issued soon.
- With the new norms, SEBI will now allow foreign portfolio investors to trade in commodity derivatives market, except for sensitive commodities.

### **Vodafone Idea Board approves merger with Aditya Birla Telecom**

- The Board of Directors of Vodafone Idea Limited, India's largest telecom operator, on September 17, 2018 approved merger of the Vodafone Idea Limited with the Aditya Birla Telecom Limited (ABTL), the parent company of Idea Cellular.
- The merger was approved under the relevant provisions of the Companies Act, 2013. The merger is now subjected to approval of the National Company Law Tribunal.

### **PM Modi to lay foundation stone for India International Convention and Expo Centre, Dwarka**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone for India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC) at Dwarka, New Delhi on September 20, 2018.
- Located in Sector 25 of Dwarka, the Centre would be a world-class state-of-the-art Exhibition-cum-Convention Centre, with facilities like financial, hospitality and retail services.
- The estimated cost of the project is Rs 25700 crores.

### **India signs loan agreement with the World Bank for Uttarakhand Workforce Development Project**

- A Loan Agreement for IBRD Credit of USD 74 million for the Uttarakhand Workforce Development Project (UKWDP) was signed between India and the World Bank on September 18, 2018.
- The Project objective is to improve the quality and relevance of training at priority Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and to increase the number of labor-market-relevant workers through short term training in Uttarakhand.

### **CCI imposes penalties upon Sugar Mills for supporting the bids in respect of Joint Tender floated by Oil Marketing Companies**

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) imposed penalties upon 18 sugar mills and 2 Associations for rigging the bids in respect of a Joint Tender floated by Oil Marketing Companies (HPCL, BPCL, and IOCL) in 2013 for procurement of ethanol for blending with petrol.
- The Government owned Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies - IOCL/ HPCL/ BPCL invited quotations from alcohol manufacturers for supply of ethanol through a Joint Tender dated 02.01.2013 which was issued by BPCL on behalf of OMCs - as the coordinator of the tender process.

### **RBI announces norms for joint priority sector lending by banks, NBFCs**

- The Reserve Bank Friday announced guidelines for co-origination of priority sector loans by banks and NBFCs with a view to enhancing flow of funds to the sector at competitive rates.
- As per the norms issued by the RBI for all scheduled commercial banks (excluding Regional Rural Banks and Small Finance Banks) and Non-Banking Financial Companies - Non-Deposit taking- Systemically Important (NBFC-ND-SIs), the sharing of risks and rewards between these entities should be in a manner that enables appropriate alignment of respective business objectives, as per their mutual agreement.
- The co-origination arrangement should entail joint contribution of credit by both lenders at the facility level.

### **World Bank approves framework to support India's transition to high-middle income country**

- The World Bank board has approved an ambitious five-year Country Partnership Framework (CPF) for India that is in line with India's objectives of high, sustainable and inclusive growth.
- The framework sets the strategic focus for the World Bank's engagement with India for the period FY18-22, to support its transition to a high-middle income economy.
- Through the CPF, the World Bank aims to support India's transition to a higher middle-income country by addressing some of its key development priorities such as resource efficient and inclusive growth, job creation and building its human capital.

### **Yamaha signs MoU with J'hkhand govt on skill development**

- India Yamaha Motor (IYM) on Friday signed an MoU with the Department of Higher, Technical Education & Skill Development and Jharkhand Skill Development Mission Society, for providing two years on-the-job shop floor training to the youth at its factories in Surajpur, Uttar Pradesh and Chennai.
- Jharkhand is the third state with which IYM has signed an MoU on Skill Development and Training, the company said in a statement.

### **Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna launched for unemployed insured persons**

- The Employee's State Insurance (ESI) has approved a 'scheme' named 'Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna' for Insured Persons (IP) covered under the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948.
- The decision was taken by the ESI Corporation during its 175th meeting, which was held in New Delhi on September 18, 2018, under the Chairmanship of Santosh Kumar Gangwar, Union Minister of State for Labour & Employment (I/C).

### **Maharashtra to launch scheme to protect deposits in credit societies**

- The Maharashtra government is going to come out with a scheme to protect deposits of upto Rs 1 lakh in cooperative credit societies, on the lines of similar protection offered to depositors of commercial banks.
- The name of the scheme would be Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Credit Society Deposit Protection Scheme. It will provide protection to deposits up to Rs one lakh.

#### **India and Morocco sign revised Air Services Agreement enabling greater connectivity**

- India and Morocco on September 19, 2018 signed the revised Air Services Agreement enabling greater connectivity between the two countries through a modernised agreement.
- The delegation of the two countries has earlier met thrice wherein they have worked towards liberalisation of markets between the two countries and towards updating the existing Air Services Agreement.

#### **Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu orders safety audit of all airlines, airports**

- Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu ordered a safety audit of all scheduled airlines and airports, amid recent incidents related to the safety of passengers.
- The Minister has directed officials concerned to immediately prepare a comprehensive safety audit plan, which involves assessment of safety parameters of all scheduled airlines, aerodromes, flying training schools and Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul Organisations.

#### **High-Level Committee recommends completion of stalled housing projects in Noida, Greater Noida**

- A high-level committee of the Uttar Pradesh Government has come out with recommendations that are aimed at providing a solution to the completion of homes in the stalled projects of Noida, Greater Noida and Yamuna Expressway.
- The committee, chaired by Durga Shankar Mishra, the Secretary in the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), was formed by the state government through its order dated June 18, 2018 to address the issues of home buyers and affected parties of Noida, Greater Noida and Yamuna Expressway.

#### **First assembly of ISA; Second ministerial of IORA; Second REINVEST meet to be held in India**

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy is organising the First Assembly of International Solar Alliance (ISA); the 2nd Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Renewable Energy Ministerial Meeting and the 2nd Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo, (REINVEST- 2018) in New Delhi.
- The three events will be inaugurated in a common function by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi in the presence of Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of United Nations on October 2, 2018.

#### **Flipkart acquires Israel-based Upstream Commerce**

- E-commerce marketplace Flipkart has announced the acquisition of Israel based Upstream Commerce, a world leader in real-time pricing and product assortment optimization solutions.
- One of Israel's leading technology startups, Upstream Commerce, builds cloud-based, automated competitive pricing and product analysis solutions. These solutions will strengthen Flipkart's ability to deliver insights to its sellers, helping them optimize their product assortment and pricing strategies and find gaps in the market to serve customers better.

#### **Finance Minister launches Financial Inclusion Index, Jan Dhan Darshak app**

- The Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Arun Jaitley launched the Financial Inclusion Index (FII) in New Delhi on September 24, 2018. The index was launched after the Finance Minister's annual performance review meeting with the CEOs of public sector banks.
- The annual index will be released by the Department of Financial Services (DFS) under the Ministry of Finance by the end of this year and it would rate states on their performance on last-mile banking services availability. The index will be a measure of access and usage of a basket of formal financial products and services that includes savings, remittances, credit, insurance and pension products.

**The index will include the following three measurement dimensions:**

- (i) Access to financial services
- (ii) Usage of financial services
- (iii) Quality

**Key Highlights**

- The single composite index gives a snapshot of the level of financial inclusion that would guide the macro policy perspective.
- The various components of the index will help measure financial services for use of internal policy making. The index can also be used directly as a composite measure in development indicators.

**Jan Dhan Darshak App**

Finance Minister launches Financial Inclusion Index As a part of financial inclusion initiative, the Department of Financial Services (DFS) under the Ministry of Finance along with the National Informatics Centre (NIC) has jointly developed a mobile application called 'Jan Dhan Darshak'.

The application will act as a guide for the common people in locating a financial service touch point at a given location in the country.

**RBI eases cash reserve rules to ease liquidity condition of banks**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) eased mandatory cash requirement rules for banks to provide "durable liquidity" to the economy.
- Banks could 'carve out' up to 15 percent of holdings under the statutory liquidity reserves to meet their liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) requirements as compared to 13 percent now.
- The relaxation in statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) requirement is with effect from October 1, 2018. This will supplement the ability of individual banks to avail of liquidity, from the repo markets.

**Government launches Agmark online system**

- The government Wednesday launched an online platform for processing applications related to quality certification mark 'Agmark' for agricultural products.
- Agmark is certification mark that assures conformity to a set of standards approved by the government agency Directorate of Marketing and Inspection.
- "The process of application will be simple, quick, transparent and 24x7," Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh was quoted as said in an official statement.

**4 Northern states, 2 UTs agree to fix uniform tax rates on petroleum products**

- Northern states of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Union Territories of Delhi and Chandigarh have agreed to fix uniform tax rates on petroleum products, amid rising fuel prices.
- Besides, these states and UTs also have agreed to bring uniformity in taxes on liquor and registration of vehicles and transport permit.

**Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley launches web portal for MSME banking credit space**

- The Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, Arun Jaitley on September 25, 2018 launched [www.psbloansin59minutes.com](http://www.psbloansin59minutes.com) web portal, a transformative initiative in Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) credit space.
- The web portal will enable in principle approval for MSME loans up to Rs 1 crore within 59 minutes from Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and 5 Public Sector Banks (PSBs).

### **India, Morocco sign MoU to enhance cooperation in MSME Sector**

- India and Morocco on September 26, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for deepening cooperation between Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sectors of the two countries.
- The MoU was signed by Ravindra Nath, CMD of National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), and Rabri Barrazouka, Director General, Maroc PME of Morocco in Rabat, Morocco. The MOU will facilitate transfer of Indian technologies and products to Morocco.

### **Assam government to introduce universal old age pension scheme**

- The state cabinet of Assam has decided to introduce a universal old age pension scheme to cover all BPL and APL ration card holders above the age of 60 years.
- The cabinet, in its meeting in Guwahati on September 25, 2018, decided to launch the pension scheme on October 2.

### **DAC clears procurement of engines worth Rs 2300 crore for T-72 tanks**

- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) on September 25, 2018 approved procurement of 1,000 engines for fitment in T-72 tanks of the Indian Army at an approximate cost of over Rs 2,300 crore.
- The engines are expected to enhance mobility, agility and acceleration of T-72 tanks, making them more versatile and effective in the battlefield. Post-transfer of technology, most of these engines will be manufactured by the Ordnance Factories Board.

### **Ravi Shankar Prasad launches DigiVAARTA to increase awareness on Digital Payments**

- Union Electronics and Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Friday launched DigiVAARTA, a multi-channel citizen engagement programme that can run on both feature and smartphones.
- DigiVAARTA is a welcome addition to the government's drive to promote adoption and awareness on digital payments.
- The technology underlying the multi-channel engagement programme is SAMWAD – a platform for intuitive and interactive communication – supported by Centre for Digital Financial Inclusion (CDFI).
- Developed with an objective to increase awareness and familiarity of individuals on various financial products and services and to educate the unbanked and under-banked individuals, SAMWAD provides enabling engagement across multiple channels in the form of stories, images and videos in any chosen language.

### **RBI cancels Bandhan Bank's permission for new branches, freezes chief's pay**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has restrained Bandhan Bank from opening new branches and also ordered freezing of remuneration of its CEO Chandra Shekhar Ghosh for not meeting the licensing conditions, the newly-launched bank said Friday.
- The bank, on its part, said it is taking steps to comply with licensing condition to bring down the shareholding of non operative financial holding company (NOFHC) in the bank to 40 per cent.

### **ICICI Bank launches co-branded credit cards with MakeMyTrip**

- ICICI Bank has partnered with travel marketplace MakeMyTrip to launch a range of co-branded credit cards which offers benefits on travel related spends.
- As part of the agreement, ICICI Bank will offer two types of credit card — MakeMyTrip ICICI Bank Platinum Credit Card and MakeMyTrip ICICI Bank Signature Credit Card.

### **IndusInd Bank Launches Voice-Based Banking Services Through Amazon Alexa**

- IndusInd Bank has always aimed at creating path breaking solutions by leveraging emerging technologies.
- In keeping up with this legacy, the Bank has launched its Artificial Intelligence (AI) based Alexa Skill – 'IndusAssist' – that enables its customers to conduct financial and non-financial banking transactions on Amazon Echo and other Alexa-enabled devices using voice based commands.

### **GST Council sets up GoM to look into Kerala's demand for imposing extra cess in case of disasters**

- The GST Council on Friday decided to set up a seven-member Group of Ministers (GoM) to look into Kerala's demand for imposing an additional cess over GST to meet the financial requirements in case of a natural calamity.
- Apart from senior union ministers, the committee would comprise members from the North Eastern, hill and coastal states which are most vulnerable to natural calamities, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley told reporters here after the council meeting.

### **Govt forms committee on Corporate Social Responsibility**

- The government on Friday constituted a High Level Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility-2018 (HLC-2018) under the Chairmanship of Injeti Srinivas, Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) to review the existing framework, guide and formulate the roadmap for a coherent policy on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).
- According to Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the Committee will review the existing CSR framework as per Act, rules and circulars issued from time to time and recommend guidelines for better enforcement of CSR provisions. It will also analyse outcomes of CSR activities/programmes/projects and suggest measures for effective monitoring and evaluation of CSR by companies. Suggestions are also expected on innovative solutions, use of technology, platform to connect stakeholders, and social audit.

### **Government approves constitution of High Level Advisory Group to review India's global trade strategy**

- The Union Commerce Minister, Suresh Prabhu, has approved the constitution of a High Level Advisory Group (HLAG) to make recommendations for identifying opportunities and addressing challenges in order to find a way forward for India in the contemporary global trade scenario.
- The HLAG will be chaired by Surjit S Bhalla, who is the Director of Oxus Research and Investments.

### **Flood loss amounts to Rs 25,000 cr: World Bank-ADB report**

- The World Bank – ADB (Asian Development Bank) team have assessed that the damages from the deluge in Kerala amounts to Rs 25,000 crores (3.5 billion). About Rs 7000 crore in this amount is likely to be granted as long-term loan from the two agencies.
- The representatives of World Bank and ADB presented the figures of loss caused due to the damage of houses, basic amenities and other essentials before chief secretary Tom Jose and department secretaries. The agencies handed over policies for rebuilding of the state and the recommendations for the short-term and long-term programmes.

### **BSE, PTC, ICICI to set up power exchange**

- BSE, PTC India Ltd and ICICI Bank have come together to form India's third electricity exchange, BSE said on Monday.
- A power exchange functions on the lines of commodity exchanges and provides a platform for buyers, sellers and traders of electricity to enter into spot contracts that are for the same day, next day, and on a weekly basis. It also provides a payment security mechanism to buyers and sellers. India has two operating power exchanges—Power Exchange of India (PXIL) and India Energy Exchange (IEX).

### **Government constitutes Competition Law Review Committee to review Competition Act**

- The Union Government on September 30, 2018 constituted a Competition Law Review Committee to review the Competition Act, 2002. The Committee will be headed by Injeti Srinivas, Secretary of the Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- The Review Committee was constituted with an aim to ensure that the Act coexists with the needs of strong economic fundamentals.

### **Maharashtra continues to top list of states with maximum average AUM**

- In August, the last month for which data is available, average assets under management (AUM) of mutual funds rose to an all time high of Rs 25.2 lakh crore, show numbers from the Association of Mutual Funds of India (AMFI).
- Maharashtra continues to be the state with the maximum penetration and assets under management, in line with it being one of the richest states in the country.

## Current Affairs related to India and states

### Pranab Mukherjee inaugurates Haryana govt's Smartgram Yojana projects

- Pranab Mukherjee, the former President of India, has inaugurated projects under Smartgram Yojana in Haryana yesterday.
- He shared the stage with Manohar Lal Khattar, Haryana Chief Minister on the occasion.

Former President, along with Khattar has launched various projects on September 2, 2018, under the scheme which are as follows:

- Smartgram Gramalaya building in Harchandpur
- Smartgram partner processing centre at a village in Harchandpur
- Training and Innovation Warehouse at a village in Alipur
- Foundation stone of 'Nayagaon Happiness Square' at Nayagaon village, in Gurgaon including the water ATM

### Home for widows 'Krishna Kutir' inaugurated in UP's Vrindavan

- Union Minister for Women and Child Development, Maneka Sanjay Gandhi, along with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on August 31, 2018 inaugurated the widows' home 'Krishna Kutir' at Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh.
- Krishna Kutir is a special home for 1000 widows and is the largest ever facility of its kind created by a government organisation.
- The Vrindavan home will offer shelter and protection to the large number of helpless widows.
- An area of 4 acres has been allocated near the home by the district administration which will be developed into a park and which can be used by the widows of the home.
- Widows will be a part of various committees which will be formed to manage the widows' home.

### India, Nepal sign MoU on preliminary survey of railway line between Raxaul, Kathmandu

- India and Nepal on August 31, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on conducting a preliminary survey of a railway line connecting Indian border town Raxaul to Nepal's capital Kathmandu.
- The agreement was signed by Indian Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri and Nepal's Secretary of Ministry of Physical Planning and Works, Madhusudan Adhikari in Kathmandu in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nepal's Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli.

### Uttarakhand HC declares fatwas as unconstitutional

- The Uttarakhand High Court on August 30, 2018 declared fatwas as unconstitutional and illegal. The high court banned all the religious bodies and statutory panchayats in the state from issuing fatwas.
- The ruling came, as the court declared illegal a fatwa banishing the family of a rape victim from their village.

### Law Commission floats Consultation Paper on family law reform

- The Law Commission has floated a Consultation Paper on family law reform. The paper discusses a range of provisions within all family laws, secular or personal and suggests a number of changes in the form of potential amendments and fresh enactments.

- To reform family law, the paper discusses the introduction of new grounds for 'no-fault' divorce accompanied by corresponding changes to the provisions on alimony and maintenance.

#### **Indus Waters Treaty: India, Pakistan agree to undertake Treaty mandated tours on both sides**

- The 115th meeting of the India-Pakistan Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) was held in Lahore, Pakistan during August 29-30, 2018. The Indian delegation was led by PK Saxena, the Indian Commissioner for Indus Waters.
- During the meeting, technical discussions were held on implementation of various hydroelectric projects under the provisions of Indus Waters Treaty 1960 including Pakal Dul (1000 MW) and Lower Kalnai (48 MW) projects in Jammu and Kashmir.

#### **Health Ministry releases draft rules on sale of drugs by e-pharmacies**

- The Union Health Ministry on September 1, 2018 released draft rules on sale of drugs by e-pharmacies to regulate online sale of medicines across the country.
- The draft rules on "sale of drugs by e-pharmacy" state that no person will distribute or sell, stock, exhibit or offer for sale of drugs through e-pharmacy portal unless registered.

#### **Bi-annual talks between Indian and Bangladeshi border forces begin in New Delhi**

- The bi-annual talks between the Indian and Bangladeshi border forces began in New Delhi on September 3, 2018.
- While the Director General of Border Security Force (BSF) KK Sharma represented the Indian side, the Director General of Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) Major General Md Shafeenul Islam lead the Bangladeshi side in the talks.

#### **France to organise Mission PEGASE in India**

- Celebrating the twentieth anniversary of the India-France strategic partnership, the French Air Force has organised Mission PEGASE in the Asia-Pacific region. The event, which began on Saturday, will end on September 4.
- The highlight is the detachment of three Rafale combat jets, one Atlas A-400M military transport aircraft, one C-135 refueling aircraft, and one Airbus A310 cargo aircraft.

#### **National Nutrition Month observed across India to fight malnutrition**

- The National Nutrition Month is being celebrated across the country in September to mark the fight against malnutrition. During this month, the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development will organise various programmes to spread broad awareness on issues related to malnutrition like stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia and low birth weight in children.
- The month will focus on adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers to eliminate the deficiencies prevailing in the Health sector.

#### **Conference on E-Mobility in Indian Railways begins in New Delhi**

- The Conference on E-Mobility in Indian Railways began in New Delhi to discuss the strategies regarding future of mobility in the country.
- Minister of State for Railways, Manoj Sinha spoke on clean energy utilisation in Indian Railways. He said that the possibilities of air and solar power are limitless.
- Ashwani Lohani, Chairman of Railway Board, said Indian Railways is moving towards fast speed corridors, creating better terminals, new tracks and complete electrification.

#### **Shipping Ministry holds Consultative Workshop on National Maritime Heritage Complex**

- The Ministry of Shipping, through its Sagarmala programme, is closely working with Gujarat and other stakeholders to showcase India's rich maritime heritage through development of a World Class Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal in Gujarat.
- Preliminary work on design elements of the proposed heritage complex has been completed and consultations from experts are now under process.

#### **International Aviation Summit begins in Delhi**

- The International Aviation Summit began in New Delhi, India on September 4, 2018. The seminar has been jointly organised by the Airports Authority of India, Ministry of Civil Aviation and International Air Transport Association (IATA).
- Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister for Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu revealed that the Civil Aviation Ministry is coming up with Vision 2035 under which it plans to build 100 new airports across India in the next 10-15 years with an investment of USD 60 billion and address the major issues concerning aviation industry such as airport infrastructure, taxation and use of technology.

#### **Supreme Court legalises homosexuality, partially strikes down Section 377**

- A Five Judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on September 6, 2018 decriminalised Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) by partially striking down some of its provisions.
- The bench comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra; Justices R F Nariman, A M Khanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud and Indu Malhotra ruled that Section 377, to the extent it criminalises sexual acts between consenting adults, whether homosexual or heterosexual, is unconstitutional.
- However, bestiality will continue as an offence. Any kind of sexual activity with animals shall remain penal offence under Section 377 of the IPC.

#### **India agrees to end PISA boycott; will participate in PISA 2021**

- The Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Prakash Javadekar in the first week of September 2018 decided to end the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) boycott.
- Resultantly, the ministry will send a team of officers to Paris this year to negotiate India's terms of participation in PISA 2021 with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD).

#### **Telangana Cabinet passes resolution to dissolve Legislative Assembly**

- The Telangana Cabinet on September 6, 2018 passed a resolution calling for the dissolution of the Telangana Legislative Assembly.
- The state's Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao had convened the meeting of his Council of Ministers to dissolve the Legislative Assembly and seek fresh elections six months ahead of schedule.

#### **Cabinet approves establishment of permanent campuses of seven new IIMs**

- The Union Cabinet on September 5, 2018 approved the establishment and operationalisation of permanent campus of seven new Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs).
- These IIMs will be established at Amritsar, Bodh Gaya, Nagpur, Sambalpur, Sirmour, Vishakhapatnam and Jammu with a total expenditure of Rs 3775.42 crore (Rs 2999.96 crore as Non-Recurring and Rs 775.46 Crore as Recurring Expenditure).

#### **6th edition of Bengaluru Space Expo inaugurated**

- The 6th edition of the biennial Bengaluru Space Expo was inaugurated by ISRO Chairman Dr K Sivan in Bengaluru.
- The three day event will showcase industry participation in Indian space programme.
- India and France are strategic partners in the space programme and are working in close proximity in development of space missions.

### **Indian navy ships & aircraft arrive in Sri Lanka to participate SLINEX-2018**

- Indian navy ships and aircraft arrived in Sri Lanka to take part in the SLINEX-2018 at Trincomalee, Sri Lanka.
- SLINEX-2018 is a joint exercise between Indian and Sri Lankan navies.
- The exercise which was previously held biannually has now been converted to an annual event from this year.

### **Indo-Kazakhstan Joint Exercise KAZIND 2018**

- Joint Army Exercise 'KAZIND' will be conducted between the Indian and Kazakhstan Army from September 10 to 23, 2018 in Otar region, Kazakhstan.
- The aim of the exercise is to build and promote bilateral Army to Army relations and exchange skills and experiences between Kazakhstan Army and the Indian Army.

### **India to participate at 87th Izmir International Tradeshow in Turkey**

- India is the Partner Country in the 87th Izmir International tradeshow which begins in Izmir, Turkey from September 7, 2018.
- In this tradeshow India will also be launching a mega business pavilion 'Source India' hosting 75 Indian companies with the aim of tie-ups to increase India's exports to Turkey.

### **PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate India's first Global Mobility Summit**

- India's first-ever Global Mobility Summit – 'MOVE' will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on September 7, 2018. The two-day summit, organised by Niti Aayog, will deliberate on steps to promote electric vehicles and shared mobility.
- The main focus of the summit is to make Indian cities pollution free. It will be attended by Union Ministers including Arun Jaitley, Nitin Gadkari, Piyush Goyal and Ravi Shankar Prasad.
- The summit will deliberate on five themes including electrification and alternative fuels, reinventing public transport, goods transport and logistics and data analytics and mobility.
- The summit is expected to witness participation from more than 2,200 people from across the world including leaders from the government, industry, research organisations, academia, think tanks and civil society.

### **ISRO unveils space suit, crew model for Gaganyaan Mission**

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on September 6, 2017 unveiled the space suit and crew model for Gaganyaan Mission, providing the first sneak peek into its upcoming manned mission to space at the 6th Bengaluru Space Expo.
- The Gaganyaan mission was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his 72nd Independence Day speech. PM Modi announced that this manned space mission will take Indian astronauts to space on board 'Gaganyaan' by 2022.

### **India, France sign MoU to form working group for Gaganyaan Mission**

- India and France on September 6, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to constitute a working group for Gaganyaan Mission, India's first manned space mission.
- The announcement regarding the same was made at the 6th Bengaluru Space Expo by French space agency CNES President, Jean-Yves Le Gall.

### **India, France sign implementation agreement on 'Mobilise Your City'**

- India and France on September 6, 2018 signed an implementation agreement on 'Mobilise Your City' (MYC) in New Delhi to support three Indian cities in their efforts to reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions.
- The MYC agreement was signed by Mukund Kumar Sinha, OSD & Ex-Officio Joint Secretary in the Urban Affairs Ministry and the Regional Director of Agence Française de Développement (Afd), Nicolas Fornage. It was signed in the presence of Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri and Alexander Ziegler, Ambassador of France in India.

### **Ayushman Bharat-Jan Arogya Yojana launched in Jammu**

- The Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY), which provides poor and vulnerable families coverage for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation was launched in Jammu on September 6, 2018.
- The state's Deputy Commissioner Ramesh Kumar inaugurated the pilot launch of the scheme at a programme organised by the Directorate of Family Welfare.

### **Uttarakhand to get India's first integrated cooperative development project**

- To check forced migration from the hills of Uttarakhand the state government will soon launch the country's first Integrated Co-operative Development Project (ICDP). The scheme aims to drastically improve the rural economy by giving a boost to the co-operative, farm and allied sectors, chief minister Trivendra Singh Rawat announced on Thursday.

### **Home Minister inaugurates Defence and Homeland Security Expo and Conference**

- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the three-day Defence and Homeland Security Expo and Conference in New Delhi on September 6, 2018.
- Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that India has been facing security and terrorism-related challenges for years and there are multiple vulnerable areas that are prone to various risks.

### **Odisha Assembly passes resolution to set up Council**

- The Odisha Assembly on September 6, 2018 passed a resolution for setting up a Legislative Council in the state.
- The state assembly speaker P K Amat announced that the resolution was passed as it got support of 104 of the 147 members of the Assembly while opposition Congress and BJP stayed away from the House.

### **Government decides to exempt electrical vehicles & automobiles run on alternative fuel from permit requirements**

- Government has decided to exempt electric vehicles and automobiles run on alternative fuel from permit requirements. The move is in a bid to boost such vehicles in the country to bring down pollution.
- The information was shared by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari while addressing the annual convention of Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) in New Delhi on September 6, 2018.

### **India's first green number plate electric car**

- Giving electric vehicles its own identity, Government of India had announced the introduction of green coloured number plates for electric vehicles and Mahindra Electric is the first company to get these new green number plates on its Mahindra eVerito electric car.
- Bengaluru based start-up Lithium Urban Technology is the first to get green coloured number plate under government's new plan that aims to boost the electric vehicles. Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Road Transport and Highways believes that these government approved distinctive green registration plates for EVs will encourage people to use EVs. He further also abolished all required permits for all vehicles running on alternative source of fuel including electric cars.

### **India's first railway varsity starts operations in Vadodara**

- The first of its kind university in the country on the transport sector, the National Rail and Transportation Institute (NRTI), started operations this week. Currently, it is functioning out of the National Academy of Indian Railways, Vadodara.
- Funded by ministry of railways, with University of California, Berkeley and Cornell University as its international partners, the university started with two undergraduate courses - BSc Transportation Technology and BBA Transportation Managements- with 50 students each.

### **Indo-US joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas 2018' to be held in Uttarakhand**

- The joint military training Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2018 will be conducted between India and the United States in Himalayas at Chaubattia, Uttarakhand from September 16 to 29, 2018.
- As part of the ongoing Indo-US defence cooperation, this joint military exercise would be held under the aegis of Headquarter Central Command.

#### **Fourth World Summit on Accreditation held**

- The 4th World Summit on Accreditation (WOSA-2018) was inaugurated by the Union Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar at New Delhi on September 8, 2018.
- Speaking on the occasion, the HRD Minister said there is a need to cover each and every institution under accreditation but right now the number of accredited institutions is very less. Currently, only 15 per cent institutions come under accreditation and 85 per cent institutions are still not coming for accreditation.

#### **Bengaluru airport set to become first in Asia to use face recognition as boarding pass**

- Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) of Bengaluru is set to become first airport in Asia to introduce face recognition based passage system technology from 2019.
- For this, Bengaluru International Airport Ltd. (BIAL), which operates KIA has signed agreement with Portuguese software firm Vision Box.

#### **India, Afghanistan agree to bolster security cooperation**

- India and Afghanistan on Monday agreed to strengthen security cooperation in an effort to ensure peace and stability in the region.
- The commitment was made at the third meeting of Joint Working Group on Political and Security Cooperation between India and Afghanistan at Kabul. Deputy Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, Hekmat Khalil Karzai, and Foreign Secretary, Vijay Gokhale co-chaired the meeting.

#### **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana to cover child cancer treatment**

- The Union Government has announced that the treatment of childhood cancer will be covered under Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana. The information was shared by NITI Aayog member Vinod Kumar Paul, while speaking at a function in New Delhi on September 9, 2018.
- Paul revealed that child cancer will be treated under the Ayushman Bharat scheme and the rate in this regard has been fixed. He also said that 1.5 lakh health and wellness centres will be opened across India by 2022 under the scheme. The centres will provide comprehensive health care for diseases like diabetes, cancer, hypertension and cardiovascular diseases.

#### **PM Narendra Modi to unveil Sardar Patel statue on October 31**

- Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on September 9, 2018 announced that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the world's tallest statue of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on October 31, 2018.
- Named as the 'Statue of Unity', the statue is currently under construction on Sadhubet island at Sardar Sarovar Dam near Kevadia Colony in Bharuch district, Gujarat. The statue will highlight the works of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, popularly known as the 'Iron man of India'.

#### **PM Narendra Modi to launch Swachhata hi Seva Campaign**

- The Swachhata hi Seva Campaign 2018, a Jan Andolan for Swachhata, will be launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 15, 2018. The campaign will be observed in the run-up to the 4th anniversary of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) on October 2.
- The 2018 campaign follows the success of the 2017 campaign and will culminate with the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention (MGISC) from September 29 to October 2, 2018, which also marks the start of the 150th birth year celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi.

#### **Delhi Government launches doorstep delivery of 40 services**

- The Delhi government on September 10, 2018 launched a scheme that will enable doorstep delivery of 40 essential government services such as caste and marriage certificates, driving license and new water connections in the first phase. The services will be provided for an extra fee of Rs 50.
- Under the scheme, the Delhi government will provide 40 services such as caste certificate, driving licence, at the doorstep of people. Eventually, more services will be added to the list.
- In July, the government had approved administrative reforms proposal to hire a company, which will be an intermediary agency, to execute the project in the national capital.

#### **Telangana's Sadarmatt anicut, Pedda Cheruvu get Heritage Irrigation Structure status**

- The International Executive Council, the highest decision making body of International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), accorded Heritage Irrigation Structure (HIS) status on the 127-year-old Sadarmatt anicut and the iconic Pedda Cheruvu tank.
- Both these sites will now be inscribed in the ICID Register of Heritage Irrigation Structures. The plaques presented by the council were received by the Member Secretary, Indian National Committee on Surface Water.

#### **India's combat aircraft Tejas successfully completes first-ever mid-air refuelling trial**

- In a first, Tejas, the advanced version of India's indigenously produced Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) was successfully refuelled mid-air by a Russian-origin Ilyushin-78 tanker on September 10, 2018.
- The mid-air refuelling was a part of a 'wet contact' trial for LCA Tejas MK-1. The Russian-origin tanker refuelled the fighter plane, piloted by Wing Commander Siddarth Singh, with 1,900 litres of fuel at an altitude of 20,000 ft. The move demonstrates a key capability sought by the Indian Air Force.

#### **BARC's Apsara Reactor recommissioned after 9 years**

- India's oldest research reactor 'Apsara', which was shut down permanently in 2009 for repair, was recommissioned with a higher capacity on September 10, 2018 at Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay.
- The refurbished version of the reactor is named as 'Apsara-upgraded' (Apsara-U).

#### **PM Narendra Modi announces remuneration hike for ASHA, Anganwadi workers**

- Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 11, 2018 announced an increase in remuneration for those involved with the government's Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) scheme and Anganwadi scheme.
- The announcement, which will be effective from next month, was made by the Prime Minister during his video bridge interaction with lakhs of ASHA, Anganwadi and auxiliary nurse midwife (ANM) workers.

#### **Microsoft partners with SRL Diagnostics to train its AI in detecting cancer**

- Microsoft has partnered SRL Diagnostics, one of India's leading pathology labs, to train its artificial intelligence (AI) system in detecting cancer.
- The tech giant plans to teach its AI to find the traits of cancerous cells that trained pathologists do manually by looking at a slice of the patient's tissue on a glass slide. SRL's bank of more than one million such slides from past diagnosis will be used as the training material for the AI.

#### **India, Iran, Afghanistan hold first tripartite meeting**

- India, Iran and Afghanistan held their first tripartite meeting on September 11, 2018 in Kabul during which implementation of the Chabahar port project and a host of other issues including ways to deepen counter-terror cooperation were discussed.
- The Indian delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale while the Iranian team was headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai chaired the meeting.

### **AAI shelves water aerodrome project in Chilika Lake**

- The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has dropped the proposed water aerodrome project at Chilika Lake in Odisha.
- The AAI has cancelled the seaplane project in the lake, as it, would have negatively impacted the ecosystem and the surrounding human population at the world's second largest brackish water lake.

### **Aadhaar not mandatory for booking International Parcel: Department of Posts**

- The Department of Posts announced on September 10, 2018 that Aadhaar was not mandatory for booking an International Parcel.
- The department clarified that it is mandatory to produce a copy of an identity proof acceptable for important transactions like booking an International parcel or International EMS (Merchandise) for safety and security reasons.
- However, it said that Aadhaar was not a mandatory document to be produced at the time of booking, but just one of the accepted identity proofs along with others like driving license, passport and voter ID.

### **Indian Army plans to reduce force strength, decides to cut 1.5 lakh jobs**

- Indian Army Chief General Bipin Rawat on September 11, 2018 reviewed the ongoing studies to restructure the force.
- The four studies demand reducing the 13-lakh strong Army force by at least 150000 over the next few years and revamping the cadre to optimise the functioning at various levels and to make the Army "lean and mean" to fight a modern-day war.

### **Bengaluru Airport to get India's first and only LED-powered runway**

- Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), on Wednesday claimed that the Kempegowda International Airport's (KIA) proposed second runway will be powered completely by LED.
- The runway, which is scheduled to become operational only in 2019, will be the first such runway in the country, the BIAL has claimed.

### **Piyush Goyal launches 'Rail Sahyog' web portal**

- Railways Minister Piyush Goyal on September 11, 2018 launched the 'Rail Sahyog' web portal to provide a platform for the Corporates and Public Sector Units (PSUs) to contribute to creation of amenities at or near Railway Stations through Corporate Social Responsibility funds.
- The app launch was in line with PM Narendra Modi's vision for a New India by 2022. It was a part of various initiatives undertaken recently by Indian Railways for upgrading its infrastructure, technology, hygiene among host of other things for an enhanced passenger experience.

### **IBM, IIT Bombay team up to accelerate AI research in India**

- IBM and IIT Bombay on Wednesday announced that the university will join the AI Horizons Network as part of a multi-year collaboration to advance AI research.
- The Department of Computer Science and Engineering at IIT Bombay is one of the preeminent research institutions in the world, with a long history of leadership in data mining and information retrieval systems.

### **India's First Dog Park To Open In Hyderabad**

- India's first dog park is set to be inaugurated in Hyderabad this week. Located at Gachibowli, at a place which was originally a garbage dumping ground, the facility which is spread over 1.3 acres have all the latest for your dogs.
- The park has been equipped with dog training equipments, play equipments, off leash areas for exercise, splash pool, sprinkler fountain, amphitheatre, two lawns, separate enclosures for big and small dogs and even a clinic.

### **EC removes NOTA option from Rajya Sabha, Legislative Council polls**

- The Election Commission of India (ECI) on September 11, 2018 withdrew the provision of NOTA (None of the above) option from ballot papers of the Rajya Sabha and the state's Legislative Council polls as per the Supreme Court directive.
- The ECI, through the notification, ordered the returning officers for Rajya Sabha and legislative council to ensure that there is no NOTA column displayed in the ballot paper.

### **First ever bus services between Bihar and Nepal flagged off**

- In a first, bus services between Bihar and Nepal were flagged off on September 11, 2018 by Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.
- The bus services have been commissioned following the agreement between India and Nepal.
- Following this, four buses will ply from Bodhgaya to Kathmandu and four buses will ply from Patna to Janakpur.

### **Arunachal CM inaugurates state's first Sainik School**

- Chief Minister Pema Khandu on September 11, 2018 dedicated Arunachal Pradesh's first sainik school to the people of the state. The state was granted three Sainik schools by the Union Ministry of Defence.
- The school at Niglok in East Siang district began its first academic session from August 27 with 60 students.

### **India, Mongolia commence joint military exercise 'Nomadic Elephant – 2018'**

- The joint military exercise between Indian and Mongolian armies, the Nomadic Elephant - 2018, began on September 11, 2018 in Mongolia.
- The Nomadic Elephant is an annual, bilateral exercise designed to strengthen the partnership between Indian and Mongolian Armed Force.

### **Indo-Kazakhstan joint exercise 'KAZIND 2018' begins**

- The Indian Army commenced joint military exercise- 'KAZIND-2018' - with the army of central Asian nation Kazakhstan on September 11, 2018.
- The exercise takes the number of India's on-going and scheduled drills with different nations, including the US, this month to four.

### **India, Sri Lanka conduct joint naval exercise 'SLINEX 2018'**

- The sixth edition of 'SLINEX 2018', a joint naval exercise between the naval forces of India and Sri Lanka is currently underway in Trincomalee, a major port city of Sri Lanka. The bilateral exercise is being held from September 7-13, 2018.
- The bilateral exercise, which was previously held once in two years, will be held as an annual event from this year onwards. Three Navy ships from each side along with around 1,000 naval personnel from both countries are participating in the joint drill.

### **WCD Ministry issues advisory on the deadly online game -Momo challenge**

- The Women and Child Development Ministry has issued an advisory on the deadly online game Momo challenge, asking parents to monitor social media activity of their children to ensure that they are not engaging in the dangerous game.
- Noting that the game has become viral on social media platforms, the ministry asked parents to keep their eyes open and also said that they should not tell their children about it unless they believe that the child also knows about it. The Ministry also gave guidelines on ways to protect a child from the game.

### **China plans bullet train from Kolkata to its Kunming City**

- Chinese Consul-General in Kolkata, Ma Zhanwu on September 12, 2018 announced that China is looking forward to plan bullet trains from Kolkata to Kunming City of China.

- However, the Chinese diplomat did not reveal the details of the route. The train is expected to traverse through Myanmar and Bangladesh.

#### **ASI discovers 254 copper coins of medieval era at Khirki Mosque**

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) discovered a collection of 254 Copper Coins in the premises of Khirki Mosque during the course of conservation of the monument.
- This mosque lies on the southern periphery of the village Khirki, New Delhi. The mosque was built by Khan-i-Jahan Jnan Shah, the Prime Minister of Firoz Shah Tughluq (1351-88) and is believed to be one of the seven mosques built by him.

#### **BEML launches India's first 205T electric drive rear dump truck 'BHQOSE'**

- India's first 205T Electric Drive Rear Dump Truck (Model BH205-E), designed and developed by Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML), was launched recently.
- The dump truck has been developed for use in the project of Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL), Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh.

#### **Union Government launches National Scholarship Portal Mobile App**

- Union Minister for Minority Affairs, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on September 13, 2018 launched the country's first "National Scholarship Portal Mobile App" (NSP Mobile App).
- The National Scholarship Portal Mobile App will ensure a smooth, accessible and hassle-free scholarship system for students from poor and weaker sections.

#### **Kochi start-up makes India's first commercial underwater drone for DRDO Lab**

- Kochi-based start-up IROV Technologies Pvt Ltd (EyeROV) is launching commercial underwater drones by handing over the first vehicle to Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL), a laboratory of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The company, backed by Kerala Start-Up Mission, oil and gas firm BPCL and the Department of Science and Technology, claims the product is the first indigenously-developed commercial underwater drone in the country.

#### **Global Climate Action Summit 2018: Indian cities, states step up climate action plans**

- The Global Climate Action Summit 2018 was held during September 12-14, 2018 at San Francisco, California, United States.
- Over 4000 businesses, cities, states and civil society delegates attended the summit and showed their commitments to achieve the goals set by the Paris Agreement.

#### **Jharkhand government introduces electric cars for official use**

- The state government of Jharkhand on September 12, 2018 introduced electric vehicles for official use. The energy department of the state got 20 such cars for its use. The information was shared by the state's Chief Minister Raghubar Das.
- The state's energy department received 20 cars in the first phase. The cars were procured by the Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), which is a joint venture of the PSUs under the Ministry of Power.

#### **Haryana assembly passes State Commission for SC Bill**

- The Haryana Legislative Assembly on September 11, 2018 passed the Haryana State Commission for Scheduled Castes Bill, 2018, for development and safeguarding the interests of people belonging to the community. The bill was passed on the last day of the state assembly's session.

- The Haryana State Commission for Scheduled Castes Bill, 2018, has been passed to set up a commission for scheduled castes in the state for the overall development and welfare of the community and to safeguard their interests.

#### **Vice President Venkaiah Naidu to embark on 3-nation visit to Serbia, Malta, Romania**

- Vice President Venkaiah Naidu will embark on a three-nation visit to Serbia, Malta and Romania on September 14, 2018. During the seven-day visit, Naidu will first reach Serbia where he will meet the leadership of that country.
- Several MoUs including in the field of Agriculture and Tourism are expected to be signed during Vice President's visit to these countries.

#### **Government approves over Rs 150 crore additional drought relief to UP**

- The Union Government has approved an additional assistance of Rs 157.23 crore for Uttar Pradesh and Rs 60.76 crore for Maharashtra.
- The assistance has been approved from National Disaster Response Fund for Uttar Pradesh affected by drought in rabi season during 2017-18 and for Maharashtra which was hit by pest attack and cyclone in 2017.

#### **India's first Tribal Tourism Circuit to be launched in Chhattisgarh**

- India's first tribal circuit tourism project under the Swadesh Darshan scheme will be inaugurated at Gangrel in Chhattisgarh on September 14, 2018.
- Union Tourism Minister KJ Alphons will inaugurate the project. It covers 13 sites in Chhattisgarh that include Jashpur, Kunkuri, Mainpat, Kamleshpur, Maheshpur, Kurdar, Sarodadadar, Gangrel, Kondagaon, Nathiya Nawagaon, Jagdalpur, Chitrakoot and Tirthgarh.

#### **Jammu and Kashmir administration launches e-plant clinics**

- The Jammu and Kashmir administration launched e-plant clinics in Udhampur district on September 12, 2018 to make technological innovations and advancement in research in the agriculture sector easily accessible for farmers for enhanced production.
- The e-plant clinics were inaugurated by District Development Commissioner Ravinder Kumar in presence of Chief Agriculture Officer Ashok Verma.

#### **Indo-Bhutan Border centre inaugurated in Assam**

- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on September 12, 2018 inaugurated the Indo-Bhutan Border Centre at Darranga in Assam's Baksa district to strengthen bilateral trade with the neighbouring country.
- The inauguration of the trade centre is a spontaneous response of the people of Assam, especially the people residing in the four BTAD districts of Baksa, Udalguri, Chirang and Kokrajhar, to the prevailing peaceful situation in the state.

#### **Tamil Nadu's ruling party- AIADMK launches its own news channel**

- The ruling AIADMK in Tamil Nadu on September 12, 2018 made a soft launch of its own channel 'News J' named after its late supremo J Jayalalithaa.
- The launch comes in the backdrop of Jaya TV, once considered the party's mouthpiece, being in the control of sidelined leader TTV Dhinakaran's relatives.

#### **India's first 'smart fence' pilot project inaugurated**

- India's first 'smart fence' pilot project was inaugurated by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh along the India-Pakistan International Border in Ploura, Jammu and Kashmir on September 17, 2018.

- The Union Minister launched the project from the BSF Headquarters during his one-day visit to the state. The initiative has been taken up by the Border Security Force (BSF), as part of their comprehensive integrated border management system.

#### **India, Malta sign MoUs on maritime, tourism cooperation**

- India and Malta on Monday signed three Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) relating to tourism, maritime cooperation and exchanges between the Foreign Service Institute of India and the Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies, University of Malta.
- In addition, India has offered Malta to take advantage of its highly skilled professionals in the field of Information and Technology (IT), financial services, health, pharmaceutical, transport, freight and tourism.

#### **Chhattisgarh starts pilot run of Ayushman Bharat across 1,033 hospitals**

- The pilot run of the Modi government's ambitious health insurance scheme for all---Ayushman Bharat---has started in Chhattisgarh.
- The national health protection scheme was launched in Chhattisgarh's restive Bijapur district this April by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The scheme, which will finally roll out on September 25 across India, will cover 107.4 million poor and vulnerable families.

#### **India's first underwater robotic drone EyeROV TUNA handed over to NPOL**

- India's first underwater robotic drone EyeROV TUNA was handed over to Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL) of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- This underwater drone will be used by NPOL for research and development activities which in turn would result in commercial product for defence purposes.

#### **Union Power Ministry launches Chiller Star Labelling Program to improve energy efficiency**

- The Union Ministry of Power on September 14, 2018 launched the Chiller Star Labelling Program, an ambitious program to encourage the deployment of energy efficient chiller systems in the country.
- Initially, the program is launched on voluntary basis and will be valid up to December 31, 2020.
- The Chiller Star Labelling Program envisages providing star rating in terms of its energy performance.

#### **DRDO conducts first successful test of man portable-anti-tank guided missile**

- India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on September 15, 2018 conducted the first successful flight test of its new indigenously designed and developed low weight man-portable anti-tank guided missile (MP-ATGM) at Ahmednagar test range in Maharashtra.
- The first successful test firing was followed by another test launch on September 16, which also took place at the same test range. The two successful missions were conducted to test different ranges of the missile, including its maximum range capability. According to DRDO, the two launches met all the test objectives.

#### **Union HRD Ministry to confer Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar 2017-18**

- The Union Minister for Human Resource Development, Prakash Javadekar will confer the Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar 2017-18 on September 18, 2018 at Dr Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi, as a part of the Swachhata Hi Seva campaign launched by PM Narendra Modi on September 15, 2018.
- This year, for the first time, the award has been extended to private schools besides government and government aided schools.

#### **Government to convert 1.5 lakh Primary Health Centers into Wellness Centers**

- Union Health Minister JP Nadda announced that 1.5 lakh Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and sub-centres will be converted into wellness centers by 2022.

- These centres will facilitate screening of every individual aged 30 for blood pressure, diabetes, tuberculosis, breast cancer and leprosy among others.

#### **15th Pravasi Bhartiya Diwas to be held at Varanasi**

- The 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas will be held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh from January 21 to January 23, 2019.
- The theme of the 2019 will be "Role of Indian Diaspora in Building a New India".

#### **ISRO inaugurates S-Band Polarimetry Doppler Weather Radar at Sriharikota spaceport**

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) inaugurated S-Band Polarimetry Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota spaceport, Andhra Pradesh.
- It will be used for observation of weather system up to range of 500 km and also for early warning of severe weather events.

#### **Indian Coast Guard commissions indigenously built patrol vessel Vijaya**

- Indian Coast Guard (ICG) commissioned indigenously built patrol vessel ICGS Vijaya in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- It is second in the series of 98 m offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) commissioned by ICG.
- It was designed and built indigenously by Larsen & Toubro (L&T).

#### **Indo-US joint military exercise 'Yudh Abhyas 2018' begins in Uttarakhand**

- Exercise Yudh Abhyas 2018, a joint military exercise of Indian and US armies, commenced on September 16, 2018 at Chaubattia, Uttarakhand with the unfurling of the national flags of both countries on the tunes of "Jana Gana Mana" and "The Star Spangled Banner".
- Indian and US soldiers gave a ceremonial salute to the two senior most officers of the US and Indian side reviewing the ceremony. The exercise will conclude on September 29, 2018.

#### **ISRO launches two UK satellites aboard PSLV-C42**

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on September 16, 2018 successfully launched its polar satellite launch vehicle (PSLV) C42 carrying two earth observation satellites for the United Kingdom.
- The launch vehicle- PSLV-C42 lifted off at 10.08 PM from the first launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.

#### **PM Narendra Modi launches Swachhata hi Seva Campaign**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 15, 2018 launched the mega countrywide campaign- Swachhata hi Seva Campaign 2018. The fortnight-long campaign was launched by the Prime Minister through video conferencing.
- In the elaborate launch event, PM Modi interacted with a cross-section of people from 18 locations across the country including school-children, jawans, spiritual leaders, members of milk and agricultural cooperatives, media persons, local government representatives, railway employees, Self Help Groups, and Swachhagrahis, among others.

#### **India, Sri Lanka sign MoU for construction of 5000-metric ton temp controlled warehouse**

- India and Sri Lanka on September 17, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the construction of a 5000-metric ton temperature controlled warehouse in Dambulla of Central Province.
- The warehouse will be constructed with an Indian grant assistance of 30 crore Sri Lankan rupees.

#### **DAC approves procurement of equipment for Defence Forces**

- Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has approved the procurement of equipment for the Defence Forces valued at over Rs 9100 crore.

- The council chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman approved procurement of two Regiments of Akash Missile Systems.
- The missile to be procured is an upgraded version of the previously inducted Akash missiles. The upgraded Akash Weapon System is operationally critical equipment, which will provide protection to vital assets.

#### **President launches logo, web portal for commemoration of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi**

- President Ram Nath Kovind on September 18, 2018 launched the logo and the web portal for commemoration of 150th birth anniversary of Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.
- The logo and the portal was released in the presence of Minister of State for Culture (Independent Charge) Dr Mahesh Sharma and Secretary of Ministry of Culture, Arun Goel.
- The logo was obtained through crowd sourcing.

#### **Government organises All India Pension Adalat for pensioners' welfare**

- The All India Pension Adalat was inaugurated on September 18, 2018 by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions Jitendra Singh in New Delhi.
- The Pension Adalat, being organised by the Department of Pension & Pensioners Welfare (DoP&PW), is one of the largest exercises for pensioners' welfare ever undertaken by the Government as part of good governance dedicated to central government pensioners.

#### **Union Cabinet approves benefit package for ASHAs, ASHA facilitators**

- The Union Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 19, 2018 approved ASHA Benefit Package with effect from October, 2018, which will be paid in November 2018.
- The eligible ASHAs and ASHA facilitators will be enrolled in the Union Government's social security schemes including the Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana.

#### **Health Ministry goes digital with Budget Dashboard**

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare made a new Budget Dashboard on Budget, Expenditure and Bill Payment position.
- The Budget Dashboard also incorporates Ministry of AYUSH and Department of Health Research.
- Budget and expenditure is available in a snapshot and also details flagship schemes, Central sector expenditure, North East, SC/ST, Centrally Sponsored Schemes, etc.

#### **Supreme Court lifts ban on Saridon, 3 other FDCs**

- The Supreme Court of India on September 17, 2018 allowed the sale of popular painkiller Saridon and three other banned fixed-dose combinations (FDCs) in medical stores across the country.
- The ruling was delivered by a bench of judges comprising Justices R F Nariman and Indu Malhotra. The bench was hearing a plea challenging the ban on the drugs following a recent notification by the Union Health Ministry. The bench also issued a notice to the centre and sought its reply on the plea filed by some drug makers and pharma associations.

#### **Assam NRC: Supreme Court orders resumption of filing of claims from September 25**

- The Supreme Court on September 19, 2018 ordered resumption of filing of claims and objections by around 40 lakh people who were left out in the draft National Register of Citizens (NRC) of Assam.

#### **Medical Cyclotron Facility Cyclone-30 became operational at Kolkata**

- Cyclotrons are used to produce radioisotopes for diagnostic and therapeutic use for cancer care.
- Cyclone-30, the biggest cyclotron in India for medical application became operational in September 2018 when 30 MeV beam reached the Faraday Cup for the first time.

### **Utraq: India's own GPS module launched**

- An India-based semiconductor distribution company has launched country's first ever 'desi' GPS module. Today at an event in New Delhi, Ramakrishna Electro Component Pvt Ltd announced a new kind of Vehicle Tracking System that will run on Indian Satellites, and not on US Satellites.
- The company has launched Vehicle Tracking System under 'Utraq' brand. This system will replace the currently in-use GPS application that is working on US satellites.

### **Gujarat to set up India's first biotechnology university**

- India's first Biotechnology University will take shape in Gujarat with the State legislative assembly set to pass a Bill for establishment of the country's first such university. It will aim to boost research, innovation and entrepreneurship in the sector.
- The Gujarat Biotechnology University, to be made a world class research-focused academic institution, will train and prepare biotech scientists in product-focused research to create and deliver a strong pipeline of innovative products for the country.

### **Health Ministry ties-up with Dell, Tata Trusts to provide technology solution for NSD programme**

- The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on September 20, 2018 signed Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with the Tata Trusts and Dell to provide technological platform for nationwide prevention, control, screening and management program of Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs).
- To bring healthcare technology transformation in Comprehensive Primary Health Care NCD programme under the Ayushman Bharat, the Health Ministry is working with Dell as technology partner and the Tata Trusts as deployment partner.

### **India successfully test fires short-range Prahaar missile**

- India on September 20, 2018 successfully test-fired the indigenously developed surface-to-surface, short-range tactical ballistic missile 'Prahaar' from the Odisha coast.
- The missile has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). It was test-launched from launch pad-3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur, near Balasore. It is capable of filling the gap between the multi-barrel rocket system 'Pinaka' and medium-range ballistic missile 'Prithvi'.

### **Ministry of Home Affairs, ISRO sign MoU to modernise Emergency Response**

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) on September 20, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up the state-of-the-art Integrated Control Room for Emergency Response (ICR-ER) in Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The MoU was signed by Joint Secretary (Disaster Management), Sanjeev Kumar Jindal on behalf of MHA and PVN Rao, Deputy Director, NRSC, ISRO.

### **PM Modi lays foundation stone of world-class convention centre in Delhi**

- The foundation stone of India International Convention and Expo Centre (IICC) was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on September 20, 2018. The IICC is being developed as a state-of-the-art centre to promote meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions (MICE) to boost industrial development in the country.
- The project is planned over an area of 221.37 acres in Sector 25 Dwarka, New Delhi, at an estimated cost of Rs 25, 703 crores.

### **Union Government launches India's first National Registry of Sexual Offenders**

- In a first, the Union Government released a National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO) on September 20, 2018. The database was launched by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi. With the launch, India became the ninth nation to maintain such a thorough database.

- The database would mainly include key details of the convicted sexual offenders such as their names, photographs, residential address, DNA samples, fingerprints, Aadhaar numbers and Personal Account Numbers (PANs). It is an initiative under the National Mission for Safety of Women. Our correspondent reports, the database will be maintained by the National Crime Records Bureau under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

#### **President Ram Nath Kovind signs Ordinance banning Instant Triple Talaq practice**

- President Ram Nath Kovind on September 19, 2018 signed the Ordinance banning the practice of Instant Triple Talaq. The ordinance was cleared by the Union Cabinet earlier on the same day itself. The ordinance makes instant triple talaq a punishable offence.
- The ordinance has similar provisions as mentioned in original the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill 2017, which was cleared by the Lok Sabha in December 2017. However, the bill was stuck in the Rajya Sabha.

#### **Romania will open consulate in Chennai**

- Romania will open a consulate in Chennai. This was decided in a meeting between Vice President Venkaiah Naidu and Romania Prime Minister Viorica Dancila in Bucharest.
- In a joint press statement, Vice President also addressed the India-Romania Business forum.

#### **Haryana government gives nod for construction of Kishau dam**

- The Haryana government has given its go ahead for the construction of Kishau dam on Tons river, a tributary of the Yamuna.
- With the construction of this dam, Haryana would get additional 709 cusecs of water for drinking and irrigation purposes.

#### **NDMC to set up separate Ayush department**

- The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has decided to set up a separate department of Ayush department to provide holistic treatment through ayurveda, yoga and naturopathy, unani, siddha and homoeopathy. These services were being offered by the health department of the civic body till now.
- The decision to set up a separate department Ayush was taken at a council meeting on September 20, 2018.

#### **Mizoram tops states in adult HIV prevalence**

- Mizoram had the highest adult HIV prevalence among states in India last year with the infection being detected in 2.04 per cent of the people whose blood samples were tested.
- Around 18,081 people were found HIV positive in Mizoram between October 1990 and August 2018. The state has a total population of around 11 lakh.

#### **UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres to visit India on October 1**

- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres will be on a four-day visit to India from October 1, 2018.
- He will be accompanied by a six member delegation and will be participating in the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention scheduled to be held at Rashtrapati Bhawan Cultural Centre, New Delhi on October 2, 2018.

#### **PM Modi launches Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 23, 2018 launched the flagship scheme 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana' (PMJAY), also known as Ayushman Bharat or the National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM).

- Beneficiaries of the Ayushman Bharat insurance programme in Jharkhand were sent a two-page personalised letter from PM Modi outlining the importance and benefits of the project. The government will send similar letters to 10.74 crore beneficiary families. The letters will have photograph of PM Modi.
- On the same occasion, the Prime Minister also launched a toll free number 14555 for people to get more information about Ayushma Bharat scheme.

#### **Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (Ayushman Bharat or AB-NHPM)**

- Ayushman Bharat, the government-sponsored health insurance scheme, will provide free coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family per year in any government or even empanelled private hospitals all over India.
- Launched with an aim to help the poor and the economically deprived, the scheme will be available for 10.74 crore beneficiary families and about 50 crore Indian citizens.
- This scheme will strengthen the healthcare services in India. Around 13000 hospitals in the country have been coordinated for the implementation of the scheme.

#### **PM Modi inaugurates Jharsuguda Airport; flags off UDAN flight between Jharsuguda-Raipur sector**

- PM Narendra Modi on September 22, 2018 inaugurated the airport at Jharsuguda, the powerhouse of Odisha, in the presence of Odisha Governor Ganeshi Lal, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, Union Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu, Union Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan and Union Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram.
- On the same occasion, Prime Minister also flagged off the UDAN flight on Jharsuguda-Raipur sector.

#### **India conducts successful test of Prithvi Defence Vehicle**

- India on September 23, 2018 conducted a successful test of its indigenously designed ballistic missile defense system off the coast of Odisha. With the test, India achieved a major milestone in developing a two-layer Ballistic Missile Defence system.
- The mission, named Prithvi Defence Vehicle (PDV) mission, aimed to engage targets in the exo-atmosphere region at an altitude above 50km of the earth's atmosphere.

#### **India, China to sign internal security cooperation agreement**

- India and China will sign an internal security cooperation agreement during the forthcoming visit of China's Minister of Public Security to India.
- Zhao Kezhi, China's Minister of Public Security is expected to visit India in October 2018 and hold meetings with Home Minister Rajnath Singh during which they will discuss various aspects of security cooperation between the two countries.

#### **India to organise 'Gandhi March' in Netherlands**

- India will organise 'Gandhi March' from the iconic Peace Palace at the Hague to Grote Kerk to launch the two-year long celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- According to a statement issued by the Indian Embassy in Hague, the 'Gandhi March' will see participation of people of all nationalities and around 20 ambassadors of different countries.

#### **Assam government to provide electricity connection to all households by 31 December**

- The Assam government will provide electricity connection to all households by December 31, 2018 under SOUVAGYA scheme.
- 78 percent works have already been completed as of now.

#### **PM Modi inaugurates Sikkim's first-ever airport**

- Sikkim's first-ever airport was inaugurated by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 24, 2018 at Pakyong. The development is a historic occasion for the entire northeast region of India.

- Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister said that with the Pakyong Airport, the country has hit a century of airports. The development not only eases connectivity to the Himalayan state but also brings it on the air-map of the world.

#### **PM Modi pays tributes to Deendayal Upadhyaya on his birth anniversary**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 25, 2018 paid tributes to Deendayal Upadhyaya on his birth anniversary.
- 25th September is observed as Antyodaya Diwas every year to mark the birth anniversary of Deendayal Upadhyaya.

#### **Village Rockstars is India's official entry to Oscars 2019**

- Village Rockstars, an Assamese language feature film by National Award-winning filmmaker Rima Das, was on September 22, 2018 selected as India's official entry for the Best Foreign Language Film category of the 2019 Academy (Oscar) Awards.
- The announcement was made by SV Rajendra Singh Babu, Chairman of the Selection Committee for Oscar Award, FFI.

#### **Government inaugurates National Orientation workshop on National e-Vidhan Application**

- Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Arjun Ram Meghwal on September 24, 2018 inaugurated the two-day National Orientation workshop on National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA).
- On the same occasion, Meghwal also launched the new website of the NeVA and administered the Swachhata Pledge to over 200 delegates, which included senior officers from Secretariats of Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, 31 Legislative Assemblies and 7 Legislative Councils.

#### **Arunachal CM launches GeM in state**

- Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu on September 24, 2018 informed that more than 26,000 government agencies have been incorporated in the Government e Marketplace (GeM).
- Launching the nation-wide mission for promotion of GeM here, the CM said that the mission is aimed at bringing in more transparency and streamlining the government procurement.

#### **Delhi HC bans slaughtering of birds at Ghazipur mandi**

- The Delhi High Court on September 24, 2018 banned slaughtering of birds in the Ghazipur murga mandi here.
- The court stated in its interim order that only the selling of live birds will be permitted in the area. The court asked the authorities to file a compliance report on its order within a week.

#### **Supreme Court constitutes committee to look into jail reforms**

- The Supreme Court on September 25, 2018 constituted a three-member committee to look into the problems of jails in India and suggest reform measures.
- The committee headed by former SC judge Justice Amitava Roy will look into the aspect of jail reforms across the country and suggest measures to deal with them.

#### **Husband is not the master of wife, says SC while striking down 158-year-old adultery law**

- The Supreme Court of India on September 27, 2018 struck down a 158-year-old penal provision in the Indian Penal Code that made adultery a criminal offence.
- The decision was taken by a five-judge bench comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices R F Nariman, A M Khanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud and Indu Malhotra. The bench unanimously held Section 497 of the Indian Penal Code, which deals with the offence of adultery, as unconstitutional and arbitrary.
- The top court said that Adultery can be a civil wrong and a ground for divorce but it cannot be a criminal offence.

### **Tata Power, Hindustan Petroleum join hands to set up electric vehicle charging stations**

- Tata Power Thursday said it has inked MoU with state-run oil marketing company Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL) for setting up commercial-scale electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at latter's retail outlets and other locations across the country.
- Tata Power and HPCL, through this memorandum of understanding (MoU), have agreed to collaborate in planning, development and operation of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles (e-cars, e-rickshaws, e-bikes, e-buses, etc), at suitable locations across India.

### **Supreme Court upholds constitutional validity of Aadhaar Act; allows Aadhaar-PAN Linking**

- The five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court on September 26, 2018 upheld most of the provisions of the Aadhaar Act by 4:1 Majority while hearing the petitions challenging the constitutional validity of Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other. Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016.
- Of the five-judges, Chief Justice Dipak Misra, and Justices A.K. Sikri, A.M. Khanwilkar, Ashok Bhushan validated the provisions of the Aadhaar with few restrictions, while Justice D.Y. Chandrachud held that the entire Aadhaar project is unconstitutional.

### **Search Committee appointed to nominate Lokpal chairperson, members**

- The Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Central government on Thursday appointed a Search Committee to nominate the chairperson and the members of the Lokpal.
- Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai has been nominated as the chairperson of the committee, a government release confirmed.

### **Committed to 100 percent deployment of VVPATs at all polling stations in 2019 General elections: EC**

- The Election Commission is committed to 100 percent deployment of VVPATs at all polling stations in the 2019 General election, as well as bye-elections to the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.
- The Commission said the supply of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) and the Voter-verifiable paper audit trails (VVPTs) is on track and it is not a matter of concern.

### **Astra BVR Air-to-Air Missile successfully flight-tested**

- Astra, the indigenously developed Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM), was successfully test fired by the Indian Air Force from Su-30 aircraft from Air Force Station, Kalaikunda.
- The missile successfully engaged a manoeuvring target with high precision meeting the mission objectives.

### **Air pollution control device WAYU inaugurated in New Delhi**

- Union Minister for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences and Environment Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated air pollution control device WAYU (Wind Augmentation Purifying Unit) for traffic junctions at ITO intersection and Mukarba Chowk in New Delhi.
- The device aims at tackling toxicity in air by sucking in particulate matter and release fresh air.

### **Union Cabinet approves National Digital Communications Policy 2018**

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on September 26, 2018 approved the National Digital Communications Policy 2018 (NDCP-2018), the new telecom policy of the country.
- The cabinet also accorded approval to the re-designation of the Telecom Commission as the "Digital Communications Commission".

### **Second Anniversary of Surgical Strike to be commemorated as Parakram Parv on 29 September**

- The second anniversary of the surgical strike will be commemorated by the Indian Army as the Parakram Parv or the Surgical Strike Day during September 29 - 30, 2018 to showcase the gallant action of brave Army in the conduct of Surgical Strikes on September 29, 2016.

- The Day will also be marked to remember the sacrifice of soldiers during the 'Uri incident'.

#### **President clears ordinance to set up a board of eminent personalities to run MCI**

- President Ram Nath Kovind on September 26, 2018 gave his assent to promulgate an ordinance that seeks to establish a committee to run the Medical Council of India, until Parliament passes legislation to replace the body with a new commission.
- The presidential assent came after the Union Cabinet cleared the ordinance on the same day. The information was shared by Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley after the cabinet meeting in New Delhi.

#### **Haryana government to institute award after Kalpana Chawla**

- The Haryana government on September 25, 2018 decided to institute Kalpana Chawla Haryana Solar Award, named after the India-born US astronaut, to encourage the participation of scientists in the solar sector.
- The main objective of the award scheme is to create a platform for participation of women and men scientists in the solar energy sector.

#### **PM Modi inaugurates Parakram Parv in Jodhpur**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 28, 2018 inaugurated the Parakram Parv at the Combined Commanders' Conference in Jodhpur to mark the second anniversary of the surgical strikes carried out by the Indian army on September 29, 2016.
- Modi also paid homage to the martyrs at the Konark war memorial. He was briefed by the three service chiefs regarding the situation prevailing along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir, Line of Actual control along the border with China and about the situation in Kashmir Valley.
- The Parakram Parv, an exhibition, is being organised by the Konark Corps at the Jodhpur Military station. Parakram Parv is being celebrated to highlight the valour and accomplishments of the Indian Army.

#### **Government launches Rail heritage digitisation project in collaboration with Google**

- The railway ministry in collaboration with Google has launched rail heritage digitisation project. The project is a first of its kind to showcase country's rail heritage to national and international audience in an online story-telling platform.
- India Railways has a history of more than 165 years and has a rich heritage that includes the Imperial and the princely railways.

#### **Government constitutes Lokpal Search Committee headed by Justice Ranjana Desai**

- The Union Government on September 27, 2018 constituted the Lokpal Search Committee under the chairmanship of former Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai for recommending names for Lokpal.
- The notification was issued by the Department of Personnel and Training.

#### **Sabarimala temple verdict: Supreme Court allows women of all age groups to enter Kerala temple**

- In a historic judgment, the Supreme Court on Friday allowed women of all ages to enter the Lord Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala in Kerala. In its 4:1 verdict, the five-judge Constitution Bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra said that barring women into the temple is gender discrimination and the practice violates the rights of Hindu women.
- While Justices RF Nariman and DY Chandrachud concurred with the CJ and Justice AM Khanwilkar, it was only Justice Indu Malhotra, the lone woman judge in the Bench, who passed a dissenting verdict.

#### **NITI Aayog, UN sign Sustainable Development Framework for 2018-2022**

- NITI Aayog and United Nations in India on September 28, 2018 signed the Sustainable Development Framework (UNSDf) for 2018-2022 at an event in New Delhi. The agreement is a reflection of the commitment and efforts made by India towards attaining the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The framework was signed by the NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant and United Nations Resident Coordinator in India Yuri Afanasiev at a special signing ceremony presided over by NITI Aayog Vice Chairperson Rajiv Kumar.

#### **IT Minister launches Centre of Excellence for Data Analytics (CEDA)**

- Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on September 28, 2018 launched Centre of Excellence for Data Analytics (CEDA) in New Delhi.
- The technology backbone of the government – the National Informatics Centre (NIC), in a joint initiative with National Informatics Centre Services Incorporated (NICSI) has set up the CEDA.
- The CEDA will aid in fast-tracking the adoption of advanced analytics in government.

#### **PM inaugurates Conference on Academic Leadership on Education for Resurgence**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Conference on Academic Leadership on Education for Resurgence on September 29, 2018 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- The event saw participation from the Vice-Chancellors and Directors from more than 350 universities. This event is being organized jointly by UGC, AICTE, ICSSR, IGNC, IGNOU, JNU and SGT University.

#### **Punjab, HP sign MoU to set up Sri Anandpur Sahib-Naina Devi ropeway project**

- Tourism in the region is all set to get a big boost with the government of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for setting up a ropeway between Shri Anandpur Sahib and Naina Devi .
- Vikas Pratap, Secretary, Tourism and Cultural affairs, Punjab signed the MoU with Ram Subhag Singh, Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism, Himachal Pradesh in the presence of both chief ministers of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh on the auspicious occasion of 111th birth anniversary of Shaheed Bhagat Singh.

#### **Kolkata gets India's first flood forecasting warning system**

- Kolkata on Thursday got its very own flood forecasting and early warning system (FFEWS) to help city officials and the citizens take proactive decisions and mitigate damage before and during disasters.
- Mayor of Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) launched the city-level warning system which received a technical assistance of \$1 million for design and implementation from the Asian Development Bank's Urban Climate Change Resilience Trust Fund.

#### **MoHUA partners with Google to launch #LooReview Campaign**

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, under the aegis of Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM – U), has partnered with Google to launch the Loo Review campaign to encourage all local guides in India to rate and review public toilets on Google Maps.
- This campaign is part of a feature which allows all citizens to locate public toilets in their cities on Google Maps, Search and the Assistant and also provide feedback on the same. 500+ cities in India with more than 30,000 toilets with the name of "SBM Toilet" are currently live on Google Maps.

#### **Goa, Portugal ink MoU on water management**

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the Portuguese Environment Ministry and the Public Works Department of Goa will help the State manage its water resources better, Portugal Environment Minister João Pedro de Matos Fernandes said on Saturday.
- As part of the MoU, the assessment of two of the biggest water treatment and supply plants at Selaulim and Opa in Goa would be undertaken, Mr. Dhavalikar also said.

#### **PM Modi inaugurates Conference on Academic Leadership on Education for Resurgence**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Conference on Academic Leadership on Education for Resurgence on September 29, 2018 at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.
- The conference saw participation from the Vice-Chancellors and Directors of more than 350 universities. The event was jointly organised by UGC, AICTE, ICSSR, IGNC, IGNOU, JNU and SGT University.

## Current Affairs related to Appointments

### India

Name	Appointed as	Organisation
Binoy Kumar	Secretary	Ministry of Steel, Government of India
Justice Ranjan Gogoi	Chief Justice	India
Justice Arup Kumar Goswami	Acting chief justice	Gauhati High Court
B Srinivas	Intelligence Chief	Jammu and Kashmir Police
Dilbagh Singh	Director General of Police (DGP)	Jammu and Kashmir Police
Amitabh Chaudhry	MD & CEO	Axis Bank
Virat Kohli	Brand Ambassador	Hero MotoCorp
Vibha Padalkar	MD & CEO	HDFC Life
Girish Radhakrishnan	MD & CEO	United India Insurance Company
Tajinder Mukherjee	MD & CEO	National Insurance Company Limited
Hima Das	Sports Ambassador	Assam
Rahul Dravid	Brand Ambassador	Manipal Hospitals
Prashant Kumar	Chief Financial Officer	State Bank of India
Anushka Sharma	Ambassador	Skill India Campaign
Varun Dhawan	Ambassador	Skill India Campaign
Anil Kumar Chaudhary	Chairman	Steel Authority of India
Rajni Kant Misra	Director General	Border Security Force (BSF)
S S Deswal	Director General	Sashastra Seema Bal
Jayant Mammen Mathew	President	Indian Newspaper Society

### World

Name	Appointed As	Organisation/Country
Arif Alvi	President	Pakistan
Daniel Zhang	CEO	Alibaba
Om Prakash Mishra	Chief Justice	Nepal
Ravi Venkatesan	special representative of young people	UNICEF

### Days observed in September

Days	Observed on	Theme/Info
National Teacher's Day	5 September	The birth date of the second President of India, Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan
International Day of Charity	5 September	
25th Raising Day of Delta Force	6 September	
International Literacy Day	8 September	Literacy and skills development
National Hindi Divas (Hindi Day)	14 September	

<b>International Day for Preservation of Ozone Layer</b>	16 September	Keep Cool and Carry On: The Montreal Protocol
<b>International Day of Democracy</b>	15 September	Democracy under Strain: Solutions for a Changing World
<b>International Day of Peace</b>	21 September	The Right to Peace - The Universal Declaration of Human Rights at 70
<b>World Tourism Day</b>	27 September	Tourism and the Digital Transformation
<b>World Rabies Day</b>	28 September	Rabies: Share the message. Save a life
<b>International Translation Day</b>	30 September	Translation: Promoting Cultural Heritage in Changing Times

## Current Affairs related to Sports

### Alastair Cook Announces Retirement From International Cricket

- The highest run-scorer in England's cricket history, Alastair Cook has announced his decision to retire from international cricket after the final Test against India at the Oval, starting September 7.
- 33-year-old Cook, who will call time on his career after playing 161 Tests, has so far scored 12,254 runs at an average of 44.88 with 32 hundreds and 56 half centuries.
- His highest Test score of 294 came against India at Birmingham during the 2011 series.

### Former Indian pacer RP Singh announces retirement from cricket

- Former Indian pacer Rudra Pratap Singh on September 4, 2018 announced his retirement from all forms of cricket through his social media account. His international career spanned a period of six years and he played 82 matches across all three formats and picked up over 100 wickets.
- RP Singh played 14 Tests, 58 one-day internationals and 10 T20 Internationals for India after making his international debut in an ODI against Zimbabwe in Harare exactly 13 years ago.

### Indian Kho Kho team to get financial support for participation in International championship

- Encouraging traditional games of the country, the Union Sports Minister, Rajyavardhan Rathore has approved the financial support for the Kho Kho team participating at the first International Kho Kho championship in England.
- The guideline for sports disciplines like Kho Kho, which are categorised as 'others', was earlier not eligible for financial support for participation in International sporting events.

### Young Indian shuttlers win titles in Ukraine

- Young Indian shuttlers clinched the mixed doubles and men's doubles titles at the RSL Kharkiv International challenge in Kharkiv, Ukraine on September 3, 2018.
- The duo of Anoushka Parikh and Saurabh Sharma defeated Poland's Pawel Smilowski and Magdalena Swierczynska, in the mixed doubles summit clash.

### Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore rewards Govindan Lakshamanan with Rs 10 lakh

- Union Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore on September 6, 2018 rewarded Indian athlete Govindan Lakshamanan with Rs 10 lakh to acknowledge his performance in the 10,000 metres race in which he was dramatically disqualified after finishing third.
- Lakshamanan had stepped off the track momentarily, as he was hit by the spike of another athlete. The Indian team protested against the disqualification at two levels but it was turned down.

### Novak Djokovic wins men's singles title in 2018 US Open

- Novak Djokovic from Serbia won 2018 US Open title of tennis in men's singles category by defeating Argentina's Juan Martín del Potro (world no 3).
- It was Djokovic's third US Open title and overall 14th Grand Slam title.
- With this win, he equalled Pete Sampras' haul of 14 Grand Slams.
- He becomes seventh man to win US Open singles title at least thrice in the Open Era.

#### **Hima Das appointed as Sports Ambassador of Assam**

- India's ace sprinter Hima Das was appointed as Sports Ambassador of Assam to inspire budding players of northeastern state to take up sports seriously.
- Hima Das was born in January 2000 at Kandhulimari village near Dhing Town of Nagaon district, Assam.
- She was the first Indian athlete to win gold medal in track event at IAAF World U20 Championships held in Tampere, Finland.
- She is nicknamed as 'Dhing Express' after her village in Assam.

#### **Asiad gold medallist Amit Panghal nominated for Arjuna award**

- Asian Games gold medal-winning Indian boxer Amit Panghal was on September 11, 2018 nominated for this year's Arjuna awards by the Boxing Federation of India.
- Amit joined Sonia Lather and Gaurav Bidhuri in the list of boxing nominees for the second highest sporting honour after the Khel Ratna.

#### **New Premier Skills phase kicks off in Kolkata**

- The hugely successful Premier Skills initiative, run by the Premier League and the British Council, is being organised in Kolkata 10 years after its first session in the city.
- The course has been jointly organised by the Sports Authority of India (SAI), the All India Football Federation (AIFF), British Council, and Premier League at Netaji Subhash Eastern Centre in Salt Lake, Kolkata.

## **Current Affairs related to Awards and Honors**

#### **VP M Venkaiah Naidu confers National Teachers' Awards in New Delhi**

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu on September 5, 2018 gave away the National Awards to 45 Teachers in New Delhi on the occasion of Teachers' day.
- The award is given as public recognition to meritorious teachers working in primary, middle and secondary schools.

#### **Dr. Raghupati Singhania conferred with civilian honour of Mexico**

- Chairman and MD, JK Tyre & Industries Ltd., Dr. Raghupati Singhania has been conferred with 'Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle', the highest honour accorded to non-nationals by the Government of Mexico.
- Melba Pría, Ambassador of Mexico to India presented the award to Dr. Singhania on behalf of the President of Mexico on the eve of 128th National Day of Mexico.

#### **Kerala Tourism wins two Gold awards of Pacific Asia Travel Association**

- Kerala Tourism won two Gold Awards of Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) for its innovative marketing campaigns.
- These awards were won by Kerala Tourism's Yalla Kerala print campaign and Live Inspired Posters under PATA's Travel Advertisement Print and Travel Poster categories respectively.
- Both campaign and posters were developed and designed by Stark Communications, the advertising agency of Kerala Tourism.

## PM Modi, Cochin International Airport honoured with UN Champions of the Earth Award 2018

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on September 26, 2018 awarded with the prestigious UN Champions of the Earth Award 2018, the highest environmental honour of the United Nations.
- The UN Environment jointly awarded PM Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron in the Policy Leadership category for their efforts regarding the creation of the International Solar Alliance.

## National Tourism Awards 2017: Ahmedabad, Mandu jointly win 'Best Heritage City' award

- The National Tourism Awards 2016-17 were presented by Union Minister for Tourism (IC), K J Alphons on September 27, 2018, on the occasion of the World Tourism Day, which is being celebrated globally with the theme 'Tourism & Digital Transformation'.
- The Tourism Minister also launched the 'Incredible India Mobile App' and the 'Incredible India Tourist Facilitators Certification' programme. Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that tourism is the cornerstone of the Indian economy, as it is a major source of employment and foreign exchange, and in order to tap the full potential of this sector, the industry has to join hands.
- The Minister also announced that India will be the host country for official World Tourism Day celebrations for the UNWTO, in 2019.

## Current Affairs around the World

### Egypt's President ratifies law to monitor social media users

- Egypt's President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi has ratified a law granting authorities the right to monitor social media users in the country as part of tightening internet controls.
- The development will allow the state's Supreme Council for Media Regulations to place people with more than 5,000 followers on social media or with a personal blog or website under supervision.

### US military to cancel 300 mn aid to Pakistan over failure to take actions against terror groups

- The US military has decided to cancel 300 million dollars aid to Pakistan over its failure to take decisive actions against terror groups.
- The move, which needs to be approved by the US Congress, is part of a broader suspension of aid announced in January.

### UN Chief calls for end to violence in Libya

- The United Nations chief, Antonio Guterres has called for an end to violence in Libya in accordance with a UN-brokered ceasefire agreement.
- At least 39 people have been killed and over 100 injured in five days of clashes among rival militias in suburbs south of Tripoli.

### Fourth International Ayurveda Congress inaugurated at Netherlands

- The 4th International Ayurveda Congress (IAVC) was inaugurated by the Union Minister of State for AYUSH Shripad Yesso Naik in Netherlands on September 1, 2018.
- The Congress aims to focus on promotion and propagation of Ayurveda in Netherlands and its neighboring countries of Europe.

### Amazon becomes 2nd US company to reach USD 1 trillion value

- E-commerce company Amazon on Tuesday became the second American company to cross USD 1 trillion in value.

- The Jeff Bezos-founded company and Apple now make up more than eight percent of the entire value of the S&P 500, CNN quoted senior index analyst for S&P, Howard Silverblatt as saying.

#### **International Women Entrepreneurs Summit begins in Kathmandu**

- The International Women Entrepreneurs Summit 2018 was inaugurated by the Vice President of Nepal Nanda Bahadur Pun in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal on September 3, 2018.
- Speaking on the occasion, Nepal's Vice President emphasised upon empowering women in all areas including social, political and economic. He also expressed concern over increasing violence against women and highlighted the need for public efforts to eliminate it.

#### **Tsunami mock drill 'IOWave18' begins: India along with 23 countries participates in exercise**

- Indian Ocean Wave Exercise 2018 (IOWave18) began on September 4, 2018 in the Indian Ocean. India along with 23 other nations is participating in this major Indian ocean-wide tsunami mock drill which involves evacuation of thousands of people from coastal areas in over half a dozen coastal states.
- Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Seychelles, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste, Tanzania and Yemen

#### **Google announces new AI Technology to fight online child sexual abuse**

- Technology giant Google announced on September 3, 2018 that it is employing a new Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology to combat online spreading of contents involving child sexual abuse. The tool uses deep neural networks for image processing to help discover and detect child sexual abuse material (CSAM) online.

#### **India not to attend Afghan peace conference in Moscow**

- India has reportedly declined an invitation from Russia to attend a multilateral conference on Afghanistan after Afghanistan itself decided against attending the conclave.
- Russia is organising the conference to bring peace in Afghanistan. The event was scheduled to take place in Moscow on September 4, but it has been postponed after several countries turned down Russia's invite to attend the event.

#### **Gold becomes first Bollywood film ever to release in Saudi Arabia**

- Indian movie 'Gold' has become the first Bollywood film ever to release in Saudi Arabia. The film is a fictional re-telling of India's iconic win at the 1948 London Olympics.
- This film is the only second movie after Rajnikanth's social drama "Kala" to hit the theatres in the Gulf country.

#### **World Hindu Congress 2018 held in Chicago, United States**

- The World Hindu Congress (WHC-2018) was held in Chicago, United States.
- It was organised to commemorate 125 years of Swami Vivekananda's historic Chicago address on September 11, 1893.
- The theme of WHC-2018 was "Sumantrite Suvikrante — think collectively, achieve valiantly".
- It was second edition of World Hindu Congress and was attended by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu.

#### **Rio-famed bluebird Spix's macaw declared extinct**

- For the first time, the first wave of aves has been nearly wiped out in the 21st century, leaving behind a warning for conservationists.
- Researchers have reportedly declared eight species of birds extinct in the wild, including Rio-famed bluebird, Spix's macaw.

#### **Ocean Cleanup foundation deploys 2000 ft long device to clean Great Pacific Garbage Patch**

- The Ocean Cleanup foundation, an organisation founded by 24-year-old Dutch innovator Boyan Slat, on September 9, 2018 launched the world's first ocean cleanup array from San Francisco, marking the start of the cleanup of Great Pacific Garbage Patch, a collection of marine debris in the North Pacific Ocean.
- The cleanup system, "System 001", headed to a location 240 nautical miles offshore for a two-week trial before moving towards the Great Pacific Garbage Patch which is 1200 nautical miles offshore, to start the cleanup.

#### **Russia prepares for biggest war games 'Vostok-2018'**

- Russia on September 11, 2018 will launch the biggest military drills in its history involving 300000 troops as well as Chinese soldiers, a move US agency NATO condemned as "exercising large-scale conflict".
- Around 300000 soldiers, 36000 military vehicles, 1000 planes and 80 warships will be taking part in the drills.

#### **Nepal refuses to participate in inaugural BIMSTEC joint military exercise**

- Nepal refused to participate in inaugural joint military exercise of Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC), which is scheduled to be held in Pune, Maharashtra.
- As per Nepal, the BIMSTEC military drill is beyond the agenda of BIMSTEC. It goes against country's history of following policy of keeping equal distance from its neighbours without being part of a regional bloc militarily.

#### **United States announces closure of Palestinian mission in Washington**

- The United States on September 10, 2018 announced the closure of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) mission in Washington DC.
- Explaining the move, the US state department said that the PLO leaders had failed to engage with US efforts to bring about peace with Israel and attempted to prompt an investigation of Israel by the International Criminal Court.

#### **Trump signs new executive order imposing sanctions on foreign meddlers in US elections**

- US President Donald Trump signed a new executive order on September 12, 2018 imposing sanctions on any country or foreign individual found trying to interfere in the US elections.
- The order calls for sanctions against any entity that authorises, directs or sponsors meddling operations in the American elections.

#### **Hunger reached 'alarming' ten-year high in 2017: UN report**

- As per a UN report on the 'state of food security and nutrition in the world' that was published on September 11, 2018, the number of undernourished globally increased to 821 million in 2017, which means that one in every nine people, does not have enough to eat.
- The report states that with food deprivation on the rise due to conflict and climate change, more people went hungry in 2017 than at any time in the previous decade. It was published by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), World Food Programme (WFP), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

#### **EU Parliament votes to punish Hungary for breaching democratic norms**

- The European Union legislators have voted overwhelmingly in favour of launching punitive action against the Hungarian government for flouting democratic rules.
- More than two-thirds of members of the European Parliament backed the censure motion, the first such vote against a member state under EU rules.

#### **Time magazine sold to Salesforce co-founder Marc Benioff**

- Meredith Corp. is selling Time magazine for 190 million USD in cash to Marc Benioff, co-founder of Salesforce and his wife.

- The Benioffs are purchasing Time personally, and the transaction is unrelated to Salesforce.com, where Benioff is chairman, co-CEO and co-founder, reported ABC News.

#### **Nepal and China conducts second Mt Everest Friendship Exercise in Sichuan province**

- The second edition of Nepal-China joint military exercise named Mt Everest Friendship Exercise 2018 (Sagarmatha Friendship-2018) commenced in China's southwestern Sichuan province.
- The 12 day long joint exercise will focus on combating terror and disaster management trainings.

#### **Nasa satellite ICESat-2 launched to measure Earth's ice changes**

- NASA satellite ICESat-2, designed to precisely measure changes in Earth's ice sheets, glaciers, sea ice and vegetation, was launched into polar orbit from California.
- The mission aims to advance knowledge of how the ice sheets of Greenland and Antarctica contribute to sea level rise.

#### **Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa to be first private passenger on SpaceX's Lunar BFR Mission**

- US private space firm SpaceX on September 17, 2018 signed the world's first private passenger to fly around the Moon aboard its Big Falcon Rocket (BFR) launch vehicle.
- Japanese billionaire and founder of online fashion giant Zozo, Yusaku Maezawa will be the first Moon tourist on SpaceX's Lunar BFR Mission. Maezawa wants to take six to eight artists from around the world on the nearly week-long trip to the Moon.

#### **India endorses 24-point programme for revitalising UN peacekeeping**

- India has endorsed a 24-point programme for revitalising the UN peacekeeping operations that is to become the basis of a high-level meeting next week, according to UN sources.
- Jean-Pierre Lacroix, the Under-Secretary General for peacekeeping operations, had visited India in June and held important discussions with Indian leaders and appreciated New Delhi's contributions to peacekeeping.

#### **ITU South Asia Area Office and Technology Innovation Centre to be established in New Delhi**

- The ITU South Asia Area Office and Technology Innovation Centre will be established in New Delhi.
- This was announced by Houlin Zhao, Secretary General (SG) of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), during the 4th BRICS Communications Ministers Meeting held in Durban, South Africa.

#### **UAE offers expats residency after retirement to boost growth**

- The United Arab Emirates will allow foreigners to obtain extended residency visas after they retire, in a major policy shift designed to give expatriates a bigger stake in the economy and foster longer-term growth.
- The foreign residents from around the globe make up more than 80 percent of the UAE's population and have for decades been a mainstay of its economy.

#### **Two Koreas sign agreement on denuclearisation of Korean Peninsula**

- In a historic move, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in on September 19, 2018 signed an agreement on denuclearisation, reducing military tensions and defusing crisis on the Korean peninsula.
- The talks were hosted by North Korea in its capital city Pyongyang. The North Korean leader welcomed the South Korea President at the Sunan International Airport, at the start of Moon's three-day visit to the nation.

#### **Nepal to become world's first country to double its tiger population**

- Nepal is set to become the first country in the world to double its tiger population as part of the World Wildlife Foundation's (WWF) 'Tx2' programme which aims to double the number of tigers all over the world.

- The government of Nepal announced on September 23, 2018, on the occasion of National Conservation Day, that there are now an estimated 235 wild tigers in the nation, nearly double the number from around 121 in 2009.

#### **Ibrahim Mohamed Solih wins Maldives Presidential Election 2018**

- Opposition candidate, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, on September 24, 2018 won the Maldives Presidential Election 2018, defeating incumbent President Yameen Abdul Gayoom, who will stay on in the presidency until his term ends on November 17, 2018.
- Ibrahim Mohammad Solih is a consensus candidate of the joint opposition, which includes the Maldivian Democratic Party, the Jumhooree Party, the Adhaalat Party and former president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom's own faction of the Progressive Party.

#### **Instagram co-founders Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger resign**

- Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger, the co-founders of the photo-sharing app Instagram, on September 24, 2018 announced to resign from their respective positions in the social media company.
- Mike Krieger is the Chief Technical Officer, while Kevin Systrom is the Chief Executive Officer. They founded the photo-sharing app in 2010 and sold it to Facebook in 2012 for about USD 1 billion.

#### **Statue of Nelson Mandela unveiled at United Nations**

- A statue of Nelson Mandela was unveiled at the United Nations to honour the late South African leader's birth.
- This year marks the 100th birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela and the UN is declaring 2019-2028 the "Nelson Mandela Decade of Peace".

#### **UAE to host Interfaith Alliance Forum in November 2018**

- The UAE will host the Interfaith Alliance Forum in Abu Dhabi on November 19-20, 2018.
- The announcement was made during a press conference held at the Ministry of Interior headquarters in Abu Dhabi.
- The forum aims to address and discuss social challenges and to strengthen efforts by religious leaders to formulate cohesive ideas that enhance the protection of the young individuals from extortion and crime via the internet.

#### **Pakistan launches nationwide anti-polio vaccination drive**

- Pakistan on September 24, 2018 launched a massive nationwide anti-polio vaccination drive, which has been touted as the final push against the crippling disease to cover 38.6 million children less than five years of age.
- The drive will last for three days but a 2-5 day catchup campaign will be launched following the initial drive so that no one was left out.

#### **Russia, Islamabad sign MoU to build gas pipeline from Iran to Pak and India**

- Russia and Pakistan signed a memorandum of understanding on implementing a project to build an underwater gas pipeline from Iran to Pakistan and India, the Russian Energy Ministry said in a statement Thursday.
- Russian Deputy Energy Minister Anatoly Yanovsky and Pakistan's Ministry of Energy Additional Secretary Sher Afgan Khan signed the document in Moscow.

#### **Uber pays 148m over data breach cover-up**

- Ride-hailing firm Uber is paying 148 million dollars to settle legal action over a cyber-attack that exposed data from 57 million customers and drivers.
- The massive data breach happened in 2016 but Uber sought to hide it from regulators. The company paid the hackers behind the intrusion 100,000 dollar to the data they grabbed from Uber's cloud servers.

## Current Affairs related to Index and Reports

### National AIDS Control Organisation releases HIV Estimations 2017 Report

- The National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) on September 14, 2018 released the HIV Estimations 2017 report.
- The HIV Estimations 2017 report is 14th in the series of HIV Estimations launched earlier under the National AIDS Control Programme (NACP). The first round of HIV estimation was done in 1998, while the latest round was done in 2015.
- NACO undertakes HIV estimations in every two years in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) - National Institute of Medical Statistics (NIMS).
- The report highlights the significant achievement of nation's response on AIDS prevention as well as on treatment front.

### Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, MP awarded best-performing states in 'Ease of Living Index' 2018

- The state of Andhra Pradesh has topped the 'Ease of Living Index' rankings launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. It was followed by Odisha and Madhya Pradesh.
- The three states were awarded best-performing states at the National Dissemination Workshop on Ease of Living Index, 2018, which was held in Delhi on September 24, 2018.
- The Minister expressed confidence that the index will encourage cities to move towards an 'outcome-based' approach to urban planning and management and promote healthy competition among cities.

## Current Affairs related to Obituaries

### Noted Gujarati author Bhagwati Kumar Sharma passes away

- Noted Gujarati author, journalist and poet Bhagwati Kumar Sharma passed away in Surat on September 5, 2018 morning. He was 84.
- Born in 1934 in Surat, Bhagwati Kumar Sharma had received Sahitya Academy award for his Gujarati novel Ashuryalok. He had also received Gujarati literature awards Ranjitram suvarna chandrak and Kumar paritoshik.

### Former Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif's wife Kulsoom Nawaz passes away

- Begum Kulsoom, the wife of Pakistan's jailed former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, died on September 11, 2018 in London after a prolonged illness.
- Kulsoom, who was under treatment at London's Harley Street Clinic since June 2014, was placed on life support as her health deteriorated.

### Freedom fighter Goura Chandra Mohapatra passes away

- Veteran freedom fighter Goura Chandra Mohapatra passed away at the age of 104 at Bhadrak District Headquarters Hospital on September 11, 2018.
- Mohapatra, who was jailed during Quit India Movement in 1942, was suffering from old age related ailments. He is survived by wife Mira Devi, four daughters and nine sons.

### India's First Woman IAS Officer After Independence passes away

- India's first woman IAS officer post-Independence, Anna Rajam Malhotra, died at her residence in suburban Andheri in Mumbai yesterday, her family sources said.
- She was 91. The last rites were performed in the city, they said.

- She was born as Anna Rajam George in Kerala's Ernakulum district in July 1927. She shifted to Chennai after her schooling in Kozhikode to pursue higher education at the University of Madras.

#### **Revolutionary leader Koteswaramma passes away**

- Revolutionary leader, writer and feminist Kondapalli Koteswaramma passed away on the early hours of September 19, 2018.
- Koteswaramma, who suffered a brain hemorrhage last week, had celebrated her 100th birth anniversary recently.

#### **Vietnam President Tran Dai Quang passes away at 61**

- Vietnam's President Tran Dai Quang passed away on September 21, 2018 in a military hospital in Hanoi after a prolonged serious illness. He was 61.
- Quang passed away despite utmost efforts to treat him by Vietnamese and foreign professors and doctors. The President lapsed into a deep coma hours after being admitted to the National Military Hospital on the afternoon of September 20.

#### **Former BCCI president BN Dutt passes away**

- Former BCCI president Biswanath Dutt, best known in Indian cricket fraternity as Jagmohan Dalmiya's mentor, passed away on September 24, 2018 after suffering from acute lung infection. He was 92.
- He is survived by his daughter and son Subrata Dutta, who is the senior vice-president of All India Football Federation.

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