

## First in Finance and Banking

### *Sudha Balakrishnan appointed first CFO of Reserve Bank of India*

- NSDL executive Sudha Balakrishnan has been appointed the first ever chief financial officer (CFO) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) effective May 15, in what is the biggest organisational change since Urjit Patel took over as RBI governor in September 2016, three people familiar with the information said.
- Balakrishnan, a chartered accountant, was till recently vice president with the National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL), India's first and largest depository, before joining RBI. She will be the 12th executive director of the RBI, and will have a three year term.
- At the RBI, Balakrishnan will be in charge of the central bank's balance sheet to ensure accounting policies and procedures comply with regulations.

### *BSE becomes India's first exchange to be recognized as a DOSM by the US SEC*

- Asia's first stock exchange BSE received recognition as a 'Designated Offshore Securities Market' (DOSM) from the United States Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in May, 2018, making it the first stock exchange in India to receive DOSM recognition.
- Following this development, the exchange joined an elite list of foreign securities exchanges that have been recognised as DOSM by the SEC under Rule 902 (b) of Regulation S under the U.S. Securities Act of 1933. BSE has largely adopted an international regulatory framework over the years to govern its structure, organization and disclosure standards.

### *ePayLater & IDFC Bank Partner to Bring India's First UPI-Based Digital Credit Card*

- ePayLater, provider of innovative digital credit solutions, has partnered with IDFC Bank to bring instant digital credit to individuals transacting online and offline, using BHIM UPI. ePayLater's 'Buy Now, Pay Later' credit facility works like a credit card without the hassles associated with a long application process or friction at payment checkout.
- For the first time, digital credit is made possible using the BHIM UPI railroad, the instant real-time payment system developed by National Payments Corporation of India facilitating inter-bank transactions. Individuals, merchants and small businesses can now opt for real-time credit, in addition to other prepaid modes of payment, for their purchases using BHIM UPI.
- ePayLater's 'Buy Now, Pay Later' facility allows users to avail credit and transact, with a 14-day interest-free period from the date of purchase, to settle outstanding bills. This is the smoothest possible checkout experience, as users no longer have to pull out their card to complete a transaction.

### **Chinese state-run bank ICBC launches India-dedicated investment fund**

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- Chinese state-run bank Industrial and Commercial Bank of China (ICBC) on May 14, 2018 launched the country's first India-dedicated publicly offered investment fund, named as the 'ICBC Credit Suisse India Market Fund'.
  - This significant move came just after the first ever informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping which was held in April 2018 at Wuhan.
  - It is the China's first publicly offered fund for investing in India and it will invest in exchange-traded funds listed on more than 20 exchanges in Europe and in the United States that are based on the Indian market.
  - It will invest in the future of the Indian economy and track the distribution of the industrial structure across the Indian market.
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### **HDFC ERGO brings AI chatbot to Google Assistant**

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- General insurance company HDFC ERGO launched its Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled chatbot "DIA" on Google Assistant in May, 2018 to enable users to access the service through Google's home device.
  - With DIA, the company aims to provide instant solutions to user queries related to general insurance through a simple voice command -- "Ok Google, Talk to HDFC ERGO", the company said in a statement.
  - Even though the primary mode of interaction will be through voice, text input through the keyboard is also supported on the Assistant.
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### **TCS Is India's First Company To Cross Rs 7 Lakh Crore In Market Value**

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- Tata Consultancy Services Ltd. in May, 2018 became the country's first company to hit the Rs 7 lakh crore market capitalisation milestone. This comes just a month after TCS became the first Indian information technology firm to cross the \$100 billion (about Rs 6.7 lakh crore) mark.
  - TCS shares rose nearly 2 percent to an all-time high of Rs 3,674.8 apiece in early trading. The stock has rallied nearly 14.5 percent since the company touched \$100 billion market value, mainly on the back of a weakening rupee. The Indian currency depreciated about 3.2 percent against the dollar in the last one month.
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### **India receives first cargo for Mangalore petroleum reserve from ADNOC**

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- India in May, 2018 received its first crude oil cargo shipment from Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) for its strategic petroleum reserve at Mangalore. The shipment is part of the agreement under which ADNOC will store 5.86 million barrels of crude oil in the country under India's Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) programme, the oil ministry said in a statement.
  - The agreement with ADNOC allows India to use the entire available crude oil stored by ADNOC at Mangalore SPR during emergency and also allows ADNOC to sell part of the crude oil to Indian refiners as and when required.
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### **Walmart acquires Flipkart for \$16 bn, world's largest ecommerce deal**

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- Walmart Inc. in May, 2018 announced its high profile acquisition of Flipkart for \$16 billion for a valuation of over \$20 billion, making it the largest ecommerce acquisition in the world. The Bentonville company has acquired 77% of the Bengaluru-based company, as per sources.
  - This is also the largest buyout for the US company with its biggest bet ever in online space and on India, underscoring the growing digital consumption potential in a country of 1.3 billion.
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- The Wednesday announcement culminates discussions between Walmart and the Bengaluru company that began in September 2016 with Walmart's plans to pick a minority stake in Flipkart. The talks pivoted earlier this year towards the world's largest retailer acquiring Flipkart.
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## Firsts in India

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### ***India begins first organised census to estimate population of Indus dolphin***

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- The Punjab government along with WWF-India would be conducting the first organised census of Indus Dolphins, one of the world's rarest mammals.
  - The move is aimed at conservation of the species. The dolphins are found only in India and Pakistan, confined to the 185 km stretch between Talwara and Harike Barrage in India's Beas River in Punjab.
  - It is the first organised census and would be conducted over a period of five days. Previously, the researchers had merely spotted the dolphins.
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### ***First Apex Conference for the CEOs of Smart Cities inaugurated in Bhopal***

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- India's First Apex Conference for the CEOs of Smart Cities was inaugurated in Bhopal by Hardeep Puri , MoS(I/C) Housing and Urban Affairs.
  - The two day Apex Conference is being organized with an objective to provide momentum to the cities and also a platform for cross-learning, sharing and disseminating the experience gained over the past two and a half years.
  - The exhibition and presentations by the CEOs will provide useful insights for accelerating project implementation and enable cross learning among Smart Cities. Such knowledge sharing will help the cities to convert ideas into concrete actions as the outcome of the conference.
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### ***First integrated smart cities control centre launched in MP***

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- In a major step towards realising the Centre's smart city mission (SCM), the Madhya Pradesh government in May, 2018 launched the country's first Integrated Control and Command Centre (ICCC) for all seven smart cities of the state in Bhopal.
  - The ICCC, installed in a building in Barkheda area of the state capital, would enable the authorities to monitor the status of various smart civic amenities in real-time through the sensors connected to it.
  - Bhopal, Indore, Ujjain, Gwalior, Jabalpur, Satna, and Sagar are the seven smart cities under SCM in Madhya Pradesh.
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### ***UGC approves setting up of nation's 1st Railway University***

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- Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar in May, 2018 announced signing of a Letter of Intent for the country's first railway university.
  - To support the unprecedented growth, the Ministry of Railways has mandated setting up a world class university, the National Rail & Transportation Institute (NRTI) to serve the additional manpower and training and development needs of India's transportation sector.
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### ***Indian Railways to Introduce Smart Coaches With Black Boxes Soon***

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- The Indian railways has unveiled the first batch of smart rail coaches in Rae Bareilly city of Uttar Pradesh. The smart coaches will have black boxes just like aircraft and this technology is being adopted to bring down the incidents of train accidents.
  - Talking more about the new technology, an official from Indian railways said that black boxes used in the train are better from the ones used in planes and will also make traveling safer. These boxes will prevent mishaps like derailments. The boxes will also monitor the train on several parameters. And if there is any case of deviation, the surveillance unit would be alerted immediately.
  - Besides this, smart coaches will have other features such as smart CCTV cameras, passenger information system, infotainment software and wi-fi access.
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### ***President unveils India's first Lithium-Ion charger***

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- President Ram Nath Kovind unveiled India's first, indigenous lithium-ion battery charger, developed by Ampere Vehicles here in May, 2018.
  - The unveiling event took place on the occasion of National Technology Day.
  - The event was dedicated to recognise the indigenous technologies, with this year's theme being - 'Commercialising Indigenous Technologies: Journey from Benchside to Business'.
  - Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Science and Technology, was also present during the event, amidst nearly 1000 scientists, technocrats, academicians, students and industry persons.
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### ***Suresh Prabhu launches India's first ever Intellectual Property mascot – IP Nani***

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- The Minister of Commerce and Industry Shri Suresh Prabhu launched the Intellectual Property (IP) mascot – IP Nani – at the conference on National Intellectual Property Rights Policy in New Delhi in May, 2018. An anti-piracy video featuring Mr. Amitabh Bachchan was also launched by the Minister at the event.
  - Mascot IP Nani is a tech-savvy grandmother who helps the government and enforcement agencies in combating IP crimes with the help of her grandson “Chhotu” aka Aditya. The IP mascot will spread awareness about the importance of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) among people, especially children, in an interesting manner.
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### ***India's First all-woman Post Office Passport Seva Kendra starts operations in Phagwara, Punjab***

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- The Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) run by an all-woman team began its operations in Phagwara, Punjab.
  - This kendra was 192nd POPSK in the country and first one to be operated by an all-woman team.
  - It will cater needs of people from Kapurthala, Nawandhar and Jalandhar rural districts.
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### ***Guwahati becomes India's first fully solar powered railway station***

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- Guwahati now has India's first railway station run by solar power. The project of installing solar panels was commissioned last year in April 2017.
  - Around 2352 solar modules with a capacity of generating 700 kwpc has been set up over the roof of the Guwahati railway station. Solar panels have been installed at the roof-top solar power plant.
  - The solar-powered station is aimed at reducing carbon-footprint as well as cut down power costs drastically.
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### ***Hyderabad's Metro Rail To Be India's First To Setup E-Vehicle Charging Stations***

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- Hyderabad Metro Rail is planning to soon provide electric vehicle (EV) charging facility at metro stations in partnership with PowerGrid Corporation of India Ltd. With this, Hyderabad Metro will be the first metro rail in the country to provide the facility. The EV charging stations will be monitored and operated remotely by PowerGrid.
  - Interestingly, with the involvement of PowerGrid, The upcoming EV charging stations will have vehicle-to-grid (V2G) concept in which EVs can also help in stabilization of the grid. A V2G system enables the flow of power between an electric system or grid and electric drive vehicles such as electric cars (BEV), plug-in hybrids (PHEV) or hydrogen Fuel Cell Electric Vehicles (FCEV).
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### ***First commercial flight lands in Arunachal Pradesh since Independence***

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- In what is being considered as a landmark in the Indian civil aviation history, the first fixed-wing commercial aircraft that took off from the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi Airport in Guwahati landed at the Pasighat Airport in Arunachal Pradesh in May, 2018.
  - Out of the eight northeastern states, Arunachal Pradesh, now has become the last to be on the country commercial flight service map. Though the state of Arunachal Pradesh had air-transport facility from the pre-independence, it was mainly for the use of armed forces.
  - The flight took 1.5 hours to cover the distance of 650km from the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi Airport in Guwahati to Arunachal Pradesh's Pasighat airport.
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### ***India to hold first joint naval exercise with Vietnam***

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- India is preparing to hold a naval exercise with the Southeast Asian nation Vietnam.
  - For the same, three Indian warships– INS Sahyadri, INS Shakti & INS Kamorta entered the Tien Sa Port in Vietnam on May 21.
  - On completion of the harbour phase, warships from the two naval forces would conduct their first joint naval exercise.
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### ***INSV Tarini returns to base after successful circumnavigation of the globe***

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- Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini with its all women crew successfully completed its circumnavigation of the globe and returned to Goa on May 21.
  - Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who had flagged off the crew on September 10, 2017, was present to welcome them back home along with other naval officers.
  - This is the first ever circumnavigation of the globe by an all-women Indian crew.
  - The expedition titled 'Navika Sagar Parikrama' was aimed at promoting women empowerment.
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***Cabinet approve to set up India's first sports university in Manipur***

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- The Union Cabinet in May, 2018 approved an ordinance to set up the country's first national sports university in Manipur.
  - Briefing reporters on the decisions of the Cabinet, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said a bill to set up the university in Imphal (west) is already pending in Parliament. He said things will start moving fast once the President signs the ordinance. The Manipur government has already allocated land for the proposed university, he said.
  - The ordinance will be on the lines of the bill introduced in Lok Sabha in August 2017. As of now, there are some institutes which offer various courses for athletes and coaches.
  - The proposed university is expected to bridge this gap. The proposal to set up the national sports university in Manipur was initially announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while Rs 100 crore funds for it were allocated in the 2014-15 budget.
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***World's Largest Bird Sculpture 'Jatayu' to be inaugurated in Kerala***

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- Kerala will soon inaugurate the world's largest bird sculpture, Jatayu Earth's Centre in Thiruvananthapuram.
  - The replica of bird 'Jatayu', a character in the Ramayana is 65 feet tall & is positioned right at the top of a rock situated 1000 feet above sea level.
  - The rock 'Jatayupara' where the structure is based, is the place where Jatayu fell after its wings were cut by Ravana.
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***PM Modi inaugurates 1st phase India's first Smart & Green Highway, Delhi-Meerut expressway***

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- Prime Minister Narendra Modi in May, 2018 inaugurated the first phase of Delhi-Meerut expressway here.
  - Stretching from Nizamuddin Bridge in Delhi to Delhi UP Border, the 14-lane highway will reduce the travel time between the two cities to only 45 minutes from the present about four to five hours.
  - Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari was also present at the inauguration event.
  - Soon after the inaugural ceremony, Prime Minister Modi held a roadshow in an open jeep on the expressway. People in big numbers gathered to get a glimpse of him during the roadshow.
  - This project will provide faster and safer connectivity between Delhi and Meerut. People from the NCR, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand will particularly benefit from this project.
  - Later in the day, the Prime Minister will also inaugurate the country's first smart and green highway, the Eastern Peripheral Expressway at Baghpat in Uttar Pradesh.
  - The 135-km expressway is built at a cost of Rs. 11,000 crore.
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***Mumbai to install UAV surveillance, panic buttons to ensure women's safety***

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- The Mumbai police are planning to use Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) for surveillance and install 'panic buttons' in order to enhance the safety of women in the city.
  - The measures are part of Rs 252-crore Safe City Project, which will be implemented fully in three years. This would be the first time that UAVs would be used in the country for this purpose.
  - After the shocking Nirbhaya gang-rape incident of 2012, the Union Home Ministry had invited proposals from police departments of big cities to provide more security to women.
  - The Union Government had also allocated funds for such projects.
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***IGI Airport Delhi to Get India's First AI Robot 'RADA' to Assist Flyers, Courtesy Vistara***

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- Vistara has come up with a unique robot using Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology that can assist customers, address their queries and entertain them. Named 'RADA', the robot is aimed at helping the airline offer an enhanced on-ground service to its customers.
  - During its initial stage, RADA will be placed at Vistara's Signature Lounge at Delhi Airport's Terminal 3 from July 5, 2018, to assist customers using the lounge before they board their flights.
  - Vistara states that 'RADA' will be further developed over a period of time in terms of functionality and features for future use cases, after gauging customer feedback.
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***Tourism Minister to launch first ever guidelines by government on Adventure Tourism***

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- The Union Government would soon be issuing first-ever guidelines for Adventure Tourism in India.
  - The guidelines on Safety and Quality Norms for Adventure Tourism in India have been formulated along with the Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI).
  - In an effort to make adventure sports safer, the set of guidelines list out the basic minimum standards required for adventure tourism activities in India.
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**First People**

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***Gina Haspel confirmed as first female director of CIA***

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- The US Senate confirmed Gina Haspel as the first female director of Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) on May 17, 2018.
  - Haspel's nomination was confirmed in a 54-45 vote, following a difficult nomination process that reopened an emotional debate about brutal interrogation techniques in one of the darkest chapters of CIA's history.
  - The vote split both parties, with six Democrats joining most Republicans in the CIA veteran's support.
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***Gobind Singh Deo becomes first Sikh to be appointed as minister in Malaysia's Cabinet***

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- Gobind Singh Deo, an Indian-origin Sikh politician in Malaysia, has become a Cabinet minister, the first member of the minority community in the country's history to be appointed as a minister.
  - Deo, 45, who has been given the communications and multimedia portfolio, is among the two politicians of Indian descent included in the Pakatan Harapan coalition's Cabinet.
  - The other Indian-origin lawmaker is M Kulasegaran from the Democratic Action Party, who has been made the human resource minister.
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***NYSE to have its first female leader***

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- The New York Stock Exchange has appointed Chief Operating Officer Stacey Cunningham as its first female president.
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- Cunningham will replace Tom Farley as the head of NYSE. She was previously appointed as NYSE's chief operating officer in June 2015.

**India's Arjun Vajpai becomes world's youngest to scale record six peaks over 8,000 m**

- Indian mountaineer Arjun Vajpai this week became the youngest person in the world to scale six peaks over 8,000 metres when he summited the treacherous Kangchenjunga, the third highest mountain in the world.
- But the real pinnacle, says the 24-year-old, would be when he achieves the "grand slam" of mountaineering - scaling all 14 mountains over 8,000 metres across the world.
- Vajpai, who became the third youngest person to scale the Mount Everest at the age of 16 in 2010, started his journey to the Kangchenjunga peak on April 26 from the Advanced Base Camp, situated at a height of 5,400 metres.

**IPS Officer Krishna Prakash, India's First Civil Servant To Become An 'Ultraman'**

- The Maharashtra cadre IPS officer becomes India's first and only uniformed service officer in Military, Naval, Air-Force and para-military forces to win the 'Ultraman World Championship' title at Australia in May 2018.
- Triathlon is a three-day 515 km (320 mile) multisport race held in Australia every year.

**Sangeeta Bahl: Oldest Indian woman to scale Mount Everest**

- Sangeeta Bahl, at the age of 53, has become the oldest Indian woman to scale the Mount Everest.
- She scaled the peak on May 19, 2018, with the help of 2 Sherpas.

**First in the World**

**Dubai gets world's first AI-composed theme song**

- The world's first AI-composed (artificial intelligence) anthem dedicated to a city, titled 'Ode to Dubai', was unveiled at the ongoing Internet of Things Expo (IoTX) at the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC) in May, 2018.
- Whilst it took weeks, months or even years for classical composers to create their piece, AI-powered Aiva finished 'Ode to Dubai' in just 72 hours, according to Barreau.

**In a first, Nasa plans to send a helicopter to explore habitat on Mars**

- The US space agency said in May, 2018 it plans to launch the first-ever helicopter to Mars in 2020, a miniature, unmanned drone-like chopper that could boost our understanding of the Red Planet.
- Known simply as "The Mars Helicopter," the device weighs less than four pounds (1.8 kilograms), and its main body section, or fuselage, is about the size of a softball.
- It will be attached to the belly pan of the Mars 2020 rover, a wheeled robot that aims to determine the habitability of the Martian environment, search for signs of ancient life, and assess natural resources and hazards for future human explorers.



***SpaceX launches most powerful Falcon 9 rocket, carrying Bangladesh's first communication satellite***

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- The California-based aerospace company SpaceX on May 11, 2018 launched its most powerful rocket yet 'Falcon 9', which is expected to carry humans to space later this year. The rocket was launched from Cape Canaveral, Florida
  - The main aim behind the launching of the Block 5 Falcon 9 rocket was to propel Bangladesh's first high-orbit communications satellite, namely, Bangabandhu Satellite-1.
  - The launch was initially expected to take place on May 10, 2018, but due to triggering of the automatic abort switch, the launch was postponed at the last minute.
  - After successful liftoff, the rocket returned to an upright landing on the "Of Course I Still Love You" dronship stationed in the Atlantic Ocean.
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***WHO publishes its first Essential Diagnostics List***

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- The World Health Organisation (WHO) on May 15, 2018 published its first 'Essential Diagnostics List', which is a catalogue of tests needed to diagnose the most common conditions along with a number of global priority diseases.
  - The list aims to address people's inability to access diagnostic services, which results in them failing to receive the correct treatment.
  - Speaking on the same, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that an accurate diagnosis is the first step to getting effective treatment. "No one should suffer or die because of lack of diagnostic services, or because the right tests were not available," he added.
  - The essential diagnostics list concentrates on in-vitro tests like tests of blood and urine.
  - It comprises 58 tests for detection and diagnosis of a wide range of common conditions.
  - It also comprises 55 tests for the detection, diagnosis and monitoring of 'priority' diseases such as HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, hepatitis B and C, human papillomavirus and syphilis.
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***16-year-old Indian becomes youngest woman to scale Mt. Everest***

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- A 16-year-old girl from Haryana has registered her name as the youngest woman to scale the world highest peak in May, 2018 evening, according to local media.
  - Born in Hisar of Haryana in north-western India, Shivangi Pathak climbed Mount Everest exploring a message that women could overcome every obstacle to achieve their goals.
  - Pathak said that she was inspired by Arunima Sinha, who was the first Indian amputee to scale the nearly 29,000 ft peak.
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***Russia launches world's first floating nuclear power plant***

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- Russia on May 19, 2018 launched 'Akademik Lomonosov', the world's first floating nuclear power plant at the St Petersburg shipyard.
  - The plant is currently towed to a port town called Murmansk in northwest Russia, where it will be loaded up with fuel. The plant would be then taken to a town in the Arctic Circle called Pevek, where it will begin generating power in mid-2019.
  - The 'Akademik Lomonosov' is to be the first of a fleet of floating nuclear power stations to be stationed in the Russian Arctic.
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***Nepal becomes first country in South-East Asia to eliminate Trachoma: WHO***

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- The World Health Organization (WHO) on May 21, 2018 declared Nepal as free from Trachoma, the world's leading infectious cause of blindness.
  - With this, Nepal becomes first country in WHO's South-East Asia Region to eliminate Trachoma.
  - Trachoma was the second leading cause of preventable blindness in Nepal in the 1980s.
  - In 2002, the Nepal Government augmented its efforts to eliminate the disease by launching the National Trachoma Programme.
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***Colombia to be NATO's first Latin American 'global partner'***

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- Colombia would be formally joining the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) next week. The announcement was made by the country's President Juan Manuel Santos on May 25, 2018.
  - With the move, Colombia will become the first Latin American nation to be a part of the alliance. It would be joining the bloc as a 'global partner', which means it will not necessarily have to take part in any joint military action and will be fully accredited in Brussels.
  - The NATO alliance comprising 29 member nations reached a partnership agreement with Colombia in May 2017, following the signing of a peace deal with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (Farc).
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***Singapore Airlines to launch world's longest commercial flights in October***

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- Singapore Airlines (SIA) will launch the world's longest commercial flights from October 11 between Singapore and New Jersey in the United States of America.
  - The 161-seat flight will cover 15,329 km non-stop, with travelling time lasting up to 18 hours and 45 minutes.
  - According to the SIA, tickets will be made available for sale progressively across various booking channels starting from Thursday.
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***US Capitol to host first-ever gathering of Indian-Americans***

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- The US Capitol will for the first time on June 7, 2018 host Indian American elected officials, leaders, philanthropists and some 80 community members running for elected offices in the November mid-term elections.
  - Senator Kamala Harris from California, the first ever Indian origin to be elected to the US Senate, is scheduled to deliver a keynote address to the one-of-its-kind of gathering.
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