

## Monthly Current Affairs – JULY

(For IAS/RAS and other competitive examinations)

### All in One

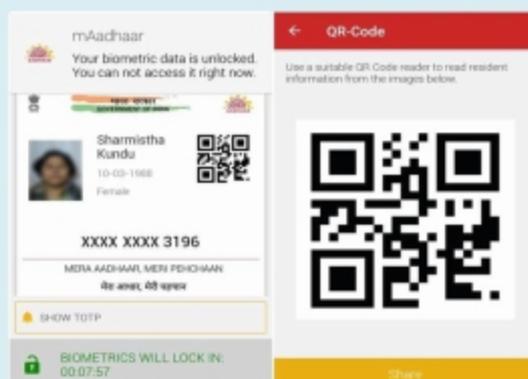
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## RAJASTHAN



- **Rajasthan's more than six lakh registered beneficiaries to get revised social security pensions from July 1**
  - ⇒ More than six lakh pensioners in Rajasthan covered under the 'Mukhya Mantri Samman Pension Yojana' will begin receiving increased pensions from Saturday, July 1. The revised social security pensions were announced by chief minister Vasundhara Raje while presenting the state budget for 2017-18.
  - ⇒ Under the single woman category, the state government revised the pensions of widows, divorcee, separated/deserted from Rs 500 to Rs 1000 for women between 60 years and 75 years and from Rs 750 to Rs 1500 for women above 75 years.
  - ⇒ For the specially-able persons, the state government has done away with the age categories and fixed the pension at Rs 750 per month. Earlier, specially-able persons up to eight years of age were given Rs 250 per month and those between eight years and 75 years were given Rs 500 per month.

- **Panagariya hails Rajasthan for various reform measures**

- ⇒ Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Arvind Panagariya praised the Rajasthan government for initiating various reform measures, including 'ease of doing business' policy.
- ⇒ As per him, amendments in labour laws, land on lease permission for solar energy, rent act in urban development, toilet construction work under Swachh Bharat Mission, Mukhyamantri Jal Swawlamban Yojana (MJSY) are some of the remarkable reforms in last three years.
- ⇒ Pangariya was in city along with his team to take part in a programme 'Development Dialogue with Niti Aayog' with Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje.
- ⇒ Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant also praised the innovations taken by the state saying that with such innovative schemes and steps, Rajasthan can be on the top.

- **Biodegradable bags to replace plastic bags.**

- ⇒ Biodegradable bags, made of starch from maize, are likely to replace regular polythene bags in the state.



- ⇒ After imposing effective ban on usage of plastic bags, government has been looking for a substitute. According to officials, biodegradable bags look to be the best available option which if swallowed, would not harm animals, too.
- ⇒ The bags have been certified by third-party testing agencies both in India and abroad. These bags have also been certified by Central Government's Central Institute of Plastics Engineering and Technology (CIPET).
- ⇒ A person or shopkeeper flouting norms is liable to five years of imprisonment and Rs 1 lakh penalty. If a person is found flouting norm frequently, a fine of Rs 5,000 per day can also be imposed on him/ her.
- ⇒ In addition to that, state government is also planning to install vending machines to dispense cloth bags as alternative for plastic carry bags. To start with, these machines would be installed at public places like vegetable markets, malls and shopping complexes.

- **Indira's name removed from Girls scheme in Rajasthan.**

- ⇒ The Rajasthan education department replaced the name of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's name from a scheme for meritorious girls in secondary schools.
- ⇒ The Indira Priyadarshini Puruskar Yojana, given to girls who score the highest in their district in Classes 10 and 12 of the Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education (RBSE), will now be called **Padmakshi Puruskar Yojana**.
- ⇒ Padmakshi, meaning a woman with lotus-like eyes, is another name for Goddess Saraswati, the deity of wisdom and knowledge. The award will be given on Basant Panchami at district-level functions every year beginning 2017-18 session.
- ⇒ Girls of general, scheduled caste, scheduled tribe, other backward class, minorities and below poverty lines categories who score the highest in RBSE exams in Class 8, 10 and 12 will be awarded with cash and a certificate.

## **Gk byte- Basant Panchami**

⇒ Basant Panchami, the birthday of the goddess, marks the beginning of spring (Basant in Hindi) and falls on the fifth day (Panchami) of Maagh in the Hindu calendar. Hindus worship the goddess on this day and wear yellow, the colour of spring.

### **• Anganwadi Chalo Abhiyan to start in state from today.**

⇒ The ministry has taken a string of steps to transform the anganwadi centres from just feeding centres to pre-school learning centres. It has renamed them as anganwadi paathshalas, distributed stationery kits to children, and also developed workbooks for them with the help of UNICEF Rajasthan.

⇒ The drive carried out in July last year had upped the enrolment from 1.2 lakh to 2.8 lakh in anganwadis. The state has nearly 61,000 anganwadi centres.

### **• Wrestling event to be held in Jaipur.**

⇒ The Rajasthan Wrestling Association (RWA) will organise a Junior National Wrestling Championship for boys and girls at the Sawai Man Singh Stadium from January 4 to 7. The decision was taken at the annual general on Sunday.

⇒ About 900 players, including 200 officials, are expected to take part in the tournament. Greco Roman, Free style and women free style event will be held. Last year, the tournament was organised in Patna and for the first time the national championship is being organised in Jaipur.

- **SDRF get ready for monsoon with Hi tech Training**

- ⇒ With the arrival of monsoon in Rajasthan, the state police have made special arrangements to ensure that any possible contingencies are tackled within minimum time.
- ⇒ According to senior police officials, eight companies of the state disaster response force (SDRF) have been put on alert to start rescue operations within a short notice.
- ⇒ In the past one year, members of the Rajasthan SDRF have been receiving training from the national disaster response force (NDRF) as well as the army in various emergency services that are relevant during rescue operations.

**Gk byte - NDRF**

- ⇒ NDRF (National Disaster Response Force) is India's elite disaster mitigation combat force established under The Disaster Management Act, 2005. It was established in 2006 and is headquartered in New Delhi. It functions under the aegis of Union Ministry of Home Affairs. Its main function is to undertake relief and rescue operations in the case of an event of any disaster (natural or man-made), accident or emergency. It is assisted by 11 battalions positioned in various states of the country. Of the 11 battalions, 3 are of BSF and CRPF each, 2 are of CISF, ITBP each and one of Sashastra Seema Bal.

- **Despite SC ban, sterilization camps to be held in Rajasthan**

- ⇒ A mega sterilization camp is being advertised to be held at Hanumangarh on World Population Day, July 11. Activists fear that such camps are being planned in other parts of the state too, although the poster that this reporter found was of Hanumangarh alone, with a schedule for sterilization camps in four different government facilities.

- ⇒ In September last year, the Supreme Court banned sterilization camps and asked the Centre to ensure better access to primary healthcare.
- ⇒ The posters advertising the mega sterilization camp in Hanumangarh too come with cash incentives - Rs1,400 to each woman, as "encouragement" and Rs2,000 to each man. Even those who refer people for such operations can expect a reward. There is something called a "prerak" reward for a person encouraging a young person who has "finished his family" to undergo the surgery - Rs200 for bringing a woman and Rs300 for bringing a man to undergo the procedure.
- ⇒ The schedule advertised on the poster says the camp on July 11 will be held at the Rawatsar community health centre. Similar operations will be conducted in different government facilities in the district on 10, 21 and 23 July.

- **Van Mahotsav on July 10 in Rajasthan**

- ⇒ This year's Van Mahotsav programme will be held on July 10 with full enthusiasm across the state, district, Block and Gram Panchayat level with a focus on water conservation.
- ⇒ Mukhyamantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan (MJSA-2) is being implemented in 4200 villages, to enhance water security and livelihoods resilience, in the water-scarce state. Under MJSA-2, besides creation of over one lakh water conservation structures, 60 lakh plants are to be planted to increase the green cover.
- ⇒ State-level Van Mahotsav would be held at Beed Govindpura in Jaipur district on July 10 at 10-30 am, where Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje would be the Chief Guest. Minister for Forest and Environment Gajendra Singh Khimsar, several senior officials and employees from Forest, Environment, Police and Civil administration would be present on the occasion.

- **Rajasthan reaps rich dividend of India-Israel cooperation**



- ⇒ Burgeoning cooperation between India and Israel has been most beneficial for Rajasthan with state receiving the best technical know-how in agriculture sector and water harvesting.
- ⇒ It has been the first visit of any Indian prime minister to Israel in 70 years but for Rajasthan chief minister's West Asian nation has become a must stop over last decade. Seeds which were sowed with visit of chief minister Vasundhara Raje in 2006 during her previous tenure are now bearing fruits. This was deepened further by the visit of former CM Ashok Gehlot who went there in 2013.
- ⇒ With technical assistance Israel, Rajasthan was among the **first state in the country to adopt drip irrigation. Crops of olive and dates** which were unfamiliar to Indian farmers are now gaining acceptance in state.
- ⇒ Raje visited Israel in 2006 and found olives being grown commercially in the Negev desert. She came back and decided on a pilot plantation of olives. Later with support from Israel, **Rajasthan Olive Cultivation Limited** was set up.
- ⇒ In animal husbandry, the Rajasthan government will seek consultation experts from Israel to enhance and conserve traditional breeds of cows in the state.
- ⇒ **Israel** also helped state in starting three Centres of Excellence at **Bassi (Jaipur), Kota and Jaisalmer.**
- ⇒ Apart from that, more than 1000 progressive farmers so far have received training from Israeli experts. The state government is looking to send more such farmers to gain technical knowhow.

- **Soon, 'show your face' to machines at health directorate to mark attendance.**

- ⇒ Now employees and officers of the health department at the administrative offices will have to mark their attendance on face reading biometric machine from July 15.
- ⇒ The health department has issued orders in this regard on July 3 directing administrative offices of the department to install face reading biometric machine by July 15.
- ⇒ To avoid any scope of manipulation. There was information that biometric attendance machines were being manipulated at health facilities, although no proof has been found. But to avoid any such discrepancy, latest machines are being installed.
- ⇒ These face reading biometric machines will be linked to Rajasthan Accountability Assurance System (RAAS) on the directions of the chief minister so that attendance of all employees and officers can be seen online at the CMO.
- ⇒ Soon the biometric machines at the health facilities — district hospital, sub-divisional hospital, satellite hospital, TB clinic, mother and child welfare centres, community health centres, primary health centres, dispensaries etc — will be upgraded to face reading biometric machines and will be linked to RAAS
- ⇒ These machines will cost ₹12,000-15,000 each and eight such machines will be installed at the directorate in Jaipur.

- **Baring four districts, south west monsoon so far fruitful in Rajasthan.**

- ⇒ The first spell of the south west monsoon has been fruitful to the state as merely four districts in the state have got deficit rainfall. By and large in the first spell of a week since the onset of south west monsoon in the state the average rainfall has been 52.6% higher compared to 2016.
- ⇒ The districts including Kota, Jhalawar, Baran and Dholpur have got deficit rainfall. "Deficit rainfall means these districts have got lesser

rainfall from what they received in the first week after onset of rainfall in 2016. There are at least six more spells of monsoon rainfall are left which are definitely going to benefit these districts.

⇒ Jalore has received a rainfall of 134 mm which is highest in the state. However, Baran has received a deficit rainfall which is 44.21 this year.

- **Rajasthan to hand over 50 urban primary health centres to private players.**

⇒ The state government has sought expression of interest from eligible private entities for the running of 50 urban primary health centres. The aim is to run these in public-private partnership (PPP) mode. The proposals will be opened on July 31. This move is explained as necessary because access to healthcare remains uneven. The partnership will initially be for three years, and could be extended for another two.

⇒ Anticipating criticism, the invitation document says, "Such partnership should not be seen as a measure of the government abdicating responsibility to provide public health services, but rather as a transitional measure towards facilitating the state to be able to manage such facilities after the term of the partnership ceases."

⇒ It also says: "Government expects that the concession granted will not be treated as a business venture and will not be used to make profits."

⇒ Services to be included are listed: primary healthcare package encompassing all outreach, including behavior change through health education and health promotion, critical and public health services."

⇒ Pregnancy, childbirth, infant care, childhood and adolescent healthcare, family planning and contraceptive services, management of communicable diseases, outpatient care for minor ailments and acute simple illnesses are expected to be provided. The government will reimburse costs.

- **Govt 'ban' on digging of roads till September 30.**

⇒ Keeping in mind that monsoon has arrived in the city Jaipur, the district administration has imposed a sort of "ban" on digging of road by different agencies— government and private as well, for preventing accidents. The district administration has also issued direction to its officials to remain alert during monsoon. It is seen in the past that mishaps happened in the city including collapse of building, low lying areas inundated with water and also other accidents which are risky for life of the people. The district administration has also set up flood control rooms in the city.

- **Digital India Summit Awards**

The state of Rajasthan has bagged 4 Digital India Summit awards 2017.



⇒ Digital Leader of the Year – **Hon'ble Chief Minister, Rajasthan**

⇒ eGovernance Initiative of the Year – **Bhamashah Scheme**

⇒ Effective Use of Tech for Security & Safety – **Abhay Command Centre**

⇒ Health Insurance Initiative of the Year – **Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yoja**

- **Now, use Facebook for college admissions.**

- ⇒ Rajasthan college education dept directive allows Facebook and Gmail accounts as valid identity document
- ⇒ The education department, in its admission policy for 2016-17, has allowed Aadhaar and Bhamashah cards as well as Facebook and Gmail accounts for 'single sign on identity' (SSOI) registration. Earlier, only Aadhaar and Bhamashah cards were allowed for SSOI registration.

- **Govt to launch advanced life support ambulances in Rajasthan**

- ⇒ The state government is all set to launch first advanced life support (ALS) ambulances in the state to help patients suffering from heart attack and those needing higher level of care during transportation to the hospital.
- ⇒ It is expected that 34 new ALS ambulances will be rolled out. There are 33 districts and Jaipur rural, which is expected to get one ambulance each.
- ⇒ There are total 1,430 ambulances in the state operational including ambulances under 108 emergency response services, 104 Janani Express and base ambulances.

- **Rajasthan's Sundar Singh Gurjar wins gold medal at World Para Athletics**



- ⇒ Sundar Singh Gurjar (21) won gold medal in the men's javelin throw event at World Para Athletics Championships held in London, United Kingdom. In the F46 category, Sundar recorded his personal best effort of 60.36m ahead of Dinesh Priyantha Herath (Sri Lanka) who emerged second with 57.93m, followed by defending champion Guo Chunliang (China) with 56.14m.
- ⇒ Sundar Singh Gurjar hails from the Karauli district in Rajasthan.

- **Co-operative department to set up solar plant in Rajasthan's Ganganagar**

- ⇒ The cooperative department has also made its foray in to the green energy sector by setting up 20 kilo watt solar plant by village cooperative society at 24 APD village near Anoopgarh in Ganganagar district.
- ⇒ The plant is expected to generate about 33,000 units of power with an average of 100-120 units per day while the average use of the society is of 80 units. the remaining power of about 10, 000 units would be sold to the power grid. This will not only save the society of Rs one lakh in power bill but also generate additional income from the sale of excess units of power.

- **Rajasthan population set for high growth rate on fertility levels**

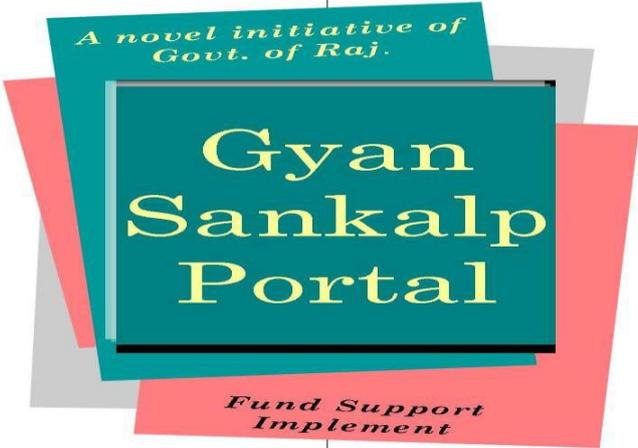
- ⇒ Sixty to seventy percent of population in the state will come from Rajasthan's past high fertility levels till 2026. The rest of 30-40% will grow due to the still higher Total Fertility Rate (TFR) in the state which stands at 2.4 as against the national TFR of 2.2.
- ⇒ Rajasthan is facing dual challenges - reducing existing high TFR (average number of children expected to be born per woman during her reproductive years) and coping with the 'population momentum'. The state is emphasising on control-focused policies and programmes, but it is high time to lay equal focus on momentum-focused policies and programmes as 60 to 70% of population in the state is growing due to momentum achieved from high fertility levels in the past.
- ⇒ At the beginning of the past decade, a family had 3.2 children on an average, but now it has 2.4 in the state. The state is quite close to achieving replacement fertility, which is 2.1 children per woman.

- **Machia park likely to abode white tiger.**

- ⇒ Visitors at Machia Biological Park of Jodhpur will soon be able to see a white tiger. Process for bringing a male white tiger from Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur Zoo has already been initiated and once the permission from both the departments and the Central Zoo Authority (CZA) is obtained, shifting will be executed.



- ⇒ Jodhpur's Machia Biological Park already has lions and panthers and once the tiger is brought here, not only it will add to the importance of the park but the visitors will also be able to see the cats at one place.
- ⇒ The new destination for the wildlife in Jodhpur, the Machia Biological Park, which has witnessed a steady rise in the visitors currently has a pair of Asiatic lion and Panther but absence of tiger has been disappointing the visitors, who have mentioned this disappointment through various media.
- **Rajasthan Government Launched Gyan Sankalp Portal to Collect Education Funds.**
  - ⇒ Rajasthan CM has introduced Rajasthan Education Funding Portal or commonly referred as Gyan Sankalp Portal to collect funds for education institutions. In order to provide better education facilities and transform study culture the government has asked to pledge and support by donating amount to Mukhyamantri Vidyadaan Kosh in Rajasthan.



**Gyan Sankalp Portal**

*A novel initiative of Govt. of Raj.*

*Fund Support Implement*

**Nodal Agency:**  
**Rajasthan Council of Secondary Education**  
 Ekivaya Bhawan,  
 Dr. RKS Sankul, JLN Marg,  
 Jaipur- 302017 (Rajasthan)

Phone: 0141-2715551  
 Fax: 0141-2715553  
 Mobile: +98290-98046  
 E-mail: csr.edu.raj@gmail.com

**Gyan Sankalp portal will allow Industries & donors to support Government Schools in Rajasthan**

*Launch on 5th August 2017*  
*By Hon'ble Chief Minister, Rajasthan Smt. Vasundhara Raje during Festival of Education, Jaipur*

**Ways to support**

- Fund/ Fund & implement projects displayed on the portal by GoR
- Adopt a School
- Create customized projects
- Donate to Mukhyamantri Vidyadaan Kosh

**Highlights**

- Transparency,
- Projects based on Real Time Gaps
- Income Tax Exemption under 80 G

**Make a pledge to support**  
<http://rajrmsa.nic.in/csr/home.aspx>

⇒ The Gyan Sankalp Portal now only available to take pledge and submit form along with a Pledge amount of Rs.500 and above. Honourable Chief Minister of Rajasthan will launch the portal live on 5<sup>th</sup> August 2017 at Festival of Education in Jaipur. The Gyan Sankalp Portal invites businessmen, industrialist to donate funds in Mukhyamantri Vidyadaan Kosh.

- **Rajasthan becomes First State to fix minimum education qualification for cooperative body poll.**

⇒ **Rajasthan has become the first State** in the country to lay down the minimum educational qualifications for contesting elections to village cooperative societies and various other cooperative bodies. In this regard, state government has amended State Cooperative Societies Rules, 2003. The new rules would benefit about 10,000 cooperative and agricultural credit societies.

⇒ The minimum educational qualification will be compulsory for the members of the Directorate of Board of the cooperatives to ensure the management is assigned to skilled hands. The required educational qualifications will range from Class V to Class VIII for election as members of governing boards of various cooperative societies.

The minimum qualifications for the primary committee members will be class VIII, for district-level committees, it will be class X and graduation for the state level committee.

- **Soon, app for info on tourism sites in Jhalawar**



- ⇒ Jhalawar district administration will soon launch the ‘Smart Tourism Mobile App’ named **‘Lezgo’**— which has been developed by Sohamsaa Systems Private Limited. The app will give complete information about the tourist site once you reach it.
  - ⇒ Information ranging from details about cities, places and attractions, text with pictures and cultural stories, audio streams, interactive fun and other features will be displayed on the smartphone without any charges.
  - ⇒ LeZgo smart tourism solution has been installed in Ajmer, Pushkar, Bharatpur, Dholpur and Barmer in the last six month. “Soon trivia features, loyalty points, travel bookings on flights, trains, buses and cabs will also be available on the app.
- **Glocal Healthcare with Rajasthan government to serve rural poor**

- ⇒ Kolkata-headquartered Glocal Healthcare Services is likely to 'take smart care to rural areas' by establishing **5,000 odd telemedicine centres across the country** in the coming two years.
- ⇒ The project surfaced early in the month of May with a first of its kind enterprise being taken up by the **government of Rajasthan in association with Glocal Healthcare**.
- ⇒ The two parties jointly intend to establish one hundred telemedicine centres across 31 district hospitals, 19 sub-division hospitals, 6 satellite hospitals and 44 community health centres in the state.
- ⇒ These mentioned centres will be linked to a central hub of doctors for consultation with the team of on-field healthcare workers armed to offer patient care at any time of requirement.

- **Need new ideas to boost Rajasthan's camel population: Researcher**

- ⇒ Ilse Kohler Rollefson, German researcher, veterinarian and ethnographer who has been researching camels in India since the 1990s, in an article in the July issue of Seminar magazine makes a case for finding a way to use the male camel as a draught animal to better conserve the breed of local camels.
- ⇒ Camel milk is renowned as a measure of mitigating the symptoms of autism in children; it is low in fat, known to have beneficial impact for diabetics and also helps in boosting the immune system and controlling infection.
- ⇒ The livestock census of 2012 showed that the population of camels in the state had shrunk from more than a million in the last few decades to just a couple of hundred thousand. Rajasthan declared the camel the "state animal" in June 2014. A law prohibiting camel slaughter and regulating temporary migration and export was passed in 2015. A new subsidy scheme now exists for all new camel calves.

- **Rajasthan government introduces module on Phad painting, spa**

- ⇒ Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation (RSLDC) has introduced training modules on Phad paintings, Purohitya Prashikshan, Heritage Mistri, Therapeutic Spa and Ornamental Fisheries to mark the World Youth Skills Day.
- ⇒ These courses have been designed for youths keeping its high employability intending to create jobs in areas which have been ignored so far. Besides, a list of new programs has been introduced for Madarsaa drop outs and transgenders like Urdu journalism, translators, legal advisor etc.
- ⇒ The RSLDC has signed MOUs with different agencies to execute these courses.
- ⇒ The Phad paintings are exclusive to Rajasthan. The painting is done on a long piece of cloth narrating a scene

- **Rajasthan: Housing project to encroach on raptor habitat**

- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment to conservation of raptors or predatory birds may sound hollow if the Urban Improvement Trust (UIT), Bikaner, and the Rajasthan government have their way.
- ⇒ However, in a recent development, the government has given its go ahead for a UIT housing project, 'Vasundhara Colony', on the forest land that is the habitat of Schedule I raptors in Jorbeer, Bikaner.
- ⇒ The Raptor MoU is also in conformity with the provisions of the existing Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972, wherein the birds have been accorded protection.

Barely a year ago, the PM had given his nod for an MoU on the conservation of migratory birds of prey from Africa and Eurasia. Approval for this MoU, also called 'Raptor MoU' was taken at a

meeting of the Union cabinet, chaired by Modi.

- **In a first, rainforest trees found in Ranthambore.**

⇒ The bio-diversity of the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve(RTR) has thrown up a surprise. a thriving patch of Litsea Glutinosa, essentially rainforest trees, were noticed in the RTR.

⇒ Presence of this species in RTR is its first report from Ranthambore as well as from Rajasthan.

- **PM Modi to inaugurate road projects in Rajasthan**

⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Rajasthan to lay foundation stones as well as inaugurate road projects worth Rs 25,000 crore.

⇒ Public works minister Yunus Khan said that chief minister Vasundhara Raje will meet Modi to decide on the final date.

⇒ Infrastructure work like, ring road in Jaipur, Jodhpur and Kota, road connecting Kota-Darrah, Pokhran-Jaisalmer, Jodhpur-Barmer are likely to be the one in which PM will lay foundation stone.

⇒ The government sources also claim that Rajasthan government may also push for refinery and petro-chemical complex project to be unveiled by the PM.

- **Soon, a biodiversity park on Ajmer-Pushkar Road**

⇒ The foothill area on Ajmer-Pushkar road will soon have a biodiversity park and space will be reserved for wild animals. The specialty of the park will be that it will have diverse plants that are found on the hills and the arid zone. The environment and forest minister Gajender Singh announced the place for biodiversity park.

- ⇒ The biodiversity park had already been sanctioned by the state government but the place for this park was not decided and the forest department had proposal for Kishangarh-Ajmer highway forest zone, Pushkar-Ajmer Road and also near old Pushkar.
- ⇒ This park will be similar to Nahargarh in Jaipur and Sajjangarh in Udaipur where wild animals have their personal space.
- ⇒ However some days ago, the minister also inaugurated Herbal Park on Kanas-Nadaliya Road of Pushkar. The park is constructed on about 20 hectares of land with costing of Rs 62 lakh. Here, there are species of herbal bushes and shrubs which need great protection and are important due to their medicinal properties. The park will also be useful for students who want to learn about herbs. The place will also attract tourists coming to Pushkar, especially foreigners.

- **Tigers to roam in Mukundra National Park by December again**

- ⇒ Plans are afoot by Rajasthan wildlife and forest department to quickly reintroduce tigers at the Mukundra Tiger Reserve.



- ⇒ Though the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) had approved the reintroduction of tigers in Mukundra Hills in Kota by
- ⇒ December 2018, the state forest department is planning to do so a year earlier.

- ⇒ Night patrolling has been introduced in all the three tiger reserves in the state as part of increasing vigilance against poachers and a Rs 60-crore video surveillance mechanism was in the pipeline for five tiger and leopard reserves.
- ⇒ These cameras will provide thermal and optical images to control centres.

- **Rare disease policy yet to see light of the day**

- ⇒ Policy proposal for diagnosis and appropriate treatment of rare diseases was submitted in 2015, but it is yet to see the light of day owing to the apathy of the state government.
- ⇒ Rare disease is a segment of diseases which is still not in the priority list of the government. These diseases are chronic, severe and progressive in nature. According to the health experts, only one in 60,000 suffer from rare diseases. Currently, seven out of 49 lysosomal storage disorders are treatable, experts said.
- ⇒ A rare disease policy needs to be implemented at the individual state level. Most of the states are now sensitive to the issue. In Rajasthan, a policy proposal has already been submitted but it is only a matter of time when it would be accepted and implemented.
- ⇒ ***Health being a state subject***, a state level intervention in this regard would be the best.

- **Rajasthan government to credit PF of contractual workers in accounts**

- ⇒ The Rajasthan government will now deposit provident fund (PF) of contractual employees in their accounts instead of giving it to their contractor.
- ⇒ The government is also trying to fix minimum wages for less than four hours in technical and non-technical professions. It is expected to be half of the existing wages which is Rs 1,200 for non-technical and Rs 1,800 for technical persons.

Based on the nature of work, number of skilled, unskilled and other specific requirements of labour will be issued. Contractors will have to provide contractual employees as per those specifications.

- **85% Raj rural women don't know about HIV/AIDS'**

- ⇒ High migratory population in the state makes Rajasthan vulnerable to HIV/AIDS. But a matter of even more serious concern is that the percentage of women with comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS is quite low here.
- ⇒ According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) -4 (2015-16), only 19.1% of women have comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS. The situation is even worse in rural areas, where only 14.7% of women (age 15-49 years) have comprehensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS.
- ⇒ Over the past few years, the National AIDS Control Society has cut down funds given to AIDS control society across the country. It could be one of the reasons of lack of comprehensive awareness of HIV/AIDS among population of the state.

- **Committee gives nod to Rajasthan's water project**

- ⇒ The National Steering Committee on Climate Change (NSCCC) recently approved three detailed project reports (DPRs) submitted by the states for funding under the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC).
- ⇒ Among the three DPRs approved, one pertained to Rajasthan's 'Mukhya Mantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan'. The project seeks to build on the work carried out under the first phase of the project to enhance the adaptive capacity of the villages by making them self-reliant in terms of water requirement, said an official statement. The main aim of Mukhya Mantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan is to benefit 21,000 villages of the state by 2020.

- ⇒ Besides Rajasthan, the environment ministry also approved projects aimed at addressing the vulnerabilities arising out of climate change in Gujarat and Sikkim.
- ⇒ **Gk byte** - NAFCC is a flagship scheme of the Centre, which provides a 100-per cent grant to the states for implementing climate change adaptation projects. The scheme is designed to fulfil the objectives of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and operationalize the SAPCCs.

- **Annapurna Rasoī benefits may be extended to hospitals**

- ⇒ After receiving positive feedback from Annapurna Rasoī Yojana in state capital, chief minister Vasundhara Raje on Wednesday directed officials to extend benefit of the scheme in all district hospitals.
- ⇒ The scheme now intends to provide subsidized food to poor and middle class patients and their attendants visiting the hospitals. During the review meeting of local self department (LSG), Raje also decided to launch 500 mobile vans across the state by December 2017.



⇒ **Gk byte** - On the lines of Amma canteens, Rajasthan government in December 2016 launched a subsidised meal scheme to provide breakfast at Rs 5 and lunch and dinner at Rs 8. Under the scheme, the department is already providing cooked meals in 80 vans in the 12 cities.

- **Rajasthan government to study noise pollution by infrastructure projects**

⇒ Jaipur City's eight ongoing infrastructure projects will go through an 'environmental impact assessment'. The agencies will study the noise and sound pollution produced during the construction of these projects.

⇒ These eight projects include the elevated road proposed between LIC Bhawan and Sodala, Dravyawati River Project, Bassi and other railway over-bridges (ROBs) and railways underpasses etc.

⇒ The JDA, for the first time, is conducting such environmental test on its projects.

⇒ The official added that a device would be installed to record sound and noise pollution along with global positioning system (GPS). Day-to-day readings will be mentioned in the report.

⇒ During the survey, experts will also study the socio-economic aspects after the completion of the projects. The Performa of the survey has already been prepared.

- **UDAY scheme: Big jolt as Rajasthan's borrowing capacity restricted.**

⇒ Rajasthan government received a major setback as the Centre forestalled the state's efforts on borrowing against the repayment of loan amount under Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY). The move will reduce the state's borrowing limit by Rs 4,000 crore.

⇒ Earlier, Rajasthan was allowed to borrow from the market, equivalent of the amount it repays under UDAY. Under this arrangement, Rajasthan was repaying Rs 4,000 crore per year as principal amount and could take loan of same amount from banks.

- ⇒ However, without consensus of states, including Rajasthan, that have opted for UDAY, the Union government stalled this arrangement.
- ⇒ According to officials privy to the development, the decision was unilateral with an aim of keeping the fiscal deficit of the Centre under mandatory 3%.
- ⇒ At present, Rajasthan has a GDP of Rs 8,27,648 crore and with the limit of 3%, total borrowing cannot go beyond Rs 24,000 crore. With Rs 4,000 crore reduced further, the total borrowing capacity will be restricted to Rs 20,000 crore only.

- **Rajasthan floods: Rescue operation gathers pace in rain-hit areas, 500 shifted to safer places**

- ⇒ Two days after torrential rain created havoc at Jalore, Sirohi, Pali and Barmer districts of the state, the rescue work expedited on Tuesday as heavy rains subsided.
- ⇒ At least 500 people were rescued by the joint teams of Army, Air force, NDRF and local administration.
- ⇒ Meanwhile, hill station Mount Abu that remained in dark due to damage of electricity poles and cables recorded a rainfall of 730 mm on Tuesday. It was followed by Reodar (Sirohi) 450, Sanchor(Jalore) 390, Sirohi 300, Gudamalani(Barmer) 230, Veja (Dungarpur) 170, Kotda (Udaipur) and Pratapgarh 100 mm each, Dhambola (Dungarpur) 90, Kumbhalgarh (Rajsamand) and Bhungra (Banswara) 80 mm each.

- **Mou Inked To Promote Training In Handpump Mistri Trade In The State**

- ⇒ A MoU being signed with WSSO (Water and Sanitation Support Organisation) for providing training in Handpumpmistri trade under Regular Skill Training Program (RSTP) of Rajasthan Skill and Livelihoods Development Corporation (RSLDC). Under the MoU 2000 youth will be trained to a tune of Rs.1.15 crores by the Department.
- ⇒ The training will hence help in maintenance of the handpumps at regional levels. Also the list of these trained youth will be made available to all the Gram Panchayats and PHED will facilitate in their placement. 50 % of the trained candidates will comprise of women which shall help in their empowerment and impetuous into such novice sectors. Also an MoU will soon be signed between WSSO and Rajasthan ILD Skill University to establish a Centre of Excellence in the trade.

- **Rajasthan govt spent Rs 138 crore for care of bovines.**

- ⇒ The Rajasthan government has earned Rs 151.50 crore from the 10 per cent surcharge levied on stamp duty for cow conservation and propagation in the year 2016-17.
- ⇒ Of the total income earned from the surcharge, the state government spent Rs 138.67 crore towards the care of bovines and maintenance of cow shelters, according to data released by the state government in a release on Sunday.
- ⇒ Under proposals for cow conservation and propagation fund rules-2016, the state government provided Rs 126.89 crore for fodder and water of 4.71 bovines at 1,036 cow shelters in the state. A total of Rs 11.79 crore has been sanctioned for 155 other cow shelters, according to the data.

⇒ The state government has provided funds upto Rs 21.24 crore to 196 cow shelters running in Jalore, Sirohi and Pali district.

- **48.2% more rain recorded in Rajasthan compared to 2016**

⇒ Rajasthan till Sunday had received 48.2% more rainfall compared to what it got in 2016 till this period. Except for eight districts which have got deficit rainfall, majority of the districts in the state have got abnormal, excess and normal rainfall.

# INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL EVENTS

## 1. INTERNATIONAL/INDIA and WORLD



- **UN: India to become more populous than China by 2024.**

- ⇒ According to the World population Prospectus: The Revision released by the United Nations, India with 1.3 billion inhabitants would surpass China's population of 1.4 billion by 2024, to become the World's populous country.

- ⇒ As per the report, the concentration of global population growth in the poorest countries is presenting a challenge. The population growth is expected to come from the 47 least developed countries where the fertility rate is around 4.3 births per woman.

- **International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking: 26 June**

- ⇒ By resolution 42/112 of 7 December 1987, the UN General Assembly decided to observe 26 June as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

- ⇒ It aims to achieve the goal of an international society free of drug abuse.

- ⇒ The theme for 2017 is: "Listen First - Listening to children and youth is the first step to help them grow healthy and safe."

According to the report, Nigeria which is currently at the seventh place is expected to become the third most populous country by 2050 replacing the US.

- **Germany legalises Same-Sex Marriage**

- ⇒ Germany has legalised same-sex marriage in line with a host of other European countries. German lawmakers had voted 393 for- and 226 against legalising same-sex marriage. Salient Facts Since 2001 Germany permits same-sex couples to enter into civil partnerships but do not grant them full marital rights which include the possibility to jointly adopt children.
- ⇒ The new law can enter into force after receiving the nod from the upper house of Parliament and the President, though those are formalities. Though Chancellor Angela Merkel had voted against the measure, she had allowed her party members to vote as per their conscience.
- ⇒ Many European countries have a same-sex marriage law. In the countries like Norway, Sweden, Denmark (excluding the Faroe Islands), Finland, Iceland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Luxembourg, France, the UK (except Northern Ireland and Jersey), and the Republic of Ireland civil marriages are legally recognised. But in Austria and Italy, only civil partnerships are permitted.

- **Estonia to open the world's first data embassy in Luxembourg**

- ⇒ The world's first ever data embassy is set for launch next year after the Estonian government signed a deal with Luxembourg.
- ⇒ Estonia is planning to keep backup files of its vital information on servers in the duchy in order to guarantee country's digital continuity.

- **India 1st country to give to UN Tax Fund with \$100,000 contribution**

- ⇒ India has contributed \$100,000 to a UN fund to help developing countries actively participate in the discussion of tax issues, becoming the first country to make the contribution.
- ⇒ The UN Tax Trust Fund aims to support the work of the Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters (the UN Tax Committee). Voluntary contributions for the fund have been called for by the UN and the committee since its establishment in 2006.

- **NASA launches Rocket to produce Colourful Artificial Clouds**

- ⇒ The NASA has successfully launched Terrier-Improved Malamute sounding rocket that created colourful artificial clouds visible in the skies of the US. The rocket was launched from its Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia.



- ⇒ The artificial clouds are formed through the interaction of barium, strontium and cupric-oxide. The vapour tracers will help in understanding the movement of the particles in the ionosphere. It will help to learn more about the movement of the air currents at that altitude.

**Gk Byte – Ionosphere**

The ionosphere is called so because it is ionised by solar radiation. It plays an important part in atmospheric electricity and forms the inner edge of the magnetosphere. Ionosphere stretches from 50 to 1,000 km and typically overlaps both the exosphere and the thermosphere. It has practical importance because it influences, for example, radio propagation on the Earth. It is also responsible for auroras.

- **China launches its first X-ray space telescope.**

- ⇒ China launched its first x-ray telescope, a significant step in the country's race to develop a space program that can rival that of the US or Russia.
- ⇒ The Hard X-ray Modulation Telescope (HXMT) took off from China's Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center, the country's first satellite launch site, located in Inner Mongolia via a domestically-developed Long March-4B rocket.
- ⇒ Once in orbit, the telescope will be used to observe high-energy entities like black holes, pulsars and gamma-ray bursts in order to understand more about their energy sources.

- **World's first train that runs on virtual tracks in China**



- ⇒ China has unveiled the world's first 'railless' train - a train that runs on virtual tracks.
- ⇒ China is also testing a bus that can straddle the road, and allow traffic to pass under it.
- ⇒ New train is part of China's attempts to develop "intelligent rail express system". Instead of railway tracks, the train runs on rubber tyres.
- ⇒ The train can move at a maximum speed of 70 km/hour.

- **65 million people displaced in 2016: UN**

- ⇒ Record 65.6 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced from their homes owing to conflict or persecution by the end of 2016
- ⇒ It includes 22.5 million refugees, 40.3 million internally displaced people and 2.8 million asylum seekers.
- ⇒ For the third consecutive year, Turkey hosted the largest number of refugees worldwide, with 2.9 million people.
- ⇒ It was followed by Pakistan (1.4 million), Lebanon (1 million), Iran (979,400), Uganda (940,800), and Ethiopia (791,600)

- **Sharjah named World Book Capital.**

- ⇒ Sharjah has been named the 'World Book Capital' title for 2019 by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).
- ⇒ The honour is a recognition of the emirate's pioneering role in supporting and expanding the local and regional publishing industries.
- ⇒ The accolade is an important addition to Sharjah's existing portfolio of milestones like, Capital of Arab Culture (1998), Capital of Islamic Culture (2014), and Capital of Arab Tourism (2015).

- **World Bank approves \$500 million grant package for Afghanistan projects.**

- ⇒ The World Bank has approved financing worth more than \$500 million for Afghanistan to support a string of projects to boost the economy, help improve service delivery in five cities and support Afghan refugees sent back from Pakistan.
- ⇒ The bank said the six grants, including donor money, worth some \$520 million would help the Afghan government

- **European Commission's fine on Google.**

- ⇒ The long arm of the European Commission has once again struck the technology world with the imposition of a €2.42 billion (\$2.7 billion) fine on Google for the company's abuse of its market position.
- ⇒ The Commission found that Google abused its dominance in the Internet search market to give itself an unfair advantage in another market — comparison shopping services. Google's comparison shopping service disadvantaged competitors by placing them lower in its search results, systematically giving Google's own services higher placement and greater visibility, leading to more

clicks. Google, which is required to pay the fine within 90 days, may appeal the decision.

### **Gk byte - EU**

- ⇒ **European Union** is as an economic and political partnership consisting of 28 member countries. A law made in European Parliament is applicable and binding on all Member States directly. It is a single market allowing the free movement of goods and people. The union has its own currency, the Euro, which is being used by 19 member countries. The capital of European Union is located in Brussels, Belgium.
- ⇒ The **European Commission (EC)** is an institution of the European Union, responsible for proposing legislation, implementing decisions, upholding the EU treaties and managing the day-to-day business of the EU

- **India-Thailand military exercise begins in Himachal.**

- ⇒ A 14-day joint military training exercise Maitree 2017 between India and Thailand started in Himachal Pradesh.
- ⇒ The joint exercise of the Indian Army with the Royal Thailand Army commenced at Bakloh in Chamba district.
- ⇒ The previous edition of the exercise was held at Krabi in Thailand in 2016.

- **Prime Minister Modi's Israel Visit: Important Takeaways.**

- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi's three-day visit to Israel which is the first by an Indian prime minister to Israel resulted in the signing of seven agreements on areas including space, tech and agriculture. The other prominent takeaways of the visit are the following:

⇒ **OCI card**

Prime Minister Modi has assured faster facilitation of OCI cards for Jewish Citizens of Indian origin in Israel. He also assured that the OCI card will be given even to those people of Indian origin who had served in the Israeli government's compulsory army service.

⇒ **Air Connectivity**

The launch of a new Air India flight connecting India and Israel was announced, the flight is expected to connect Delhi/Mumbai with Tel Aviv.

⇒ **Israeli flower named after PM Modi**

As a special gesture, a new fast growing Israeli Crysanthumun flower was named "MODI" after Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during the Indian Premier's visit to the Danziger flower farm, which is one of the leading floriculture companies of Israel having founded in 1953.

⇒ **Strategic partnership**

India and Israel have announced that they have elevated their ties to a strategic partnership as India has identified Israel as a major development and technological partner. Both countries have also agreed to combat growing radicalization and terrorism and expand co-operation in cyber security.

⇒ **Indian Cultural Centre**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced the establishment of an Indian Cultural Centre in Israel to enhance people-to-people contacts between the two countries. Israel's has also voiced its strong support to promote the practice of yoga by designating June 21 as International Yoga Day.

⇒ **Israel India Innovation Initiative Fund (I4F)**

The \$40 million Israel India Innovation Initiative Fund has been launched as a five-year technology fund with an aim at growing the business relationship between both the countries. The similar type of fund had boosted Israel's ties with that of the US in the past 40 years.

⇒ India and Israel have signed **Total 7 agreements** on areas including space, tech and agriculture.

- MoU for setting up of India-Israel Industrial R&D & Technological Innovation Fund (I4F)
- MoU for conservation of water in India
- MoU on State Water Utility Reform in India
- India-Israel Development Cooperation- 3-year work program in Agriculture (2018-2020)
- Plan of cooperation regarding cooperation in atomic clocks
- MoU regarding cooperation in GEO-LEO optical link.

MoU regarding cooperation in electric propulsion for small satellites.

- **Italy passes bill to make torture illegal**

- ⇒ Italian lawmakers have finally passed a bill making torture a crime under national law, after years of parliamentary back-and-forth.
- ⇒ Rome signed the UN Convention Against Torture in 1984 but had never transferred it into national legislation.

- **UNESCO puts city of Hebron on its heritage in danger list.**

- ⇒ UNESCO has declared the Old City of Hebron an endangered world heritage site, sparking outrage from Israel in a new spat at the international body.
- ⇒ Meeting in Poland, the UN's cultural arm voted 12 to three — with six abstentions — to give heritage status to Hebron's Old City in the occupied West Bank, which is home to more than 200,000 Palestinians and a few hundred Israeli settlers.

- **122 Countries adopts historic global treaty to ban Nuclear Weapons.**

- ⇒ The United Nations has adopted a historic global treaty banning nuclear weapons. The treaty was adopted by a vote of 122 members in favour. The Netherlands was the only country who voted against the treaty. Singapore abstained from voting.

⇒ The nine nuclear powers, namely, the United States, Russia, Britain, China, France, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel neither took part in the negotiations nor cast their vote. Even Japan the sole sufferer of atomic attack refrained from taking part in the negotiations. Most of the NATO countries too boycotted the negotiations. The nuclear powers view the treaty as unrealistic and argue that it will not have any impact on reducing the global stockpile of 15000 atomic weapons.

- **India ranked 23rd in second Global Cyber security Index (GCI)**

⇒ India has been ranked 23rd out of 165 nations in the second Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) that measures the commitment of nations across the world to cyber security. The Index has been released by the UN telecommunications agency International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

⇒ India has been listed in the “maturing category” of the index with a score of 0.683. Around 77 countries have been placed in the maturing category as they have developed complex commitments to cyber security and engage in cybersecurity programmes and initiatives. Singapore has topped the index with a score of 0.925. Singapore is followed by United States (2nd), Malaysia (3rd), Oman (4th), Estonia (5th), Mauritius (6th), Australia (7th), Georgia (8th), France (9th), Canada (10th) and Russia (11th). China has been placed at 34th.

**Gk byte-ITU (International Telecommunication Unit)**

⇒ ITU is the United Nations specialised agency for information and communication technologies (ICTs). ITU has 193 countries as its members and also 800 private-sector entities and academic institutions. ITU is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. ITU is responsible for allocating global radio spectrum and satellite orbits. It also develops the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies to seamlessly interconnect. It also strives to improve access to

ICTs among the underserved communities worldwide.

- **India and Bangladesh have decided to construct bridge along Mizoram Border**

- ⇒ India and Bangladesh have decided to construct a bridge over Mizoram's Khawthlangtuipui river (also known as Karnaphuli river) to facilitate trade and to improve communication between the two countries.
- ⇒ The decision was taken after officials from both the side met at Tlabung town in Mamit district of Mizoram.
- ⇒ The Mamit district is situated adjacent to Khagrachari district of Southeast Bangladesh. The proposed bridge is expected to be constructed as closer as possible to the nearest custom station located in the Bangladesh side. The proposed bridge is expected to serve as an important link between India and Bangladesh. It would improve road connectivity between the two regions. The proposed bridge is also expected to strengthen the ties between the people of the two countries.

- **2017 G20 Hamburg summit.**

- ⇒ The **2017 G20 Hamburg summit** was the twelfth meeting of the Group of Twenty (G20), which was held on 7–8 July 2017, at Hamburg Messe, in the city of Hamburg, Germany



## **AGREED**

- ⇒ To support free trade and open markets
- ⇒ Countries can use "legitimate trade defense instruments" to protect their companies if trade partners are taking advantage of them.
- ⇒ To fight terrorism by, among other things, pushing internet providers to detect and remove extremist content.
- ⇒ To make a renewed push to reduce excess steel production capacity — primarily in China.

## **COULDN'T AGREE**

- ⇒ To unanimously support the Paris agreement on climate change
- ⇒ To pursue United Nations sanctions such as asset freezes and travel bans against criminals smuggling people from Africa and the Middle East to Europe.

### **● SBI in Nepal launches digital village initiative.**

- ⇒ The State Bank of India has launched a digital village initiative in Nepal by installing a cash recycling centre.
- ⇒ The digital village initiative has been launched in Jarisingpouwa in Shankarapur Rural Municipality, 25 km east from Kathmandu.
- ⇒ The bank has also distributed 430 debit cards to the people of the locality, which is considered remote area due to the hill side location though it is not very far from Kathmandu city.
- ⇒ Solar street lights were also installed in the area. The SBI in Nepal also celebrated its 25 years of establishment on July 7

- **Sikkim row: China issues safety advisory for its citizens in India**

- ⇒ China has issued a safety advisory for its citizens staying in or travelling to India, in the backdrop of the ongoing standoff between the troops of the countries near the Sikkim sector.
- ⇒ The advisory has asked Chinese citizens to pay attention to the security situation in India as well as to personal security.
- ⇒ Border troops from China and India have been locked in the standoff in the Doklam area near the Bhutan tri-junction for the past three weeks after a Chinese Army's construction party attempted to build a road.

- **Iraq PM announces 'victory' over Islamic State.**

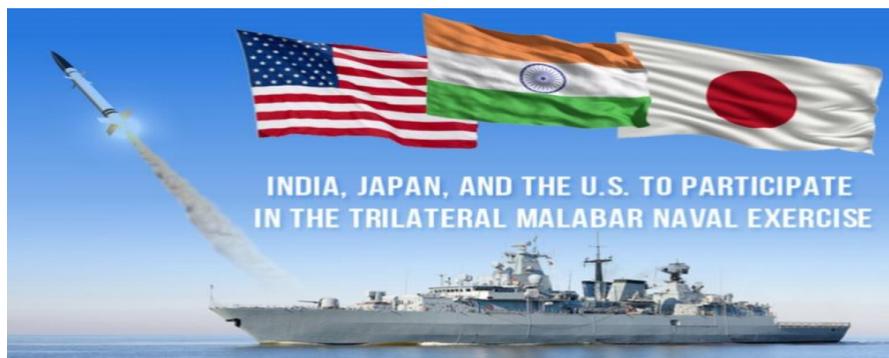
- ⇒ Iraq's prime minister celebrated with troops on Sunday after they drove Islamic State militants from some of their last strongholds in Mosul.
- ⇒ Iraq PM Haider al-Abadi arrived in Mosul to declare victory over IS in the more than eight-month old operation to drive the militants out.
- ⇒ The militants captured Mosul, Iraq's second largest city, in a matter of days in the summer of 2014.
- ⇒ IS still hold several smaller towns and villages across Iraq and Syria.

- **Japan's men-only island gets UNESCO heritage tag**



- ⇒ A men-only island in Japan where women are banned and male visitors must bathe naked in the sea before visiting its shrine, has been declared a UNESCO World Heritage site.
- ⇒ The tiny landmass of Okinoshima is permanently manned by a Shinto priest who prays to the island's goddess, in a tradition that has been kept up for centuries.
- ⇒ Limited numbers are permitted to land on the island in the Sea of Japan (East Sea)
- ⇒ UNESCO's heritage committee considered 33 sites for the prestigious status at its annual gathering in Poland.
- ⇒ UNESCO's World Heritage list includes over 1,000 sites, monuments and natural phenomena that are of "outstanding universal value" to humankind.
- ⇒ It includes treasures such as Australia's Great Barrier Reef, the Taj Mahal in India, and the rock-carved city of Petra in modern-day Jordan

- **MALABAR 2017 Trilateral Naval Exercise**



- ⇒ India, Japan and United States (US) navies have kicked off 2017 MALABAR trilateral naval Exercise near Chennai in Bay of Bengal. This year it is the 21st edition of the naval exercise.

- ⇒ In this edition of the exercise, total of around 15 warships, two submarines and scores of fighter jets, surveillance aircraft and helicopters from three navies will take part.
- ⇒ Indian Navy, aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya is participating for the first time.
- Malabar Exercise began as an Indo-US bilateral naval drill in 1992. Since then it is held annually. Japan had formally joined the exercise as a permanent participant in 2015. The primary aim of this multilateral exercise is to increase interoperability amongst the three navies and develop common understanding of procedures for Maritime Security Operations and deepen defence relations.
- **NASA Jupiter Probe to Fly Over Great Red Spot.**
  - ⇒ NASA's Juno spacecraft is about to get the best-ever look at Jupiter's famous Great Red Spot. Jupiter's mysterious Great Red Spot is probably the best-known feature of Jupiter.
  - ⇒ It became first space probe to complete flyby of Jupiter's Great Red Spot.
  - ⇒ The Great Red Spot on Jupiter is a massive storm (cyclone) measuring about 16,000 km in diameter. It is largest known storm in the solar system.

**Gk byte - Juno Space craft**



⇒ NASA had launched unmanned spacecraft Juno on August 5, 2011 from Cape Canaveral, Florida as part of its New Frontiers program. It has been orbiting Jupiter, solar system's largest planet from July 2016. The spacecraft has been named from Greco-Roman mythology. It is orbiting Jupiter from pole to pole, 5,000 kilometers above planet's cloud tops. It has mission life istill February 2018.

- **22<sup>nd</sup> World Petroleum Congress held at Istanbul.**

⇒ Minister of State (I/C) for Petroleum and Natural Gas, Shri Dharmendra Pradhan chaired a Ministerial Session on the subject "Current Economic Strategies in Indian Oil & Gas Sector".

⇒ He also chaired a Plenary Session on 'Supply and Demand Challenges for Oil, Gas and Products' at the 22nd World Petroleum Congress at Istanbul, Turkey.

⇒ The Minister launched an event on Hydrocarbon Exploration & Licensing Policy (HELP) as a part of process of promoting the upcoming oil & gas bidding rounds in India.

- **Vietnam renews Indian Oil Deal in South China Sea.**

⇒ Vietnam has granted ONGC Videsh a two-year extension to explore oil block 128 in the South China Sea. The permission was first granted in the year 2006 which is due to expire in mid-June.

⇒ The part of the oil block 128 is in the U-shaped 'nine-dash line,' the area which is claimed by China. The area is also a route for more than \$5 trillion in trade every year and is also claimed by the Philippines, Brunei, Malaysia and Taiwan.

- **Liu Xiaobo, Chinese dissident who won Nobel prize, dies.**

- ⇒ Nobel Peace Prize laureate Liu Xiaobo, China's most prominent political prisoner, died on Thursday at a hospital in the country's northeast, officials said. He was 61.
- ⇒ Chinese literary critic, writer, human rights activist who called for political reforms and end of communist single-party rule. He is also known for his role in 1989 Tiananmen Square protests in Beijing.
- ⇒ Liu is the third person to have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize while in prison or detention, after Germany's Carl von Ossietzky (1935) and Burma's Aung San Suu Kyi (1991).

- **India ranks 116 out of 157 nations on Sustainable Development Goal**

- ⇒ India ranked low 116 out of 157 nations on the 2017 Sustainable Development Goal (**SDG**) Index and Dashboard report released by Sustainable Development Solutions Network (**SDSN**) and Bertelsmann Stiftung.
- ⇒ The Top Countries in the Index are 2017 SDG Index were **Sweden** (1st), **Denmark** (2nd), **Finland** (3rd), **Norway** (4th), **Czech Republic** (5th).
- ⇒ The SDGs are the set of 17 non-binding goals featuring 169 targets to be implemented from 2015 to 2030. They were adopted by member countries of United Nations at the 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit held in New York.

- **India contributes additional \$1 million to India-UN Development Partnership Fund.**

- ⇒ India has contributed an additional \$1 million to India-UN Development Partnership Fund launched to support sustainable development projects across the developing world.
- ⇒ Earlier, India had made an initial contribution of \$1 million when the fund was created. The amount was allocated for the implementation of a project benefiting seven Small Island Developing States in South Pacific Ocean.

- **India, European Union establishes Investment Facilitation Mechanism.**

- ⇒ India and European Union (EU) have established Investment Facilitation Mechanism (IFM) for EU Investments in India. The mechanism will allow for a close coordination between EU and India with an aim to promote and facilitate EU investment in India.
- ⇒ The key objective of IFM is to pave the way for identifying and solving problems faced by EU companies and investors with regard to their operations in India. It will cover both new investors as well as those already present in India.

- **India tops global index of countries with most confidence in their government: OCED Report**

- ⇒ India has topped in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's (OECD) Government at a Glance 2017 report. It states that Narendra Modi led NDA coalition has secured 73% trust of people, highest in the world. OECD's Government at a Glance report presents an index of countries that trust their governments the most. It determines government's trust levels by whether or not people consider their government stable and reliable, if it's able to protect its citizens from risk and whether it can effectively deliver public services.

- **India launches solar project in Egypt**

- ⇒ India has launched a solar project with state-of-the-art technology to electrify a remote village in Egypt.
  - ⇒ The Solar Electrification Project, an off-grid system that is ideal for remote locations, has been launched at Agaween village in the Western Desert in Matrouh Governorate, close to the Libyan border.
  - ⇒ India provided all the solar panels and sub-systems, machinery, equipment and technical support, as well as training for technicians, while the Egyptian government provided the location for implementation of the project.
- **Facebook declines Pak's request over cell phone number link-up**
    - ⇒ Facebook has declined Pakistan government's request to link all accounts with the users' mobile phone numbers.
    - ⇒ Pakistan had suggested that Facebook accounts be linked with users' mobile phone numbers. However, the management of Facebook believed it was more feasible to sync accounts with email addresses.
    - ⇒ The purpose of the request - was to help the government deal with fake accounts, which were often used to spread hate material in cyberspace.
    - ⇒ This was the first time that a senior member of Facebook's management dealing with global public policy had visited Pakistan to discuss measures for addressing the issue of

misuse of social media platforms especially Facebook which has over 33 million users in the country at the moment.

- **Indonesia renames part of South China Sea.**

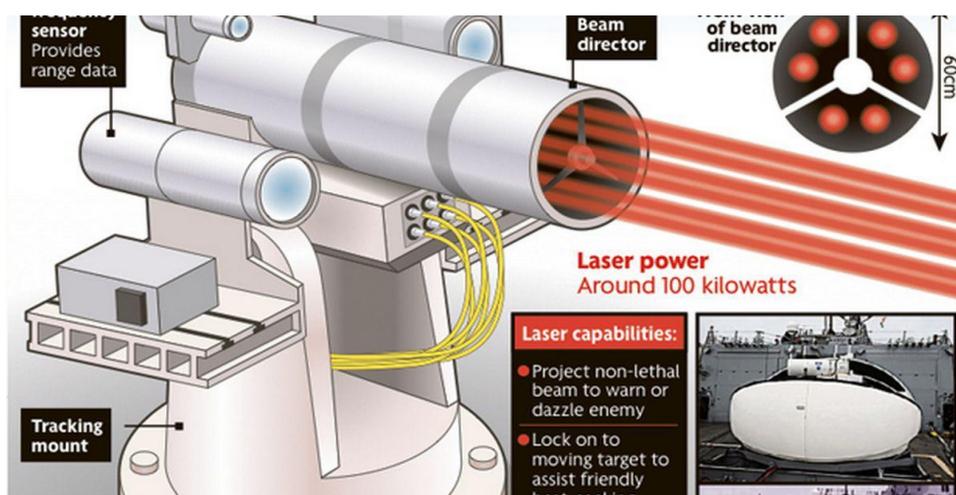
⇒ Indonesia has named waters in its exclusive economic zone that overlap with China's expansive claim to the South China Sea as the North Natuna Sea.

⇒ China claims most of the South China Sea, putting it in dispute with many southeast Asian nations, and has carried out extensive land reclamation.

⇒ Philippines also has claims to the South China Sea.

⇒ Iceland appraised world's most peaceful nation, India 137th  
Iceland has been named the world's most peaceful nation, besting the Global Peace Index for the tenth back to back year. New Zealand and Portugal have finished the top three, while Syria has been named the slightest peaceful.

- **US Navy tests world's first Laser Weapons System**



⇒ United States Navy successfully tested the world's first-ever active Laser Weapons System (**LaWS**). In the test, the LaWS deployed aboard the USS Ponce amphibious transport ship was

able to destroy a drone in flight and moving targets on the Persian Gulf. USS Ponce is first ship in the world to be deployed with such advanced weapons system

⇒ LaWS operates within an invisible part of the electromagnetic spectrum. It is absolutely silent and incredibly effective.

## • Nelson Mandela International Day – 18 July

⇒ Nelson Mandela International Day (or Mandela Day) is celebrated every year on 18th July to honour the former Nobel Prize winner.

⇒ The day is commemorated with the slogan **Take Action! Inspire Change.**

⇒ The United Nations officially declared this day in November 2009. Mandela was former President of South Africa.

⇒ Nelson Mandela was awarded India's highest civilian honour, the ***Bharat Ratna in 1990*** for his role in the anti-apartheid movement. Apart from Pakistan national Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, he is the only non-Indian to have received the award.

## • Australia joins International Solar Alliance

⇒ Australia became the 35th country to join the International Solar Alliance, an initiative launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in November 2015 in Paris.

⇒ It is co-led by India and France.

⇒ The aim was to support developing countries to boost their solar production capacity.

⇒ The solar alliance, whose head office is in India, has grown stronger in the past two years with more countries joining the group and signing the agreement.

- **Google launches job applicant management tool 'Hire'**

- ⇒ Google officially released a new tool named 'Hire' to help small and medium sized businesses recruit talent.
- ⇒ The service is built on G Suite and will allow employers to track candidates' contact information, resume details and calendar invites.
- ⇒ It will allow business partners to share feedback within the candidate's profile.

- **IMF approves conditional \$1.8 billion loan to Greece.**

- ⇒ The International Monetary Fund's board approved a \$1.8 billion loan to Greece but will only release the money if the country gets debt relief from its European creditors.
- ⇒ The IMF has praised Greece for taking steps to reduce its budget deficits, including expanding its tax base and cutting spending on pensions. But the lending agency is pressuring Greece's eurozone lenders to provide enough relief to ensure the battered country can pay its bills.
- ⇒ If an agreement on debt relief is reached, the IMF will join the eurozone lenders in an ongoing bailout.

- **UNESCO has named Sharjah as the World Book Capital for 2019.**

- ⇒ Sharjah was chosen for its efforts to make books accessible to its entire population. Salient Highlights Sharjah was selected to underline the efforts taken by it to make books accessible for reading to as many people as possible, especially the marginalised populations.

- ⇒ It has followed an innovative and inclusive community-focused activity programme to engage people, in particular, the very large migrant population. Sharjah is the 19th city to be named as World Book Capital by the UNESCO.
- ⇒ Sharjah has become the first among the Gulf Cooperation Council and third in the Arab world and the Middle East to receive this prestigious recognition.

- **Spanish scientists develop 'anti-Zika drug'**

- ⇒ Researchers from a southeastern Spanish university announced the discovery of a molecule that could be used as a potential drug to fight the effects of a Zika virus infection.
- ⇒ Scientists belonging to its Bioinformatics and High-Performance Computing research group had found that a compound previously used as an antibiotic countered the symptoms of the mosquito-borne disease.
- ⇒ The molecular structure of the proteins involved in the Zika virus' replication process was first described only a year ago.

- **Iran and Iraq sign accord to boost military cooperation**

- ⇒ Iran and Iraq signed an agreement on Sunday to step up military cooperation and the fight against terrorism and extremism.
- ⇒ Iran-Iraq ties have improved since Iran's long-time enemy Saddam Hussein was toppled in 2003 and an Iraqi government led by Shia Muslims came to power. Iran is mostly a Shia nation.
- ⇒ Tensions between Iran and the United States have heightened since the election of Mr. Trump, who has often accused Tehran of backing militant groups and destabilising the region.

- **India to host 2017 Global Conference on Cyber Space.**

⇒ India will host Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS), the world's largest conference on cyber space and related issues in New Delhi in November 2017.

⇒ The theme for the GCCS 2017 is 'Cyber4All: An Inclusive, Sustainable, Developmental, Safe and Secure Cyberspace'.

⇒ This is for the first time GCCS is taking place outside Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) nations.

⇒ It is a prestigious International Conference that aims at encouraging dialogue among stakeholders of cyberspace. It was incepted in 2011 in London.

- **India, Bangladesh signed agreement to connect both countries by waterways**



⇒ India and Bangladesh signed an agreement to connect both the countries by waterways.

- ⇒ The waterways will facilitate movement of passengers and goods between India's northeast and West Bengal with Bangladesh.
- ⇒ The Union Minister of State for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Mansukh Mandaviya informed that infrastructure for the services would be set up along the major rivers in Bangladesh, West Bengal and the Brahmaputra in Assam.

- **India third largest terror target after Iraq and Afghanistan: US report.**

- ⇒ India has displaced Pakistan on a list of countries facing terror attacks in 2016, with higher fatalities and injuries than its restive neighbour, according to data compiled by the US state department.
- ⇒ Out of 11,072 terror attacks in 2016 worldwide, India bore the brunt of 927, 16% more than 2015 (798).
- ⇒ More than half of the terror attacks in India in 2016 took place in four states – J&K, Chhattisgarh, Manipur and Jharkhand. Iraq is on the top of the list.

- **World's oldest emoji discovered' on pottery**



- ⇒ Archaeologists have discovered what may be the world's oldest emoji — a smiley face painted on an 3,700-year-old piece of pottery.
- ⇒ During an excavation at an ancient city whose remains are in modern-day Turkey near the Syrian border, archaeologists found the ancient pitcher with three visible paint strokes on it — two dots for eyes and a curve for a smile.

- **Money Parked by Indians in Swiss banks hit record low.**

- ⇒ According to the data released by Zurich-based SNB, money parked by Indians in Swiss banks have nearly halved to 676 Swiss francs (about Rs. 4,500 crore) in 2016. The data release comes ahead of a new framework for the automatic exchange of information between Switzerland and India to check the menace of black money. SNB (Swiss National Bank) is Switzerland's central banking authority.
- ⇒ During 2016, the total money held by Indians fell by 45 % to stand at CHF 675.75 million. This is the biggest ever yearly decline in such funds.

- **World's first floating wind farm starts in Scotland**



⇒ The world's first full-scale floating wind farm started to take shape off the north-east coast of **Scotland**. The Peterhead wind farm is known as **Hywind**, is a trial.

⇒ It is a tech development project to ensure it's working in open sea conditions.

⇒ The Hywind project is being run in collaboration with the Abu Dhabi firm Masdar.

- **Bolivia declared total independence from World Bank & IMF**

⇒ Bolivia's President Evo Morales has been highlighting his government's independence from international money lending organizations and their detrimental impact the nation.

⇒ Some of Bolivia's largest resistance struggles in the last 60 years have targeted the economic policies carried out by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.

- **BRICS Youth Forum opens in Beijing**

⇒ **The 2017 BRICS Youth Forum** opened in Beijing, China to discuss the development of the youth in the countries.

⇒ The theme of the three-day forum is '**Enhance BRICS Partnership, Promote Youth Development**'.

⇒ The five BRICS countries are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa first came up with the idea of establishing a dialogue mechanism for BRICS youth in 2014 during a meeting between BRICS leaders in South Africa.

- **IMF retains India 2017 GDP growth forecast at 7.2%.**

⇒ The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its July World Economic Outlook (WEO) Update has retained India's projected GDP growth rate at 7.2% for 2017-18, slightly up from 7.1% in the previous year. However, update projects that India's growth would accelerate to 7.7% in 2018-19.

⇒ India's economic growth slowed down to 7.1% in 2016-17, sharply lower than 8% in 2015-16 due to the effect of demonetisation

⇒ The global economic growth rate will be 3.5% in 2017 and 3.6% in 2018. The economic activity in both advanced and emerging and developing economies is accelerating.

- **Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif resigns over Panama Papers verdict.**

⇒ **Nawaz Sharif** resigned as Prime Minister of Pakistan following a decision by the country's Supreme Court to disqualify him from office.

⇒ He is only the second after former prime minister Yousaf Raza Gilani to be dismissed by the Supreme Court.

⇒ Due to a probe into his family's wealth following the 2015 Panama Papers Mr Sharif's children to offshore companies.

- **Iran successfully launches satellite-carrying rocket.**

⇒ Iran successfully launched a satellite-carrying rocket **Simorgh** into space recently.

⇒ The launch of a "Simorgh" rocket that is capable of carrying a satellite weighing 250 kilograms (550 pounds). "Simorgh" means "phoenix" in Farsi.

⇒ It took place at the Imam Khomeini National Space Station in Semnan, 220 kilometres (138 miles) east of Tehran.

- **Amazon's Jeff Bezos briefly overtakes Gates to become world's richest.**



⇒ Amazon founder **Jeff Bezos** became the world's richest person, as a jump in the share price of the US tech giant enabled him to overtake Microsoft founder Bill Gates.

⇒ He is chairman and chief executive of the Seattle-based company, was worth almost \$91billions after Amazon's share price rose more than 1 per cent in morning trading in New York.

⇒ According to Forbes, Gates is the richest person in the magazine's annual rankings in March for the past four years and for 18 of the past 22 years.

- **Shahid Khaqan Abbasi declared as interim Pakistan Prime Minister**

⇒ Pakistan Muslim League selected Minister for Petroleum and Natural Resources, Shahid Khaqan Abbasi to be the **interim Prime Minister of Pakistan**.

⇒ Nawaz Sharif recently resigned as Pakistan Prime Minister after the Supreme Court disqualified him from holding public office.

- **Sri Lanka and China sign \$1.1 billion Hambantota Port Deal.**

⇒ Sri Lanka signed \$1.1 billion deal to the United States of America to sell a 70% stake in the strategic Hambantota deep-sea port to China.



⇒ It is a deep-water port in the southern tip of Sri Lanka.

⇒ The deal was signed between **Sri Lanka Ports Authority (SLPA)** and China Merchants Port Holding Company (CMPort)

⇒ These sea lines run through several major maritime choke points such as the Strait of Mandeb, Strait of Hormuz, Strait of Malacca and the Lombok Strait as well as other strategic maritime centres in Pakistan, Maldives, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Somalia.



## 2. ART & CULTURE



- **President approves ordinance allowing Kambala in Karnataka.**
  - ⇒ President Pranab Mukherjee has approved the promulgation of The Prevention of cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Ordinance, 2017 by the Governor of Karnataka in pursuance of Article 213 of Constitution. The promulgated ordinance legalises Kambala, bullock cart races and bull runs as traditional sports involving animals and exempt them from The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.
  - ⇒ Kambala is the traditional slush track buffalo race that is held annually in coastal districts of Karnataka to entertain rural people of the area. Slushy/marshy paddy field track is used for Kambala. The sports season generally starts in November and lasts till March. The contest generally takes place between two pairs of buffaloes, each pair race in two separate wet rice fields tracks, controlled by a whip-lashing farmer. In the traditional form of Kambala, buffalo racing was non-competitive and buffalo pairs ran one by one in paddy fields. Besides, there was also ritualistic approach as some agriculturists race their buffaloes as a means to thank the god for protecting their animals from disease. But in recent times, Kambala has become an organised rural sport.

- **Declaration of Historic City of Ahmadabad as a UNESCO's World Heritage Property.**

- ⇒ India now has overall 36 World Heritage Inscriptions with 28 Cultural, 07 Natural and 01 Mixed site.
- ⇒ It is under the dynamic and visionary leadership of the Prime Minister of India that India has been successful in securing the nomination of the "Historic City of Ahmadabad" on UNESCO's World Heritage list on 8th July, 2017 during the 41st Session of World Heritage Committee. This makes the walled city of Ahmedabad the first city in India and the third in Asia to be inscribed to the World Heritage List. In the past 3 years alone, India has managed to put five built heritage sites on the world heritage list of UNESCO.
- ⇒ India now has overall 36 World Heritage Inscriptions with 28 Cultural, 07 Natural and 01 Mixed site. While India stands second largest in number after China in terms of number of world heritage properties in ASPAC (Asia and Pacific) region,
- ⇒ It is overall seventh in the world.
- ⇒ Founded in 15th century, the walled city of Ahmadabad, on the eastern bank of the Sabarmati river, presents a rich architectural heritage.

### **3. GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENT**



- **India emerging as front-runner in fight against climate change: World Bank.**

- ⇒ India is emerging as a front runner in the global fight against climate change, the World Bank has said, noting that the solar power is gradually displacing coal as an energy source in the Country.
- ⇒ With nearly 300 days of sunshine every year, India has among the best conditions in the world to capture and use solar energy.
- ⇒ Indian government is setting ambitious targets that include 160 gigawatts (GW) of wind and solar by 2022, the World Bank said that not only will this help hundreds of million people light their homes it will also enable children to study at night, provide families with refrigerators to preserve their food or TVs to entertain themselves.

- **Tax department launches 'Aaykar Setu' for taxpayers**

- ⇒ The Income Tax Department has introduced a mobile app, named 'Aaykar Setu' which aims to facilitate taxpayers with solutions to a range of tax-related issues. The app which was formally launched

by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, will also let people link their PAN with the 12-digit unique identification number, Aadhaar.

- ⇒ The app is currently available on the Android platform but the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) plans to make it available as a desktop service as well.
- ⇒ It provides ease of use of all the services related to tax payment including tax payment, tax calculation. Also if a taxpayer has a problem, this app will help in lodging his grievance in the e-Nivaran module of the CBDT.
- ⇒ The app will also have a section as 'tax gyaan' which will be a multiple choice question web-based game to provide knowledge to the youth accessible from mobile as well as desktop.

- **Dumping in Ganga will be fined from now.**

- ⇒ Penalty of **Rs 50, 000** will be imposed on those dumping waste in the stretch between Haridwar and Unnao of River Ganga, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) said.
- ⇒ No waste dumping should be allowed within 500 meters from the edge of the Ganga. Also, 100 meters from the edge of the river should be declared a “no-development zone.
- ⇒ The Tribunal directed the concerned authorities to complete the setting up of a sewage treatment plant and cleaning of drains within two years.

- **Country's first biomethane bus developed by Tata Motors.**



- ⇒ Tata Motors has developed country's first Bio-CNG (bio-methane) bus which was unveiled recently at a bio-energy programme, 'Urja Utsav'.
- ⇒ At the Urja Utsav held in Pune's Shiv Chhatrapati Sports Complex, Tata displayed three engines, along with the lead mode.

- **Environment Ministry approves Projects in 3 States under NAFCC**

- ⇒ The Union Environment Ministry approved three projects for climate change adaptation in three states viz. Rajasthan, Gujarat and Sikkim for funding under the National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC).

- 1 Sikkim:** The investment aims to address the issue of water security which are directly identified as climate resilience building interventions under the SAPCC.
- 2 Rajasthan:** It aims to bolster water security in villages under the Mukhya Mantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan. It aims to enhance the adaptive capacity of villages by making them self-reliant in terms of water requirement.

**3 Gujarat:** The project seeks enhance the adaptive capacity of natural resource dependent communities to climate change in targeted villages of Kachchh district.

- **Sagar vani Launched by Union Ministry of Earth Science.**

⇒ Union Ministry of Earth Science has launched Sagar Vani, an integrated information dissemination system

**Sagar Vani**  
**Integrated Information Dissemination System  
For Ocean Information Services**

- A software platform where various dissemination modes will be integrated on a single central server
- Services will be disseminated in local languages using advanced artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities
- Uses power of television and cable network mediums for topical and alert dissemination services
- Will serve the coastal community, with advisories and alerts towards their livelihood as well as their safety needs at sea

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⇒ It includes Multi Lingual SMS, Voice Call/Audio Advisory, Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.), Mobile Apps (User/Admin modules), email, Fax, GTS, Digital Display Boards, IVRS, Radio/Television broadcast units, Cloud Channels, etc.

⇒ The system also has facility to provide access to various stakeholders (State Fishery Departments, Disaster Management Authorities, NGOs etc.) so that they will be able to further disseminate these ocean information and alerts to the user community. This 'Sagar Vani' system compares with the most advanced countries' services in terms of speed of delivery, diverseness of services and omni channel capabilities. It can disseminate services in local languages using advanced artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning capabilities

- **Centre plans to remote-map canals**

- ⇒ The Centre plans to link all canals via a geographical information system that would allow them to be remotely mapped.
- ⇒ The Central government has earmarked Rs. 77,595 crore to states to complete a range of irrigation projects that have been stuck for decades owing to lack of funds, with the water ministry committed to ensuring that 99 such projects would be completed by 2020. Twenty-three would be completed by 2016-17 and 31 by 2017-18. One of the major reasons for the projects to remain incomplete was inadequate provision of funds by the concerned State governments.
- ⇒ Some of these canals could be hundreds of kilometres long and some much smaller.

- **Eight national waterways will be unveiled soon**

- ⇒ As many as 32 new national waterways in the country have been considered technically feasible for development of shipping and navigation.
- ⇒ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will soon inaugurate eight national waterways (NW).
- ⇒ Out of 106 newly—declared national waterways (NWs), 32 NWs are considered technically feasible so far. Out of these 32 NWs, the development of seven NWs has been approved.

## 4. ECONOMY



- **India's Largest Municipal Bond Programme Launched**

- ⇒ The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) became the first municipal corporation in the country to tap money through municipal bonds in 14 years.
- ⇒ The AA+ rated PMC's municipal bonds raised Rs 200 crore at 7.59 per cent rate at the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE). This is the first-ever mobilisation of debt capital by a municipal corporation on the BSE BOND platform.
- ⇒ This will also be the first issuance since the publication of 'Issue and Listing of Debt Securities by Municipalities Regulations, 2015' by Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI). The 10-year bonds will be used by the Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) for a Rs 2,300-crore water project. The scheme is aimed at providing water 24x7 for all residents of Pune.

- **NMCE, ICEX to merge to create India's third biggest commodity exchange.**

- ⇒ National Multi Commodity Exchange (NMCE), India's first demutualised online national multi-commodities exchange will merge with Indian Commodity Exchange (ICEX). The merged entity will create India's third biggest commodity exchange. The

largest commodity exchange by volume is the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) followed by National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX).

- ⇒ The new exchange will offer a wide range of contracts, including bullion, oil, rubber, and other agri-commodities. It will also offer the world's first diamond futures contract, which has already received in-principle approval from the market regulator SEBI.

### **Gk byte – Commodity Trading**

- ⇒ Commodity trading is an exchange where various commodities and derivatives products are traded. Most commodity markets trade in agricultural products and other raw materials and contracts based on them. These contracts can include spot prices, futures, forwards and options on futures.
- ⇒ At present, India has six national commodity exchanges namely, Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX), National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX), National Multi-Commodity Exchange (NMCE) and Indian Commodity Exchange (ICEX), ACE Derivatives exchange (ACE) and Universal commodity exchange (UCX) apart from numerous regional exchanges. Government had established regulatory body is Forward Markets Commission (FMC) in 1953.
  - ⇒ It was merged with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) in September 2015.

### **• Karnataka launches 'Elevate 100' scheme for start-ups**

- ⇒ The Karnataka government has launched the 'Elevate 100' scheme to identify and nurture innovative start-ups.
- ⇒ The aim is to identify 100 most innovative start-ups in the state to elevate them to the next level of success.

⇒ The Elevate scheme is the brainchild of the start-up cell, Karnataka Biotechnology and Information Technology Services (KBITS).

- **The new hydrocarbon policy opens more exploration**

⇒ The recently unveiled Open Acreage Licensing Policy and the National Data Repository together are a significant and welcome step towards opening up the hydrocarbon exploration and production industry in India. By placing greater discretion in the hands of explorers and operators, the Licensing Policy attempts to address a major drawback in the New Exploration Licensing Policy, which forced energy explorers to bid for blocks chosen by the government.

⇒ Besides allowing potential investors to make informed decisions, this will open up a new sector in India. There are a number of companies around the world that make it their business to simply explore hydrocarbon basins and sell the information they gather. The new initiative seeks to incentivise such prospectors.

⇒ Concern is whether India can attract enough investment to meet the government's objective of reducing oil imports by 10% by 2022, especially given the past experience investors have had with large projects such as KG-D6. There are after all proven reserves in other parts of the world, such as the Gulf of Mexico, that could still keep investor appetite for Indian acreage weak.

- **Scheme for IPR Awareness has launched.**

⇒ Taking forward the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy 2016, a 'Scheme for IPR Awareness – Creative India; Innovative India' has been launched by Cell for IPR

Promotion and Management (CIPAM) under the aegis of the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion.

⇒ The Scheme aims at raising IPR awareness amongst students, youth, authors, artists, budding inventors and professionals to inspire them to create, innovate and protect their creations and inventions across India including Tier 1, Tier 2, Tier 3 cities as well as rural areas in the next 3 years.

- **Nalco, IDCO to set up Aluminium Park in Odisha.**

⇒ Nalco, in collaboration with Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IDCO), is setting up the first of its kind Aluminium Park in Angul, Odisha.

⇒ Investment to the tune of Rs 180 crore will be made on infrastructure of the project which is expected to generate 15,000 jobs.

⇒ Odisha currently contributes about 54 per cent of India's total aluminium smelting capacity.

- **Govt to introduce new product pricing rules that bar sales over MRP.**



- ⇒ From January 1, 2018, the price of a packaged goods would no longer depend on where you bought it – be it a local kirana store, a mall, a five-star hotel or an airport. The Consumer Affairs ministry has amended the rules that govern packaged commodities to this effect.
- ⇒ As per the amended Legal Metrology rules for packaged commodities that will come into effect from the next calendar year, the Centre has clarified that the retail sale price shall be the maximum retail price (MRP) inclusive of all taxes, with the provision to round off the price to the nearest rupee or 50 paise.
- ⇒ The new norms also require sellers to enhance the size of letters and numerals for making declarations about the packaged goods, such as their “Best before date, month and year” to indicate their shelf life, for making it easier for consumers.
- ⇒ Interestingly, for e-commerce marketplaces, declaring the month and year in which a commodity is manufactured or packed is not mandatory and if they fulfill certain conditions, they will not be held

liable for whether the declarations were correct or incorrect. er for consumers to read vital information.

- **States issue Rs 2.32 lakh cr bonds under UDAY**



- ⇒ States have issued bonds worth Rs 2.32 lakh crore under the UDAY scheme meant for revival of discoms.
- ⇒ The power ministry had launched UDAY scheme for revival of the debt ridden power distribution utilities in November, 2015.
- ⇒ As per the scheme, total liability opted for restructuring by the states through issuance of bonds was Rs 2.69 lakh crore, covering 15 states.
- ⇒ States have issued bonds worth Rs 2.32 lakh crore covering 86 per cent of the debt (to be taken over by them) so far under UDAY scheme, a latest review of power ministry stated.
- ⇒ As on September 30, 2015, total debt of all state owned DISCOMs was Rs 3.95 lakh crore. The 26 states and 1 UT which have joined the UDAY scheme account for total outstanding debt of Rs 3.82 lakh crore. Thus as much as 97 per cent of the total outstanding debt of all state DISCOMs has been covered under the UDAY.
- ⇒ Under the scheme, states were required to take over 75 per cent of discoms debt and issue bonds for writing off those loans. The

discoms are required to pay remaining 25 per cent of the debt by issuing bonds.

### **Gk byte – Uday scheme**

⇒ UDAY **Ujjwal Discom Assurance Yojana** provides for the financial turnaround and revival of Power Distribution companies (DISCOMs), and importantly also ensures a **sustainable permanent solution** to the problem. It has ambitious target of making all discoms profitable by **2018-19**.

### **It has all the 3 elements —**

1. Clear up the **legacy issues** of past losses and debt.
  2. Provide a **financial road map** to bring tariffs in line with costs by FY19.
  3. Provide enough **deterrents** for the state govt to not allow the state discoms to become loss ridden post FY18, as losses start to impact their FRBM limits.
- The State govt. will takeover the **discom liabilities** over 2-5 year period.
  - This will allow discoms to convert their debt into **State bond**. These bonds will have a maturity period of 10-15 years.
  - 
  - It will allow transfer of **75% outstanding debts** incurred by stressed discoms to States' debt, 50% in 2015-16 and 25% in 2016-17.
  - 
  - The central government will not include the loans of the discoms in calculation of the **state's deficit** till 2016-17.
  - Electricity is not a **central subject**, states' cannot be made to participate in the programme.
- **Retail inflation at 1.54% in June, lowest in 5 years**
- ⇒ India's annual retail inflation eased in June to its slowest pace in more than five years, as food prices fell, building pressure on the central bank to cut interest rate when it meets for a monetary policy review on August 2.

- ⇒ This is the lowest inflation rate since India started releasing retail inflation data in January 2012 based on a combined CPI index for rural and urban consumers.
- ⇒ Good rains this year could lead to bumper grain production and a further slide in food prices in Asia's third-largest economy.

### **Gk byte - Inflation and Index (WPI,CPI)**

- ⇒ **Inflation** is the rising price of goods and services over time. Inflation reduces the purchasing power of each unit of currency. The inflation rate is the percent increase or decrease of prices during a specified period. It's usually over a month or a year.
- ⇒ If the inflation rate is more than 50 percent a week, that's **hyperinflation**. If inflation occurs at the same time as a recession, that's **stagflation**. Rising prices in assets like housing, gold or stocks are called **asset inflation**.
- ⇒ Inflation rates in India are usually quoted as changes in the Wholesale Price Index (WPI), for all commodities.
- ⇒ Many developing countries use changes in the consumer price index (CPI) as their central measure of inflation. India used WPI as the measure for inflation but new CPI(combined) is declared as the new standard for measuring inflation.
- ⇒ **CPI** numbers are typically measured **monthly**, and with a significant lag, making them unsuitable for policy use. India uses changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to measure its rate of inflation.
- ⇒ **WPI** measures the price of a representative basket of wholesale goods. In India, this basket is composed of **three groups**:-

**Primary Articles** (20.1% of total weight),  
**Fuel and Power** (14.9%)  
**Manufactured Products** (65%).

⇒ WPI numbers were typically measured weekly by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. This makes it more timely than the lagging and infrequent CPI statistic. However, since 2009 it has been measured monthly instead of weekly.

- **A.P., Telangana and Gujarat top in ease of doing business**

⇒ Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Gujarat are the three best-performing states in "ease of doing business" NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said.

⇒ On the other hand, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Assam fare worst in the rankings.

⇒ The World Bank, along with the Centre's Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) was involved in the process of reviewing the evidence submitted by states/UTs regarding implementation of reforms for the rankings.

- **New rules to protect policyholders.**

⇒ The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDA) has notified new rules to protect policyholder's interest.

⇒ If an insurer delays claims payments, it has to pay a penalty that's 2% over the bank rate, which is specified by the Reserve Bank of India, as on 1 April of that fiscal.

⇒ It has to do so within 30 days from when the decision to pay was taken.

- **India's first TISC to be established in Punjab.**

- ⇒ The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) signed an Institutional agreement with the Punjab State Council of Science and Technology in New Delhi to establish India's first Technology and Innovation Support Center (TISC) at Patent Information Centre, Punjab, under the World Intellectual Property Organization's (WIPO) TISC program.
- ⇒ The objective of the TISC is to stimulate a dynamic, vibrant and balanced Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) system in India to foster creativity and innovation, thereby promoting entrepreneurship and enhancing social, economic and cultural development by establishing a network of TISCs in India.
- ⇒ The Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) is designated as the National Focal Point for the TISC national network.

- **India's first solar powered DEMU train launched.**



- ⇒ Indian Railways has launched India's first solar powered diesel multiple unit (DEMU) broad gauge train. It is 1600 Horse Power (HP) train with all solar powered coaches. The train will run from Sarai Rohilla in Delhi to Farukh Nagar in Haryana. It will replace an existing non-solar powered rake on the same route.

- **Cabinet approves SASEC Road Connectivity Investment Program**

⇒ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister has given its approval for upgradation and widening of 65 kms of Imphal-Moreh Section of NH-39 in Manipur.



⇒ The project is being developed with ADB's loan assistance under the South Asian Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Road Connectivity Investment Program which aims at upgradation of road infrastructure in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and India (BBIN) in order to improve the regional connectivity among BBIN nations.

⇒ The project corridor is also a part of the Asian Highway No. 01 (AH01) and acts as India's Gateway to the East.

- **Union Government launches GST training Programme.**

⇒ The Union Government launched a Goods And Service Tax (**GST**) training Programme to skill around two lakh youths in six months and to handle tax compliance issues like invoice making.

⇒ The people would be trained under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (**PMKVY**).

- ⇒ It will be implemented in **14 states** and in the next six months, two lakh people will get complete training about GST.
- ⇒ To mark the second anniversary of Skill India mission the ministry has inaugurated the training course at 100 centres in the country.

- **Kolkata to host global business meet in November.**

- ⇒ The Indian Chamber of Commerce (**ICC**), in association with the West Bengal Government, will host Horasis Asia Meeting, a Global Business meeting, in the city in November.

The two-day business meet, starting November 26, will focus on sustainable business practices in various areas, including power and energy.

- **SBI launches ‘SBI Realty’ portal for home buyers**



- ⇒ India's largest commercial bank State Bank of India (SBI) launched SBI Realty, a dedicated portal that will help home buyers to choose flats from its 3,000 approved projects across the country. SBI Realty will be a one stop integrated website for home buyers. It will help customers to choose their dream home from 3,000 SBI approved projects, which are spread across 13 states/UTs covering 30 cities.

⇒ Using the portal, customers can compare current and past trends of prices for properties in various localities in the city. It will also assist customers in calculating appropriate loan amount a customer should borrow based on income and credit profile.

- **Cabinet approves selling 51% stake in HPCL to ONGC**

⇒ The Cabinet has given an in-principle approval to sell the government's entire 51.11 per cent stake in Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd to Oil and Natural Gas Corp in a bid to create a state-run integrated oil major that can compete with private and foreign players.

⇒ ONGC chairman Dinesh Sarraf said the shareholders of both companies would gain from the deal.

⇒ The combined market value of ONGC and HPCL would be \$42 billion.

- **Centre ask states to set up own insurance cos for PMFBY**

⇒ The Centre said it has asked state governments to set up their own insurance companies for better implementation of the crop insurance scheme and warned the existing insurers of strict action in case of irregularities.

⇒ As per the lok sabha session the question arises regarding the scheme. There are implementation issues in the government's flagship Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY) launched in 2016.

⇒ At present, both public and private insurers are implementing the PMFBY. More companies will enhance the competition.

⇒ The PMFBY has replaced two schemes National Agricultural Insurance Schemes as well as the Modified NAIS. Government is working to ensure farmers' income gets doubled by 2022.

- **Govt eyes USD 10bn investment in food processing sector**

⇒ The government is eyeing an investment worth USD 10 billion in next five years in the food processing sector, Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal said.

⇒ It has been seen 40 per cent growth in FDI in multi-branded food retail after we announced 100 per cent FDI in the sector last year.

⇒ The government has set a target of USD 10 billion investment in the food processing sector in next 5 years.

⇒ Further, the minister said exports have also increased and stood at USD 1 billion from April-July period.

⇒ For this purpose, the government has launched Rs 6,000 crore 'Kisan SAMPADA Yojana' scheme for food processing, which will integrate current and new schemes.

⇒ The scheme will benefit 20 lakh farmers and generate 5,30,500 direct and indirect employment in the country by the year 2019-20.

⇒ The minister said the government has sanctioned 42 food parks and 100 cold chains, of which 10 mega food parks and 30 cold chains are operational.

⇒ "We are expecting all 42 food parks and 100 cold chains to be operational in two years," she added.

⇒ The government is organising '**World Food India 2017**' **from November 3-5** in New Delhi to give a platform to stakeholders to showcase the growing food processing sector, policies and connect global and domestic industry.

- **Govt launched probe against 30,000 shell firms in 2016-17**

⇒ India launched its biggest yet fight against the use of shell companies to evade tax or launder money by targetting around 30,000 companies and their directors in 2016-17, a government official said on condition of anonymity.

⇒ The number is significant because the finance ministry and various investigative agencies launched only 1150 investigations against shell companies in the previous three years.

⇒ Shell companies meticulously comply with statutory requirements such as filing tax returns and annual reports so that they do not draw attention, unlike defunct companies.

### **Gk byte - Shell Company**

⇒ Shell Company is a corporate entity without active business operations or significant assets. They are often created to avoid taxes and many big companies create shell corporations to avoid taxes without attracting legal actions.

⇒ It can't be asserted that shell corporations are illegal. They are deliberate financial arrangements to avoid taxes. Tax avoidance is not illegal, though it is not desirable.

⇒ But many shell companies park black money, carry out illegal transactions and sometimes act as facilitators of money laundering.

⇒ Now, there is increasing attempts globally and nationally from governments to check tax avoidance. Hence, shell companies are coming under government scanner.

⇒ The Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which is an inter-governmental body, gives guidelines in controlling shell companies.



## 5. POLITY AND GOVERNANCE



- **Dr Jitendra Singh launches new training programme 'COMMIT'.**
  - ⇒ The Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (I/C), Prime Minister's Office, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr. Jitendra Singh launched a new training programme **Comprehensive Online Modified Modules on Induction Training (COMMIT)** for State Government officials.



- ⇒ The objective of this training programme is to improve the public service delivery mechanism and provide citizen centric administration through capacity building of officials who interact with the citizens on day-to-day basis.
- ⇒ Dr. Jitendra Singh said that the new training programme will supplement the earlier training programme and the advantage of COMMIT is that it is cost effective and has the potential to cover about 3.3 lakh officials annually, compared to 10,000 officials under existing 12-Day Induction Training Programme (ITP).

- **KK Venugopal appointed as Attorney General of India**



- ⇒ President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed senior advocate and constitutional expert K K Venugopal (86) as the new Attorney General of India. He will be 15th Attorney General of India. He succeeds Mukul Rohatgi as the country's top law officer. Earlier, in the Morarji Desai' government (1977-79), Venugopal had served as Additional Solicitor General of India

**Gk byte - Attorney General of India**

- ⇒ Attorney General for India is the Indian government's chief legal advisor, and its primary lawyer in the Supreme Court of India. He is appointed by the President of India under **Article 76(1)** of the Constitution and holds office during the pleasure of the President.

He is part of Union Executive.

- ⇒ Attorney General is the first law officer of the government of India and acts as top advocate for Union Government. He is responsible for giving advice to President/ Union Government upon such legal matters and to perform such other duties of legal character which are assigned to him by the President.
- ⇒ He has right of audience in all courts within the territory of India. He has also the right to speak and take part in proceedings of both the houses of parliament including joint sittings. But **cannot vote** in parliament. Further, he can also be made a member of any parliamentary committee but in the committee also, he has **no power to vote**.

- **Telangana to Have Separate Agriculture Budget from Next Year**

- ⇒ Telangana would have a separate budget for agriculture from the next year.
- ⇒ Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao decided to substantially enhance funds for the agriculture sector and present a separate agriculture budget.
- ⇒ Rao also asked the officials to form farmers' associations at various levels -- from villages to the state -- to organise the cultivators

- **New regulations for teacher training.**

- ⇒ The blueprint being framed by the National Council For Teacher Education (NCTE), promises action against errant institutions— nearly 3,000 teacher education colleges may be barred from admitting fresh students from the next academic year.
- ⇒ By January next year, NCTE will put out a ranking of the top 100 teacher training institutes.

- ⇒ While the move could create confusion, the government believes it is essential to curb the growth of poor quality institutions and bring transparency in teacher training.
- ⇒ NCTE functions under the Union human resource development (HRD) ministry. It has already collected preliminary data through affidavits and showcause notices it has served to around 12,000 institutions.
- ⇒ According to Sources, NCTE is hitting the reset on the grading system, with less emphasis on physical assets. Now, physical assets will get just 10% weightage, 20% weight will go to academic assets, 30% to teacher transactions and 40% to students' learning outcome. Currently, there is no weightage on learning outcomes for approval or accreditation of such institutions.

### **Gk byte – NCTE**

- ⇒ The **National Council for Teacher Education**, in its previous status since 1973, was an advisory body for the Central and State Governments on all matters pertaining to teacher education, with its Secretariat in the Department of Teacher Education of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).
- ⇒ Despite its commendable work in the academic fields, it could not perform essential regulatory functions, to ensure maintenance of standards in teacher education and preventing proliferation of substandard teacher education institutions. The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 and the Programme of Action thereunder, envisaged a National Council for Teacher Education with statutory status and necessary resources as a first step for overhauling the system of teacher education.
- ⇒ The National Council for Teacher Education as a statutory body came into existence in pursuance of the National Council for Teacher Education Act, 1993 (No. 73 of 1993) on the 17th August, 1995.
- ⇒ The main objective of the NCTE is to achieve planned and coordinated development of the teacher education system

throughout the country, the regulation and proper maintenance of Norms and Standards in the teacher education system and for matters connected therewith.

- **Union Cabinet approves establishment of International Rice Research Institute in Varanasi.**

- ⇒ It will be named as IRRI South Asia Regional Centre (**ISARC**) and will be set up on the campus of National Seed Research and Training Centre (**NSRTC**) in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- ⇒ This Centre will be the first International Centre in the eastern India and it will play a major role in harnessing and sustaining rice production in the region. It is expected to be a boon for food production and skill development in the eastern India and similar ecologies in other South Asian and African countries.

- **Delhi government to start online RTI portal**

- ⇒ Delhi became the second state to launch e-RTI portal that will enable citizens to file online Right to Information (RTI).



- ⇒ The Central government had launched its own online RTI application portal in 2013, which allowed users to file queries, pay application fee and submit requests for appeal.
- ⇒ The Central government had urged the States to set up their own online application portals. Maharashtra had followed suit in 2015 with its own RTI portal.

- **Government sets up new wing to provide intelligence inputs**

- ⇒ The Union Government has set up Directorate General of Analytics and Risk Management (DGARM), a new wing to provide intelligence inputs taking action against tax evaders. It has been set up will be under the Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC). It will also do big data analytics for taxmen for better policy formulation.
- ⇒ The DGARM was set up on 1 July 2017, coinciding with rollout of Goods and Services Tax (GST). It will function as an apex body of CBEC for data analytics and risk management and will report to the chairman of CBEC.

- **Delhi to host India's maiden Mobile Congress from September 27**

- ⇒ India is setting the stage for the Indian Mobile Congress (IMC) in September.
- ⇒ The IMC will be held in September this year for the first time. Then on, it will be an annual event. The event to be held from September 27 to 29 will be organized by telecom industry body Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI) with support from the Department of Telecommunications and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.

- **National Democratic Alliance Vice President nominee Venkaiah Naidu resigns his Union Minister Post**

- ⇒ Union Minister M Venkaiah Naidu resigned his Union Minister post for his party choosing him as a candidate for the **Vice Presidential Election**.

- ⇒ He was holding two portfolios of Information and Broadcasting, and Housing and Urban Affairs.

- **Smriti Irani gets Information and Broadcasting ministry and Narendra Singh Tomar gets Urban Development**

- ⇒ Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi handed over the **Information** and **Broadcasting** portfolio to Smt. Smriti Irani.

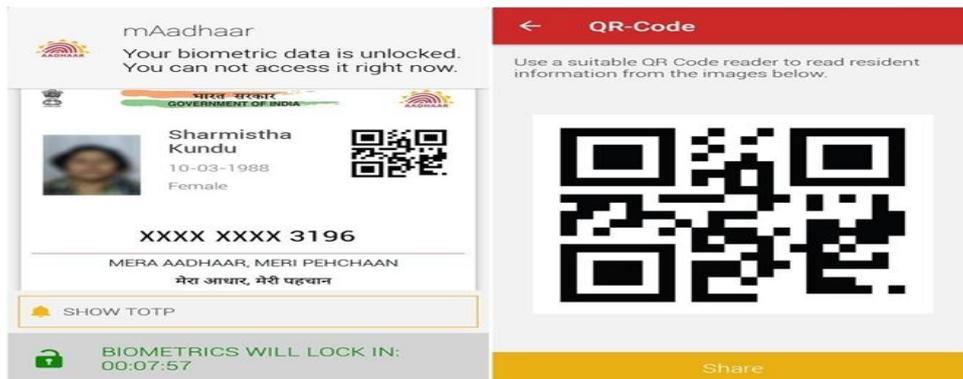
- ⇒ The **Urban Development Ministry** given to Shri Narendra Singh Tomar.

- ⇒ This announcement came after BJP leader Shri M Venkaiah Naidu, who is the Government's nominee for the position of Vice-President, resigned from his ministerial responsibilities.

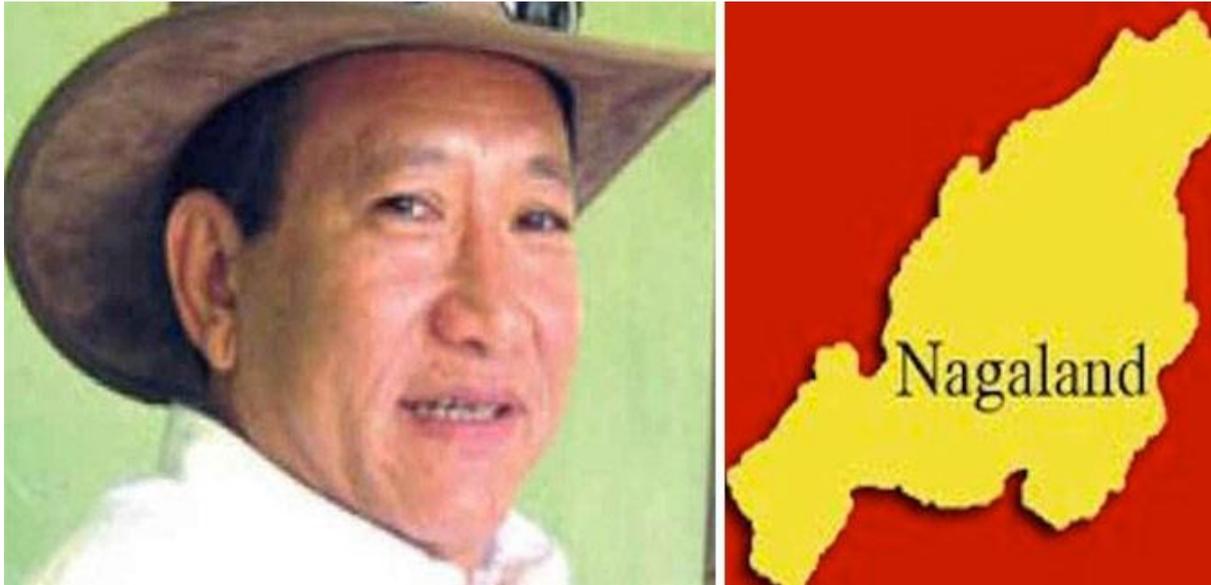
- **J&K bags best award in adventure tourism destination**

- ⇒ The J&K Tourism Department has received the award in the category of 'Best Adventure Tourism Destination and Eco-Tourism Destination' at a 3-Day event organized by Indian International Travel Mart, Chennai.

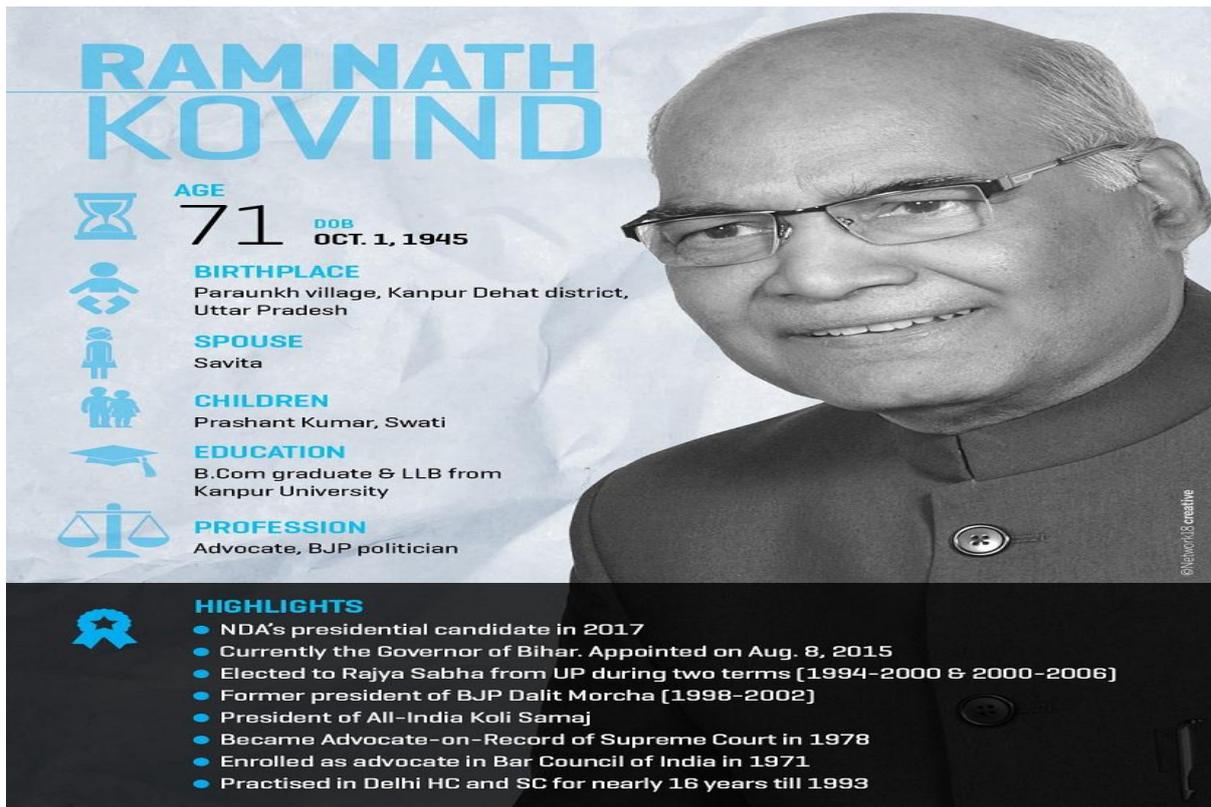
- **UIDAI launches mAadhaar app for Aadhaar data on phone**



- ⇒ The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has launched 'mAadhaar', a new mobile application for syncing Aadhaar data on mobile phones. The app allows users to carry their unique Aadhaar information including name, date of birth, gender, address, and the linked photograph, on their smartphones. The app also allows users to lock or unlock biometrics data.
- ⇒ The application allows users to have their Aadhaar profile on their mobile as a quick and convenient identification proof. It also lets users lock/unlock their biometric data that's linked to Aadhaar via the app to secure their personal data. It also allows viewing and sharing updated Aadhaar profile via QR (Quick Response) code and sharing eKYC (electronic Know Your Customer) details with service providers such as telecommunications companies.
- **TR Zeliang sworn in as 19th Chief Minister of Nagaland.**



- ⇒ Senior Naga People's Front (NPF) legislator TR Zeliang (65) was sworn in as the 19th chief minister of Nagaland. He was administered oath to office and secrecy by Governor P.B. Acharya. Earlier Governor had dismissed the Shurhozelie Liezietsu government under Clause (I) of Article 164 of the Constitution after he failed to prove majority on the floor of the Assembly.
- ⇒ Prior to it, Zeliang had staked claim to form government in Nagaland with a majority support of 47 members in the 60 member Legislative Assembly. TR Zeliang will now have to prove his majority on the floor of the House. This is his second stint as chief minister in a little more than three years.
- **Ram Nath Kovind elected India's 14th President.**
  - ⇒ Ram Nath Kovind was declared elected as India's **14th President** polling 65.6% of the vote defeating the Opposition's joint candidate, former Lok Sabha Speaker Meira Kumar, who secured 34% of the vote.



**RAM NATH KOVIND**

**AGE** 71 **DOB** OCT. 1, 1945

**BIRTHPLACE**  
Paraunkh village, Kanpur Dehat district, Uttar Pradesh

**SPOUSE**  
Savita

**CHILDREN**  
Prashant Kumar, Swati

**EDUCATION**  
B.Com graduate & LLB from Kanpur University

**PROFESSION**  
Advocate, BJP politician

**HIGHLIGHTS**

- NDA's presidential candidate in 2017
- Currently the Governor of Bihar. Appointed on Aug. 8, 2015
- Elected to Rajya Sabha from UP during two terms [1994-2000 & 2000-2006]
- Former president of BJP Dalit Morcha [1998-2002]
- President of All-India Koli Samaj
- Became Advocate-on-Record of Supreme Court in 1978
- Enrolled as advocate in Bar Council of India in 1971
- Practised in Delhi HC and SC for nearly 16 years till 1993

- ⇒ Mr. Kovind will be the second Dalit President of India after late President K.R. Narayanan
- ⇒ Also, he will be first from Uttar Pradesh and the first person from the BJP to hold the office of President since Independence.
- ⇒ He entered politics in 1994 when he became a member of Parliament in **Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh** and served as an MP for two consecutive terms till 2006.
- ⇒ He had represented India in the United Nations in New York and addressed United Nations General Assembly in October 2002.
- ⇒ On August 8, 2015, Kovind was appointed **governor of Bihar.**

- **Dairy products to carry quality mark**



- ⇒ Like Woolmark assures of getting quality wool and Agmark and ISI marks are assurance that the agriculture produce or industrial products that you buy are of good quality and standards, dairy products in the country including milk pouches will have a quality mark logo on them.
- ⇒ The dairy products carrying this quality mark logo will assure the consumers that the products are free from any kind of adulteration.
- **NALSA has launched Web Application for Legal Services to Prisoners**
  - ⇒ NALSA has launched a web application for free Legal Services to Prisoners at the conference held at Indian Law Institute, New Delhi. The Conference saw the participation of Member Secretaries and administrative officers of 18 State Legal Services Authorities. The Legal Services Management System has been developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
  - ⇒ The State Legal Services Authorities and District Legal Services Authorities will feed into the web application the

data for each individual prison inmate in the jails within their jurisdiction. The feeds will have details regarding the representation of prisoners through a counsel in the court.

- **She-box launched for govt staff to report harassment at workplace.**



- ⇒ The Union women and child development (WCD) ministry on Monday launched **“She-box” — an online complaint window** to be made available at the ministry’s website (www.wcd.nic.in), where any woman employee who faces sexual harassment or abuse at work can report the incident.
- ⇒ Officials said the ministry had been getting numerous complaints from women employees alleging delay in investigation of such cases, which necessitated the need to set up the She-box.
- ⇒ Parliament having cleared the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act in February 2013, its implementation has so far remained patchy.

- **FSSAI bans Stapler Pins in tea bags from January 2018.**



- ⇒ The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) banned the use of stapler pins in tea bags from January 2018.
  - ⇒ The FSSAI order directs the concerned food business operators to discontinue the manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import of stapled tea bags by 1 January 2018.
  - ⇒ Currently, tea bags are either stapled or knotted. According to industry estimates, the tea bag segment contributes 3-4% by value of total tea sales but it is one of the fastest growing segments at 50-60% year-on-year.
  - ⇒ FSSAI is a nodal statutory agency responsible for protecting and promoting public health in India through the regulation and supervision of food safety.
- **Union Government launched Mobile App 'Aarambh' for Road Maintenance**
    - ⇒ It aims at the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) based mapping for making road inventories, condition surveys, and producing cost estimates and other relevant data for preparation and monitoring of annual road maintenance plans.
    - ⇒ They also launched a Concept Note and Guidance Note for Mobilising Funds for Maintenance of Rural Road. The Concept Note outlines innovative ways, which can be adopted by the

State Governments for mobilising additional funds for road maintenance.

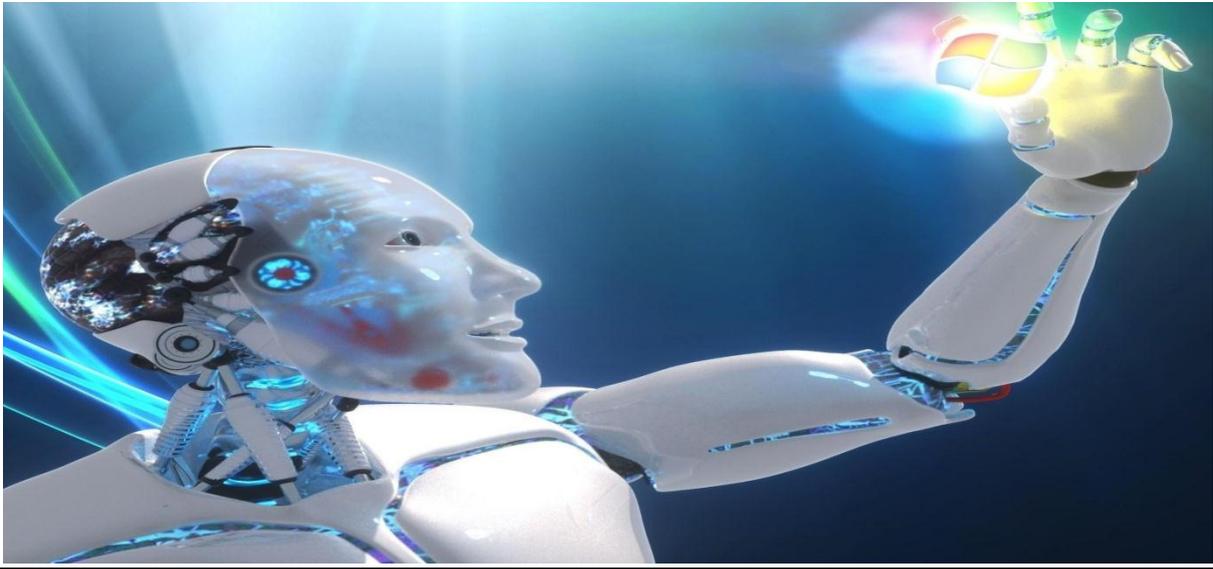
- **Aadhaar disrupting food security: Right to Food Campaign**



- ⇒ Right to Food Campaign, in a press release, expressed shock and dismay at the arguments of Attorney General KK Venugopal in Supreme Court in the ongoing case on whether the right to privacy is a fundamental right.
- ⇒ The Right to Food Campaign said it welcomed the recognition that the National Food Security Act (which includes the Public Distribution System, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and social security pensions) was important in realizing right to life. However, all reports so far point to the devastation and exclusion that Aadhaar-integration is causing in these programmes, Right to Food said, contradicting the claim by the government that Aadhaar was needed for these very schemes.
- ⇒ The Right to Food Campaign feels that by putting all the focus on Aadhaar, the government is distracting attention from the real issues in the implementation of these programmes - the need to introduce pulses and oil in the PDS, eggs and other nutritious items in the MDM programme, timely payments in NREGA, raising its contribution to social security pensions from Rs200, and so on. The Campaign urges the nine-judge Constitution bench to take note of mounting evidence of the failure of Aadhaar in welfare programmes and demands that all notifications linking Aadhaar with welfare programmes (NREGA, PDS, MDM, pensions etc) be immediately withdrawn.



## 6. SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



- **PSLV-C38 Successfully Launches 31 Satellites in a Single Flight.**
  - ⇒ ISRO's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle PSLV-C38 successfully launched the 712 kg Cartosat-2 Series Satellite along with 30 co-passenger satellites from Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR, Sriharikota.
  - ⇒ This is the thirty ninth consecutively successful mission of PSLV.
  - ⇒ The total number of Indian satellites launched by PSLV now stands at 48.



- ⇒ One of the 30 co-passenger satellites carried by PSLV-C38 was the 15 kg NIUSAT, a University/Academic Institute satellite from Nurul Islam University, Tamil Nadu, India.
- ⇒ The remaining 29 co-passenger satellites carried were 14 international customer satellites from USA (10), United Kingdom (3), Belgium (3), Italy (3), Austria (1), Chile (1), Czech Republic (1), Finland (1), France (1), Germany (1), Japan (1), Latvia (1), Lithuania (1) and Slovakia (1).

### **Gk byte - PSLV**

Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) is the third generation launch vehicle of India. It is the first Indian launch vehicle to be equipped with liquid stages. After its first successful launch in October 1994, PSLV emerged as the reliable and versatile workhorse launch vehicle of India with 39 consecutively successful missions by June 2017. During 1994-2017 period, the vehicle has launched 48 Indian satellites and 209 satellites for customers from abroad.

Besides, the vehicle successfully launched two spacecraft – Chandrayaan-1 in 2008 and Mars Orbiter Spacecraft in 2013 – that later traveled to Moon and Mars respectively.

- **Union Government launches National Biopharma Mission**

- ⇒ The Union Ministry of Science & Technology has launched ***National Biopharma Mission***, a first ever Industry-Academia mission to accelerate biopharmaceutical development in India.
- ⇒ Under this mission, the ministry also launched Innovate in India (i3) program to create an enabling ecosystem to promote entrepreneurship and indigenous manufacturing in the sector. Indian biopharmaceutical industry is still 10-15 years behind their counterparts in the developed countries and faces stiff competition from Korea, China and others.
- ⇒ **Innovate in India (i3)** program is a flagship program of the Government of India in collaboration with World Bank. It is committed to make India a hub for design and development of novel, affordable and effective biopharmaceutical products and solutions.

It promises to boost the growth of domestic biopharma industry by accelerating the translation of research concepts into viable products and supporting clinical validation.

**National Biopharma Mission**

- ⇒ The mission aims to enable and nurture an ecosystem for preparing India's technological and product development capabilities in biopharmaceuticals to be globally competitive level over the next decade.
- ⇒ The mission will be implemented by Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a PSU of Department of Biotechnology. It will bring together expertise from national and international corridors

- **Nuclear reactor at Kalpakkam: World's envy, India's pride.**

⇒ Hidden from public, on the shores of the Bay of Bengal at Kalpakkam near Chennai, Indian nuclear scientists are in the final throes of starting a high-tech giant stove more than 15 years in the making.

⇒ This novel nuclear reactor is a kind of an 'akshaya patra', the mythical goblet with a never-ending supply of food.

⇒ The Department of Atomic Energy is getting ready to commission its ultra-modern indigenously designed and locally mastered fast-breeder reactor.

⇒ Called a 'Fast-Breeder Reactor', these are a special kind of nuclear reactors that generate more atomic fuel than they consume as they work.

⇒ India has been running an experimental facility called a Fast-Breeder Test Reactor (FBTR) now for 27 years.

⇒ This is a small nuclear reactor a forerunner for the monster that India has constructed at Kalpakkam called the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR). This will generate electricity commercially using the fast breeder route.

⇒ The world's only commercially operating fast breeder reactor is situated in the Ural Mountains of Russia at the Beloyarsk Nuclear Power Plant, not far from Russia's fourth largest city Yekateringburg.

- **“JIGYASA” - Student-Scientist connect programme launched**

- ⇒ Jigyasa, a student- scientist connect programme was officially launched in the national capital.
- ⇒ Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), has joined hands with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) to implement this programme.

**॥ विज्ञान दीपने संसार भयं निवर्तते ॥**

**Signing of MoU**  
between  
**COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC & INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR)**  
&  
**KENDRIYA VIDYALAYA SANGATHAN**  
for  
**Jigyasa**  
PROMOTING SCIENTIFIC TEMPER THROUGH STUDENT - SCIENTIST CONNECT PROGRAM

in the gracious presence of

**Dr. Harsh Vardhan** & **Prakash Javadekar**  
Union Minister of Science & Technology and Earth Sciences and Environment, Forest & Climate Change and Vice-President, CSIR      Union Minister of Human Resource Development

Date : 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017 | Time : 14:00 hours  
Venue : Hotel Ashok  
Chanakyapuri, New Delhi

38 CSIR RESEARCH LABS | 1151 KVs | STUDENT-SCIENTIST CONNECT | SOON TO BE EXPANDED TO OTHER SCIENCE DEPARTMENTS NATIONWIDE

**Narendra Modi**  
Prime Minister and President, CSIR

**JIGYASA**

- ▶▶ A path-breaking initiative to inculcate Scientific Temper amongst students.
- ▶▶ CSIR will extend scientific knowledge to students and teachers from 1151 KV Schools across India.
- ▶▶ Students will also get an opportunity to visit 38 CSIR Research Labs.

**Models of Engagement**

- ▶▶ Student Apprenticeship Program
- ▶▶ Learning while Doing
- ▶▶ Science and Maths Club
- ▶▶ Scientists as Teachers and Teachers as Scientists
- ▶▶ Teachers' Workshop
- ▶▶ Student Residential Program
- ▶▶ Publication of student articles in CSIR Journals
- ▶▶ Summer vacation Program

**Council of Scientific & Industrial Research**  
www.csir.res.in

**Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan**  
www.kvsangathan.nic.in

- ⇒ The focus is on connecting school students and scientists so as to extend student's classroom learning with that of a very well planned research laboratory based learning.

● **Now, sex selection in cows to get fewer male calves**

- ⇒ The Union government has asked 10 animal husbandry centres to establish sexed semen production facilities to boost milk productivity and tackle the problem of “unwanted male calves” arising from the cow slaughter ban.
- ⇒ Sexing technologies allow farmers to control the gender of the calf. Scientists believe the use of sexed semen will result in the birth of nine females to every male, thereby helping farmers who prefer milk-producing cows to bulls.

- ⇒ Bulls have become a burden on farmers because growing mechanisation in agriculture has made them near-redundant in the fields.
- ⇒ The environment ministry's recent rules banning the sale of cattle for slaughter at cattle markets have only aggravated the problem.
- ⇒ India is the largest milk producer in the world. Its total milk production was 155.5 million tonnes in 2015-16, divided almost evenly among buffaloes and cows. However, the demand for milk is expected to cross 200 million tonnes by 2021-22.
- ⇒ At present, this technology is used only by a few rich farmers who can afford to purchase the doses from foreign companies. These doses come from males of foreign breeds. Opening labs in India will mean producing the doses in India with indigenous bull and buffalo semen.

- **Tamil Nadu reports first case of Zika virus.**

- ⇒ The first case of Zika in Tamil Nadu was reported from a sleepy hamlet in Krishnagiri district by the state public health authorities
  
- ⇒ Although the viral disease is known to have existed in India since 1952, Zika attracted global attention in late 2015 when a surge in the number of babies born with microcephaly — brain damage caused by abnormally small heads — was reported in northeastern Brazil months after an epidemic.

## Range of Microcephaly Severity



- ⇒ In February 2016, WHO declared Zika as a global health emergency. Since November 2016, three people have been tested positive for the virus, according to the Union health ministry. The patient from Tamil Nadu is the fourth known Zika case in the country making Tamil Nadu the second state to report the case after Gujarat.

### **GK byte - Zika disease**

- ⇒ Like dengue and chikungunya, Zika is viral disease transmitted by Aedes mosquito. These mosquitos breed in fresh water by laying eggs near standing water in buckets, pots, and vases mostly in areas of habitation.
- ⇒ Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites.
- ⇒ Signs and symptoms of Zika virus usually begin two to seven days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. Most people with the viral infection show no symptoms, but others may have fever, rash, and joint pain apart from headache, red eyes (conjunctivitis) and fatigue.

### **PP-Previous Paper (IAS 2017)**

#### **Q. Consider the following statements:**

1. In tropical regions, Zika virus disease is transmitted by the same mosquito that transmitted dengue.
2. Sexual transmission of Zika virus disease is possible.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only (c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2

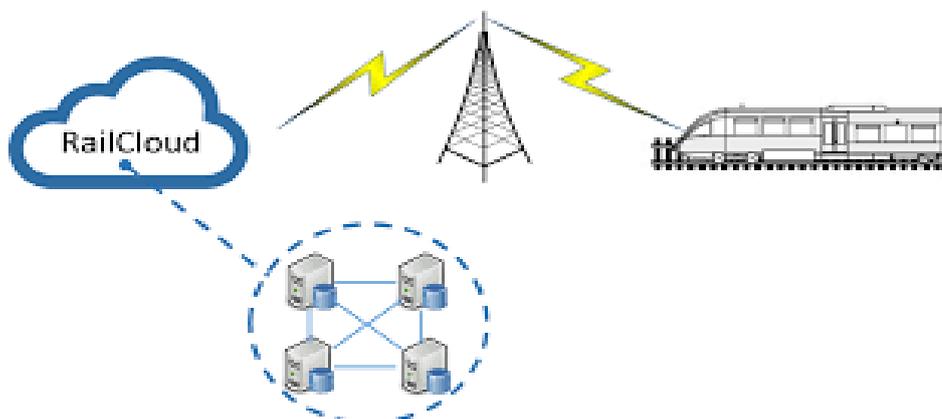
### Answer (c)

#### Explanation

- ⇒ Zika virus is a mosquito-borne flavivirus that was first identified in Uganda in 1947 in monkeys through a network that monitored yellow fever. Zika virus is primarily transmitted to people
- ⇒ Through the bite of an infected mosquito from the Aedes genus, mainly **Aedes aegypti** in tropical regions. Aedes mosquitoes usually bite during the day, peaking during early morning and late afternoon/evening. This is the same mosquito that transmits **dengue**, chikungunya and yellow fever. **Sexual transmission of Zika virus is also possible.**
- ⇒ The symptoms of Zika are similar to other arbovirus infections such as dengue, and include fever, skin rashes, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise, and headache. Zika virus disease is usually mild and requires no specific treatment. There is currently no vaccine available.

#### • **RailCloud – The new security system of Railway.**

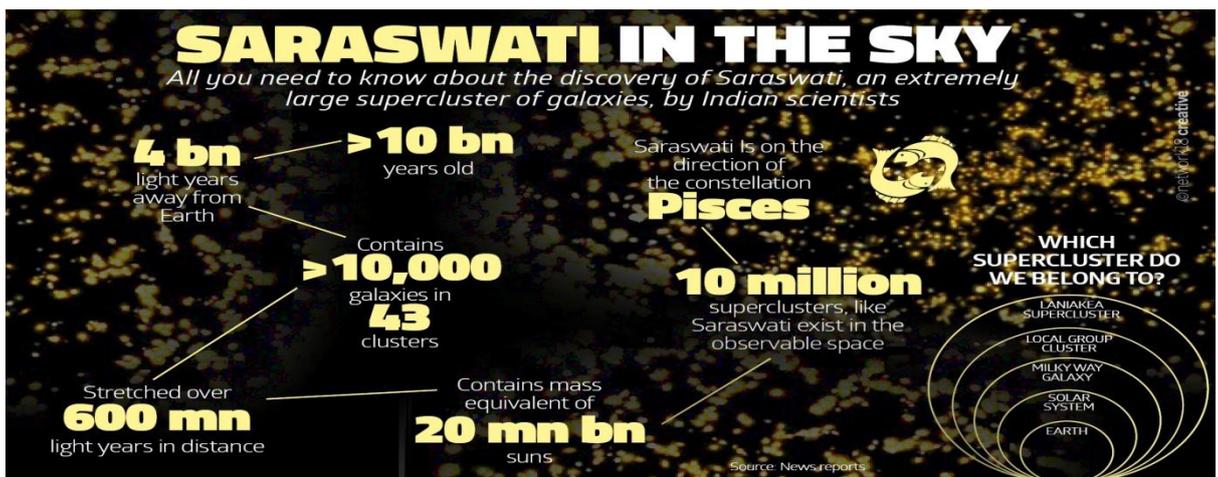
- ⇒ The Indian Railways has launched RailCloud, a virtual server with an inbuilt security system that will enable faster connectivity at a reduced cost.



- ⇒ Developed by rail PSU RailTel at an estimated cost of about Rs 53 crore, RailCloud is aimed at optimising server resources and its management.
- ⇒ RailCloud technology enables maximising the usage of available server and storage resulting in accommodation of bigger data and more applications within same server space. This makes the system suitable to meet higher demand.
- **National Strategic Plan for Malaria Elimination in India (2017-22)**

- ⇒ The Strategic Plan gives year wise elimination targets in various parts of the country depending upon the endemicity of malaria in the next 5 years.
- ⇒ Highlighting the salient features of the NSP, Shri Nadda stated that the strategies involve strengthening malaria surveillance, establishing a mechanism for early detection and prevention of outbreaks of malaria, promoting the prevention of malaria by the use of Long Lasting Impregnated Nets (LLINs), effective indoor residual spray and augmenting the manpower and capacities for effective implementation for the next five years.

- **Indian scientists discover supercluster of galaxies – Saraswati.**



- ⇒ A team of Indian astronomers have identified previously unknown, extremely large supercluster of galaxies located in the direction of constellation Pisces. It has been named

“Saraswati”.

⇒ A supercluster is a chain of galaxies and galaxy clusters. It bound by gravity consisting of tens of thousands of galaxies. It often stretches several hundred times the size of clusters of galaxies. So, galaxies are made of billions of stars and planets and grouped into clusters. These clusters of galaxies, in turn, are grouped together to form superclusters.

- **Govt. panel to study cow derivatives**

⇒ Headed by Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan, the committee will select projects that can help scientifically validate the benefits of panchgavya — the concoction of cow dung, cow urine, milk, curd and ghee — in various spheres such as nutrition, health and agriculture.

⇒ The government has given the project the acronym **SVAROP**, which stands for Scientific Validation and Research on Panchagavya, and says it is a “national programme” that’s being conducted by the Department of Science and Technology, Department of Biotechnology, and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) of the Ministry of Science and Technology in collaboration with IIT-Delhi.

- **India to have its own GPS system from 2018**



⇒ India will be having its own GPS system. '**NavIC**' will be operational early 2018. The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite

System (IRNSS) with an operational name of NavIC is currently being tested for its accuracy and is most likely to be available in the market for public use early next year.

⇒

NavIC the name given by PM Narendra Modi after the launch of IRNSS-1G, is designed to provide accurate position information to users within the country.

- **ISRO's Satellite-based chips for Unmanned Rail Crossings.**

- ⇒ ISRO's satellite-based chips are set to alert people at unmanned rail crossings
- ⇒ Satellite-based chip systems developed by ISRO will be used to alert road users at unmanned level crossings about approaching trains.
- ⇒ These chips will also help the railways in tracking train movement on a real-time basis. Initially, on a pilot basis the ISRO-developed integrated circuit (IC) chips will be installed in the Mumbai and Guwahati Rajdhani trains.
- ⇒ Hooters will be installed at 20 unmanned level crossings on Rajdhani routes for Guwahati and Mumbai.

- **Odisha to become First State in the Country to Open a Blood Bank for Cattle**

- ⇒ Odisha is set to become the first state in the country to open a blood bank for cattle. The proposal has received the nod from the National Agriculture Development Programme (NADP). It is now awaiting the approval from the state government.
- ⇒ The blood bank for cattle would be set up on the premises of the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) at an estimated cost of Rs. 3.25 crore.

- ⇒ 60% of the project cost would be funded by the Central government and the rest 40% would be funded by the Odisha state government. Under this initiative, the blood would be procured voluntarily from the cattle farmers.
- ⇒ The blood bank will also have blood transfusion facility for cattle blood. The blood bank will help in preventing cattle deaths during deliveries and other ailments. It would come handy in saving the lives of the domesticated animals.

- **Scientists develop new software that can create 3D models from 2D photographs**

- ⇒ Scientists have developed new **Artificial intelligence (AI)** software called SurfNet that can create three dimensional (3D) models from 2D photographs.
- ⇒ SurfNet software using hundreds of thousands of 2D shapes of objects can reconstruct it a model in 3Dimensions.
- ⇒ It can be used in robotics, object recognition and even self-driving cars. SurfNet will give them the ability to understand the 3D environment around them using standard 2D cameras.

- **Niti Aayog clears six proposals for high-tech public transport.**

- ⇒ Niti Aayog has cleared proposals of the transport ministry exploring options to improve public transport. These proposals include mass rapid transportation technologies such as metrino, hyperloop, pod taxis, stadler buses, hybrid buses and freight rail road.
- ⇒ The new technologies are being explored by the Government as current public transportation is unable to resolve the increasing traffic crisis in the country.

⇒ **Metrino:**



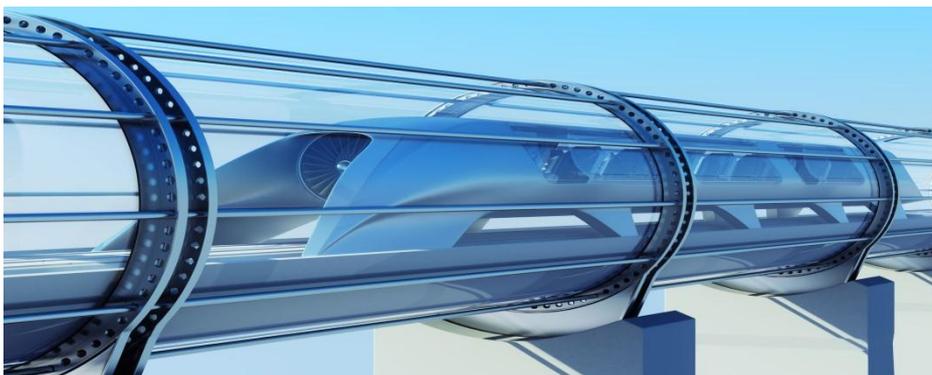
⇒ Fully automatic, driverless small pods travel independently suspended over an overhead network which is usually 5-10 meters above the ground.

⇒ **Podtaxi:**



⇒ Small automated vehicles/podcars/cable cars which carry a small number of passengers. The ropeway-like system runs on electricity and driverless pods and comes down at designated stations, thus removing the traffic burden from crowded roads.

⇒ **Hyperloop:**



⇒ A hyperloop comprises a sealed tube or series of tubes through which a pod may travel free of air resistance or friction conveying people or objects at speeds matching that of an aircraft.

- **National Centre for Seismology launches ‘India Quake’ – An App for Earthquake Parameter Dissemination.**

⇒ Union Minister of Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Environment, Forests & Climate Change Dr Harshvardhan launched an app “**India Quake**” on the occasion of Foundation Day of Ministry of Earth Sciences in New Delhi.

⇒ National Centre for Seismology (NCS) operates a national seismological network with 84 stations. These stations are connected to **NCS headquarter** through VSAT for real time data communication.

⇒ In the event of an earthquake, NCS locates them using data from its network and disseminate earthquake parameters to all the concerned government department and other stake holders through SMS, email and fax.

- **Indian Scientists develop Gelator to remove oil from spills.**

⇒ Scientists from the Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research (IISER), Thiruvananthapuram have developed gelator that can suck up oil and congeal it. The gelator is **hydrophobic material that has property of oleophilic (oil-loving)** and takes up oil when it comes in contact with it. It can be used to recover marine oil spills with a simple, efficient and cost-effective method.

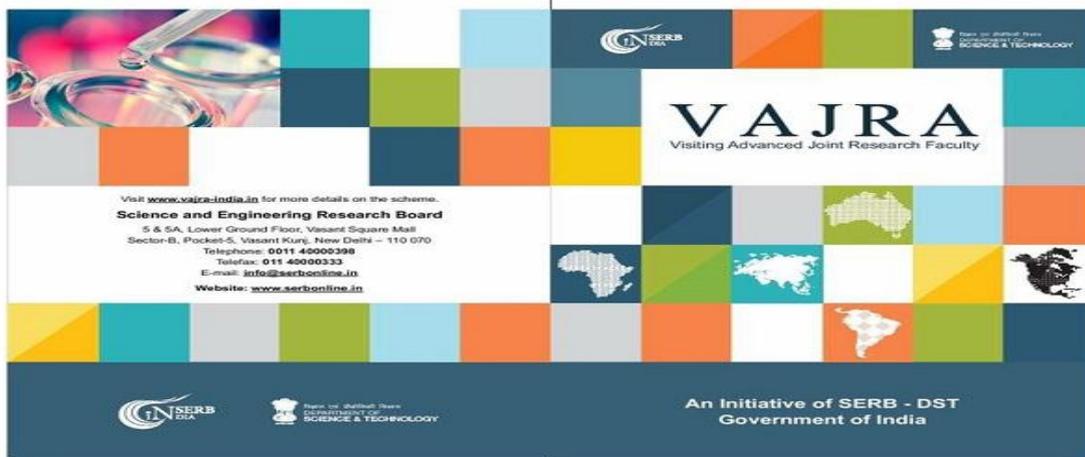


- ⇒ It is developed using a cheap raw material mannitol and cellulose pulp through a one-step process.

## 7. SOCIETY



- **Priyanka Chopra to endorse Skill India campaign**
  - ⇒ Actress Priyanka Chopra will soon be seen endorsing government's flagship Skill India campaign, with the National Skill Development Corporation roping in the Bollywood celebrity as an ambassador for the initiative.
  - ⇒ Priyanka will use her celebrity status to motivate youngsters to hone their abilities through a media campaign.
  - ⇒ Earlier, Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli, batting legend Sachin Tendulkar, Bollywood actors Sidharth Malhotra and Shabana Azmi and singer Mohit Chauhan had also become goodwill envoys for Skill India.
- **Government launches VAJRA Scheme**
  - ⇒ Department of Science and Technology has launched VAJRA (Visiting Advanced Joint Research) Faculty scheme that enables NRIs and overseas scientific community to participate and contribute to research and development in India.



- ⇒ The scheme would promote broad areas of research like energy, health, advance material among others. Public funded academic institutions and national laboratories will be eligible for hosting the VAJRA Faculty. The VAJRA faculty can reside in India for a minimum of 1 month and a maximum of 3 months a year.
- **Uttarakhand and Haryana Declared Open Defecation Free States**
  - ⇒ Under the Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G), rural Uttarakhand and rural Haryana have been declared as the 4th and 5th Open Defecation Free (ODF) States of India. Already, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala, have been declared ODF.
  - ⇒ As per the government sources, nationally the sanitation coverage has increased from 42% to over 64% since the launch of SBM. Uttarakhand has 13 districts, 95 blocks, 7256 gram panchayats and 15751 villages while Haryana has 21 districts, 124 blocks, and 6083 gram panchayats. All these have been declared as ODF. With this, the total number of ODF states in the country have increased to 5 covering more than 2 lakh villages and 147 districts across the country.
- **No-detention policy in school may be scrapped from next academic year: Union minister**

- ⇒ The HRD Ministry has decided to remove the no-detention policy for students from the next academic year. Under the Right to Education Act, no child will be detained or held back in any class or expelled till the completion of elementary education covering classes 1 to 8.
- ⇒ Rationale The government's decision comes after it had received several complaints regarding the deterioration of the quality of basic education in the country. In addition, the States have been asking for the withdrawal of the no-detention policy from the Right to Education Act 2009.
- ⇒ As per the critics, the policy has resulted in remarkable improvement in enrolments but has brought down the academic standards. Background No-Detention Policy Under this policy, the students up to class VIII are automatically promoted to the next class without being held back even if they do not get a passing grade.

### **Gk byte – No Detention Policy**

- ⇒ The policy was implemented as part of the Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) under the RTE Act to ensure all-round development of students. The concept of CCE which was imported from the West lays emphasis on evaluating a child through the year, and not just based on performance in one or two term exams.
- ⇒ The basic objective behind the no-detention policy was to prevent dropouts. The no detention policy in the RTE does not mean the abolition of assessment rather it calls for a replacement of the traditional system of evaluation with a continuous and comprehensive assessment that is not threatening. The policy also intends to free the students from the pressure and fear of examination and give them a stress-free academic environment and childhood.
- **India's first university only for Dalit students to come up in Hyderabad by 2018.**

- ⇒ If the Telangana government has its way, Dalit students who wish to pursue their post-graduation in the state will have an exclusive university for them by next academic year.
- ⇒ A proposal to establish an exclusive university for Dalit students in Hyderabad is under active consideration of the state government
- ⇒ The university is said to be part of the government's policy of providing education free of cost to students from weaker sections from kindergarten to post-graduation (KG to PG) level.
- ⇒ At present, there are universities exclusively for women and religious minorities but not for weaker sections, though they are given reservations in various state-run universities.

- **Kerala proposes 'stray dog zoos'**

- ⇒ The Kerala government is planning "stray dog zoos" to keep them off the streets in the State. The State government informed a Supreme Court Bench led by Justice Dipak Misra that it had asked all district panchayats to keep aside two to three acres and notify them as 'stray dog zoos'.
- ⇒ The State government, was responding to a question from the Supreme Court on the construction of shelter homes for the stray dog population, which has increased aggressively over the years and become a dangerous presence on the streets, especially after dark. However, the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) and activists refused to be convinced by the solution Kerala has arrived at concerning stray dogs.

- **National Green Tribunal bans use of nylon and synthetic manja.**

- ⇒ **NGT** imposed a ban on nylon and synthetic 'manja' the string used to fly kites as it poses a threat to the lives of birds, animals and humans.
- ⇒ State governments have been directed to prohibit the "manufacture, sale, storage, purchase and use" of synthetic

'manja' or nylon threads and all other synthetic threads used for flying kites.

⇒ The NGT passed the order after People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) moved it for a nationwide ban on all forms of sharp kite-flying strings called **manja**.

- **Matunga becomes India's first railway station run by women**

⇒ The Central Railway has taken a step towards Women Empowerment by appointing an all-female work staff at the suburban **Matunga** station.

⇒ It is first such ladies special station in India.

⇒ A total of 30 women staffers, including 11 booking clerks, five RPF personnel, seven ticket checkers are working under the supervision of station manager.

⇒ Matunga is a locality in the heart of Mumbai City towards downtown Mumbai

- **Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana is launched.**

⇒ The Union Minister for Finance, Defence and Corporate Affairs has formally launched the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY) in the national capital.

⇒ PMVVY is a Pension Scheme announced by the Government of India exclusively for the senior citizens aged 60 years and above which is available from 4th May, 2017 to 3rd May, 2018.

⇒ The Scheme can be purchased offline as well as online through Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India which has been given the sole privilege to operate this Scheme.

⇒ Scheme provides an assured return of 8% p.a. payable monthly (equivalent to 8.30% p.a. effective) for 10 years.

- **Rural Development to launch Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana.**

- ⇒ The Ministry of Rural Development will launch a new sub-scheme under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) which will be named as “Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AEGY)”.
- ⇒ It aims to provide an alternative source of livelihoods to members of Self Help Groups (SHGs) under DAY-NRLM by facilitating them to operate public transport services in backwards rural areas.
- ⇒ The States have informed about the number of blocks allocated to them to take up this sub-scheme in the pilot phases.

- **Government to launch Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana.**

- ⇒ The Union Ministry of Rural Development will launch Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY), a sub-scheme under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).
- ⇒ AGEY aims to provide an alternative source of livelihood to members of Self Help Groups (SHGs) by facilitating them to operate public transport services in backward rural areas. Key Features of AGEY AGEY will provide safe, affordable and community monitored rural transport services like e-rickshaws, 3 and 4 wheeler motorised transport vehicles to connect remote villages.

⇒ These transport vehicles will connect villages with key services and amenities including access to markets, education and health for the over all economic development of the area.

- **Maharashtra, Rajasthan record highest cases of child marriage.**

⇒ Maharashtra tops the list in child marriage, followed by Rajasthan. 17 districts of Maharashtra, including Latur, Mumbai and Pune have reported high instances of child marriage.

⇒ In Rajasthan, 13 districts, including Jaipur, Ajmer and Bhilwara, have reported increasing incidents of child marriage.

⇒ The figures, highlighting the prevalence of child marriage.

- **Union Government approves construction of 30,000 affordable houses on Private land**

⇒ The Centre approved the construction of 30,000 houses for the urban poor on private land in Maharashtra's Sholapur.

⇒ The main aim is to give momentum to affordable housing in urban areas.

⇒ Under the Centre's flagship programme **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)**, the **Housing and Urban Affairs** Ministry gave approval to the Central assistance of Rs 450 crore for the project.

⇒ Under **PMAY(U) the Raynagar Cooperative Housing Federation**, Sholapur had submitted a proposal to build 30,000 houses for its members comprising beedi and textile workers and other urban poor belonging to the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) at a cost of Rs 1,811 crore.

- **Union Cabinet clears minimum wage code bill**

⇒ The Union Cabinet approved the **new wage code bill** which will ensure a **minimum wage across all sectors by integrating four labour related laws.**

**The new wage code**

⇒ The Labour Code on Wages Bill will consolidate the **Minimum Wages Act, 1948; the Payment of Wages Act, 1936; the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965; and the Equal Remuneration Act, 1976.**

⇒ The bill seeks to empower the Centre to set a minimum wage across all sectors in the country and states will have to maintain that.

⇒ However, states will be able to provide for higher minimum wage in their jurisdiction than fixed by the central government.

⇒ The new minimum wage norms would be applicable for all workers irrespective of their pay.

⇒ At present, the minimum wages fixed by the Centre and states are **applicable to workers getting up to Rs 18,000 pay monthly.**

⇒ This would ensure a universal minimum wage for all industries and workers, including those getting monthly pay higher than Rs 18,000.

- **Punjab govt launches 'Care Companion Programme'.**

⇒ The objective of this scheme is improving patient outcomes through better family engagement and education.

⇒ This innovative program turns hospital hallways/wards into classrooms and taps into the most compassionate and willing resource available for care i.e. the patient's own family, by teaching the family high-impact medical skills to take care of their loved ones in the hospital and at home.

- ⇒ Families will learn high-impact health skills for taking care of the new-born baby and post-partum mother, specifically, baby hygiene, thermal care, breastfeeding, and maternal nutrition. The aim is to reduce the number of baby deaths and complications like infections in the first 30 days' post-discharge, and ensure adoption of long-term health pro motive behaviours.

## 8. SECURITY



- **New anti-hijacking law with tougher punishment comes into force**
  - ⇒ A tough new anti-hijacking law that prescribes capital punishment for perpetrators in the event of the death of "any person" has come into force following a government notification.
  - ⇒ The 2016 Anti-Hijacking Act replaces a 1982-vintage law, under which hijackers could be tried for the death penalty only in the event of the death of hostages, such as flight crew, passengers, and security personnel.
  - ⇒ Under the new law, the perpetrators can be tried for the death penalty for causing the death of "security personnel on board" or "ground support staff" as well.
- **Made-in-India warship to be largest in Lankan navy's fleet**

- ⇒ The Sri Lankan Navy is on the verge of commissioning its largest warship, which has been built in India under a ₹1,000-crore contract inked four years ago for two such vessels.
  - ⇒ **INS Saryu**, an offshore patrol vessel inducted into the Indian Navy in Jan 2013. Goa Shipyard Ltd is constructing similar vessels for the Sri Lankan Navy.
  - ⇒ The 105-metre long warship, with a displacement of around 2,400 tonnes, is expected to be commissioned into the Sri Lankan Navy on August 2.
- **Indian Army inks MoU with DRDO to raise MRSAM defence system regiment**
    - ⇒ The Indian Army has signed MoU with Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) to raise one regiment of the advanced Medium Range Surface to Air Missiles (MRSAM) defence system.
    - ⇒ The Indian Army is planning to have a total of five regiments of MRSAM defence system, which will be deployed opposite to China and Pakistan. Each regiment consists of four launchers with three missiles each. So five regiments will have total 60 missiles.
    - ⇒ Earlier the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) headed by PM Narendra Modi had approved proposal for procuring MRSAM system for the army.
    - ⇒ **MRSAM**- The MRSAM is an advanced, all weather, mobile, land-based air defence system.
    - ⇒ It can shoot down enemy ballistic missiles, aircraft, helicopters, drones, surveillance aircraft and AWACS aircraft. It is capable of engaging multiple aerial targets at ranges of more than 50 km.
  - **Russia keen to sell new fighter MiG-35 to air force**

- ⇒ Russia is keen on selling its new fighter jet MiG-35 to India with the MiG corporation's chief saying the country has evinced interest in the aircraft and talks were on to understand its requirements.
- ⇒ The MiG-35 is Russia's most advanced 4++ generation multipurpose fighter jet developed.
- ⇒ MiG aircraft have been used by India for almost 50 years and MiG corporation proposes its new products to India among the first countries and intends to continue supplying India with its most modern aircraft.

- **India celebrates Kargil Vijay Diwas day is observed on July 26**

- ⇒ The Indian nation celebrates Kargil Vijay Diwas Day is observed on July 26.
- ⇒ On the occasion, Defence Minister Arun Jaitley and three Chiefs of Services will lay a floral tribute at Amar Jawan Jyoti, India Gate.
- ⇒ Kargil Vijay Diwas is celebrated on July 26 every year to commemorate India's victory in the 1999 Kargil War against Pakistan as it was on this day that the Indian Army had taken control of posts across the Himalayas in the Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir, after fighting for 60 days.

- **Reliance Defence launches first two naval patrol vessels**



- ⇒ Reliance Infrastructure subsidiary Reliance Defence and Engineering Limited (RDEL) on Tuesday announced the launch of its first two Naval Offshore Patrol Vessels (NOPVs) at their shipyard in Pipavav, Gujarat.
- ⇒ The two NOPVs -- '**Shachi**' and '**Shruti**' -- are among five ships being constructed by RDEL under the P-21 project of the Indian Navy.
- ⇒ The launch is a significant and milestone event, as these two NOPVs are the first warships to be launched by a private sector shipyard in India.

- **'Muntra' - India's first unmanned tank**

- ⇒ **Defense Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has developed India's first unmanned tank, which has three variants namely surveillance, mine detection and reconnaissance in areas with nuclear and bio threats.



- ⇒ It is called **Muntra (Mission UNmanned TRAcked)** and has been rolled out of the Chennai lab.
- ⇒ The tanks will facilitate Indian Armed forces in conducting unmanned surveillance missions. Muntra-S developed for unmanned surveillance missions, whereas Muntra-M is built for detecting mines.

## 9. MISCELLANEOUS/ SPORTS/ PERSONALITIES



- **Haryana girl Manushi Chhillar is Femina Miss India World 2017.**



- ⇒ The 54th Femina Miss India World 2017 winner is Manushi Chhillar from Haryana, while the first runner-up is Sana Dua from Jammu and Kashmir and the second runner-up is Priyanka Kumari from Bihar.
  - ⇒ The event was held at Yash Raj Studios in Mumbai.
  - ⇒ Besides, Vinali Bhatnagar won the Miss Active crown whereas Vamika Nidhi won the special award of 'Body Beautiful'.
- **Achal Kumar Jyoti to be India's new Chief Election Commissioner.**

- ⇒ Election Commissioner Achal Kumar Jyoti has been appointed the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India by the Narendra Modi government.
- ⇒ He will take charge as the CEC on July 6 after Nasim Zaidi retires.
- ⇒ Jyoti, former Chief Secretary of Gujarat, was appointed as the Election Commissioner on May 7, 2015.

He will join as **21<sup>st</sup> CEC**.

- **KK Venugopal appointed as Attorney General of India**

- ⇒ President Pranab Mukherjee has appointed senior advocate and constitutional expert K K Venugopal (86) as the new Attorney General of India. He will be 15th Attorney General of India. He succeeds Mukul Rohatgi as the country's top law officer. Earlier, in the Morarji Desai' government (1977-79), Venugopal had served as Additional Solicitor General of India.

- **India tops medal tally at Asian Athletics.**

- ⇒ India topped the medal tally for first time in the history of Asian Athletics Championships, pushing China to second spot.
- ⇒ India ended the four-day championships on top with their highest ever medal haul of 29 medals (12 gold, 5 silver and 12 bronze).
- ⇒ China ended this edition on second position with 8 gold, 7 silver and 5 bronze.
- ⇒ Asian Athletics Championship 2017 was held in Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar.

- **Ravi Shastri appointed new head coach and Zaheer Khan bowling coach**

- ⇒ Ravi Shastri to become Indian cricket team's new head coach where the appointment was confirmed by Board of Control for Cricket in India (**BCCI**).

- ⇒ He was chosen by the BCCI's Cricket Advisory Committee (**CAC**) that includes former captains Sourav Ganguly, Sachin Tendulkar and veteran batting star VVS Laxman.
- ⇒ Zaheer Khan is appointed as the Bowling coach of Indian Cricket Team and Rahul Dravid is appointed as Batting Coach (Overseas).

- **Odisha to set up International Standard Sports City**

- ⇒ Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced to set up an **International Standard Sports City** recently.
- ⇒ Kalinga International Sports City will be set up in Bhubaneswar and will be eligible to bid for most international competitions including Commonwealth and Asian games.
- ⇒ The state government also signed an expression of interest with the **International Association of Athletics Federation (IAAF)** and the Athletics Federation of India for setting up of a high-performance academy inside the Kalinga Stadium.

- **India's Mithali Raj becomes first to score 6000 runs in women's ODI cricket**

- ⇒ Indian captain Mithali Raj created history by becoming the first player in the history of Women's One-day International (**ODI**) cricket to score more than 6000 career runs.
- ⇒ She broke the previous record of Charlotte Edwards (5992) in 164 innings.
- ⇒ She achieved the record feat against Australia in the **ICC Women's World Cup 2017** match at Bristol.

- **India to host 8th Edition of Theatre Olympics 'The Biggest Theatre Celebration of the World'**

- ⇒ India will host the 8th edition of **Theatre Olympics in 2018**, the biggest theatre celebration of the world.
- ⇒ The eight edition of the greatest carnival will start from February 17-April 08, 2018.
- ⇒ The Theatre Olympics will take place simultaneously in various cities across the country.
- ⇒ There will be five hundred plays and seven hundred ambience performances from across the world.

- **Sandeep Patil named brand ambassador of indoor cricket team**

- ⇒ Former Indian batsman Sandeep Patil was named as the brand ambassador of the Indian Indoor Cricket Team.
- ⇒ Patil, a member of the 1983 World Cup-winning squad, will be the face of the team in the lead-up to the 10th edition of the World Indoor Cricket Federation (WICF) World Cup, to be held from September 16-23 at the Insportz Club in Dubai.

- **15 July: World Youth Skills Day**

- ⇒ The World Youth Skills Day is observed globally on 15 July every year to raise awareness about the importance of investing in youth skills development. Observance of the day aims to create more awareness on training and the development of skills for the youth of today and also create better employment opportunities for the youth. 2017 Theme is “Skills for All”.

- **Roger Federer won a record eighth Wimbledon title and became the tournament’s oldest champion.**

- ⇒ He defeated Marin Cilic to win the title.
- ⇒ It is his **11th Wimbledon final** and 29th title.

- **International Indian Film Academy Awards 2017**

⇒ The 18th edition of the International Indian Film Academy Awards was held in New York.

⇒ Here's the complete list of the IIFA 2017 winners:

**Best Film-** Neerja

**Best Actor (Male)-** Shahid Kapoor for Udta Punjab

**Best Actor (Female)-** Alia Bhatt for Udta Punjab

**Best Director-** AnirudhRoy Chaudhary for Pink

- **India's Harinder Pal Sandhu wins Victorian Open squash tournament**

⇒ India's Harinder Pal Sandhu (28) won the Victorian Open squash tournament held in Melbourne, Australia. In the final he defeated Rex Hedrick of Australia.

- **H S Prannoy wins US Open Grand Prix Gold Badminton title**

⇒ Indian Shuttler H S Prannoy won the 2017 Yonex US Open Grand Prix Gold badminton tournament title.

⇒ It was third Grand Prix Gold title of badminton.

⇒ The 2017 US Open Grand Prix Gold was the eleventh Grand Prix's badminton tournament of the 2017 Badminton World Federation (BWF) Grand Prix and the tournament.

- **India lose to England by 9 runs in ICC Women's World Cup final**

- ⇒ India lost to England by nine runs in the International Cricket Council (ICC) Women's World Cup final at Lord's in London.

- ⇒ The country England got its fourth Women's World Cup.

- ⇒ Player of the Tournament: Tammy Beaumont.

- ⇒ Player of the Match: Anya Shrubsole.

- **Sachin Siwach wins gold at Commonwealth Youth Games**

- ⇒ World Youth Champion Sachin Siwach clinched a gold medal at the Commonwealth Youth Games after defeating Welsh boxer James Nathan Prober 4-1 in the final.

- ⇒ Siwach, who won gold last year, was the only one of the 103 boxers to have clinched a gold so far in the tournament, taking place in Bahamas.

- **Boxing Championship 2021 to be held in India.**

- ⇒ The International Boxing Association (AIBA) has announced that India will host their first Men's World Championship in 2021.

- ⇒ The announcement was made after a two-day executive committee meeting that was held in Moscow.

- ⇒ The AIBA Men's World Championships 2019 will be held in Russia city of Sochi. The 2018 Women's World Championships will also be held in New Delhi.

- ⇒ The 2019 Women's World Championships will be held in Trabzon, Turkey.

- **Indonesia to host AFC U-19 Championship**

- ⇒ The **Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Competition Committee** awarded Indonesia the hosting of the AFC Under-19 Championship 2018.

- ⇒ The AFC U-19 championship is scheduled to be held from 18 October to 4 November 2018.

The committee felt that Indonesia was regarded as the most favourable among the bidders.

- **29<sup>th</sup> July - International Tiger Day.**

- ⇒ This year's International Tiger Day would be celebrated with the slogan '**Fresh Ecology For Tigers' Protection**'.

- ⇒ This was first celebrated in 2010 and was founded at an international summit that had been called in response to the shocking news that 97% of all wild tigers had disappeared in the last century, with only around 3,000 left alive.

- ⇒ Tigers are on the brink of extinction and International World Tiger Day aims to bring attention to this fact and try to halt their decline. International World Tiger Day aims to bring attention to this fact and try to halt their decline.

- **Ajay Singh wins bronze medal in Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships.**

- ⇒ India's Ajay Singh won the **bronze medal** in Asian Youth and Junior Weightlifting Championships at Kathmandu, taking India's tally to three.

- ⇒ He got third place in 77 kgs men's junior category lifting 143 kgs in the snatch and 172 kgs in clean and jerk.
- ⇒ S. Nirupama Devi won bronze in 69 kgs women youth category.
- ⇒ Konsam Urmila Devi won gold in the 44kg weight category.
- **Former Union Minister Ashwani Kumar conferred with Japanese honour**
  - ⇒ Former Union Minister Ashwani Kumar was conferred with the Japan's imperial decoration 'Order of the Rising Sun' award for his contribution to fostering Japan-India ties.
- **July 30 - United Nation's World Day against Trafficking in Persons.**
  - ⇒ The **United Nations World Day against Trafficking in Persons** is observed on 30 July across the world.
  - ⇒ This year, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) selected '**Act to Protect and Assist Trafficked Persons**' as the focus of the Day.
  - ⇒ The theme aims at one of the most pressing issues of the largest mixed migration movements of refugees and migrants.
- **Caeleb Dressel becomes first ever Swimmer to win three gold medals in one night at worlds Championship.**



- ⇒ The 20-year-old **Caeleb Dressel** America's newest star of the pool recently became the first swimmer to win three gold medals on a single night at either the worlds or the Olympics.
- ⇒ Caeleb Dressel accomplished this feat at 2017 FINA World Aquatics Championships in Budapest, Hungary.