

Monthly Digest
March -2018

Dear readers,

This **Monthly GK Digest** is a complete docket of important news and events that occurred in a month of **March 2018**. We have compiled important & expected questions, which can be asked in upcoming **Banking interviews** and all upcoming **Banking & Insurance exams**.

Banking & Financial Awareness

1. US-based Major credit rating agency Moody's Investors Service estimated that India will grow in the calendar year 2018 -- **7.6%**.
Note:
 - Moody's Investors Service was established in 1909, headquarters in New York, USA.
 - Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC: was founded in 1860, headquarters in New York, USA, subsidiary of S&P Global.
 - Fitch Ratings: was founded in 1914, headquarters in New York City and London.
2. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** raised its **lending rates** with immediate effect by 20 basis points to **8.15%**.
Note: This is the first lending revision by the bank since April 2016 and comes a day after it massively raised the retail and bulk deposit rates. The bank raised its retail and bulk term deposit rates for various maturities by up to **75 basis points**.
3. The **IndusInd Bank** has announced its partnership with Ripple to facilitate payments into and out of India.
Note: RippleNet can now provide instant access in emerging markets such as India, Brazil, and China.
4. ICICI Bank has raised the one-year MCLR from 8.2% to -- **8.3%**
5. **Marshall Islands** has become the first Country to adopt a Cryptocurrency as its Official Currency.
Note: The Pacific island nation "Marshall Islands" has become the first Country in the world to adopt a Cryptocurrency SOV (Sovereign) as its Official Currency. A cryptocurrency is a digital asset designed to work as a medium of exchange using cryptography to secure the transactions and to control the creation of additional units of the currency.
6. The **Punjab National Bank (PNB)** has increased one-year MCLR to 8.3% from -- **8.15%**.
7. The ICICI Bank has launched instant overdraft facility '**InstaOD**' for MSME customers in a completely online manner.
Note: Now, Customers can get overdraft facility up to Rs. 15 lakhs for a year anytime anywhere using the Internet/mobile banking. The '**InstaOD**' facility will enable online loan processing, instant disbursement with no collateral requirement, pre -payment or foreclosure charges.
8. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has imposed a monetary penalty of **Rs. 40 lakhs** on State Bank of India (SBI) for non-compliance of its directions on detection and impounding of counterfeit notes.
Note: The penalty seemed warranted and substantiated considering the bank's reply and oral submissions. Earlier, RBI had imposed monetary penalties on Axis Bank for violation of non-performing asset classification norms and Indian Overseas Bank for not complying with the KYC regulations.
9. The union government has made providing passport details mandatory for taking loans of **50 crore rupees & above**.
Note: The main aim of this decision is to ensure a swift action in case of fraud and prevent fraudsters from fleeing the country. Now for all existing loans of over 50 crore rupees, banks have been asked to collect passport details of borrowers within 45 days.
10. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has cut down the charges for non-maintenance of average minimum balance in its savings accounts by up to 75%.
Note: Now, the customers in metro and urban centers will have to pay Rs 15 per month plus GST (Earlier Rs 50 per month plus GST). For semi-urban centers, the charges have been reduced from Rs 40 to Rs 12 per month plus GST. The lender has 41 crore savings bank accounts, out of

which 16 crore accounts under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna.

- 11. The Reserve Bank of India** has decided to discontinued Letters of Undertaking (LoUs) and Letters of Comfort (LoCs) for Trade Credits.

Note: The Letters of Credit will be continued to be issued subject to compliance with the provisions contained in Department of Banking Regulation Master Circular on 'Guarantees and Co-acceptances' dated July 1, 2015.

- 12.** Inflation based on wholesale prices eased to a seven-month low in February -- **2.48%**.

Note: Inflation in vegetables softened with annual inflation at 15.26% as against 40.77% in January. According to a government data, inflation in food articles slowed to 0.88% in February from 3% in the preceding month. As per the data, inflation in 'fuel and power' segment too eased to 3.81% compared to 4.08%

- 13.** The world bank has projected India's GDP growth for the next financial year at -- **7.3%**.

Note: The World Bank's biannual publication, India Development Update: India's Growth Story, expects the economy to clock a growth rate of 6.7% in the current fiscal ending 31st March. The World Bank forecasts global economic growth to edge up to 3.1% in 2018.

- 14.** According to Commerce Secretary Rita Teaoitia, India's exports grew by 4.5% in February-2018 to **25.8 billion Dollar**

Note: During April to February period of the current fiscal, exports recorded a growth of 11% to \$273 billion. Imports also rose by 10.4% to \$37.8 billion during the last month.

- 15. Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** has issued a **Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework** to maintain sound financial health of banks

Note: It facilitates banks in breach of risk thresholds for identified areas of monitoring including capital, and profitability to take corrective measures in a timely manner. The framework is not intended to constrain the performance of normal operations of the banks for the general-public.

- 16.** The **Axis Bank** had opened a representative **office in Sharjah** to promote the bank's retail products and services to non-resident Indians (NRIs).

Note: This representative office is the third such Axis Bank office in the UAE after Dubai and Abu Dhabi. Sharjah has an estimated 650,000 NRIs residing in the emirate. With-in India, the bank has 3,589 domestic branches

(including extension counters), and 13,977 ATMs across the country.

- 17.** The **India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation (IMGC)** have signed a pact with **State Bank of India (SBI)** to offer mortgage guarantee scheme for prospective non-salaried and self-employed home loan customers.

Note: Under this product applicant can avail higher finance based on risk grade of the borrower, by opting for IMGIC default guarantee cover. IMGIC is a joint venture between National Housing Bank, Genworth Inc International Finance Corporation and Asian Development Bank.

- 18.** The flagship company of Muthoot Group has tied up with Global IME Bank to expand its money remittance services between Indo Nepal Corridor -- **Muthoot Finance**.

Note: Muthoot Finance is the only NBFC to extend the money transfer services from India to Nepal.

- 19.** The Reserve Bank of India had imposed a monetary penalty of Rs. 58.9 crore on -- **ICICI Bank Limited**.

Note: The penalty was imposed for violating norms relating to the sale of government securities from the held-to-maturity category of its bonds portfolio. This penalty has been imposed in the exercise of powers vested with the RBI under the provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, taking into account failure of the bank to adhere to its directions/guidelines.

- 20.** The HDFC Bank has signed an agreement with the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) under which the bank will facilitate a host of services to the public procurement portal for Central and state government organizations.

- 21.** The Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) has launched the pensioner's portal -- **www.epfindia.gov.in**. **Note:** The enhanced "Track eKYC" has also been launched to check the status of Aadhaar seeded against their UAN. EPFO assists the Central Board in administering a compulsory contributory Provident Fund Scheme, a Pension Scheme and an Insurance Scheme for the workforce engaged in the organized sector in India.

- 22.** The **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** has constituted a task force to review the Income Tax Act, 1961 and to draft a new Direct Tax Law in consonance with the economic needs of the country.

Note: The Finance Ministry has also sought suggestions and feedback from stakeholders and general-public in the format provided on the departmental website. The format can be downloaded from the website and suggestions

may be sent through e-mail at rewriting-itact@gov.in. by 2nd April,2018.

23. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has allowed the amalgamation of its wholly own subsidiary 'All Bank Finance Ltd (ABFL)' with the lender -- **Allahabad Bank**.
Note: In December 2016, the bank's board had already approved the proposed merger. The ABFL offers a basket of fee-based financial services such as trusteeship services, investment advisory & portfolio management services, distribution of Mutual Funds schemes and other corporate services.
24. The Export-Import Bank '**Exim Bank**' will provide a **USD 500 million credit facility** to Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to fund various development projects in western-south Africa.
Note: Now, Bank has extended four LoCs to the Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) of West African States, taking the total value of LOCs to USD 1,000

million. The LoC of USD 500 million is an umbrella limit for financing developmental projects in 15-member countries.

25. The Ministry of Finance has approved Government guarantee of Rs. 5,000 cores in the current fiscal year for Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) bonds to be subscribed by -- **Life Insurance Corporation (LIC)**.
Note: The guarantee fee for the amount has also been waived by the Finance Ministry. Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) is a finance arm of the Indian Railway. It raises financial resources for expansion and running through capital markets and other borrowings.
26. The stock market regulator Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has allowed physical settlement of both stock options and stock futures.
Note: At present only cash settlement of derivatives is allowed.

Obituaries

1. Eminent Odia writer **Kanakalata Mohanty** passed away due to old age-related problems.
Note: Mohanty is the author of 12 novels and more than 100 short stories. Her novels Ete Andhara, Kete Jwala and Anuradha shot her into the limelight in the 1960s.
2. Veteran **Bollywood** actor **Shammi** passed away after prolonged illness.
Note: Shammi acted in movies like Jab Jab Phool Khile, Preet Na Jane Reet, Aamne - Saamne, Upkar, Ittefaq and many others. Her perfect comic timing in TV shows like 'Dekh Bhai Dekh', Zabaan Sambhal Ke, Shriman Shrimati and others brought smiles to many faces.
3. The Tripura Fisheries and Cooperation minister **Khagendra Jamataia** passed away in New Delhi.
Note: Jamatia had joined CPI (M) in 1983 and had been winning from Krishnapur constituency since 1988.
4. The renowned litterateur Prafulla Das has passed away, he belonged to __**Odisha**.
Note: Das had written a number of books on the history of India's freedom struggle.
5. The famous sufi singer **Pyare Lal Wadali** passed away.
Note: He was the younger brother of Ustad Puran Chand Wadali and one of the renowned singers of popularly known 'Wadali Brothers'. Wadali Brothers are famous for their Punjabi Sufi music.
6. Former Maharashtra minister and Senior Congress leader **Patangrao Kadam** passed away due to illness.
Note: He was great educationist and founder of several educational institutes, including the Bharati Vidyapeeth at Pune.
7. World-renowned physicist passed away in Cambridge -- **Stephen William Hawking**.
Note: He was known for his work with black holes, relativity and wrote several popular science books including 'A Brief History of Time' in 1988. He was still able to communicate using a single cheek muscle attached to a speech-generating device. His life story was the subject of the 2014 film The Theory of Everything, starring Eddie Redmayne.
8. Noted Hindi film and television actor **Narendra Jha** passed away.
Note: The actor best is known for his performances in films such as "Raees", "Kaabil" and "Haider". He worked with iconic filmmakers like Shyam Benegal in the film Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose: The Forgotten Hero.
9. Pulitzer Prize Winner Journalist **Les Payne** passed away at his home in Harlem, USA.
Note: The Pulitzer Prize (established in 1917) is a yearly award (21-categories) for achievements in newspaper, magazine and online journalism, literature, and musical composition in the United States. The winner in the public

service category of the journalism competition is awarded a gold medal.

10. Former Manipur Chief Minister **R K Dorendra Singh** passed away.

Note: He was the Chief Minister of Manipur state four times between 1974 to 1993.

11. Noted Malayalam writer passed away in Thiruvananthapuram -- **M Sukumaran**.

Note: Sukumaran was the recipient of the Kendra Sahitya Akademi and Keral Sahitya awards in 2006 and 1976. His short stories 'Sangaganam' and 'Unarthupattu' have been made into films.

12. Renowned Hindi poet & Jnanpith awardee passed away in Delhi-- **Kedarnath Singh**.

Note: He was a professor and head of the Department of Hindi department at Jawaharlal Nehru University's Indian Language centre.

New Appointments

1. Armenian lawmakers elected as the new president of Armenia -- **Armen Sarkisian**.

Note: He will succeed Serzh Sarkisian. The political shift comes after President Sarkisian in 2015 initiated controversial constitutional amendments to turn the impoverished Moscow-allied country into a parliamentary republic with a powerful Prime Minister.

2. **Conrad Sangma** sworn-in as **Meghalaya Chief Minister**.

Note: National People's Party (NPP) President 'Conrad Sangma' was administered the oath of office and secrecy as 12th Chief Minister by Governor Ganga Prasad at Raj Bhavan in Shillong. Conrad Sangma is the son of former Lok Sabha Speaker late PA Sangma. Currently, Mr. Sangma is the Member of Parliament(MP), Lok Sabha from Tura Parliamentary constituency.

3. The union govt. has set up eight members steering committee to consider various issues relating to the development of Fintech space in India -- **Subhash Chandra Garg**.

Note: The Committee will take stock of the developments in the fintech sector globally, and in India. It will also work with Government agencies like UIDAI to explore creation and use of unique enterprise identification number.

4. The new president of Republic of Armenia -- **Armen Sarkisian**.

Note: Sarkisian will succeed Serzh Sarkisian and will assume the presidency in 9th April, 2018.

5. The first woman officer to be inducted as the first direct-entry combat officer in Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) -- **Prakriti**.

Note: She has a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and now based in an ITBP unit in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh.

6. Indian-origin personality has been appointed as official ambassador of UK skills -- **Sanjeev Gupta**.

Note: Gupta was appointed to the flagship programme to give children and young people the direct structured experience of the industry at school or college level.

7. **Biplab Kumar Deb** sworn in as the Tripura's Chief Minister (10th).

Note: Jishnu Deb Burman, a member of the royal family, took oath as the Deputy CM of the State. Tripura's Governor Tathagata Roy administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr. Deb and his council of ministers in a ceremony at Assam Rifles ground in Agartala. The BJP alliance in the north-eastern state has won 43 out of the 60 assembly seats, ending nearly 25 years of the Left rule in Tripura.

8. The new Special Director in the Enforcement Directorate (ED) by the government -- **Mr. Vivek R Wadekar**.

Note: The ED is the central investigative agency (under the finance ministry) that enforces the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) in the country.

9. Indian Cricketer **Virat Kohli** has been named first Brand Ambassador of the Uber in India.

Note: Uber is a cab-hailing startup headquartered in San Francisco, California, United States. For the first time, Uber has roped any brand ambassador across the Asia Pacific region.

10. **Suresh Prabhu** has been given additional charge of the Civil Aviation Ministry.

Note: The decision was taken after the resignation of TDP's Ashok Gajapathi Raju was accepted by President Ram Nath Kovind.

11. Nepal's first woman president has been re-elected for a second term in office -- **Bidya Devi Bhandari**.

Note: She became Nepal's first woman president in 2015. The President of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is the head of state of Nepal and commander in chief of the Nepalese Armed Forces.

12. **Sitanshu Kar** will be the new head of the Press Information Bureau (PIB).

- Note:** He will take charge as PIB head on 1st May 2018. Presently, he is the director general of All India Radio (AIR)'s News Services Division (NSD).
13. Indian govt. has nominated Padma Shri awardee former Director NCERT **Prof. J S Rajput** as India's representative to the Executive Board (EXB) of UNESCO.
Note: The executive board is one of the constitutional organs of UNESCO examines the work of the organization, elected by the General Conference. The EXB has a four-year term of office and 58 seats.
14. Former director of National Centre for Biological Sciences **K Vijay Raghavan** has been appointed as the principal scientific adviser for three years to the govt. of India.
Note: He will succeed nuclear physicist Rajagopala Chidambaram. The Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA) is the one of the three scientific bodies advisor to the government of India on all matters related to science policy. The other two are Science Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (SAC-PM) and Science Advisory Council to the Cabinet (SAC-C).
15. **Abiye Ahmed** has been elected Ethiopia's new Prime Minister.
Note: Earlier, he served as the head of OPDO Secretariat and Oromia Housing and Urban Development Office with the title of Deputy President of Oromia Region. Ethiopia is the most populous landlocked country in the world and the second-most populous nation on the African continent.
16. Former diplomat of United States **Rosemary DiCarlo** appointed as the Chief of UN Political Affairs.
Note: She became the first woman to head UN political affairs, one of the most high-profile positions at the world body. She will succeed American Jeffrey Feltman who held the post of under-secretary-general for political affairs since 2012.
17. The Deputy Election Commissioner of India -- **Chandra Bhushan Kumar**.
Note: Chandra Bhushan Kumar is a 1995 batch IAS officer of union territories cadre, has been appointed to the post for five years. The current Chief Election Commissioner of India is Om Prakash Rawat. Under Chief Election Commissioner, there are two Election Commissioner – Sunil Arora and Ashok Lavasa.
18. Former US Ambassador to the United Nations (UN) **John R Bolton** will be the new National Security Adviser to President Donald Trump.
- Note:** He will replace Lt Gen H R McMaster. The National Security Advisor (NSA) is a senior aide in the Executive Office of the President, who serves as the chief in-house advisor to the President of the United States on national security issues.
19. **Indu Bhushan** has been appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission (ABNHPM) for two years.
Note: The scheme has the benefits cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year. Bhushan holds a Ph.D. in Economics and Master of Health Sciences from Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore.
20. **Xi Jinping** has been re-elected as President of China for a second five-year tenure.
Note: He has been also elected as the head of the powerful Central Military Commission (high command of the Chinese military). Wang Qishan has been elected as vice president, with 2969, one vote less in the carefully choreographed poll.
21. American-trained economist will be the China's new central bank Governor--**Yi Gang**.
Note: According to the Wall Street Journal (WSJ), the nomination of Yi's was reviewed by the nearly 3,000 delegates attending the National People's Congress. His appointment to the top post at the People's Bank of China (PBOC) was set to be approved when the legislature reconvenes.
22. Myanmar's President resigned after two years in the position -- **Htin Kyaw**.
Note: The President of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar is the head of state and the head of government of Myanmar and heads the Cabinet of Myanmar.
23. The next Ambassador of India to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea -- **Atul M. Gotsurve**.
Note: Currently, Mr. Gotsurve is serving as the Director in the Ministry of External Affairs.
24. Mauritius President has resigned after being embroiled in a financial scandal, the use of a credit card to buy luxury personal item, provided by an NGO -- **Ameenah Gurib-Fakim**
Note: Africa's only female head of the state, Gurib-Fakim is an internationally renowned scientist and biologist.
25. Russian President **Vladimir Putin** stormed to victory in presidential election.
Note: Putin won more than 75% of the vote according to preliminary results. The President of the Russian Federation is the elected head of state, Supreme

- Commander-in-Chief, and holder of the highest office in the Russian Federation.
26. Bihar Governor **Satya Pal Malik** has been given additional charge as the Governor of -- **Odisha**.
Note: Dr. SC Jamir, who is the present Odisha governor, is completing his tenure.
27. **Lt. Gen Harpal Singh** has been appointed as the Director General Border Roads (DGBR).
Note: Earlier, he was holding the appointment of Director General Military Training at IHQ of MoD (Army). The Border Roads Organization (BRO) develops and maintains road networks in India's border areas & friendly neighboring countries. The BRO operates and maintains over 32,885 kilometers of roads and about 12,200 meters of permanent bridges in the country.
28. Myanmar's Parliament has elected as the country's next President -- **Win Myint**.
Note: The President of Myanmar is the head of state and the head of government of Myanmar and heads the Cabinet of Myanmar.
29. Egyptian President re-elected for the second term -- **Abdel Fattah el-Sisi**.
Note: He was elected to a four-year presidential term in 2014. Sisi overthrew Islamist president Mohammed Morsi in 2013 following mass protests against his rule.
30. The chairman of the central panel of the 65th National Film Awards(NFA) -- **Shekhar Kapur**
Note: The central panel comprises a chairperson and 10 other members, including 5 regional chairpersons who head the respective regional panels.

Honor & Awards

1. Indian film actor turned politician **Shatrughan Sinha** has been honored with a lifetime achievement award for his contribution to the fields of arts and politics.
Note: The annual Political and Public Life Awards instituted by Britain's Asian Voice weekly newspaper was presented at a ceremony in the UK's Parliament complex in London. Sinha has to his credit over 225 Hindi feature films besides several in other Indian languages.
2. The best actress award at the 90th Academy Awards 2018 -- **Frances McDormand**.
Note: She performed as a grieving mother in movie "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri".
3. The first Indian woman from the field of law and justice to be conferred the 'Nari Shakti Puraskar' -- **Gita Mittal**.
Note: The Delhi High Court Acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal has become the first woman from the field of law and justice to be conferred the 'Nari Shakti Puraskar'.
4. The first-ever Indian architect to win the Pritzker Architecture Prize -- **Balkrishna Doshi**.
Note: He is the first Indian architect to be awarded the prize. Doshi is widely known for designing extensive low-cost housing projects and public institutions. The laureate receives USD 100,000 and also a bronze medallion.
5. India won the Best Exhibitor Award at ITB-Berlin World Tourist Meet in **Berlin**.
Note: A short film named "Yogi of the Racetrack" India's Incredible was presented by India during the meet. The short film got 3.2 million hits in 60 hours.
6. Canadian mathematician **Robert Langlands** has won the Abel Prize-2018 for his visionary programme connecting representation theory to number theory.
Note: Langlands has received the financial award of USD 776,000 from Norway's King Harald V at an award ceremony in Oslo. The Abel prize has been awarded annually since 2003 to one or more outstanding mathematicians in memory of the Norwegian mathematics genius Niels Henrik Abel.
7. The G.K. Reddy Memorial National Award -2017 for journalism -- **Karan Thapar**.
Note: G. K. Reddy was an Indian journalist that attained national and international acclaim for his articles and news stories. In his memory, the G. K. Reddy Memorial Award for Outstanding Journalism was established by T. Subbarami Reddy.
8. **South Asian Cinema Foundation (SACF)** has won the Frederick Pincott Award for 2017.
Note: The award was given by the Indian High Commissioner, Y K Sinha for promoting Hindi cinema in Britain for the last 18 years. The SACF was set up in London in January 2000 by PK Nair (film archivist), Derek Malcolm (film critic) and Kusum Pant Joshi (social historian-researcher).
9. The National 'Water Digest Award' to the state Department for Water Conservation-Diversion and increasing the irrigation capacity in the State -- **Chhattisgarh Water Resources Department**.
Note: The Award presented every year by the globally renowned magazine 'Water Digest', which focuses mainly on water resources.
10. **Justice Jawad Rahim** has been appointed as the acting chairperson of the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)**.
Note: He will discharge his duties until a regular appointment is made and will take part in the selection

process of other members of the NGT. National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 (NGT) is an Act of the Parliament of India which enables the creation of a special tribunal to handle the expeditious disposal of the cases pertaining to environmental issues.

11. Sreekumaran Thampi honored with the J.C. Daniel Award for recognition of his sterling contributions to the Malayalam film industry.

Note: He was honoured C. Daniel Award is a top film award of the Kerala government.

12. Indian Council of Medical Research(ICMR) won the 2017 Kochon Prize for TB research.

Note: The award comprises prize money worth USD 65,000. Kochon Prize is awarded annually by Stop TB Partnership to individuals or organizations that have made a significant contribution to combating tuberculosis.

13. According to sixth World Happiness Report-2018, in 156 countries by their happiness levels, India ranks at **133rd rank.**

Note: Burundi (East Africa) is the unhappiest place in the world and Pakistan (75th), China (86th) and Nepal (101st). The World Happiness Report is published as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Solution Network. It ranks countries on various quality of life parameters like social support, GDP per capita, health-life expectancy, freedom, generosity and absence of corruption.

14. India Post paid tribute to theoretical physicist and cosmologist by issuing a special cover on him-- **Stephen Hawking.**

Note: The postal department is paying tribute to the legendary scientist by releasing the special cover in all its 22 Circles.Hawking passed away at the age of 76 on 14th March in his home in Cambridge in the United Kingdom.

15. Indian film **Halkaa** has bagged the Grand Prix de Montreal at the gala.

Note: Halkaa was selected among seven international children's films from different countries in the official competition of the festival.The film is a take on a slum child's heroism, aspirations, and dreams.The film stars child actor Tathastu, Ranvir Shorey and Paoli Dam.

16. NITI Aayog has released comprehensive roadmaps and detailed timelines for its initiative Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E) project in New Delhi.

Note: It will introduce system-wide governance transformation in School Education. The roadmaps will operate between 2018 to 2020.

17. The Sri Lankan Cricket(SLC) paid tribute to the former BCCI President 'Jagmohan Dalmiya' with a **book --A Ribute to Jagu.**

Note: The joint secretary of Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) Mr. Avishek (Dalmiya's son) received the memorial book.

Important News – India

1. The Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has launched a mobile App and Toll-free Emergency number for Highway users in New Delhi -- **'Sukhad Yatra App' & 1033.**

Note: Sukhad Yatra mobile application has been prepared by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to empower Highway user. **Toll-free number (1033)** will enable users to report an emergency condition and highway-related feedback.

2. Discover the methane gas flares and active cold seeps from the seabed in the Krishna Godavari basin in the Bay of Bengal-- **CSIR-National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa.**

Note: The discovery was made by a team of scientists from CSIR-NIO during an exercise undertaken in January-February 2018.The seep sites are distributed over a water depth of 900 metres to 1,900 metres. These sites are characterized by high concentrations of hydrogen sulphide, calcium carbonate, unique faunal groups and shallow presence of methane hydrates.

3. Information and Broadcasting minister Smriti Irani has released a book in print and online versions-- **India-2018.**

Note: The Books published by the Publications Division. It is an exhaustive publication dealing with all aspects of the country's development.

4. The registration for annual two months Yatra **Amarnath Yatra** has begun through 440 branches of Punjab National Bank, Jammu and Kashmir Bank and YES Bank across the country.

Note: The pilgrimage will start on the 28th of June this year via both Baltal and Pahalgam routes. Any person below the age of 13 years or above 75 years, pregnant women and medically unfit people are barred for taking pilgrimage in south Kashmir.

5. The Women and Child Development Ministry has approved projects worth over Rs 2,900 crore under the fund for eight major cities to make them safer for women --**Nirbhaya fund.**

- Note:** These cities are Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, and Lucknow.
6. The Andaman Nicobar command is organizing biennial get-together of foreign navies at Port -- '**Milan-2018**'.
Note: The theme of the Milan is friendship across the seas. During multilateral Exercise at sea with an aim to enhance regional cooperation for combating Unlawful Activities at sea will be organized. This prestigious international event will also see participation of 38 delegates from the sixteen participating countries.
 7. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) has invited suggestions on rationalizing curriculum to ensure all round development of students of -- **class 1 to 12th**.
Note: The objective of seeking suggestions is to make the content more balanced in various subjects offered as prescribed by the NCERT and CBSE.
 8. As per Global Fire Power Index (GFPI-2017), India's rank in the world in terms of military power-- **4th**.
Note: There are 133 countries included in the Global Firepower (GFP) list 2017 on the basis of their global military powers. Pakistan ranked 13th in the Global Firepower (GFP) list 2017
 9. The National Film Archives of India (NFAI) will organize a Women's Film Festival at **Pune**.
Note: The theme of the 9th edition of the festival is Travelling Women. The festival will feature other acclaimed films including Away We Go, Under the Tuscan Sun, and Wild.
 10. The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises ministry has launched Portal for women entrepreneurs of India-- **Udyam Sakhi**.
Note: The portal is a network for nurturing social entrepreneurship and creating business models for low cost products and services in order to empower women and make them self-sufficient.
 11. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the pan-India expansion of flagship programme "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" from -- **Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan**.
Note: The programme has been expanded from the present 161 districts to 640 all over the country. Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) is a social campaign of the Government of India launched on 22nd January 2015, aims to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls.
 12. Animal Welfare Board of India headquarters shifted to -- **Ballabgarh, Haryana**.
 - Note:** The Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) is a statutory advisory body **established in 1962 under Section-4 of The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960**. It frames a range of rules on how animals ought to be humanely treated everywhere.
 13. The city to host the 2018 National Legislators Conference -- **New Delhi**.
Note: The purpose of the Conference is to provide a platform to Members of Parliament, Members of Legislative Assemblies and Members of Legislative Councils across the country to share their experiences. The theme of the conference is — "We For Development".
 14. The country's first state-led incubator for women entrepreneurs launched in **Telangana**.
Note: 'WE-Hub' is India's first state-led incubator exclusively for women entrepreneurs. It is a business platform for aspiring women from rural and urban backgrounds helping them achieve being independent and overcome the societal barriers.
 15. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron inaugurated the 75 MW solar power plant in -- **Mirzapur**.
Note: It is the largest solar power plant in Uttar Pradesh. The solar power plant has been built in the with French solar power giant Engie Solar at Dadar Kalan village in Mirzapur. The plant will generate 15.6 crore units of electricity annually, about 1.30 crore units per month.
 16. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the TB-free India Campaign to take the activities under the National Strategic Plan for TB Elimination by -- **2025**.
Note: TB is responsible for 1.7 million deaths in 2016, despite most cases being curable while over 10 million people contract TB every year. The summit will set the stage for United Nations High-Level Meeting on TB in September this year.
 17. The Union Home Ministry Country's has approved to set up the country's first Coastal Policing Academy in **Gujarat**.
Note: This will be India's first institution to safeguard the nation's shoreline. The National Academy of Coastal Policing (NACP) will start functioning from April 2018. The NACP will be managed by a multi-agency team of paramilitary and defence forces.
 18. The union govt. has constituted a three-member Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal for the dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over sharing the river's water -- **Justice AM Khanwilkar**.

19. The two-day Asia-Pacific Regional Conference of the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP) in **New Delhi**.
Note: The theme of the conference is "Challenges to Policing in 2020 - How is Cyber Space shaping our approach to Cybercrime and Terrorism, how do we perform within it and take advantage of it".
20. India's tallest national flag has been unfurled in -- **Belagavi, Karnataka**.
Note: The 110 m tall flag post at Kote Kere is near the historic Belagavi fort in the city. It is taller than the post in Pune (107 m) and the one at the India-Pakistan border at Attari (105 m) in Punjab.
21. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the proposal of Department of Fertilizers to continue Urea Subsidy Scheme up to -- **2019-20**.
Note: A total estimated cost of Rs. 1,64,935 crores and for disbursement of fertilizer subsidy. This decision implies that there will be no increase in price of urea, till 2020. Urea Subsidy is a part of Central Sector Scheme of Department of Fertilizers with effect from 1st April, 2017 and is wholly financed by the Government of India through Budgetary Support.
22. The annual 'Krishi Unnati Mela' was held at the Indian Agricultural Research institute in -- **New Delhi**.
Note: The main objective of the Mela is to create awareness among farmers about the latest agriculture-related technological developments. The main theme pavilion will be based on Doubling of farmers income by 2022.
23. The Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** has inaugurated the 105th session of Indian Science Congress in ____ **Imphal, Manipur**.
Note: The theme of this year's edition of the Science Congress is "Reaching the Unreached through Science and Technology".
24. **Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC)** is organizing fortnight long camps across the country to fast-track GST refunds to exporters.
Note: GST was rolled out across the country from 1st of July last year. The CBEC has already given refunds to the tune of 5 thousand crore rupees but as much as 70 per cent of total refunds to exporters is still stuck.
25. The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) has launched a mobile app on the occasion of its 33rd Inception **Day -- Citizen Services**.
Note: The application has been developed in-house by the NCRB. The application comprises a bouquet of 9 essential police related services for the citizen.
26. **NITI Aayog** has released comprehensive roadmaps and detailed timelines for its initiative Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E) project in New Delhi.
Note: It will introduce system-wide governance transformation in School Education. The roadmaps will operate between 2018 to 2020.
27. Patiala court of Punjab has awarded a two-year prison sentence to Punjabi pop singer for 2003 human trafficking case-- **Daler Mehndi**.
Note: The court found him & his brother Shamsher Mehndi (died last year) guilty of taking ten people to the United States 20 years ago as part of their singing troupe, in return for money.
28. The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has launched a mobile application for airport passengers -- **Lost and Found**.
Note: The objective of this mobile app is that the passengers can directly register complaints and get status of their complaint immediately from the airports under CISF security cover. The CISF guards 59 civil airports across the country.
29. Five-day Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship and present Gandhian Young Technological Innovation awards at -- **Rashtrapati Bhavan New Delhi**.
Note: The festival is an initiative to recognise, respect, showcase, reward innovations and to foster a supportive ecosystem for innovators. It is being organised by Rashtrapati Bhavan in association with the Department of Science and Technology & the National Innovation Foundation-India.
30. The 106th edition of the Indian Science Congress will be held next year at the -- **Barkatullah University, Bhopal**.
Note: The theme of the 106th Indian Science Congress will be "Future India: Science and Technology". Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA) is a premier scientific organization of India with headquarters at Kolkata, West Bengal.
31. The chief of the Army Staff 'General Bipin Rawat' has released a book on Paramveer Chakra Awardee -- **Paramveer Parwane**.
Note: The book is written by Dr. Prabhakaran Jain and published by 'Medha Books'. The book illustrates the

- bravery of Paramveer Chakra Awardees from 1947 to 1965.
- 32.** The University Grant Commission (UGC) has accorded autonomy to higher education institutions -- **60**.
Note: In Sixty institutions (Central Universities-5, State Universities-21, deemed-24, Private Universities-2 and colleges-8), have been granted autonomy under the Autonomous Colleges Regulation.
- 33.** Third edition of National Conclave on Mines and Minerals held in -- **New Delhi**.
Note: The conclave will provide an effective platform to showcase the recent policy initiatives of the government. The first edition of the conclave was held at Raipur (in July, 2016), while the second took place in New Delhi (February 2017).
- 34.** The first National workshop to implement the campaign in a fast track mode across the country held in New Delhi __ **Poshan Abhiyaan**
Note: The workshop will provide a complete orientation on the campaign to provide handholding in using the software involved and to augment the convergence with different Ministries in implementing the campaign for improved Nutritional outcomes.
- 21.** The world's largest solar park has launched in the state -- **Karnataka**.
Note: The Karnataka government has launched the world's largest solar park 'Shakti Sthalaon' at Pavagada in Tumakuru district.
- 22. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)** has introduced billing through Point of Sale (POS) hand-held machines in trains to check overcharging by vendors.
Note: This will help not only making passengers aware of relevant information but also in improving the passenger satisfaction. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) is a subsidiary of the Indian Railways that handles the catering, tourism and online ticketing operations of the Indian railways.
- 23.** The Air India has introduced a direct thrice a week flight from New Delhi to **Tel Aviv, Israel**.
Note: It will be a new beginning in the people-to-people contact and diplomatic ties between India and Israel. The Air India will be operating its 256-seater Boeing 787 Dreamliner on this route.
- 24.** The Union Cabinet has approved the launch of National Health Protection mission -- **Ayushman Bharat**.
Note: The Scheme has the benefits cover of 5 lakh rupees per family per year. A beneficiary will be allowed to take cashless benefits from any public and private empaneled hospitals across the country. The scheme will subsume the ongoing centrally sponsored schemes- Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana and senior citizen health insurance scheme.
- 25.** The union govt has declared 2018 as National Year of -- **Millets**.
Note: To boost the cultivation of millets like 'ragi and jowar' on a mission mode to achieve nutritional security. Millet cultivation has declined due to change in dietary habits and unavailability of millets.
- 26.** The Union Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot has launched the first Indian Sign Language (ISL) of three thousand words Dictionary in -- **New Delhi**.
Note: The basic aim of developing the ISL Dictionary is to remove communications barriers between the deaf and hearing communities as it is focused on providing more information in Indian sign language. The Dictionary has been developed by Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre under Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
- 27.** The three-day International Yoga Fest ended on an enthusiastic note in **New Delhi**.
Note: More than 5,700 delegates from across the country and abroad participated in the Fest. According to the AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik, Yoga is useful in combating these disorders and shows that science and spirituality need not always be treated as separate entities.
- 28.** The 7th India-Egypt Joint Commission was held in **New Delhi**.
Note: India and Egypt are two world's oldest civilizations reviewed the progress in the areas of political, trade & investment, S&T, cybersecurity, capacity building, security, space, and culture.
- 29.** The first-ever international exhibition of graphic prints 'Print Biennale India - 2018' has begun in **New Delhi**.
Note: The event has been organized by Lalit Kala Akademi, to discover new artistic trends in printmaking nationally and internationally. Artists across the world have sent their works and are showcasing their artwork in this international exhibition.
- 30.** The Union minister has inaugurated 'Saras Aajeevika Mela' at -- **Pragati Maidan, New Delhi**.
Note: The stalls will display the skills, potential and hard work of our women from across India. The products range from handlooms, handicrafts, artifacts and heritage products, tribal ornaments, decorative items, metallic

products, earthen utensils, paintings, organic food items, spices, processed food products, soft toys, utility items, brass and wrought iron products.

- 31. India** has become world's third largest electricity producer.

Note: India is the third largest producer and consumer of electricity in the world with the generation of 1,423 BU, behind China (6,015 BU) and the United States (4,327 BU). According to India Brand Equity Foundation (IBEF)

February 2018 report, Electricity production stood at 1,003.525 Billion Unit between April 2017- Jan2018.

- 32. Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL)** has won an order for setting up a 75 MW Solar Photovoltaic (SPV) power plant in Gujarat, against stiff international bidding.

Note: This is the organization's largest solar PV project till date. The company is presently executing over 150 MW of ground-mounted and rooftop Solar PV projects across the country.

Important Day

1. The World Wildlife Day has been observed across the world on **3rd March**.

Note: The theme of 2018 is "Big cats: predators under threat". The day is celebrated and implemented by the secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), in collaboration with other relevant United Nations organizations.

2. The International Women's Day (IWD) is being celebrated on **8th March**.

Note: The UN Women's theme for 2018 is "The Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives". It is a day when women are recognized for their achievements without regard to divisions, whether national, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, economic, or political.

3. The World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated globally on **15th March**.

Note: The theme for this year is 'Making Digital Marketplaces Fairer'. The first World Consumer Rights Day was observed in 1983 and become an important occasion for mobilizing citizen action. In India, we also observe the National Consumer Day on 24th of December every year.

4. The 'International Day of Happiness' is celebrated throughout the world on -- **20th March**.

Note: The day was founded by United Nations adviser 'Jayme Illien' on June 28, 2012. The World Happiness Report 2018, ranks 156 countries by their happiness levels, and 117 countries by the happiness of their immigrants.

5. International Day of Forests being observed on -- **21st March**

Note: The theme of 2018 is 'Forests and Sustainable Cities'. This global celebration of forests provides a platform to raise awareness of the importance of all types of woodlands, trees, and celebrate the ways in which they sustain and protect us.

6. The World Poetry Day is observed every year on -- **21st March**.

Note: A decision to proclaim 21st March as World Poetry Day was adopted during UNESCO's 30th session held in Paris in 1999.

7. Parsis in India & abroad are celebrating their New year with great enthusiasm -- **Navroz**.

Note: Parsis in Mumbai are visiting nearby Agiaries to offer special Tehveel-e-Navroz prayers on the occasion of Navroz. Nowruz is the day of the vernal equinox and marks the beginning of spring in the Northern Hemisphere.

8. The World Water Day is observed every year on -- **22nd March**.

Note: The theme this year is, 'Nature for Water', exploring nature-based solutions to the water challenges the world faces in the 21st century.

9. The Bihar state has celebrated its 106th foundation day on -- **22nd March**.

Note: The theme for this year's celebrations is "Centenary of Champaran Satyagraha and Elimination of Dowry and Child Marriage". Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu has inaugurated Bihar Diwas celebration in Patna and also released four books 'Ek Tha Mohan', 'Bapu Ki Chiththi', 'Champaran Ki Kahani' and 'Neel Ke Dhabbe' on this occasion.

10. The United Nations' (UN) World Meteorological Day is annually held on -- **23rd March**.

Note: The theme of WMD 2018 is 'Weather-ready, climate-smart'.

11. On their martyrdom day nation is paying tributes to freedom fighters -- **Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev**.

Note: On this day in 1931, British rulers had executed them in Lahore for their revolutionary activities against the British rule. They were hanged a day before the scheduled date of execution.

12. The "World Tuberculosis Day" observed every year on -- **24th March**.

Note: World TB Day is one of eight official global public health campaigns marked by the World Health Organization (WHO). The theme for World Tuberculosis Day 2018 is "Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free world".

13. The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is observed every year on--**25th March**.

Note: The day offer the opportunity to honor and remember those who suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system.The theme of 2018 is "Remember Slavery: Triumphs and Struggles for Freedom and Equality".

14. The World Theatre Day (WTD) is celebrated annually on -- **27th March**.

Note:World Theatre Day was created in 1961 by an international non-governmental organization International Theatre Institute (ITI), France.ITI was founded in 1948 by UNESCO and the international theatre community.

States News

1. 1st Mega Food Park inaugurated in Maharashtra -- **M/s Satara Mega Food Park Pvt. Ltd. at Satara**

Note: This is the 10th Mega Food Park being operationalized in the country and the 8th one operationalized during the tenure of the present government. The Satara Mega Food Park has been set up in 64 acres of land at a cost of Rs. 139.30 crore.

2. The Buddhist Community celebrated the silver jubilee of the Losar Festival in **Arunachal Pradesh**.

Note: For the Buddhist community, the festival is termed as the 'New Year' according to their Buddhist calendar.

3. India's first helicopter taxi service has been launched in **Bengaluru**.

Note: The helicopter will seat up to six people apart from the pilot and the service will cost Rs3,500 plus GST.

4. The world-famous International Yoga Festival (IYF) held in **Rishikesh**.

5. The Union Minister Smriti Zubin Irani inaugurated the FICCI Frames 2018 in **Mumbai**.

Note: She has also released the FICCI-EY Media & Entertainment Report 2018 named 'Re-imagining India's M&E Sector'

6. The state govt. has launched a programme "Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas' in **Odisha**.

Note: This initiative will help people in solving their grievances instantly.

7. Shigmotsav or Shigmo has been organized enthusiastically in **Goa**.

Note: Shigmotsav is one of the several cultural festivals of the coastal state and is celebrated through colours, costumes, music, dance and parades.

8. Microsoft has inked its first-ever renewable energy deal in India -- **Bengaluru**

Note: The agreement will see Microsoft purchase 3 megawatts of solar-powered electricity from Atria Power to help power its new office building in Bangalore.

9. Haryana's first cyber police station has been opened in **Gurugram**.

Note: The cases related to cybercrime and offences would be registered now in the newly opened cyber police station.Also, the cyber station will act as a centralised monitoring station for all kinds of online and tech-related crimes.

10. **Diu** has become the first Union territory of India to run completely on solar power energy.

Note: Diu is a small island and mainland village in West India will now completely run 100 percent on solar power energy. Diu is one of the least populated UTs in India which have a geographical area of only 42 kilometres. The solar power plants have been installed over 50 acres in Diu.

11. The **Madhya Pradesh** government has launched a pension scheme for the single women of the state.

Note: Under the scheme, the pension will be given to all the unmarried women who 50 or above 50 years old.All the women residents of MP who are single will now get the pension after they turn 50 years of age.Later, all such unmarried women will receive a pension on a monthly basis till the time they get married.

12. The **West Bengal** has become the best performing State both in terms of allotting jobs and utilizing funds under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

Note: According to statistics, West Bengal generated more than 28.21 crore work days under the scheme so far in 2017-18 and spent more than Rs. 7,335.31 crores for it.Tamil Nadu occupied the second spot with 22.17 crore work days and spent Rs. 5,981.75 crores.

- 13.** The **Kerala** state govt. has declared Jackfruit as official fruit of the state.
Note: Kerala has been producing around 320 million jackfruits every year. The agricultural office in Ambalavayil in Wayanad will be used as a research station for jackfruit. Jackfruit is also the national fruit of Bangladesh and the state fruit of the Indian states of Tamil Nadu.
- 14.** The **Andhra Pradesh** state govt. has launched 'Naipunya Rathams', multi-utility vehicle to bring technology to the remote corners.
Note: The project will be initially implemented in identified 28 Smart Villages in 13 districts and will be expanded to other Smart Villages in a phased manner. The 'Naipunya Rathams' will facilitate and look to improve digital literacy, digital skills and create an awareness of various government schemes that are underway in the new state of Andhra Pradesh.
- 15.** Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan has launched a unified app for all government services at Kerala's first global digital summit in Kochi -- **M-Kerala**.
Note: Kerala also becomes the state with the largest public Wi-Fi (1000 public hotspots) deployment in the country.
- 16.** The **Assam** state govt. has launched a programme to build one lakh toilets across the state under the 'Swachh Bharat Mission'.
Note: This special scheme will be known as Mission Sambhav (or Mission Possible) and construction works will be completed within 10 days. The state govt. has targeted to make the state Open Defecation Free (ODF) within this year. Five districts in the state have already been declared ODF.
- 17.** The four-day 'Madhavpur Mela' has begun at Madhavpur Ghed in **Porbandar, Gujarat**.
Note: It will showcase for the first time the cultural integration of the North-East with Gujarat. The festival will see a vibrant cultural trail of art, dance, music, poetry, story-telling and folk drama from the North-Eastern States with the aim to integrate the rich cultures of the two regions.
- 18.** Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden has been opened for visitors in **Srinagar (Jammu & Kashmir)**.
Note: It is the largest tulip garden in Asia spread over an area of about 30 hectares. The tulip garden was opened in 2008 with the aim to boost floriculture and tourism in Kashmir Valley.
- 19.** **Airport Authority of India** has signed MoU with the Assam Astate govt to develop villages in Kamrup.
Note: It would provide financial assistance under its CSR initiative of Rs. 4.58 crore for the Kamrup district as per the estimates prepared by the UNDP to improve the resilience of communities around Guwahati Airport.
- 20.** Recently Madhya Pradesh state government has raised the retirement age of state government employees to 62 years from 60 years.
- 21.** The Union Food Processing Industries Minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal has inaugurated the first mega food park at **Roopangarh Village, Ajmer (Rajasthan)**.
Note: The food park is being set up at a cost of over Rs. 113.57 crores and will benefit around 25 thousand farmers in Ajmer as well as neighboring districts.
- 22.** Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal & Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri ceremonially flagged off Delhi Metro's Line from the Metro Bhawan in New Delhi -- **Pink Line**.
Note: The new service will operate on a 21.56 km stretch, taking the total area that Delhi Metro Railway Corporation (DMRC) covers to 250 km.
- 23.** The **Haryana state** Govt has announced to setting up a committee led by state agriculture and farmers welfare minister Om Parkash Dhankhar to discuss the issue with the Delhi govt and the centre.
Note: The MLAs can keep their points in the meeting of the Committee and Delhi government can be approached for constructing separate channels for polluted water instead of allowing the polluted water to flow in the river.
- 24.** Haryana state assembly passes bill proposing death penalty in rape case of girls below -- **12 years**.
Note: Haryana state Assembly has passed "the Criminal Law (Haryana Amendment) Bill -2018" proposing death penalty or rigorous imprisonment of not less than 14 years for rape or gang rape of girls below 12 years. The law also proposes punishment not less than 2 years and up to 7 years in case of assault with intent to outrage the modesty of a girl.
- 25.** The Union minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the 5th Nadi Mahotsava at **Bandrabhan, Madhya Pradesh**.
Note: The two-day mahotsava with various sessions of discussion is taking place for the conservation of Narmada river.
- 26.** The union govt has approved the setting up of a Plastic Park in **Deoghar, Jharkhand**.
Note: The project would be set up at a cost of Rs. 120 crores in an area of 150 acres.

Important News – World

1. Earth Hour is a worldwide movement organized by the **World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)**.
Note: The event is held annually encouraging individuals, communities, and businesses to turn off non-essential electric lights for one hour (from 8:30 to 9:30 pm) on a specific day towards the end of March, as a symbol of commitment to the planet.
2. India receives the first consignment of LNG from the **United States**.
Note: Under the long-term contract of 20 years, Gail will be getting 22-24 shipments per annum till the breakwater is built. Once that is done we will be handling 80-90 ships a year.
3. The 12-day mega annual cultural festival 'India by the Nile' has begun **in Cairo**.
Note: The festival will provide audiences an Indian cultural experience and encourages artistic collaborations between India and Egypt. The festival is organized by the Embassy of India in Egypt and the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture in collaboration with entertainment company Teamwork Arts.
4. India's biggest crude oil supplier by overtaking Saudi Arabia in this financial year -- **Iraq**.
Note: Iraq supplied 38.9 million tonnes (MT) of oil, which was more than 20% of country's oil needs.
5. **China** will build a train line connecting the Iranian port of Bushehr to the rest of the country's railway network.
Note: It will see the group build a 400-kilometer railway line between the Gulf port and the southern city of Shiraz. This would complete the "North-South Railway Corridor" in line with Iran's goal of becoming a transport hub for goods between the Gulf, the Indian subcontinent, Russia and Central Asia.
6. The India-China bilateral trade in 2017 rose by -- **18.63%**.
Note: A rare novelty of the bilateral trade otherwise dominated by the Chinese exports was about 40% increase of Indian exports to China in 2017 totaling to 16.34 billion Dollar.
7. The country hosted the World ATM Congress (WATMC-2018) -- **Spain**.
Note: It is the world's largest international air traffic management (ATM) exhibition and conference attracting thousands of delegates each year.
8. The United States and Israeli military have launched a month-long joint military drill -- **Juniper Cobra 2018**.
Note: Around 2,500 US troops routinely based in Europe have been deployed in Israel and 2,000 Israeli Aerial Defence troops, logistics units, medical forces and other Israel Defense Forces units are participating. The exercise simulates a scenario in which Israel is being attacked on several fronts, including by precision-guided ballistic missiles from Iran.
9. The country to host the first-ever International Solar Alliance (ISA) summit -- **India**.
10. The first-ever multi-nation naval exercise at sea was held at the Andaman sea -- **MILES-18**.
Note: 11 naval ships of 8 countries (Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand) and nine Indian ships participated in the event. The theme of this year event is 'Friendship Across the Seas'.
11. **Russia** successfully launched its new hypersonic Kinzhal missile.
Note: The new missile was launched from a MiG-31 supersonic interceptor Aircraft. The Kinzhal has a strike range of 1,200 miles (2,000km) and can travel at 10 times the speed of sound.
12. **United States** has challenged Indian export subsidies schemes at the World Trade Organization (WTO).
Note: The US Trade Representative (USTR) alleged that through these programmes, India is given exemption from certain duties, taxes, and fees which benefits numerous Indian exporters. These export subsidies provide an unfair competitive advantage to recipients.
13. Prime minister of Slovenian has resigned after the supreme court annulled the result of a September referendum that approved a 1-billion-euro railway project -- **Miro Cerar**.
Note: He will keep the post until a new government formed. Cerar took office in 2014 when his SMC party scored a stunning electoral victory just one month after being created.
14. India's President **Ram Nath Kovind** has inaugurated the World Hindi Secretariat (WHS) in **Port Louis (Mauritius)**.
Note: The main objective of the WHS is to promote Hindi as an international language and further its cause for recognition at the United Nations as an Official Language. The organization was set up by the governments of India and Mauritius to promote Hindi across the world.
15. **Qatar** has announced a 50 million USD donation to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestine Refugees.
Note: Qatar has also announced to continue finance projects implemented by the UNRWA. Qatar is facing a nine-month boycott by its Gulf allies.
16. According to the United Nations Committee for Development Policy, four countries will be recommended

for graduation from the least developed country (LDC) category -- **Bhutan, Kiribati, Sao Tome & Principe and Solomon Islands.**

Note: They are set to move up from the ranks of poorest nations due to their increasing national earning power as well as access to better health care and education. Two more countries, Vanuatu, and Angola, are scheduled for graduation in 2020 and 2021 respectively.

17. Informal world Trade Organization (WTO) ministerial meeting begins in **New Delhi.**

Note: The informal meeting will provide an opportunity for ministers to explore in greater detail the options on different issues for re-invigorating the WTO. This is the second WTO mini-ministerial meeting being hosted by India (first in 2009).

Science & Defense

1. India successfully flight-tested its precision strike weapon at Pokhran test range, Rajasthan--**BrahMos.**

Note: The sleek supersonic cruise missile flies at almost three times the speed of sound, at Mach 2.8. The BrahMos is a medium-range ramjet supersonic cruise missile can be launched from submarine, ships, aircraft, or land. The BrahMos has been developed as a joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of India and the Federal State Unitary Enterprise NPO Mashinostroyeniya (NPOM) of Russia under BrahMos Aerospace.

2. An indigenously built frigate of the Indian Navy has been decommissioned in Mumbai after over three decades of service --**INS Ganga.**

Note: The ship represented a big step forward in the nation's warship building capability. INS Ganga (F22) is a Godavari-class guided-missile frigate of the Indian Navy, built by Mazagon Dock Limited in Mumbai. She was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 30th Dec 1985.

3. The 5th Indo-Kyrgyzstan joint training exercise concluded at Counter Insurgency Jungle Warfare School, Vairengte Mizoram --**Khanjar V.**

Note: The exercise was a success and has taught valuable lessons to the troops of both the countries

Sports News

1. The Head coach of Cricket Australia **Darren Lehmann** announced his resignation.

Note: Cricket Australia slapped one-year bans on Smith and Warner besides announcing a 9-month ban on the 25-year-old opener Bancroft for their involvement in tampering with the cricket ball during the Newlands Test against South Africa.

2. Indian shooter shattered the qualification world record in 10-meter women's air rifle event of the season's first junior ISSF World Cup in Sydney, Australia -- **Elavenil Valarivan.**

Note: Elavenil also combined with Shreya Agrawal and Zeena Khitta to claim the team gold medal.

3. BCCI cleared India speedster of corruption charge -- **Mohammed Shami.**

Note: The BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) cleared India speedster Mohammed Shami's central contract after its Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) exonerated him of corruption charges leveled by his wife 'Hasin Jahan'. Shami has been given a Grade 'B' annual retainership contract (3 crore rupees). He will also be free to play in the Indian Premier League (IPL) for his franchise Delhi Daredevils.

4. The New Zealand captain **Kane Williamson** has become New Zealand's most prolific test century maker, scoring his 18th hundred in cricket test against England.

Note: Now, Williamson has gone to the top of the list for most test centuries. Williamson, Ross Taylor, and the late Martin Crowe shared the record previously with 17 centuries.

5. India's teen shooting sensation **Manu Bhaker** has won individual gold at the ISSF Junior World Cup in Sydney.

6. **Pusarla V Sindhu** has been chosen as the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent for the opening ceremony of Commonwealth Games 2018.

Note: The opening ceremony will be held at the Carrara Stadium in Gold Coast on 4th April. The 2018 Commonwealth Games (or Gold Coast 2018), is an international multi-sport event for members of the Commonwealth that will be held on the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia between 4 to 15 April 2018.

7. **Pankaj Advani** retained the Asian Billiards title in the summit clash of Asian Billiards Championships in Yangon (Myanmar).

Note: Now, Advani remains the reigning Indian, Asian and world champion in billiards for 2017-18. This is Advani's 11th gold medal at the Asian level of cue sports.

8. German racing driver **Sebastian Vettel** has won a dramatic Australian Grand Prix after leapfrogging Lewis Hamilton during a safety car period.
Note: The Australian Grand Prix is a motor race held annually in Australia currently under contract to host Formula One until 2023.
9. India's rising shooter has won a gold medal at the ISSF Junior World Cup in the 25-meter rapid fire pistol event in Sydney, Australia -- **Anish Bhanwala**.
Note: Bhanwala was placed 7th in the same event at the ISSF Senior World Cup.
10. India Under-16 team have won the **Jockey Cup International Youth Invitational Football Tournament** title in Hong Kong.
Note: They defeated Hong Kong by 4-2. Earlier, they had defeated Chinese Taipei (4-0) and Singapore by 3-1.
11. India's duo **Manu Bhaker and Anmol** secured the gold medal in the ISSF Junior World Cup in Sydney, Australia.
Note: The pair won the mixed 10-meter air pistol event with a qualification world record.
12. **Iceland** has announced a diplomatic boycott of the football World Cup in Russia over the poisoning of a former double agent in Britain.
Note: Icelandic leaders will not attend the FIFA World Cup in Russia this summer. The 2018 FIFA World Cup (21st) is a quadrennial international football tournament contested by the men's national teams of the member associations of FIFA. A total of 64 matches will be played in 12 venues located in 11 cities in Russia from 14 June to 15 July 2018.
13. The four-day national level 17th Sub-junior National Wushu Championship has begun in **Jammu**.
Note: The sports event is being organized by the 'Wushu Association of India' in collaboration with J&K State Sports Council. Around 37 teams across the country and 12 boys from Army are participating in the national championship.
14. The World Rapid Chess Champion **Viswanathan Anand** has lifted the Tal Memorial rapid trophy in Moscow.
Note: The win came after an easy final round draw against Boris Gelfand (Israel). The trophy adds to Anand's world rapid title won in Riyadh over two months ago.
15. **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** has restored the **Russian** membership with immediate effect following its suspension from the Winter Olympics at Pyeongchang in South Korea.
Note: A total of 168 Russians competed as part of a neutral OAR team at the Winter Olympics and was the third largest to win 17 medals, including two golds. All the remaining tests on the Olympic Athletes from Russia (OAR) team were found negative. Russia was banned from February's Games by the IOC over state-sponsored doping.
16. **Navjot Kaur** has become the first Indian woman to win a Gold medal at the Senior Asian Wrestling Championships.
Note: She clinched the Gold medal in the 65 kg freestyle category at the tournament being held at Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan. Navjot defeated Japan's Miya Imai, 9-1.
17. The 27th Sultan **Azlan Shah Cup Hockey tournament** begins in -- **Ipoh, Malaysia**.
Note: Six nations (India, hosts Malaysia, defending champions England, Australia, Argentina and Ireland) are taking part in the tournament. The tournament is named after the ninth Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King) of Malaysia, Sultan Azlan Shah, an avid fan of field hockey.
18. Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao has announced a cash prize of 2 crore rupees for Indian gymnast -- **Aruna Reddy**.
Note: First Indian gymnast to win an individual medal at the World Cup. Earlier, Aruna Reddy clinched a bronze medal in women's vault at the Gymnastics World Cup held in Melbourne.
19. India's star wrestler **Vinesh Phogat** has won the Silver Medal in the 50kg Freestyle competition at the Asian Wrestling Championship in Kyrgyzstan.
20. The first Indian woman from the field of law and justice to be conferred the 'Nari Shakti Puraskar' -- **Gita Mittal**.
Note: The Delhi High Court Acting Chief Justice Gita Mittal has become the first woman from the field of law and justice to be conferred the 'Nari Shakti Puraskar'. The Nari Shakti award is presented for exemplary service to the cause of upliftment of women.
21. The football club has clinched the I-League title (2017-18) -- **Minerva Punjab**.
Note: Minerva Punjab FC has won the first I-League tournament (2017-18) after defeating Churchill Brothers in the final at the Tau Devi Lal Stadium in Gurgaon, Haryana.
22. Indian shooter clinched a silver medal in the women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions event at the ongoing ISSF World Cup in Guadalajara, Mexico -- **Anjum Moudgil**.
Note: Former junior world champion Ruijiao Pei (China) has won the Gold Medal. India thus remained on top of the medals tally with eight medals.
23. **Australia** lifted the Sultan Azlan Shah cup 2018 title at Ipoh, Malaysia.
Note: Australia defeated England by a narrow 2-1 margin. India finished at fifth place after defeating Ireland in the classification match.
24. **India B** clinched the 45th edition of the Deodhar Trophy.
Note: Deodhar Trophy was named after Prof. D. B. Deodhar who was known as the Grand Old Man of Indian cricket.
25. **Tejaswin Shankar** created a new National Record to claim the gold medal at the 22nd Federation Cup Senior National Athletics Championships.

- Note:** He broke his own national mark of 2.26m and sets a record at 2.28m. The Delhi boy has now booked his seat for the Commonwealth Games.
26. Former Test opening batsman has been appointed as Cricket Australia's new high-performance coach **Chris Rogers**.
Note: Rogers had a successful first-class career in Australia and England spanning almost two decades and more than 300 matches despite being colour blind.
27. English Cricketer has announced his retirement from the International cricket -- **Kevin Pietersen**.
Note: Pietersen has 8,181 runs in 104 tests, 4,440 runs in 136 ODIs and 1,176 runs in 37 Twenty20 Internationals. Pietersen was named both the ICC "ODI Player of the Year" and "Emerging Player of the Year" in 2005.
28. Indian para-athlete **Deepa Malik** has won the gold medal in the F-53/54 category javelin event at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix in Dubai.
Note: Deepa Malik became the Asian rank one in the F-53 category. Now, Deepa has also qualified for the 2018 Asian Para Games in Indonesia (Scheduled, October 2018).
29. **Nepal** earn One Day International (ODI) status for the first time.
Note: Nepal have gained ODI status for the first time in their history after defeating Papua New Guinea (PNG) by six wickets in the Cricket World Cup Qualifier play-off in Harare.
30. **India** won the 'Nidahas Cricket Trophy' in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
Note: The tri-nation Twenty20 series '2018 Nidahas Trophy' (Bangladesh, India and Sri Lanka) was a cricket tournament that was held in Sri Lanka. The tournament was played to celebrate Sri Lanka's 70th year of independence; the title derives from the Sinhalese *nidahas*, meaning 'freedom'.
31. **Purva Barve** has won the Women's Singles (Under-19) title at the Israel Junior 2018 held in Rishon LeZion, Israel.
Note: She defeated Anastasiia Pustinskaia (Russian) in three sets 21-19, 19-21, 21-13.
32. In Cricket **Vidarbha** lifted their maiden 'Irani Trophy' in Nagpur.
Note: They beat Rest of India by virtue of their massive first innings lead. The Z. R. Irani Cup (earlier called Irani Trophy) tournament was conceived during the 1959-60 season to mark the completion of 25 years of the Ranji Trophy championship, named after the late Z. R. Irani.
33. The eighth-seeded Argentine **Juan Martin del Potro** bagged the Indian Wells Masters title in California
Note: Potro beat the veteran Swiss Roger Federer, 6-4, 5-7, 7-6 in a thrilling Final.

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