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National

India Slips to 42nd Place on EIU Democracy Index, Norway Tops

i. India has slipped to 42nd place on an annual **Global Democracy Index** according to the data compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU). India has moved down from 32nd place last year.

The top 3 Countries in the list are-

1. Norway,
2. Iceland,
3. Sweden.

ii. The index ranks 165 independent states. The list has been divided into four broad categories- full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime and authoritarian regime. **North Korea is ranked the lowest at 167th, while Syria is a notch better at 166th place.**

Union Budget 2018-19: Complete Analysis

Budget 2018 Takeaways-

- As per the FM in the Union Budget, India is expected to become the fifth largest economy very soon.
- The Growth rate is expected between 7.2-7.5% in the second half of 2017-18.
- Exports are expected to grow 15% in 2018.
- As per the FM, India is a Rs2.5 trillion economy.
- Minimum Support Price (MSP) of all crops shall increase to at least 1.5 times that of the production cost.
- A fund for the fishery, aquaculture development and animal husbandry will be set up with a total corpus to be Rs 10,000 crore. We will also allocate Rs 1290 crore for a bamboo mission, as it is green gold.
- Ujjwala Yojana, the free LPG connection scheme expanded to eight crore households.
- The government will provide 4 crore electricity connections to the poor under Saubhagya Yojana.
- Eklavya schools for tribal children.
- 24 new government medical colleges.
- 18 new schools of planning and architecture will be set up in the IITs and NITs
- National health protection scheme to cover 10 cr poor families. Health cover of up to 5 lakh per family per year for poor & vulnerable. National health protection scheme to benefit 50 crore people.
- Govt. is launching a new national health protection scheme – **Rashtriya Samaj Beema Yojana**. This will have 50 crore beneficiaries and 10 crore families will get 5 lakh per year for their families to cover secondary and tertiary hospital expenses. **This is the world's largest government-funded healthcare program.**
- Customs duty increased on mobile phones from 15% to 20%.

7th India Energy Congress Held in New Delhi

i. The **7th India Energy Congress was held in New Delhi**. The theme of the 7th edition of India Energy Congress is '**Energy 4.0: Energy Transition Towards 2030**'.

ii. The India Energy Congress is the flagship event of **World Energy Council India (WEC India)** and joint event of ministries of power, coal, new & renewable energy, petroleum & natural gas, external affairs and Department of Atomic Energy.

1st Ever International Kala Mela Inaugurated in New Delhi

i. The First ever International Kala Mela was inaugurated by the **Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu in New Delhi.**

ii. The International Kala Mela has been organised by the **Lalit Kala Akademi** in partnership with **IGNCA** of the Ministry of Culture. More than 800 artists from across the world took part in the Festival.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The Minister of State for Culture (I/C) and Environment, Forest & Climate Change is Dr Mahesh Sharma.

'Exam Warriors'- A Book Penned Down by PM Modi Released

i. The book penned down by PM Narendra Modi named 'Exam Warriors' was launched to reach out to the students across the country ahead of their exams. The book was released by **External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj.**

ii. The book has been written to inspire youths to face the difficult moments of examinations and life, with fresh and new energy. **'Exam Warriors' is published by Penguin India,** which runs into 208 pages.

Assam Government, Ola Sign MoU for River Taxi Service

i. Cab-hailing startup Ola and the **Government of Assam** have signed an MoU to pilot an app-based river taxi service in Guwahati. The river taxis will be machine-operated boats and users will be able to book the rides through Ola's app.

ii. It'll bring commute time down to 2-5 minutes from 45 minutes by road. This MoU was signed during the **Global Investors Summit: Advantage Assam.**

Important Takeways from above news-

- Assam CM- Sarbanand Sonowal, **Governor-** Jagdish Mukhi.

Mumbai Airport Becomes World's Busiest Single-Runway Airport

i. Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International airport of Mumbai sets record with **980 flights in 24 hours** or almost one flight every minute.

ii. With this, the Mumbai Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International airport bettered its own feat of 974 flights in 24 hours, recorded in December 2017. While **Gatwick, the U.K.'s second-largest airport,** remains the most efficient single-runway airport in the world.

UP Government in Association with UNICEF Launches DASTAK Campaign

i. Uttar Pradesh State government in association with UNICEF has launched massive **door to door campaign DASTAK** to eradicate deadly **Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) and Japanese Encephalitis (JE) disease in the state.**

ii. The war cry of DASTAK is **'Darwaja Khatkhatao, AES aur JE ko bhagao'**. In DASTAK campaign, whole state machinery with the help of UNICEF will now literally go door to door in 38 JES and AE affected districts which mostly fall in the **Tarai region.**

Important Takeways from above news-

- The **United Nations International Children's Education Fund (UNICEF)** is a UN program headquartered in New York City, the USA.
- **Henrietta H. Fore** is the Executive Director of UNICEF.

President Ram Nath Kovind Inaugurates Mahamastakabhisheka Utsav

i. The President of India Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the **88th Mahamastakabhisheka Utsav** of Lord Gomateshwara in **Hassan district of Karnataka.**

ii. Mahamastakabhisheka of Gommateshwara, who is **also known as Bahubali** takes place once in 12 years. It is an important Jain pilgrimage centre and lakhs of tourists visit Shravanbelagola to see 57 feet tall

monolithic stone statue.

CSE Ranked Top Environment Policy Think Tanks in India

i. The Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) has been ranked the **top environment policy think tanks in India** while it has secured the 16th position in global rankings, climbing up two positions from the last year.

ii. The rank was given by **The Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program (TTCSP)** of the Lauder Institute at the University of Pennsylvania.

Important Takeways from above news-

- TTCSP conducts a research on the role policy institutes play in governments and civil societies around the world.

HAL Develops First Hawk-i Flight

i. The Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has developed the **first flight of Hawk-i with indigenous Real Time Operating System (RTOS)**. Hawk-i is the first indigenous RTOS developed in India from scratch and certified by **Center for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC)**.

ii. The RTOS is the system software which provides a standard run-time environment for real-time applications execution in a safe and reliable manner.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **HAL Chairman- T. Suvarna Raju, Headquarters- Bengaluru.**

First Ever Chat Based Job Search App 'Empzilla' Launched

i. The first ever of its kind in the country chat-based job search mobile app 'Empzilla' is being launched that will do away with existing limitations of employers and job seekers making selection process quick and cost-effective.

ii. The mobile app gets the conversation between employers and job seekers going in seconds and the latter can chat with the potential employers.

India Ranks 44th in Global Intellectual Property Index, US Tops

i. India has increased “substantially” its score in the **International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, ranking 44th among 50 nations**, according to the US Chambers of Commerce report. Last year, India ranked 43rd out of 45 countries in the Index.

ii. The top 3 countries on the list are- The USA, The United Kingdom and Sweden.

iii. India’s overall score has increased substantially from 25% in the 5th edition of the Index to 30% in the 6th edition, according to the annual report prepared by the **Global Innovation Policy Centre (GIPC)** of the US Chambers of Commerce.

South Central Railway Becomes 1st Rail Zone with 100% LED Lighting at Stations

i. The South Central Railway (SCR) has become the **first railway zone in the country** to complete **100% LED lighting** at all the stations under its jurisdiction.

ii. It has attained the status of becoming the first zone in the Indian Railways to complete 100% LED lighting in all the 733 stations under its jurisdiction.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Piyush Goyal** is the present Railways Minister of India.
- **The HeadQuarters of South Central Railway is Secunderabad.**

NITI Aayog Releases Nation-Wide Healthy State Report

i. NITI Aayog has released the ‘**Healthy States, Progressive India Report**’. **Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu** have ranked top among the larger states **in terms of overall performance**. The report was released by **NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant**.

ii. Jharkhand, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh are at the top in the terms of annual incremental performance. States and Union territories have been ranked in three categories namely larger states, smaller states and Union territories.

iii. Among smaller states, Mizoram ranked first followed by Manipur and Goa in terms of annual incremental performance. **Among Union territories, Lakshadweep** showed best, overall performance as well as highest annual incremental performance.

Rajnath Singh inaugurates first of its kind spoken Sanskrit centre

i. Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh has launched the Centre for learning Sanskrit language in Gujarat University, Ahmedabad.

ii. The centre will offer a **six-month course** for people on how to speak the language. The coordinator of the course, Atul Unagar stated it was possibly the first such course launched in India.

Nitin Gadkari Releases India's 1st Ever Highway Capacity Manual

i. The Minister of Road Transport & Highways **Mr Nitin Gadkari** released India's first ever Highway Capacity Manual (HCM) in New Delhi.

ii. The manual is also known as **Indo-HCM** and it has been developed by **CSIR – CRRI** on the basis of an extensive, country-wide study of the traffic characteristics on different categories of roads like a single lane, two-lane, multi-lane urban roads, and the associated intersections on these roads.

Important Takeaways from above news-

- **CSIR-** Council of Scientific & Industrial Research.
- **CRRI-** Central Road Research Institute.

Mumbai 12th Richest City Globally, New York Tops: New World Wealth Report

i. Mumbai, India's financial capital is the 12th richest city in the world with a total wealth of \$950 billion, according to a report by **New World Wealth**. The list was topped by **New York** as the richest city in the world.

ii. Total wealth refers to the private wealth held by all the individuals living in each city. It includes all their assets (property, cash, equities and business interests) less any liabilities. **The top 3 richest cities in the list are-**

1. New York (\$3 trillion).
2. London (\$2.7 trillion).
3. Tokyo (\$2.5 trillion).

Government of India Makes Amendments in Small Savings Act

i. In order to remove existing ambiguities due to multiple Acts and rules for Small Saving Schemes, the **Government of India has proposed merger of Government Savings Certificates Act, 1959 and Public Provident Fund Act, 1968 with the Government Savings Banks Act, 1873.**

ii. With a single act, relevant provisions of the Government Savings Certificates (NSC) Act, 1959 and the Public Provident Fund Act, 1968 would stand subsumed in the new amended Act without compromising on any of the functional provision of the existing Act.

Radio Umang: India's 1st Online Radio Station Launched

i. India's 1st Online Radio Station 'Radio Umang' was launched recently in India. Listeners can tune in to this online radio station through web streaming or download the app.

ii. With 24 hours programming, it has found listeners in Hindi speaking regions of India and in over 60 countries worldwide.

West Bengal Becomes First State To Opt Out Of 'Modicare'

i. Claiming that the Bengal government had already enrolled **50 lakh people** under its own **Swasthya Sathi programme**, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has announced the decision to opt out of Centre's 'Modicare' scheme.

ii. This makes West Bengal the first state to withdraw from the ambitious programme. Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had announced the **NHPS on February 1**, making it the biggest global plan to provide quality health cover to a population larger than the combined citizenry of the **US, UK, Germany and France**.

Important Takeways from above news-

NHPS stands for National Health Protection Scheme.

India's First Radio Festival Being Held In Delhi

- i. India's first radio festival is being held in New Delhi to mark World Radio Day. The festival is being organized by International Association of Women in Radio and Television, in collaboration with UNESCO.
- ii. The festival includes live performances, an exhibition, and slotted panel discussions. Apart from touching on the theme for World Radio Day 2018 - radio and sports - the festival is also examining the potential of the medium as a platform for social change, ways to make it more creative and will trace the journey of music on the radio.

World Congress on Information Technology Begins in Hyderabad

- i. The prestigious **World Congress on Information Technology 2018** has begun in **Hyderabad**. Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the inaugural session of the **three-day IT summit through a video link**.
- ii. The **World Information Technology and Services Alliance (WITSA)** is organising Congress while the **National Alliance of Software and Services Companies (NASSC)** and the **Telangana state Government** are jointly hosting the event.

India's 2nd Mission to Moon Chandrayaan-2 to be Launched in April 2018

- i. According to the Union Minister of State of the Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh, **the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** is planning to launch **Chandrayaan-2 Mission around April 2018**. Chandrayaan-2 is the country's second mission to the moon.
- ii. Chandrayaan-2 is a challenging mission as for the first time we will carry an **orbiter, a lander and a rover to the moon**. **Chairman of ISRO K Sivan** stated that the total cost of the Chandrayaan 2 mission will be about Rs 8 billion. The window for launch is open till October 2018.

Important Takeways from above news-

- ISRO was established in 1969.
- **Founder and 1st Chairman of ISRO- Vikram Ambalal Sarabhai, Headquarters in- Bengaluru, Karnataka.**

Assam Worst in MMR, Spent Just 13.58% of NHM Fund in 2017-18

- i. **Assam** is at the bottom of the list with regard to **maternal mortality rate (MMR)** with a figure of 300 against the **national average of 167**, while the fund spending under National Health Mission (NHM) is just 13.58% for 2017-18.
- ii. MMR is the annual number of female deaths per 1,00,000 live births from any cause related to or aggravated by pregnancy or its management. The Centre had allocated Rs 1,056.25 crore for Assam under National Health Mission (NHM) for 2017-18.

Mumbai to have India's 1st Artificial Intelligence Centre

- i. **In a first in the country**, the Maharashtra government will be setting up an institute for artificial intelligence (AI) in Mumbai.
- ii. **Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis** will unveil the plan for the institute during the **Magnetic Maharashtra Summit and at the Global Economic Conference** in Canada in March 2018.

Important Takeaways from above news-

- Maharashtra has already become the first state to unveil a **FinTech Policy**.

India's Biggest Global Pharma Conference Begins In Bengaluru

- i. India's biggest Global Conference on Pharma Industry and Medical Devices began in Bengaluru With the theme, 'Driving NextGen Pharmaceuticals. Union Minister for Chemicals & Fertilisers Ananth Kumar inaugurated the three-day event.
- ii. The event is being organised by the Department of Pharmaceuticals (DoP), Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers, along with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).

India's Aadhaar And Umang App Win Award In Dubai

- i. India's Umang App was named winner of the Best M-Government Service award in the Accessible Government category while Aadhaar won the best emerging technology award at the recently concluded World Government Summit 2018 in Dubai, where India had the status of 'Guest of Honour' country.
- ii. The Summit acknowledged technology pioneers for providing global solutions to global challenges. The mobile application Umang App provides users a unified platform that combines government departments and services, facilitating transactions for citizens. The award acknowledged Government of India's efforts to provide convenient services to its citizens.

Prime Minister Inaugurates World Sustainable Development Summit 2018

- i. **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the **World Sustainable Development Summit 2018 (WSDS 2018)** at Vigyan Bhawan in **New Delhi**.
- ii. The summit is the flagship forum of **The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)**. The summit's theme **this year was 'Partnerships for a Resilient Planet'**.

LS Speaker Sumitra Mahajan Inaugurated 6th India Region CPA Conference

- i. **Lok Sabha Speaker, Sumitra Mahajan** inaugurated the **6th India region Commonwealth Parliamentary Association conference at Patna in Bihar**. The conference focused on the objectives and role of the Parliamentary Association body.
- ii. The conference hold discussions mainly on two topics viz. **'Parliament's role in the development agenda'** and **'Legislature and Judiciary - Two important Pillars of Democracy'**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Bihar CM- Nitish Kumar, Governor- Satya Pal Malik**.

Amazon Launches its 1st Food Retail Service in India

- i. **Amazon has become the first foreign e-commerce firm** to start its own food retail venture in India called **Amazon Retail**, piloting its services in Pune.
- ii. It will reportedly be available on Amazon India platform and sell locally made and packaged food to the consumers directly.

8th Edition of Theatre Olympics Inaugurated in Delhi

- i. **Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu** inaugurated the **8th edition of the Theatre Olympics at Lal Quila** in New Delhi. The event has been organised by **National School of Drama** under the aegis of Ministry of Culture.
- ii. The theme of the festival is - **"Flag of Friendship"**. 30 countries are participating from across the globe.

India to Host World Environment Day 2018

- i. The government of India and the UN jointly announced that **India will host the global World Environment Day celebrations on 5 June 2018**.
- ii. **World Environment Day** is celebrated globally on **June 5**. The theme for World Environment 2018 is **"Beat Plastic Pollution"**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- World Environment Day is a UN Environment-led global event, the single largest celebration of our environment each year and is celebrated by thousands of communities worldwide.

PM Flags Off Palace Queen Humsafar Express in Karnataka

i. Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the **Palace Queen Humsafar Express** between **Mysuru and Udaipur in Mysuru Railway Station.**

ii. The train between Mysuru and Udaipur will act as a backbone of tourism, an employment generating industry. He also dedicated to the nation, **the electrified Mysuru-Bengaluru Railway Line** and announced two more infrastructure projects for the region.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Karnataka CM- Siddaramaiah, Governor- Vajubhai Vala.**
- The Union Minister of Railways of India is **Piyush Goyal.**

Fitch Places PNB on 'Rating Watch Negative' With Downgrade Possibility

i. Fitch placed Punjab National Bank on Rating Watch Negative (RWN), reflecting a possibility of downgrade following the **USD 1.77 billion fraud.** The fraud is **the biggest ever in the banking history.**

ii. The Viability Rating measures credit worthiness of a financial institution and reflects the likelihood of the entity to fail, as per Fitch.

Important Takeways from above news-

- PNB is also likely to get an additional **Rs5,400 crore from the government** by end-March 2018 under the government's recapitalisation agenda.
- **PNB Chairman- Sunil Mehta, Headquarters- New Delhi.**

Cabinet Approves New Bill To Ban Unregulated Deposit Schemes And Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill

In a major policy initiative to protect the savings of the investors, the Union Cabinet has given its approval to introduce the following bills in the Parliament:-

1. Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018 in parliament &

2. Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2018.

1. The Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Bill, 2018

The bill is aimed at tackling the menace of illicit deposit-taking activities in the country. Companies/institutions running such schemes exploit existing regulatory gaps and lack of strict administrative measures to dupe poor and gullible people of their hard-earned savings.

2. The Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2018

The Union Cabinet has given its approval to introduce the Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2018 in Parliament. In order to facilitate orderly growth of the Chit Funds sector and remove bottlenecks being faced by the Chit Funds industry, thereby enabling greater financial access of people to other financial products, the following amendments to the Chit Funds Act, 1982 have been proposed:

Government Clears Private Commercial Mining in Coal

i. In a major reform in the coal sector since its nationalisation in 1973, **the government has allowed private companies to mine the fossil fuel for commercial use.** This move ended the monopoly of state-owned Coal India Ltd.

ii. The decision was taken by the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)** under the Chairmanship of PM Narendra Modi. Currently, the private sector is allowed coal mining for captive use only.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Coal Minister of India-** Piyush Goyal.
- Coal accounts for around **70% of the country's power generation.**

Haryana Government Launched 4 Subsidized Food Canteens Under 'Antyodaya Aahaar Yojna'

i. Haryana Chief Minister **Manohar Lal Khattar** launched **4 food canteens at Faridabad, Gurugram, Hisar, and Yamunanagar** via video-conferencing from Chandigarh.

ii. These have been set up under the 'Antyodaya Aahaar Yojana' to provide healthy, nutritious and hygienic food at only Rs 10 per meal to all poor and needy.

Maharashtra Government to Launch Asmita Yojana to Provide Cheap Sanitary Pads

i. Maharashtra government will roll out 'Asmita Yojana' on the **International Women's Day (March 8, 2018)** to provide cheap (subsidised) sanitary pads to school girls and women.

ii. Under the scheme, schoolgirls studying in Zilla Parishad schools will get sanitary napkin packet at Rs 5 while rural women can avail it at the subsidised rate of Rs.24 and Rs.29.

Newborn Mortality Rate: India 12th Worst Among Low-Income Countries

i. India has been ranked **12th-worst among 52 low-middle income countries** based on the number of children dying within the first month of their birth, which is 25.4 per 1,000 live births.

ii. **Pakistan is the worst** with 45.6 newborn deaths per 1,000 live births, **according to the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).**

iii. **Japan, with an NMR of 0.9 deaths per 1,000 live births, has been ranked the world's safest country in which to be born followed by Iceland (1) and Singapore (1.1).**

Kerala Makes Vaccination Compulsory for School Admissions

i. Kerala government has made **vaccination compulsory for school admissions** from next academic year onwards. Parents will have to show details of shots given to children at the time of enrolment in schools.

ii. **The health minister of Kerala KK Shailaja** has released the new health policy draft. The move comes in the wake of stiff opposition from certain communities against the vaccination drive.

Jaipur's Gandhinagar Railway Station Becomes Fully Women Operated Station

i. **The Gandhi Nagar railway station in Jaipur, Rajasthan** became railway station to be fully-managed by women. Gandhi Nagar is an important railway station in Jaipur situated on the **Jaipur-Delhi rail route.** The station has the footfall of more than 7,000 passengers every day.

ii. There are 40 women staff at the station beside women personnel of the railway protection force have been deployed at the station.

UP Investors Summit 2018: Important Highlights of Day 1

i. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** inaugurated the two-day '**UP Investors Summit**' in Lucknow. It is the first such event by the Yogi Adityanath government. The summit is aimed at showcasing investment opportunities and potential across various sectors in Uttar Pradesh.

ii. It was emphasised that Uttar Pradesh government should compete with Maharashtra to become the first Indian state with a trillion-dollar economy.

Highlights of Day 1-

1. Uttar Pradesh has signed **1,045 pacts worth Rs4.28 trillion** on the first day of the UP investors' summit.

2. PM Modi announced **Rs20,000 crore defence corridor for Bundelkhand.**

India Ranks 81st in Global Corruption Perception Index

- i. **India has been ranked 81st in the global corruption perception index for 2017**, released by **Transparency International**. The index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption. **In the 2016 India was in the 79th place among 176 countries.**
- ii. The index uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. In the latest ranking **New Zealand and Denmark were placed the highest**, with scores of 89 and 88, respectively. On the other hand, **Syria, Sudan and Somalia were ranked lowest** with scores of 14, 12 and 9, respectively.

Avani Chaturvedi Becomes 1st Indian Woman to Fly Fighter Aircraft Solo

- i. **Flying officer Avani Chaturvedi** scripted history by becoming the **first Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo.**
- ii. She flew a MiG-21 bison in her first solo flight from Jamnagar base of Indian Air Force (IAF) in Gujarat.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa** is the 25th Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force.

UP Government Signs Pact with Amazon India for Khadi Products Sale

- i. **Uttar Pradesh's Khadi and Village Industries Board** has signed a pact with **Amazon India** to facilitate **online selling of Khadi products.**
- ii. As part of an MoU, Amazon India will educate, train and enable rural khadi artisans to directly sell their products to Amazon.in customers across the country under the brand of UP Khadi.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Khadi and Village Industries Board CEO- Avinash Krishna Singh.**

EPFO Cuts Interest Rate to 8.55% for 2017-18

- i. Retirement fund body **Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO)** has **reduced the interest rate on deposits to 8.55%** for 2017-18 from 8.65% for 2016-17 following a general decline in interest rates.
- ii. The move will affect around 6 crore subscribers and leave EPFO with a surplus of **Rs 586 crore against Rs 695 crore** in the previous financial year.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The finance ministry had recently lowered interest rate on **General Provident Fund (GPF) and Public Provident Fund (PPF) to 7.6%.**
- **EPFO Chairman- M. Sathiyavathy, Headoffice- New Delhi.**

Manohar Parrikar Presents Rs 17,123-crore Goa Budget

- i. **Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar** presented in the state assembly **Rs. 17,123-crore budget for 2018-19**, an increase of 6.84% over the ongoing fiscal.
- ii. The Budget focuses on education and job creation.

Paytm Launches Two Insurance Companies

- i. **Digital payments startup Paytm** has launched two insurance companies, **Paytm Life Insurance and Paytm General Insurance.**
- ii. Paytm Founder **Vijay Shekhar Sharma**, CFO **Madhur Deora**, and **Shankar Prasad Nath** are the three signatory stakeholders in both the companies.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Paytm is run by **One97 Communications Ltd.**
- **Vijay Shekhar Sharma** is the founder of **One97 Communications.**
- **One97 Communications** in all now have six companies under its umbrella including **Paytm, Paytm Money, Paytm Mall and Paytm Payments Bank.**

RBI Sets Up Committee Under YH Malegam to Monitor Bad Loans

i. Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an expert committee **under the chairmanship of YH Malegam** to look into a range of issues relating to **classification of bad loans, rising incidents of frauds and effectiveness of audits.**

ii. Y H Malegam is a former member of the Central Board of Directors of RBI. A K Misra – Executive Director of RBI will be the Member-Secretary of the committee.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Dr Urjit Patel is the 24th Governor of RBI.

RBI Headquarters in Mumbai.

India to Host 1st International Solar Alliance in March 2018

i. India will host the **first International Solar Alliance (ISA) summit** on 11th March 2018. It will be attended by **French President Emmanuel Macron and United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.**

ii. The summit will be held in Delhi. The ISA aims to launch 121 projects during the summit. During the summit, two new programmes will be inaugurated on- **Scaling Solar E-Mobility and Storage, and Rooftop Solar.**

PM Modi Launches Amma Two-Wheeler Scheme in Chennai

i. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Amma Two Wheeler Scheme (in Chennai) of the state government coinciding with the birth anniversary of former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, Jayalalithaa.

ii. The scheme, with the objective of enhancing the livelihood of working women, **aims to provide subsidised two-wheelers to women, transgenders and differently-abled persons.**

PM Modi Flags Off 'Run for New India' Marathon in Surat

i. Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the 'Run for New India' marathon in Surat, Gujarat. The Marathon is aimed at creating awareness about social causes and call upon all to resolve to build a New India.

ii. The Marathon is divided into 4 categories. Around 1.50 lakh runners participated in the **'Run for New India'** marathon which was organized by the Surat Nagrik Samiti.

Tamil Nadu, Microsoft Tie-Up to Accelerate Cloud Technology Adoption

i. The government of Tamil Nadu announced signing an agreement with **IT Major Microsoft** to improve the integration of technology in teaching and learning in the state.

ii. The partnership aims to reform education sector, build tech capacity and enhance digital literacy across all levels.

7th Meeting of EPG on Nepal-India Relations Concludes

i. The seventh meeting of Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on Nepal-India relations has concluded in **Kathmandu, Nepal.** Various bilateral issues including 1950 Peace and Friendship treaty, trade, environment, border and hydropower were discussed during the two-day meeting.

ii. EPG is a joint mechanism consisting experts and intellectuals from India and Nepal. It was set up in February 2016 to provide suggestions for updating all existing bilateral treaties and agreements between both the countries. **Next meeting of the group will be held in New Delhi.**

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Nepal Capital-** Kathmandu, **PM-** K P Sharma Oli.

Andaman & Nicobar Command to Host Milan 2018

i. The second week of March will witness **Andaman & Nicobar Command** hosting a **multinational mega event MILAN 2018**. MILAN is a congregation of littoral navies conducted biennially by Indian Navy at the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

ii. The theme of this year's MILAN International Maritime Seminar is '**In Pursuit of Maritime Good Order - Need for Comprehensive Information Sharing Apparatus**'.

Important Takeways from above news-

- MILAN was first held in 1995.

National Conference on e-Governance in Hyderabad

i. The **21st national conference on e-Governance** will be held in **Hyderabad**. The government of India and Telangana Administrative Reforms department are jointly organising the conference with the **main theme around- technology for accelerating development**.

ii. The two-day conference will deliberate on several aspects of the e-governance including its universalization and replication, governing e-governance, best practices, emerging technologies and synergising role of national and state governments.

Blue-Coloured Baal Aadhaar Card Launched By UIDAI

i. Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) introduced a 'Baal Aadhaar' card for children below the age of five years. No biometric details will be required to get this blue-coloured Baal Aadhaar card.

ii. A child below 5 years of age gets a blue in coloured Aadhaar known as Baal Aadhaar. When the child becomes 5 years old, a mandatory biometric update is required.

Important Takeways from above news-

- UIDAI Chief Executive Officer(CEO)- Ajay Bhushan Pandey, Headquarters- New Delhi.

India Ranks 47th On Inclusive Internet Index: Facebook

i. India has been ranked 47th out of 86 countries on the Inclusive Internet Index by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), which was commissioned by Facebook.

ii. Sweden took the first place, followed by Singapore and the US. The scores on the index, which covered 91% of the world's population, is based on the scores of Availability, Affordability, Relevance and Readiness categories.

International

UAE Launches World's Longest Zip Line

- i. **The United Arab Emirates** has made a record by opening the **world's longest zip line**, measuring 2.83 km in length. Guinness World Records officials certified the zip line in Ras al-Khaimah.
- ii. The **Jebel Jais Flight** takes thrill-seekers atop the country's largest mountain peak, from a launch pad 1,680 meters (5,512 feet) above sea level.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **UAE Capital-** Abu Dhabi, **Currency-** UAE dirham.

Rwanda Becomes 1st Poor Country to Provide Eye Care For All

- i. **Rwanda** has become the **first low-income country to provide universal eye care** for its 12 million population.
- ii. The government has partnered with the organisation **Vision for a Nation (VFAN)** to train more than 3,000 eye care nurses based in 502 local health centres, prescribing glasses and referring those with serious eye problems to national clinics.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The country ranks **159th on the Human Development Index**.
- **Rwanda Capital-** Kigali, **Currency-** Rwandan franc, **President-** Paul Kagame.

Sri Lanka Celebrates 70th Independence Day

- i. **Sri Lanka celebrated the 70th Independence Day** in a grand ceremony at the **Galle Face Green in Colombo**. The theme of the ceremony was "**One Nation**".
- ii. It was on this day in 1948 that country achieved freedom from British rule. Representing Britain's Queen, Prince Edward, Earl of Wessex, and the Countess of Wessex participated in the celebrations as Chief Guests.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **President of Sri Lanka-** Maithripala Sirisena, **Prime Minister of Sri Lanka-** Ranil Wickremesinghe.

Sweden Commits Record \$370m of Aid to UN World Food Programme

- i. **Sweden and the United Nations World Food Programme** signed a **Strategic Partnership Agreement** committing an unprecedented **\$370 million dollars to WFP** over the next four years.
- ii. The contribution for the period 2018-2021 is the **biggest ever made by a donor** within a WFP Strategic Partnership Agreement.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Sweden Capital-** Stockholm, **Currency-** Swedish krona.

Maldives Crisis- Government Declares State of Emergency

- i. **The Maldives president, Abdulla Yameen**, has declared a **state of emergency in the country** as heavily armed troops stormed the country's top court and a former president **Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed** was arrested in a deepening political crisis.
- ii. The former Maldivian president **Mohamed Nasheed** urged India to "act swiftly" to help in resolving the ongoing political crisis in the island nation.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Maldives Capital-** Male, **Currency-** Maldivian rufiyaa.

Dubai Retains Rank as World's Busiest International Airport in 2017

- i. **Dubai International Airport** has held on to its **No 1 ranking as the world's busiest airport for international travel**, after seeing around 88.2 million passengers in 2017.
- ii. Dubai International Airport first **surpassed London Heathrow** as the world's busiest airport for international traffic in 2014.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Dubai is a city and emirate in the United Arab Emirates.
- **UAE Capital-** Abu Dhabi, **Currency-** UAE Dirham.

Bermuda Becomes 1st Country in World to Abolish Same-Sex Marriage

- i. **Bermuda** has become the **first country to legalise and then repeal same-sex marriage**.
- ii. Bermuda's governor John Rankin approved a bill reversing the right of gay couples to marry, despite a supreme court ruling last year authorising same-sex marriage.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Bermuda Capital-** Hamilton, **Currency-** Bermudian dollar.

Forbes Releases its First-Ever Cryptocurrency Rich List

- i. **Business magazine Forbes** has released its **first-ever Crypto Rich List**, comprising 20 wealthiest people in the cryptocurrency space. The list was topped by **Ripple Co-founder Chris Larsen**, who is estimated to have a crypto net worth of \$7.5-8 billion.
- ii. He is followed by **Ethereum Co-founder Joseph Lubin (\$1-5 billion)** and Founder of cryptocurrency exchange **Binance Changpeng Zhao (\$1.1-2 billion)**.

PM Modi 3 Nation Visit- Modi Conferred 'Grand Collar of the State of Palestine'

- i. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred the **'Grand Collar of the State of Palestine'** by **President of Palestine Mahmoud Abbas**, recognising his key contribution to promote relations between India and Palestine.
- ii. President Abbas conferred the honour after the conclusion of the bilateral meeting between the two leaders. Modi is the **first Indian Prime Minister to make an official visit to Palestine**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Palestine Capital-** East Jerusalem, **Currency-** Israeli new shekel (one of its 3).
- **'Grand Collar of the State of Palestine'** has in the past been awarded to King Salman of Saudi Arabia, King Hamad of Bahrain, and President Xi Jinping of China.

India Retains Top Spot as Source Market for Dubai in 2017

- i. Dubai witnessed 15% growth in tourist arrivals from India in 2017**, hosting 2.1 million visitors, retaining top spot as the source market.
- ii. It also became the first country to cross the 2 million mark in a single year**, according to the latest data published by **Dubai's Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing (Dubai Tourism)**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Dubai is the financial city and Emirate of the United Arab Emirates.

PM Modi 3 Nation Visit- ONGC Videsh, Partners Acquire 10% Stake in Abu Dhabi Oilfield

- i. ONGC (Oil and Natural Gas Corporation) Videsh Ltd** and its partners have acquired a **10%** in a large offshore oilfield **Abu Dhabi National Oil Co.'s (ADNOC) in Abu Dhabi for \$600 million**. It is the **first time any Indian company has set foot in oil-rich Emirate**.
- ii. The current production of this field is about 400,000 barrels of oil per day** (20 million tonnes per annum) and Indian consortium's annual share shall be about 2 million tonnes. The contract for the concession was signed in Abu Dhabi in presence of **Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.

Singapore to Impose Carbon Tax From 2019

- i. Singapore will impose a 'carbon tax' from 2019 to cut its greenhouse gas emissions** and make companies more competitive as global agreements on climate change take effect.
- ii. Finance minister Heng Swee Keat** stated that the tax would be levied on all facilities producing 25,000 tonnes or more of greenhouse gas emissions a year.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Singapore ranks **26th out of 142 countries** in terms of emissions per capita based on the latest International Energy Agency data.

World's Tallest Hotel 'Gevora' Opens In Dubai

- i. The Gevora Hotel in Dubai**, developed by the Al Attar Group has now become the **“world's tallest hotel”**. It stands 356 metres and 53 centimetres tall.
- ii. It is one metre taller than the previous holder of the title, the JW Marriott Marquis**, in the same city. **The title has been confirmed by Guinness Book of World Records**.

World's 1st Autonomous Pods Unveiled in Dubai

- i. Dubai's Roads and Transport Authority (RTA)** launched the first tests of the **world's first autonomous pods at the World Government Summit**. The autonomous pods are launched in cooperation with **Next Future Transportation (US-Based)**.
- ii. They can be coupled together in as little 15 seconds or detached depending on the riders' destination in five seconds**.

China to Host 2018 SCO Summit at Qingdao in June

- i. China will host 2018 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit at Qingdao**, eastern Shandong Province in June 2018. China had taken over rotating chair of SCO after 17th SCO summit concluded in Astana, capital of Kazakhstan in June 2017.
- ii. SCO is a Eurasian economic, political and security organisation headquartered in Beijing, China**. It was founded in 2001.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The full members of the SCO are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Pakistan.
- Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia have observer status at present.
- India and Pakistan were admitted as full members of the organisation at the summit in Astana 2017.

Google Launches Google Pay to Take on Apple Pay

- i. Google** has combined its two payment services, **Google Wallet and Android Pay**, into a new app called **Google Pay**.
- ii.** The platform includes features like the ability to pay at checkout counters with a smartphone or pay for public transportation.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Google CEO-** Sundar Pichai, **Parent organization-** Alphabet Inc., **Headquarters-** The USA.

China Becomes Vice President Of Financial Action Task Force

- i.** China was elected as the Vice President of Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a global body mandated to combat terror financing and money laundering. China's election came after the FATF plenary meeting in Paris.
- ii.** China's election to the FATF assumes significance as Pakistan is set to be put in the FATF 'grey list' in June 2018. The grey lists put countries under the scanner for not implementing the objectives of the task force.

Defence

Japan Launches Smallest Rocket Ever to Carry Tiny Satellite into Orbit

- i. The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)** launched the **world's smallest rocket with the ability to put a tiny satellite into orbit**. The rocket lifted off from the Uchinoura Space Center.
- ii.** It carried a microsatellite **TRICOM-1R**, a three-unit CubeSat weighing about 3 kilograms. This satellite launch was a re-flight of the TRICOM-1 mission, which was lost in SS-520's failure in 2017.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Japan PM-** Shinzo Abe, **Capital-** Tokyo, **Currency-** Japanese Yen.

India Successfully Test-Fires Nuclear-Capable Agni-I Missile

- i. India successfully test-fired** the indigenously developed **short-range nuclear capable Agni-I ballistic missile**. The missile was fired from the Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast.
- ii.** The test was conducted by the Strategic Force Command of the Indian Army. The range of Missile is **700 km**. It was **18th version of Agni-I**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The missile was inducted into service in **2004**.
- It is the surface-to-surface single-stage missile.
- The **15-metre-long Agni-I** weighing **12 tonnes** can carry payloads up to **1,000 kg**.

Nuclear-Capable Prithvi-II Missile Successfully Test-Fired

- i. India successfully test-fired** its **indigenously developed nuclear capable Prithvi-II missile** as part of a user trial by the Army from Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, in Odisha.
- ii.** Prithvi-II is capable of carrying **500-1,000 kilogram** of warheads and is thrust by liquid propulsion twin engines. It is a **surface-to-surface missile** and has a **strike range of 350 km**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- DRDO Headquarters in New Delhi.

SpaceX Launches its Most Powerful Rocket Towards Mars

i. The US-based SpaceX has successfully launched the **world's most powerful operational rocket Falcon Heavy towards Mars**. The rocket, carrying a Tesla Roadster car, will revolve around the Sun in a way that will repeatedly bring it close to the Earth and Mars.

ii. Falcon Heavy's thrust and capacity are the highest since **NASA's Saturn V**, which carried astronauts to the Moon. Falcon Heavy successfully lifted off from **Launch Complex 39A at Kennedy Space Center in Florida**.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Founder and CEO of SpaceX-** Elon Musk, **Established in-** 2002.

India Successfully Test-Fires Agni-II Missile

i. India successfully test-fired Agni II medium-range nuclear-capable missile from APJ Abdul Kalam island off the Odisha coast. The **Strategic Forces Command (SFC)** fired Agni-II from a mobile launcher at launch complex 4 of the Integrated Test Range.

ii. Agni-II, which has a length of **20 metres, weighs 17 tonnes** and can carry a **payload of 1000 kgs** over a distance of 2000 kms. It is a part of the Agni series of missiles developed by the DRDO.

Cobra Gold Military Exercise Held in Thailand

i. US Marines in Thailand for the **Cobra Gold training exercise** took part in one of the wildest parts of the drills - drinking cobra blood. **This was the 37th edition of the exercise.**

ii. This year, **seven countries** are participating in Cobra Gold - **the US, Thailand, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, South Korea, and Singapore**. Part of the drill involves jungle survival.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Thailand Capital-** Bangkok, **Currency-** Thai baht.

India Successfully Test-Fires 'Dhanush' Missile

i. India has successfully test-fired the nuclear-capable surface-to-surface 'Dhanush' ballistic missile with a strike range of **350 km** from a naval ship off Odisha coast.

ii. It was developed by the **Defence Research and Development Organisation**. 'Dhanush' missile is capable of carrying a payload of **500 kg** and hitting both land and sea-based targets.

DRDO Successfully Carries Out Test flight of Rustom-2 Drone

i. Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully flown its **Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicle RUSTOM 2** in Karnataka.

ii. DRDO is developing within India a medium-altitude long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle RUSTOM 2. It has the capability to fly for 24 hours at a stretch at over **200 km/hr speed**, and can, not only conduct sustained surveillance but will be able to destroy enemy targets.



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Appointments or Resign/Retired

Lt. Gen Anil Chauhan Takes Charge as DGMO of Indian Army

- i. Lt. Gen Anil Chauhan took charge as the new Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of the Indian Army. He succeeds Lt General A K Bhatt.
- ii. Lt Gen Chauhan has held several important posts in the Army and is known for his expertise in counter-insurgency operations in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast.

Important Takeaways from above news-

- General Bipin Rawat is the present Chief of Army Staff.

IOA Joint Secretary Vikram Singh Sisodia Named Chef-de-Mission for CWG

- i. The Indian Olympic Association (IOA) appointed its joint secretary Vikram Singh Sisodia as the Chef-de-Mission for the upcoming Commonwealth Games to be held in Gold Coast, Australia.
- ii. The IOA also appointed three team managers to accompany Sisodia and help him in the day-to-day duties during the Games. Sisodia is also currently the president of Chhattisgarh State Tennis Association.

Important Takeaways from above news-

- The 21st Commonwealth Games will be held from April 4 to 15 in Gold Coast, the second largest city in Australia.
- IOA President- Narinder Dhruv Batra, IOA Secretary- General Rajeev Mehta.

Neelam Kapur Appointed DG of Sports Authority of India

i. Senior-most Indian Information Service (IIS) officer Neelam Kapur was appointed **Director-General of Sports Authority of India (SAI)**.

ii. She is at present the Principal Director General of the Directorate of Field Publicity (DFP). It is for the **first time that an IIS officer has been appointed as SAI chief**. The post is usually held by an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Till now, Sports Secretary Rahul Bhatnagar was looking after the post of SAI

John Hennessy Appointed Alphabet's New Board Chairman

i. Alphabet has appointed John L. Hennessy as the new board chairman of the company. Hennessy has been on the board since 2004 and Lead Independent Director since 2007. **He has replaced Eric Schmidt.**

ii. Schmidt will remain as a "**technical advisor**" to **Alphabet**. Hennessy is a former president of Stanford University and has had an extensive career in the tech industry.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Alphabet Inc. is the US-based company.
- It is the parent company of Google.

Mahmud Hossain Appointed New Chief Justice of Bangladesh

i. The President of Bangladesh, Abdul Hamid appointed **Syed Mahmud Hossain as the new Chief Justice of the country.**

ii. Justice Hossain is the **22nd chief justice of Bangladesh**. President administered the oath of office to Justice Hossain.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Bangladesh PM-** Sheikh Hasina, **Capital-** Dhaka, **Currency-** Bangladeshi Taka.

Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades Wins Re-Election for 2nd Term

i. **Cyprus President Nicos Anastasiades** has won **re-election for a second term**. The official final result after a second-round run-off put the conservative incumbent on 55.99% of the vote, ahead of Communist-backed Stavros Malas on 44%.

ii. Anastasiades has taken credit for steering the economy of Cyprus to recovery after it was plunged into **crisis in 2013** by its exposure to debt-wracked Greece and fiscal slippage under a former left-wing administration.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Cyprus Capital-** Nicosia, **Currency-** Euro.

PepsiCo CEO Indra Nooyi Becomes ICC's 1st Independent Female Director

i. **PepsiCo Chairman and CEO Indra Nooyi** has been appointed as the **International Cricket Council's (ICC) first-ever independent female director**. Nooyi will join the cricket body in June 2018 for a 2-year term.

ii. The introduction of an Independent Director, who must be female, was approved by the ICC in June 2017, aimed at improving the global governance of the sport.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **ICC Chairman-** Shashank Manohar, **Headquarters-** Dubai, The UAE.

Chandrashekhara Kambara Elected New President of Sahitya Akademi

i. **Kannada litterateur Chandrashekar Kambar** has been elected as **president of the Sahitya Akademi** in the election held for the post. He has replaced **Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari**. Hindi poet Madhav Koushik has been elected as vice-president.

ii. This is the second time election was held in the history of Sahitya Akademi, after Ananthamurthy's election to the post. Prof.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Sahitya Akademi was founded in 1954.

Jacob Zuma Resigns As South Africa's President

i. South Africa's embattled President Jacob Zuma has resigned. He announced the decision in a televised address to the nation after the ruling African National Congress (ANC) party threatened to eject him from office via a parliamentary vote of no confidence today.

ii. The 75-year-old, who was the country's President for the last 9 years, has been under increasing pressure to give way to Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, ANC's new leader. Mr Zuma's resignation followed weeks of intense public pressure to step down amid long-standing corruption allegations.

Cyril Ramaphosa Sworn In As New President Of South Africa

i. Cyril Ramaphosa, head of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) has been sworn in as South Africa's new President. He was elected as the new president of South Africa by the ruling party politicians after the resignation of Jacob Zuma.

ii. The country's 400-member parliament, dominated by the ruling African National Congress Party (ANC), elected Ramaphosa to finish his predecessor's term, which ends with elections in 2019. The ANC has finished first in every national vote since the end of white-minority rule in 1994.

K.P. Sharma Oli Appointed as Nepal's New PM

i. **K.P. Sharma Oli** was sworn in as **Nepal's Prime Minister** for the second time, weeks after his Left alliance with the Communist Party of Nepal-Maoist (CPN-Maoist) swept the parliamentary polls. **He has replaced Sher Bahadur Deuba.**

ii. **President Bidya Devi Bhandari administered the oath** of office and secrecy to Mr Oli and two other Ministers, both from the Communist Party of Nepal-Unified Marxist-Leninist (CPN-UML), at a function held at President's Office.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Nepal Capital-** Kathmandu, **Currency-** Nepalese rupee.

Michael McCormack Named Australia's New Deputy Prime Minister

i. Michael McCormack has been elected new Deputy Prime Minister of Australia. He has replaced former Deputy Prime Minister Barnaby Joyce.

ii. The leader of the National Party automatically becomes deputy prime minister under the terms of the coalition agreement with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's Liberal party.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Australia Capital-** Canberra, **Currency-** Australian dollar, **Prime Minister-** Malcolm Turnbull.



Honours/ Awards

Magahi Writer Shesh Anand Madhukar Awarded Sahitya Akademi's Bhasha Samman

i. Magahi writer Shesh Anand Madhukar, who has been working extensively for the development of the language, was honoured with this year's Sahitya Akademi Bhasha Samman award.

ii. The second writer of Magahi language to be given the award, Madhurkar was conferred the award, comprising a Rs 1 lakh cheque and a memento, by Sahitya Akademi President Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Some of the important works of Shesh Anand Madhukar in Hindi are "Magahi Kavita Ke Bimb", "Eklavya", and "Bhagwan Birsa".

Shyam Benegal Awarded V Shantaram Lifetime Achievement Award

i. Mumbai International Film Festival (MIFF) committee has decided to bestow **V. Shantaram lifetime achievement Award** to **veteran film producer and director Shyam Benegal**. The award will be presented at concluding ceremony of **MIFF in Mumbai**.

ii. He will be awarded a trophy, cash price of 10 lakh rupees, a certificate and a shawl **by Governor of Maharashtra C. Vidyasagar Rao**.

Indian Engineer Awarded Sci-Tech Oscar Award

i. Vikas Sathaye, a Pune-born person has been honoured with the Scientific and Engineering Academy Award at the **Oscars Scientific and Technical Awards 2018** at Beverly Hills in Los Angeles, California.

ii. Sathaye and his team received the award for his contribution towards conceptualisation, designing, engineering, and the implementation of the '**Shotover K1 Camera System**' during his stint at Shotover Camera Systems in Queenstown, New Zealand.

Important Takeways from above news-

- The Scientific and Engineering Award is given for scientific achievements that produce a definite influence on the advancement of the motion picture industry.

Milkbasket Recognised as 'Startup of the Year' 2017

i. Milkbasket, India's first and largest micro-delivery platform has been recognised as '**Startup of the Year' 2017** at the 7th Small Business Awards held in New Delhi.

ii. The startup of the year award is dedicated to young SMEs, **aged 7 years or less**, with great potential to become big in local/international markets.

Important Takeways from above news-

- Co-founder and CEO of Milkbasket is Anant Goel.

Sanjiv Bajaj Named EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2017

i. Business consultancy firm **EY** has named **Bajaj Finserv's Sanjiv Bajaj** as the entrepreneur for 2017. Sanjiv Bajaj will now represent India at the EY World Entrepreneur of the Year award (WEOY) in Monte Carlo.

ii. The awardees were selected by a nine-member jury led by **Sun Pharmaceuticals' managing director Dilip Shanghvi**.

BAFTA Awards 2018: Complete List Of Winners

Crime drama **Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri** won maximum prizes at the **British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) Awards 2018**, which took place at the Royal Albert Hall in London, UK.

Here's the list complete List of winners for BAFTA 2018:

S. No.	Category	Winners
1.	Best Film	Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
2.	Outstanding British	Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri

	Film	
3.	Best Director	Guillermo Del Toro, The Shape of Water
4.	Best Actress	Frances McDormand, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
5.	Best Actor	Gary Oldman, Darkest Hour
6.	Best Supporting Actress	Allison Janney, I, Tonya
7.	Best Supporting Actor	Sam Rockwell, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri



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Sports

India Open Boxing: Mary Kom Clinches Gold, India Bag 10 Medals

i. The five-time World Champion MC Mary Kom claimed the gold medal in the India Open International Boxing tournament at Thyagraj Indoor Stadium in New Delhi.

ii. She defeated Josie Gabuco from the Philippines in a split 4-1 decision to grab the gold in the women's 48kg weight category.

India Lifts U-19 World Cup 2018

i. India has defeated Australia to lift the Under 19 World cup for the fourth time. The Men in Blue defeated the three-time champions **Australia** at Bay Oval, New Zealand.

ii. The Australian team had set the target of 217 runs and was chased down easily by India. **Manjot Kalra** was the Hero of the match with his brilliant century.

Special Mentions-

- **Manjot Kalra** was declared Man of the Match.
- **Shubman Gill** was declared Player of the Tournament.
- **Anukul Roy** finished the 2018 edition with joint-highest 14 wickets.

Important Takeways from above news-

- India was the earlier winner in 2000, 2008 and 2012.

Saurav Ghosal Becomes the Highest-Ranked Indian Squash Player

i. India's leading squash player, Saurav Ghosal jumped five places to **No. 14** to become **the highest ranked Indian in the latest Professional Squash Association (PSA) rankings.**

ii. Ghosal beat **Joshna Chinappa** who slipped three places to No. 17 while **Dipika Pallikal Karthik** remained on 20. Former Indian national champion **Harinder Pal Sandhu** was placed at **49th.**

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Gregory Gaultier** from **France** is currently at **No. 1 Position** in the Professional Squash Association (PSA) rankings.

Shubhankar Sharma Becomes Best Indian Golfer in the World

i. Shubhankar Sharma has emerged as **the best Indian golfer in the world**, grabbing the **72nd position** in the **Official World Golf Ranking (OWGR)**. He has won the **Maybank Championship in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.**

ii. Sharma has enjoyed a golden run over the past few months on the international stage, **clinching his first European Tour win at the Joburg Open.**

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Dustin Johnson** from the USA is currently the World Number 1 in Official World Golf Ranking.

Jasprit Bumrah, Harmanpreet Kaur in Forbes India 30 Under 30 List

i. Indian cricketers Jasprit Bumrah and Harmanpreet Kaur as well India women's hockey team goalkeeper **Savita Punia** and shooter **Heena Sidhu** are among Forbes India 30 Under 30 list.

ii. Bumrah finished the year 2017 as the third highest wicket-taker in ODIs with 39 scalps in 23 matches, whereas in T20Is he grabbed 12 wickets in 11 outings.

iii. In December 2016, Harmanpreet became the **first Indian woman cricketer to play in Australia's Big Bash League (BBL).**

India Open 2018- Complete List Of Winners

India Open is a badminton event held annually at the **Siri Fort Sports Complex, New Delhi.** In women's singles Defending champion **P V Sindhu** was defeated by **American Beiwen Zhang** to finish runner-up at the India Open Super 500 tournament.

Complete List of Winners-

S. No.	Category	Winner	Runner-Up
1.	Men's Singles	Shi Yuqi (China)	Chou Tien Chen (Taiwan)
2.	Women's Singles	Beiwen Zhang (America)	P V Sindhu (India)

3.	Men's Doubles	Marcus Fernaldi Gideon (Indonesia) and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo (Indonesia)	Kim Astrup (Denmark) and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen (Denmark)
4.	Women's Doubles	Greysia Polii (Indonesia) and Apriyani Rahayu (Indonesia)	Jongkolphan Kititharakul (Thailand) and Rawinda Prajongjai (Thailand)
5.	Mixed Doubles	Mathias Christiansen (Denmark) and Christinna Pedersen (Denmark)	Praveen Jordan (Indonesia) and Melati Daeva Oktavianti (Indonesia)

Jhulan Goswami 1st Woman in the World to Take 200 ODI Wickets

- i. Indian women's cricket team pacer **Jhulan Goswami** has become the **first woman in the world to take 200 wickets in ODI cricket**.
- ii. Goswami achieved the feat playing in her **166th ODI** against South Africa. Goswami had become the leading wicket-taker in women's ODI in May 2017, overtaking former **Australian pacer Cathryn Fitzpatrick's record of 180 wickets**.

Khelo India School Games Concludes; Haryana Tops Medal Tally

- i. The first **Khelo India School Games** concluded in **New Delhi** with sports powerhouse **Haryana topped the overall medal tally**. The state won **102 medals** which include 38 gold and 26 silver.
- ii. **Maharashtra** with 110 medals (36 of them gold) finished second while **Delhi with 94 medals came third**. Sports Minister, **Col Rajyavardhan Rathore** presented the top State Haryana with the glittering trophy.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Anu Kumar** of Uttarakhand grabbed the **first gold medal of the Khelo India School Games** in 1500 metres Race.
- **Malivika Bansood** won the **last gold medal for the state** in the girl's badminton singles final.

Sharmila Nicollet, 1st Indian Golfer to Qualify for China LPGA Tour

- i. **Sharmila Nicollet** has become the **first Indian golfer to qualify for the China Ladies PGA Tour**. The 26-year-old Bengaluru golfer fought her way back into the tournament in the last two rounds to earn a card for the Tour.
- ii. Sharmila had played on the Ladies European Tour before losing her full card, played her three rounds in the CLPGA Tour Qualifying School.

Tamil Nadu Wins Senior Women's National Football Championship For First Time

- i. Tamil Nadu has won the Senior Women's National Football Championship for the first time. Tamil Nadu, which was playing its first-ever final, defeated Manipur, 2-1 at the Barabati Stadium in Cuttack, Odisha.
- ii. Skipper Indumathi and Indrani found the net for Tamil Nadu, while Ratanbala scored Manipur's only goal.

Rohan More Becomes 1st Asian to Swim Across Ocean Seven

- i. **Pune-based swimmer, Rohan More** became the **first Asian as well as the first Indian to swim across the Ocean Seven**. He is the youngest to complete it. He swam across the Cook Strait between North and South Islands of New Zealand in 8 hours and 37 minutes.
- ii. With this, More becomes **only the ninth person in the world to complete it**. He has received the Tenzing Norgay Award from the Indian Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. The award was presented by President Ram Nath Kovind.

8th Edition of Theatre Olympics Inaugurated in Delhi

- i. Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu** inaugurated the **8th edition of the Theatre Olympics at Lal Quila** in New Delhi. The event has been organised by **National School of Drama** under the aegis of Ministry of Culture.
- ii.** The theme of the festival is - "**Flag of Friendship**". 30 countries are participating from across the globe.

Roger Federer Wins Rotterdam Open for 97th Career Title

- i. Roger Federer (Switzerland)** celebrated his return to the top of the world rankings by winning the **Rotterdam Open, in the Netherlands**. It was his 97th career title.
- ii.** The **36-year-old, the oldest No.1 in history, defeated Grigor Dimitrov (Bulgaria)** in the final.
- iii.** Federer is three years older than **American Andre Agassi** was when previously holding the record for oldest No.1 back in 2003. This was his **third title in Rotterdam** following successes in **2005 and 2012**.
- iv. France doubles pair P. H. Herbert and N. Mahut** won the Men's Doubles Title.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Netherlands Capital-** Amsterdam, **President-** Mark Rutte.

Australia's Most-Capped Female Player Alex Blackwell Retires

- i. Australia's most-capped female player and vice-captain Alex Blackwell** has announced her **retirement from international and state cricket**.
- ii.** She became just the fourth female Australian to pass 5,000 runs when she batted in the Test, Twenty20 and One-Day arenas, compiling 5,250 runs.

Cricket Canada Unveils ICC-Approved T20 League

- i. Canada's own first franchise-based Twenty20 league "Global T20 Canada",** was announced in New Delhi. The Global T20 Canada League will begin functioning from July 2018 at three venues in Toronto.
- ii.** Global T20 Canada League has received official sanction of the **International Cricket Council (ICC)**. Cricket Canada has become the **first Associate member of the ICC** to start a Twenty20 franchise league in the North America market.

MC Mary Kom And Seema Poonia Bag Silver Medals In Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament

- i.** Indian stars Seema Poonia and MC Mary Kom have settled for Silver medals after losing in the final of 69th Strandja Memorial Boxing tournament at Sofia in Bulgaria.
- ii.** While Mary Kom lost to Bulgarian Sevda Asenova in the 48-kilogram title bout, Seema went down to Russian Anna Ivanova in the 81 kg final. Overall Indian women ended up with two silver and four bronze medals in one of the oldest boxing tournaments in Europe.
- iii.** Indian boxer Vikas Krishan claimed a gold medal after defeating Troy Isley of the USA. Vikas was adjudged the best boxer of the event, a first for an Indian.

Important Takeways from above news-

- **Bulgaria Capital-** Sofia, **Currency-** Bulgarian lev.

PyeongChang Winter Olympics 2018- Important Highlights

- i.** PyeongChang Winter Olympics 2018, officially known as the XXIII Olympic Winter Games were held in Pyeongchang, South Korea. The motto of Winter Olympics 2018 was "Passion.Connected". Soohorang, a white tiger, and Bandabi, an Asiatic black bear were the official mascots for this event.

Aruna Budda Reddy Becomes 1st Indian to Win Individual Medal at Gymnastics World Cup

- i. Aruna Budda Reddy** has created history by becoming the **first Indian to win an individual medal at the Gymnastics World Cup in Melbourne, Australia**. She clinched a **Bronze medal** in the Women's Vault.

ii. Aruna, who hails from Hyderabad, scored **13.649 average points** to finish third and claim the bronze medal at the Hisense Arena. **Tjasa Kysilef of Slovenia took home the Gold, while Emily Whitehead of Australia won the Silver.**

Parupalli Kashyap wins Austrian Open

i. Reigning Commonwealth Games champion **Parupalli Kashyap** overcame Malaysia's **June Wei Cheam** in straight games in the men's singles final to clinch the Austrian Open International Challenge, his first international title in over three years.

ii. The Indian looked in good touch throughout the tournament as he **didn't drop** a single game en route to his title win.



Obituaries

World's Oldest Man Passes Away at 113

- i. The world's oldest man Francisco Nunez Olivera** has died just over a month after celebrating his 113th birthday.
- ii.** He passed away in Spain where he had lived throughout his life. He was born on December 13, 1904.

Kathakali Maestro Madavoor Vasudevan Nair Passes Away

- i. Kathakali maestro Madavoor Vasudevan Nair** collapsed on stage and died while performing at Agasthyacodu Mahadeva Temple, Kerala. He was 89.
- ii.** He was the Padma Bhushan award recipient.

Actor John Mahoney Passes Away

- i. Actor John Mahoney** passed away after a brief illness in Chicago, the USA. **He was 77 years old.** He was well-known for playing the title character in the **“Frasier” show.**
- ii.** He worked in films for nearly 35 years. His important works are “The American President,” “Moonstruck,” “In the Line of Fire,” and “Say Anything”.

Noted Litterateur Chandrasekhar Rath Passes Away

- i. Eminent litterateur Chandrasekhar Rath** passed away at the age of 89. He died of old age ailments. He was recently nominated for Padma Shri by the Union government this year for his contribution towards Odia literature.
- ii.** His three novels, **Yantrarudha (The Instrumented) 1967, Asurya Upanivesh (The Sunless Colony) 1974 and Nav Jatak (Regenesis) 1981,** have given him a special place in Odia literature. He has also received literary awards like Sahitya Akademi Award and Sarala Award.

Pakistani Activist Asma Jahangir Passes Away

- i. Asma Jahangir,** Pakistan’s renowned **human rights lawyer, social activist and an outspoken critic of the country’s powerful military establishment,** passed away of cardiac arrest. She was 66.
- ii.** She was the **first woman to serve as the president of Supreme Court Bar Association of Pakistan.**

Renowned Violinist MS Anantharaman Passes Away

- i. Noted violinist M.S. Anantharaman,** an exponent of **Parur style** of violin playing had passed away.
- ii.** He was 94 and was proficient in **Carnatic music.**

Legendary Bollywood actress Sridevi passes away

- i. Veteran Bollywood actress and Padma Shri awardee Sridevi,** who had an illustrious career spanning over four decades, passed away. She was 54.
- ii.** Sridevi was died due to cardiac arrest in Dubai.

Former Cabinet Secretary T.S.R. Subramanian Passes Away

- i. Former Cabinet Secretary T.S.R. Subramanian** passed away. He was 79. Mr Subramanian was a 1961 batch officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre.
- ii.** He served as Cabinet Secretary from August 1996 to March 1998.

Important Days with theme

World Cancer Day: 04th February

- i. **The World Cancer Day** is observed on **4th February every year** to raise awareness about cancer, its treatment and to encourage methods of its prevention. **The theme for WCD 2016-18 is 'We can, I Can'**.
- ii. Vice President **Venkaiah Naidu** inaugurated a medical camp at Swarna Bharat Trust, Atkur in **Andhra Pradesh** organised on the occasion of World Cancer Day.

National Productivity Day- 12 February

- i. **The National Productivity Council** observed the **National Productivity Day (NPD) on 12 February 2018**. The council is also observing the National Productivity Week till February 18.
- ii. The theme for NPD 2018 is **'Industry 4.0 Leapfrog Opportunity for India'**.

Important Takeaways from above news-

- The year 2018 is the **60th anniversary** of the National Productivity Council (NPC).
- **Chairman of NPC-** Ramesh Abhishek, **Headquarters-** New Delhi, **Established in-** 1958.

World Radio Day- 13 February

- i. **World Radio Day** is observed annually on **13 February**.
- ii. The theme for WRD 2018 is **"Radio and Sports"**. The Day is organised globally by the **UNESCO**.

Important Takeaways from above news-

- **UNESCO-** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- **France's Audrey Azoulay-** 11th DG of UNESCO, **Headquarters-** Paris, France.

World Day of Social Justice- 20 February

- i. **The World Day of Social Justice (WDSJ)** is observed globally on **20th February**.
- ii. The theme for WDSJ 2018 is **"Workers on the Move: the Quest for Social Justice"**.

Important Takeaways from above news-

- **ILO Headquarters-** Geneva, Switzerland.
- **ILO Director-General-** Mr Guy Ryder.

International Mother Language Day- 21 February

- i. **UNESCO** has celebrated **International Mother Language Day on 21 February**. The 2018 theme is- **"Linguistic diversity and multilingualism count for sustainable development"**.
- ii. It has been organised for nearly 20 years with the aim of preserving linguistic diversity and promoting mother tongue-based multilingual education.

Important Takeaways from Above news-

- **UNESCO-** United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
- **France's Audrey Azoulay-** 11th DG of UNESCO, **Headquarters-** Paris, France.