

Monthly Current Affairs Update

June 2018

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Banking and Financial Related News

RBI withdraws rule exceptions for NBFCs owned by govt

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has ended the special dispensations granted earlier for non-banking financial corporations (NBFCs) owned by the government.
- Instead, it has specified a roadmap, stretching till 2021-22, for these lenders to meet the norms on capital adequacy, provisioning and corporate governance. Among the entities affected are IFCI, Power Finance Corporation, India Infrastructure Finance Company, Indian Railway Finance Corporation, Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency and Housing & Urban Development Corporation.

HDFC Bank recognized for best practices in payment security at visa summit

- HDFC Bank has once again been recognized with the Champion Security Award at the 14th Visa Asia Pacific Security Summit. For the second time in a row, the bank has won the award in the India and South Asia category. The Award is a mark of excellence reflecting leadership in risk management and payment security performance.
- As India is transforming to digital India, consumers are shopping and paying with devices, and transactions are moving from cash to online digital modes. Visa believes in investing in new standards, technologies, and products that will equip financial institutions, merchants, third parties and consumers in the fight against fraud.

India, Singapore agree to improve business access

- India and Singapore have agreed to improve access for businesses in each other's markets as they concluded the second review of the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA).
- The review includes enhancements such as expanded tariff concessions for an additional 30 products and improved rules to provide more flexibility for Singapore exports into India to qualify for preferential tariffs under the agreement, Singapore's Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) said.

Odisha govt launches health insurance scheme for journalists

- The Odisha government launched a health insurance scheme for working journalists in the state on Friday. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the scheme, called "Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana".
- In the first phase, as many as 3,233 working journalists will get health insurance coverage up to Rs 2 lakh a year. At least five members of the journalists family will be covered under the scheme, said an official statement.

Country's first AUSC power plant to come up in NTPC's Chhattisgarh station

- India's first advanced ultra-supercritical thermal power plant would be set up in the Sipat station of the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) in Chhattisgarh.
- The coal-fired project, one of the ambitious plans of the Centre, would have a capacity of 800 Mw. Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic Research (IGCAR) has developed the technology, while power equipment major BHEL will design and manufacture the boiler and other equipment that NTPC would use.

Price of non-subsidised LPG increases by Rs 48

- The price of non-subsidised cooking gas LPG was increased by 48 rupees per cylinder on June 1, 2018 in New Delhi.
- The cost of the gas will now be Rs 698 in Delhi, Rs 723.50 in Kolkatta, Rs 671. 50 in Mumbai and Rs 712.50 in Chennai.

Financial Literacy Week to begin on June 4; Consumer Protection is the theme

- The Reserve Bank of India has chosen customer protection as theme for the Financial Literacy Week beginning on June 4. This week long event ending on June 8 will focus on creating awareness among customers of banks about financial products and services, good financial practices and going digital, the RBI said in a statement.
- The week will focus on four consumer protection messages like 'know your liability' for unauthorised electronic banking transaction and Good practices for a safe digital banking experience.
- Among various messages, customers will be told through banners and posters that in case of unauthorised digital transaction if bank is informed within 3 days, the liability of the account holder is zero.

Income Tax Department launches new Benami Transactions Informants Reward Scheme, 2018

- The Income Tax Department has issued a new reward scheme titled “Benami Transactions Informants Reward Scheme, 2018” to seek people’s participation in the Income Tax Department’s efforts to unearth black money and to reduce tax evasion.
- The scheme is aimed at encouraging people to give information about benami transactions and properties as well as income earned on such properties by such hidden investors and beneficial owners.

Under the new rewards scheme, a reward up to Rs 1 crore would be given to those who can give specific information in prescribed manner to the Joint or Additional Commissioners of Benami Prohibition Units (BPUs) in Investigation Directorates of Income Tax Department about:

- Benami transactions and properties as well as proceeds from such properties which are actionable under Benami Property Transactions Act, 1988, as amended by Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Amendment Act, 2016.
- Substantial evasion of tax on income or assets in India which are actionable under the Income-tax Act, 1961

India to import 1st cargo of LNG from Russia under long term deal tomorrow

- India will on Monday import its first ever cargo of LNG from Russia under a long-term deal as the world's fourth-largest buyer of liquefied natural gas (LNG) diversifies its import basket to meet its vast energy needs.
- State-owned gas utility GAIL India Ltd will bring the shipload of LNG from Gazprom at Petronet LNG Ltd's import terminal here, official sources said. Beginning of supplies from Russia comes within weeks of India importing its first ever LNG cargo from US under a long-term import deal.

YES BANK launches ‘Scale-Up’ series to upskill MSMEs

- YES BANK launches MSME ‘Scale-Up’ series, a unique Industry-Academia collaboration, to upskill MSMEs from Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities with MDI Gurgaon as its Training Partner and Spark Minda, a global entity in automotive components.
- The initiative is aimed at boosting MSME businesses by educating them on latest manufacturing technologies, global best practices and innovative finance management.

- The maiden chapter of the Series kicked off in MDI Gurgaon, in collaboration with the first Corporate Anchor 'Spark Minda'.

Telangana government, LIC sign MoU for life insurance scheme for farmers

- Telangana government and the LIC today signed an MoU for the implementation of a Rs five lakh life insurance scheme for the benefit of farmers in the state.
- The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in the presence of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao at an event where he addressed state agriculture department officers and others.
- Describing the scheme as the 'greatest thing' he has done in his life, Rao said it should be implemented from August 15.

Paytm Introduces 'Merchant Referral' to Enable Neighbourhood Offline Stores to Accept Payments in their Bank Accounts

- One97 Communications Limited, that owns the brand Paytm, has introduced a first-of-its-kind 'Merchant Referral' on its platform. This move is to enable small and medium merchant (SME) community to join the cashless revolution by accepting payments from any bank account into their bank accounts at no charges.
- The company has been witnessing a surge in customer requests to help their neighbourhood stores accept payments using Paytm. This feature will offer customers an opportunity to contribute towards the digital payment adoption in their respective neighbourhoods and powering these shopkeepers with mobile payments.

Bengaluru to host UN Global Compact Network India convention

- Global Compact Network India (GCNI), a local network of the United Nations Global Compact in New York, is holding its 13th National Convention on the theme of 'Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): A Blueprint for Action' here on June 8 at Hotel Shangri-La.
- This year, the GCNI convention is of a greater significance as it is coinciding with the UN India Business Forum being hosted on June 7.
- As part of a long term association, Accenture, will support the event as the Knowledge Partner of GCNI.

Tripura starts exporting pineapples to Dubai

- Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb on June 3, 2018 flagged off the first consignment of pineapples from the state to be exported to Dubai.
- Speaking at the function, Deb said more consignments of pineapples of the state would be exported to foreign countries. Deb urged the farmers in the state to plant pineapples and bamboo in land lying unused.

First cargo of Russian LNG to arrive in Gujarat

- India will receive the first ever cargo of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from Russia on June 4, 2018 as New Delhi diversifies import basket to meet its vast energy needs.
- The shipload of LNG will be brought by state-owned gas utility GAIL India Ltd from Gazprom, a Russian supplier at Petronet LNG Ltd's import terminal in Dahej, Gujarat.
- Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister Dharmendra Pradhan will receive the first consignment at the terminal.

Yes Bank launches Green Future Deposit scheme with an eye to raise Rs 1,000 crore

- Private sector lender Yes Bank launched a deposit scheme today, which could fetch up to 8 per cent for a tenure of little over 18 months.
- The bank is eyeing Rs 1,000 crore from the scheme 'Green Future:Deposit' in next three months. The launch coincides the World Environment Day.
- The bank said in a statement that this deposit account can be opened for 18 months and 8 days to 18 months and 18 days, with peak interest rate of 7.50 per cent per annum for a regular Green Future.

Joint venture formed to set up India's first bio-refinery in Assam

- An agreement to set up India's first bio-refinery – Assam Bio-Refinery Pvt Ltd – as a joint venture (JV) between state-run Numaligarh Refinery Ltd (NRL) and two foreign partners has been signed, NRL announced on Tuesday.
- The JV, which would produce the eco-friendly bio-ethanol and other chemicals from bamboo biomass, has been created by NRL with equity participation of Chempolis Oy of Finland and Fortum 3 B.V. of Netherlands, NRL Managing Director S.K. Barua told reporters here.
- According to the official, bio-coal will be used for production of steam and supplying clean power to the refinery.

Government launches 'Krishi Kalyan Abhiyaan' to help farmers raise their income

- The Union Ministry of Agriculture and farmers' welfare has launched the Krishi Kalyan Abhiyaan from June 1, 2018 till July 31, 2018 to aid, assist and advice farmers on how to improve their farming techniques and raise their incomes.
- The Krishi Kalyan Abhiyaan will be undertaken in 25 Villages with more than 1000 population, each in 111 Aspirational Districts identified in consultation with Ministry of Rural Development as per directions of NITI Ayog. In the districts where the number of villages (with more than 1000 population) is less than 25, all villages will be covered.

"Whatsapp for Credit Score": Wishfin launches free credit score on Whatsapp

- Wishfin has launched a new product, "Whatsapp for Credit Score". Wishfin has integrated with Whatsapp to launch a free credit score on Whatsapp. This is a first of its kind, where Indian users will have access to their credit score on Whatsapp. This is also one of the early adaptations of Whatsapp for Credit monitoring globally.
- Nearly six months ago, Wishfin had partnered with Whatsapp on testing its enterprise business solution. Wishfin had launched loan and credit card application on Whatsapp which was a huge success. That has further confirmed Wishfin's belief that Whatsapp is a great engagement tool for financial products.

Bank of Baroda raises MCLR by 5 basis points

- State-run Bank of Baroda today said announced a 5 basis points increase in its marginal cost of funds-based lending rates (MCLR) across various tenors.
- The new rate will be effective from June 7, the bank said in a statement today.
- The one-year MCLR rate, or the minimum lending rate has been hiked to 8.45 per cent from 8.40 per cent.

K-DISC launches major training programme in Blockchain tech

- Kerala State Development and Innovation Strategic Council (K-DISC), a key state government initiative, has launched an ambitious programme for imparting training in Blockchain technology to students, providing them with an early-mover advantage and positioning the state as the largest supplier of Blockchain technologists in the country.

India receives cheapest LNG as Russia's Gazprom begins supplies

- India on June 4, 2018 received its cheapest LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) as Russian company Gazprom began shipping natural gas under a long-term deal. As per the sources, Gazprom is providing LNG at around USD 7 per mmBtu.
- The Russian rate is USD 1.5 per mmBtu less than the price at which Qatar's RasGas, India's oldest supplier, used to deliver LNG.
- Russian supplies are also cheaper by USD 1 to USD 1.5 per mmBtu than the LNG sourced from Australia's Gorgon LNG and the United States.
- LNG carrier 'LNG Kano', carrying a cargo from Russian supplier Gazprom, ported at Petronet LNG's import facility at Dahej, Gujarat.

RBI to set up Public Credit Registry

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced that a Public Credit Registry (PCR) would be set up in a modular and phased manner, to strengthen the economy's credit culture.
- The RBI's High Level Task Force, which submitted its report on April 4, had recommended that with a view to address information asymmetry, foster access to credit, and strengthen the credit culture in the economy, a PCR should be set up.
- In lieu of the same, the central bank, while announcing its bi-monthly monetary policy statement, said it has considered the recommendations of the Task Force and decided to set up a PCR in a modular and phased manner.
- Furthermore, the RBI said an Implementation Task Force (ITF) is being constituted to help design undertake logistics for the next steps in setting up of the PCR.

RBI raises policy rate for the first time in four years, maintains 'neutral' stance

- The Reserve Bank of India on Wednesday raised its policy rate for the first time in more than four years, due to inflation concerns, but kept its policy stance as "neutral".
- The monetary policy committee lifted the repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25 percent, the first increase since January 2014, as predicted by 46 percent of respondents in a Reuters poll this week.
- All six members on the rate panel voted for an increase.

IDFC Bank, Capital First get Reserve Bank of India's nod for merger

- IDFC Bank on Wednesday said it has received RBI's approval for merger of Capital First, Capital First Home Finance and Capital First Securities with the company.
- "The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has, via its letter dated 4 June, 2018, conveyed its 'No Objection' for the voluntary amalgamation of Capital First Ltd, Capital First Home Finance Ltd and Capital First Securities Ltd with IDFC Bank," IDFC Bank said in a regulatory filing.

Canara Bank fined in UK for anti-money laundering breaches

- Britain's markets regulator has fined the UK division of India's Canara Bank 896,100 pounds (\$1.2 million) and blocked it from accepting new deposits for around five months for systemic anti-money laundering (AML) failures.
- The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) said on Wednesday that the control failures at the UK division of Canara Bank, India's fifth largest state-run lender by assets, affected almost all levels of its business and governance structure, including senior management.

President approves promulgation of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018

- President Ram Nath Kovind on June 6, 2018 gave approval to promulgate the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018.
- The Ordinance provides significant relief to home buyers by recognising them as financial creditors.
- From now on, home buyers will have representation in the Committee of Creditors and will be an integral part of the decision making process.
- Homebuyers will have the right to initiate a resolution process against the bankrupt real estate companies and get their money back.

Agro-Processing Financial Institution as NBFC for food processing sector

- Food Processing Ministry will soon create the Agro-Processing Financial Institution which will exclusively fund food processing projects.
- The Agro-Processing Financial Institution will be a non-banking financial institution.
- This NBFC in food sector will create capacity building in the field of risk assessment and ease lending to food processing sector.

Centre to start measuring green GDP of States

- The government will begin a five-year exercise to compute district-level data of the country's environmental wealth.
- The results of this study will eventually be used to calculate every State's 'green' Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Cabinet approves revision in the wage structure and allowances of Gramin Dak Sevaks

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the revision in the wage structure and allowances of Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS) of the Department of Posts.
- The revision in the wage structure would entail an estimated expenditure of Rs 1257.75 crore (Non-recurring expenditure - Rs 860.95 crore and Recurring expenditure of Rs.396.80 crore) during 2018-19.

Cabinet approves revised guidelines on time bound closure of loss making Central Public Sector Enterprises

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the revised guidelines of the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) on time bound closure of sick/ loss making Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) and disposal of movable and immovable assets.

- The revised guidelines would reduce delays in the implementation of closure plans of sick/loss making CPSEs. They would replace the guidelines issued by DPE in September, 2016.

Baba Kalyani heads group to study SEZ Policy

- The Union Government has constituted a group of eminent persons headed by Baba Kalyani, Chairman of Bharat Forge to study the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Policy of India.
- The group will evaluate the SEZ policy, suggest measures to cater to the needs of exporters in the present economic scenario and make the SEZ policy WTO compatible.

Axis Bank launches new chat bot Axis Aha service for its customers

- Private sector lender Axis Bank has launched a virtual assistant for customers armed with proprietary artificial intelligence and machine learning algorithms and named it Axis Aha.
- The chatbot is designed to provide relevant and contextual responses to customer queries and even helps make transactions on the chat window itself. Customers can initiate transactions either through voice or chat, said the bank in a press release.

RBI allows Urban Co-operative Banks to become Small Finance Banks

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on June 6, 2018 decided to allow voluntary transition of the Urban Co-Operative Banks (UCB) into Small Finance Banks (SFB), a move that is aimed at bringing UCBs into mainstream banking.
- The Urban Co-Operative Banks can now covert into SFBs after meeting the prescribed criteria. The details of the scheme will be announced separately by the RBI.
- The decision was taken during the meeting of the Monetary Policy Committee.
- The move is an outcome of the recommendations made by the High Powered Committee on Urban Cooperative Banks in August 2015. The committee was chaired by R Gandhi, the then Deputy Governor of the RBI.

RBI extends temporary loan repayment relief for small businesses

- In a significant relief measure to small businesses, particularly, non-GST registered firms, the RBI tweaked norms exempting banks not to classify loans as NPAs even if payments are delayed by 180 days.
- Typically, banks and NBFCs have to classify an account as NPA if loan repayments are delayed for 90 days after due date. It may be noted that a similar exemption doubling the loan repayment delays up to 180 days was first extended to GST-registered MSMEs in February.

ITC acquires Nimyle floor cleaner, forays into home care space

- ITC Ltd has acquired floor cleaning brand Nimyle from Kolkata-based Arpita Agro Products for an undisclosed amount, marking the cigarette-biscuits-hotel major's entry into the home care segment.
- ITC confirmed the deal refusing to share further details. Nimyle is the second largest brand in the floor cleaning segment in West Bengal and Odisha while has recently entered the North and selling through e-commerce firms like Amazon and Big Basket.

World Bank approves funding for Atal Bhujal Yojana

- The World Bank has approved Water Resources and River Development Ministry's Rs 6000 crore worth central sector scheme, 'Atal Bhujal Yojana'.
- The scheme will be implemented over a period of five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23 with assistance from the World Bank. The scheme proposal has already been recommended by the Expenditure Finance Committee and the Ministry will be seeking Cabinet approval for the project shortly.
- The scheme has been formulated by the Water Resources Ministry to address the criticality of ground water resources in major country parts.

EFC extends timeline of Dam Rehabilitation & Improvement Project to 2020

- The Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) on June 7, 2018 approved the revised cost estimate of the Dam Rehabilitation & Improvement Project (DRIP) for Rs 3466 crore and extended time period for conclusion of the project till June 2020
- The approval came during a meeting of the EFC under the Chairpersonship of Secretary, Department of Expenditure that was held to consider the proposal of Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation for revised cost estimate of the DRIP.

RBI amends Gold Monetisation Scheme to make it more attractive

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on June 7, 2018 amended the Gold Monetisation Scheme, 2015 (GMS) with an aim to enable people to open a gold deposit account hassle-free.

Short term deposits

- From now onwards, the short-term deposits will be treated as bank's on-balance sheet liability.
- These deposits will be made with the designated banks for a short period of 1 to 3 years.
- Deposits can also be allowed for broken periods such as for 1 year 3 months or for 2 years 4 months 5 days.
- The rate of interest payable in the case of deposits, for maturities with broken periods, will be calculated as the sum of interest for the completed year plus interest for the number of remaining days.

Redemption of principal at maturity

- In the case of Medium and Long Term Government Deposits (MLTGD), the redemption of principal at maturity will be either in rupees equivalent of the value of deposited gold at the time of redemption, or in gold, it depends upon preference of the depositor.
- However, any pre-mature redemption of MLTGD shall be only in rupees.
- In case of redemption of the deposit in gold, an administrative charge of 0.2 percent of the notional redemption amount in rupees will be collected from the depositor.
- The interest accrued on MLTGD will be calculated with reference to the value of gold in terms of rupees at the time of deposit and will be paid only in cash.

The designated banks will be paid handling charges such as charges for gold purity testing, refining, transportation, storage and any other relevant costs for Medium and Long Term Government Deposits at a flat rate of 1.5 percent and commission at the rate of 1 percent of the amount equivalent to the amount of gold mobilised under the scheme.

Committee formed to examine setting up of Asset Reconstruction co for faster resolution of stressed assets of PSBs: Goyal

- Interim finance minister Piyush Goyal on Friday announced the formation of a committee that he said will come up with recommendations to set up a mechanism for the speedy resolution of stressed assets in the banking system.
- “A committee under the chairmanship of Sunil Mehta, non-executive chairman of Punjab National Bank, which over next two weeks will come out with their recommendations over setting up of an asset reconstruction company and/or asset management company for faster resolution of stressed assets,” he said.

Short-term subsidised crop loan to be implemented through direct benefit transfer mode: RBI

- The RBI announced that interest subsidy scheme on short-term crop loans of up to Rs 3 lakh will be implemented through the Direct Benefit Transfer Mode from the current financial year.
- The Centre has earmarked Rs 15000 crore for 2018-19 towards interest subvention for short-term crop loans.

Punjab government launches ‘Business First Portal’

- The Punjab Government on June 7, 2018 launched a ‘Business First Portal’ to give a big push towards the ease of doing business in the state. The portal was unveiled by the state’s Industry Minister Sunder Sham Arora in Jalandhar, Punjab.
- While addressing the industrialists present at the launch, the Minister stated that online portal would facilitate the industrialists for regulatory clearances and fiscal approvals and real-time tracking of applications on a common platform.
- The portal aims to be a one-step solution for industrialists.

Air India seeks Rs 1000 crore bank loan to meet its urgent working capital requirement

- National Carrier Air India sought proposals for short-term loans worth one thousand crore rupees to meet its urgent working capital requirements.
- The loan will be drawn in June in one or more tranches. The airline has requested banks to submit their financial bids by 13th of this month.

Government Task Force on shell companies removed the names of over 2 lakh 26 thousand firms

- Government Task Force on shell companies have identified and removed the names of over 2 lakh 26 thousand firms from the register of companies in the Financial Year 2017-18.
- These companies have not filed their annual returns for a continuous period of two or more financial years.

Qingdao Declaration: India refuses to endorse China’s One Belt One Road initiative

- India on June 10, 2018 refused to endorse Chinese President Xi Jinping’s One Belt, One Road (OBOR) project as part of a joint declaration at the 18th Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Summit in Qingdao.
- The summit was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was on a two-day visit to the picturesque coastal city of China’s Shandong province to attend the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).
- It was for the first time that the Indian prime minister attended the SCO summit after India and Pakistan became full-fledged members of the grouping.
- In an address at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, PM Modi said mega connectivity projects must respect sovereignty and territorial integrity of countries.

Yes Bank Launches New Accelerator Programme for Startups in Smart City, Cleantech, Agritech, Lifesciences Tech and EdTech

- After tasting success with its fintech accelerator, Yes Bank is now set to launch multi sector accelerator program.
- YES SCALE will offer a 15 week program for startups in the areas of smart city, clean tech, Agritech, Lifesciences tech and education tech.
- The bank will invest close to Rs 4.5 crore towards this program which includes the grants for pilots.
- Rs 2.5-3 crore has been carved out of the bank's CSR funds which will be allocated towards funding for proof of concepts. The bank will not take an equity stake in lieu of the grants.

RBI releases draft guidelines to modify loan system for large borrowers

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on June 11, 2018 released the draft guidelines to modify the loan system for delivery of bank credit, making the rules stricter to regulate larger borrowers enjoying working capital facility from the banking system.
- The draft specifies a minimum level of loan component in fund based working capital finance and a mandatory Credit Conversion Factor (CCF) for the undrawn portion of cash credit availed of by large borrowers.

Here are the draft guidelines on loan system for delivery of bank credit:

Minimum level of 'loan component'

- Borrowers having aggregate fund based working capital limit of Rs 150 crore and above from the banking system, need to withdraw a minimum of 40 percent of the limit as loan component and the remaining as cash credit, with effect from October 1, 2018.

Sharing of Working Capital Finance

- The ground rules for sharing of cash credit and loan components will be laid down by the consortium, subject to guidelines on bifurcation. Under Multiple Banking Arrangements (MBAs), each bank will have a duty to ensure adherence to these guidelines at individual bank level.

Amount and tenure of the loan

- The amount of the Working Capital Demand Loan (WCDL) will be fixed by banks in consultation with the borrowers, and the tenure of this loan shall not be less than seven days.

Repayment/ rollover of loan component

- Banks will have the discretion to demand repayment of the 'loan component' in instalments or by way of a 'bullet' repayment.

Risk weights for undrawn portion of cash credit limits

- The undrawn portion of cash credit or the overdraft limits sanctioned to the large borrowers will attract a credit conversion factor of 20 percent with effect from April 1, 2019.
- Loan component will be revised to 60 percent from 2019
- The current 40 percent loan component will be revised to 60 percent, with effect from April 1, 2019.

Government to launch Rs 500-crore credit enhancement fund

- The Union Government is planning to launch Rs 500-crore worth credit enhancement fund in July to boost infrastructure financing.
- The move aims to facilitate infrastructure investments by insurance and pension funds. The fund was first proposed in the financial budget for fiscal year 2016-17.
- The information was shared by Kumar Vinay Pratap, joint secretary (infrastructure, policy and finance), Ministry of Finance while speaking at an event on private sector participation in resource mobilisation organised by the Finance Ministry.

Axis tops value, Paytm volumes in mobile banking

- According to State Bank of India's (SBI) annual report for 2017-18, Axis Bank commands the largest value share of mobile banking transactions at 17.2 per cent but Paytm tops volumes with 22 per cent.
- However, Paytm's value share is a meagre 0.25 per cent, as per the report.
- On the other hand, ICICI Bank has a 17.1 per cent share of transactions by value and 9.7 per cent by volume.

Gujarat tops e-way bill collection

- Despite industries such as textiles and ceramics, among others facing teething problems, Gujarat has emerged as the leading state in generating e-way bills during April, May and the first week of June.
- The state has generated over 10.72 million inter- and intra-state e-way bills, followed by Maharashtra (8.13 million), Karnataka (8.05 million), Uttar Pradesh (7.64 million) and Haryana (7.63 million), respectively.

Cabinet approves HDFC's proposal to raise additional share capital

- HDFC Bank, India's most valued lender, has received government approval to sell fresh shares in India and abroad in what could result in the country's largest qualified institutional placement (QIP).
- The approval includes an Rs 8,500-crore infusion from parent Housing Development Finance Corp (HDFC), which will allow it to maintain its 25.6% current shareholding, potentially leaving about Rs 15,500 crore to be raised from the market. The QIP record is Rs 15,000 crore raised by State Bank of India (SBI) in June 2017.
- Cabinet approved the proposal on Wednesday, subject to overseas ownership limits.

Amazon India launches seller lending network

- Amazon India today launched its Seller Lending Network (SLN), which will allow sellers on the e-commerce major's platform to seek loans from multiple third party lenders.
- Amazon India has partnered organisations like Aditya Birla Finance, Bank of Baroda, Capital First, Capital Float, Flexiloans, and Yes Bank for the lending programme.
- Amazon India, which is locked in an intense battle for market leadership with homegrown player Flipkart, has about 3.4 lakh sellers on its platform.
- Under SLN, sellers will get access to a wider selection of loan options from multiple lenders and loan types (term loans or overdraft loans) as well as competitive interest rates.

Government events costlier than Rs 40 lakh needs Finance Ministry approval from now on

- The Centre has made it mandatory for all ministries and government departments to seek prior approval of the Finance Ministry if their expenditure on seminars, workshops and similar events exceeds Rs 40 lakh.

- This is in order to keep in check the rising number of bills being posted on such events. Proposals involving expenses less than Rs 40 lakh will have to be approved by the financial advisor of the concerned ministry.

Gujarat to become 1st state with 100% piped gas network

- Gujarat will become the first Indian state to get completely covered under the piped gas distribution network after the ninth round of bidding, which will see a quarter of the country brought under the network.
- The western Indian state already has 84.31 per cent of its area under the city gas distribution (CGD) network, and will see the remaining area covered after the ninth round of bidding which opened last month, Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Chairperson D K Sarraf said here today.

SEBI constitutes Group to facilitate the stock market listing of startups

- Market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on June 12, 2018 constituted a Group to review Institutional Trading Platform (ITP) Framework to make stock market listing attractive for startups.
- The group will submit the report to SEBI within a period of one month that is by July 2018.

Terms of Reference of the Group

- To look into the existing Institutional Trading Platform (ITP) framework and suggest measures to facilitate listing of startups.
- To revisit the current ITP framework and identify the areas, if any, which require further changes.
- To address issues relevant to ITP which the group may like to assess.

SEBI constitutes Expert Committee to frame rules for direct listing of Indian firms abroad

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on June 12, 2018 constituted an Expert Committee to frame rules for direct listing of Indian firms abroad.

Terms of Reference of the Committee:

- Examine the economic case for permitting direct listing of Indian companies overseas and listing of Indian companies on foreign bourses in India.
- Examine various legal, operational and regulatory constraints in facilitating companies incorporated in India to directly list their equity share capital abroad and vice versa.
- Make recommendations for a suitable framework in which to facilitate such direct listing.

Government approves revision of carpet area of houses eligible for interest subsidy under PMAY-U

- The Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs has approved a 33-per cent increase in the carpet area of houses eligible for interest subsidy under the Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) for the Middle-Income Group (MIG) under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) (PMAY-U) to boost affordable housing.
- With the revision, the carpet area of a house for Middle Income Group-I (MIG-I) has been increased from 120 sqm to 160 sqm and for MIG II, the area has been increased from 150 sqm to 200 sqm.

NSDC Signs An MoU With Singapore EGL To Boost Skill India Programme

- As PM Narendra Modi had earlier spoken during his talks with the Startup India programme beneficiaries, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) under the Ministry of Skill Development and

Entrepreneurship, Government of India has signed an MoU with the Singapore e-Government Leadership Centre (eGL) to skill India's workforce.

- As per the MoU, both the organisations will work together to develop and implement skill development programmes across emerging technology areas like Data Analytics, Artificial Intelligence and Robotics, reports ET.

PhonePe partners with Ola

- Flipkart-owned PhonePe today said it has partnered cab aggregator Ola that will allow riders to book rides using the former's payment platform.
- He added that PhonePe has also added 'Auto-pay' feature that allows users to make payments seamlessly.

Industrial Production expanded by 4.9 percent in April

- The Industrial production expanded by 4.9 percent in April 2018 on improved performance by manufacturing and mining sectors.
- The industrial growth, based on Index of Industrial Production (IIP), was 3.2 percent in April 2017.
- The IIP for March 2018 has been revised upwards to 4.6 percent from 4.4 percent estimated earlier.

India, US agree to hold comprehensive talks to address trade & economic issues

- India and the US agreed to hold comprehensive talks to address trade and economic issues.
- The decision was taken during a series of meetings by the Union Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu with US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.
- India will send an official team to the US to work out the details and initiate a comprehensive negotiation on all issues concerning trade and economic relationship between the two countries.

Karnataka Bank launches 'Deposit Only Card'

- Karnataka Bank Ltd has launched 'KBL-Deposit Only Card' that enables hassle-free cash deposit transactions at the bank's 24X7 e-lobby services.
- A press release by the bank said here on Thursday that this card is specially meant for the bank's current/overdraft customers.

MARG ERP Limited partners with ICICI Bank

- Marg ERP limited, a leading Inventory and Accounting software solution company has partnered with ICICI Bank, India's largest private sector bank by consolidated assets, to offer an integrated payments platform to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) customers, using MARG's accounting software.
- This integration aims to promote 'Connected Banking' and enables ICICI Bank's current account holders to securely connect their bank account with the MARG ERP software and undertake an array of digital transactions from within the ERP platform itself.

NSE launches platform to facilitate repo in corporate debt securities

- Leading stock exchange NSE today launched 'Tri-Party Repo Market' platform in its debt segment to facilitate repurchase (repo) of corporate debt securities.
- The platform is a kind of repo contract where a third entity, apart from the borrower and lender, called tri-party agent acts as an intermediary to facilitate services like collateral selection, payment and settlement, custody and management during the life of the transaction.

Reliance investing in India's first carbon fibre unit

- Reliance Industries is investing in setting up India's first carbon fibre manufacturing unit to cater to aerospace and defence needs, the company said in its annual report.
- The owner of world's largest oil refining complex will also make low-cost and high-volume composite products like modular toilets, homes and composites for windmill blades and rotor blades.

NBCC to invest ₹ 500 cr to acquire 2 loss-making PSUs

- State-owned construction firm NBCC plans to invest around ₹ 500 crore to acquire majority stake in two loss-making public sector firms, a top company official said.
- "We are gradually moving towards consolidation in the construction business. As a part of the strategy, we acquired loss making HSCL. We will be completing the acquisition of two more PSUs by the second quarter of this fiscal," company's chairman-cum-managing director Anoop Kumar Mittal told reporters here today.

Northeast India's first small bank, North East Small Finance bank starts operation

- North East Small Finance bank (NESFB), Northeast India's first small bank has started its services on 17 June, 2018 in Assam.
- Ratan Tata launched the first branch of the bank in Guwahati, Assam.
- Tata, through his investment arm RNT Associates, has invested Rs 40 crore in the bank.
- Rupali Kalita is the MD & CEO of North East Small Finance bank (NESFB).

About North East Small Finance bank

- Headquarters - Guwahati, Assam
- MD & CEO - Rupali Kalita

NABARD to Lend Rs 21000 crore to Madhya Pradesh in Current Fiscal

- National Bank For Agriculture And Rural Development (NABARD) would lend Rs 21000 crore to the Madhya Pradesh government in the financial year 2018-19.
- Out of the 21000 crore rupees, Rs 4000 crore would be used for irrigation, roads and infrastructure in rural areas, another Rs 4000 crore to commercial and cooperative banks for investment in the agriculture sector, Rs 3000 crore for Civil Supplies Corporation and MP State Cooperative Marketing Federation Limited (Markfed), and Rs 10000 crore to cooperative banks for the purpose of agricultural credit.

TRAI signs net neutrality MoU with European regulator BEREC

- Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has signed a memorandum of understanding on net neutrality titled 'Joint Statement for an Open Internet' with the Body of European Regulators for Electronic Communications.

- The purpose of the MoU is to “collaborate closely and expose their common understanding of net neutrality”.

4th Meeting of Governing Council of NITI Aayog held

The fourth meeting of Governing Council of NITI Aayog was chaired by PM Narendra Modi at Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi.

A total of 23 state chief ministers attended the meeting.

Highlights of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog Meeting

- PM Narendra Modi has assured help to the bifurcated states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh with the norms and provisions.
- Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan headed seven member committee will be formed under MNREGA scheme for development of irrigation and post-harvest. The committee will also comprise the Chief Ministers of Bihar, Gujarat, Sikkim, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh.

RBI relaxes norms for Foreign Portfolio Investors to invest in debt

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has eased the norms for Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) to invest in debt, particularly into individual large businesses.
- From now on FPIs will be permitted to invest in Government securities (G-secs) without any minimum residual maturity requirement. However, there will be a condition, short-term investments by an FPI shall not exceed 20 percent of the total investment.
- Short-term investments by an FPI may exceed 20 percent of total investments made on or before April 27, 2018.
- FPIs will also be permitted to invest in corporate bonds with minimum residual maturity of above one year. The condition is, short-term investments by FPI in corporate bonds shall not exceed 20 percent of the total investment of that FPI in corporate bonds.

Task Force constituted to examine feasibility of Steel Plants in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

- Steel Ministry constituted a Task Force to examine the feasibility of setting up steel plants in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana by any interested parties at Bayyaram and Kadapa.
- The task force comprises of representatives from the Central Government, State Government and Central Public Sector Enterprises under the Ministry of Steel.

Suresh Mathur Panel set up to review norms for insurance marketing firms

- Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority has set up a panel consisting 10 members to review norms for insurance marketing firms.
- The aim of this panel is to increase insurance penetration in the country.
- In 2015, IRDAI introduced the new distribution channel of IMF or Insurance Marketing Firms with an objective of increasing insurance penetration through an area-wise registration approach.
- The panel will be headed by Suresh Mathur, ED-IMF of IRDAI.

Truecaller acquires multi-bank payments app Chillr

- Truecaller has announced its acquisition of Indian payments startup Chillr to strengthen its payments business in the country. The Swedish company said it will roll out credit and other financial services to Indian users in the coming months.
- Chillr co-founder Sony Joy will join as the vice president of Truecaller Pay, while the full team will be absorbed by the company. The Stockholm-headquartered company will also double its team size in India.

RBI revises housing loan limits under Priority Sector Lending

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on June 19, 2018 revised the upwards housing loan limits under Priority Sector Lending (PSL).
- The housing loan limits were revised to bring union of the PSL guidelines for housing loans with the Affordable Housing Scheme of the Union Government and to give a stimulus to low-cost housing for the economically weaker sections and low income groups.
- PSL loans are relatively cheaper than market interest rate.
- Housing loans of up to Rs 35 lakh for residences costing less than Rs 45 lakh will now be treated as Priority Sector Lending (PSL) to give a boost to the low-cost segment.
- The housing loan limits for eligibility under priority sector lending will be revised to Rs 35 lakh in metropolitan centres and to Rs 25 lakh in other centres.
- However, for being classified as priority sector, the overall cost of the residence in the metropolitan centre (with population of 10 lakh and above) and at other centres should not exceed Rs 45 lakh and Rs 30 lakh, respectively.

RBI tightens norms for Liberalised Remittance Scheme

- The Reserve Bank of India has tightened norms for Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) by making quoting of the Permanent Account Number or PAN mandatory even for transactions below USD 25000.
- Under the LRS, all resident individuals, including minors, are allowed to freely remit up to 250000 US dollar per financial year for any permissible current or capital account transaction.
- Earlier, a system for daily reporting of individual transactions under the LRS by banks was been put in place.

Government declares national targets for off-shore wind power

- The Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) declared medium (5 GW by 2022) and long-term (30 GW by 2030) targets for offshore wind power capacity addition.
- The offshore wind power will add new element to already existing basket of renewable energy of the country.
- The target set for offshore wind power is moderate in comparison to on-shore wind target of 60 GW and solar target of 100 GW by 2022.

Chief Ministers Subgroup constituted to coordinate policy approaches for agriculture and MGNREGS

- The Union Government on June 19, 2018 constituted a Chief Ministers Subgroup to coordinate policy approaches for Agriculture and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). The decision was taken during the Fourth Governing Council Meeting of the NITI Aayog.
- The Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh will be the Convener of the subgroup; and the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Sikkim will be the member of the group along with the NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand.

Arvind Subramanian, Chief Economic Advisor, resigns

- Arvind Subramanian, Chief Economic Advisor, has stepped down from his position on June 20, 2018.
- The reason cited for his surprise resignation is "pressing family commitments".
- The Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) is the economic advisor to the Government of India.

SEBI reduces timeline for IPO price band

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) on Thursday announced a reduction in the timeline for the announcement of Initial Public Offering (IPO) prices.
- Addressing a press conference post a board meeting, SEBI Chairman Ajay Tyagi announced that the timeline for announcing IPO has been reduced from five days to two.
- Three regulations around initial public offerings and buybacks have been redrafted.

2nd edition of MSME Pulse report by SIDBI-TransUnion CIBIL released

- The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), a premier financial institution for the promotion, financing and development of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector, in joint venture with TransUnion CIBIL, a Credit Information Company, has released the second edition of MSME Pulse, a quarterly report on MSME sector.
- The report provides the policy makers, regulators and industry with precise data-driven insights to support policy as well as business decisions. The first edition of the report was released in March 2018.

India slaps tariffs on 29 US items; higher import duties from August 4

- After a week of speculations, India on Thursday finally imposed higher tariff rates on 29 import items from the United States (US) but announced that new rates would kick in from August 4.
- India had last week notified the World Trade Organization (WTO) of its decision to impose 'reciprocal tariffs' on American products. The move comes after New Delhi got a cold shoulder from Washington DC on its request for exempting India from the higher tariffs announced by the US on steel and aluminium imports.

Accenture Ventures, Consulate General of Israel & NASSCOM launch "Scalerator" Program

- In a first-of-its-kind collaboration, Accenture, the Consulate General of Israel to South India, and the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) have jointly launched 'scalerator,' an exclusive program that aims to enhance the collaboration between Israeli and Indian startups to create innovative solutions for global markets.
- With support from Accenture Ventures' Open Innovation initiative, scalerator will identify growth-stage Israeli startups with deep expertise in emerging technologies -- particularly cybersecurity, cloud computing, artificial intelligence, automation, the Internet of Things, blockchain and extended reality - and connect them with India's startup community through NASSCOM's 10,000 Startups initiative.

Goibibo partners with PhonePe for seamless bookings

- Online travel company, Goibibo, announced its partnership with PhonePe, a digital payments start-up, to provide a unified login and payments experience to over 100 million PhonePe users while making their hotel bookings.

- As a part of this partnership, Goibibo will be live with their 'Hotels' store (microapp) on the PhonePe app. Leveraging mutual synergies, the alliance brings together a streamlined travel booking experience through Goibibo, and assured reliability and integrity of payments through PhonePe.

Gujarat launches SKY Scheme for farmers to generate solar power

- The Gujarat government on Saturday launched a solar power scheme for farmers- Suryashakti Kisan Yojana (SKY) enabling them to generate electricity for their captive consumption as well as sell the surplus power to the grid and earn an extra buck.
- Announcing the pilot project of the scheme in Gandhinagar, chief minister Vijay Rupani termed it a revolutionary step towards empowering farmers to generate their own electricity using solar energy and help doubling their income.

PM Modi to inaugurate AIIB Annual Meeting 2018

- The Department of Economic Affairs, Union Ministry of Finance and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) on June 22, 2018 announced to jointly host the third Annual Meeting of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) on June 25-26, 2018 in Mumbai, India.
- The theme for this year's meeting is 'Mobilising Finance for Infrastructure: Innovation and Collaboration'.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the third Annual Meeting of AIIB on June 26, 2018.

Prime Minister lays foundation stone of paperless Vanijya Bhawan

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of Vanijya Bhawan, a new office complex for the Union Department of Commerce, in New Delhi on June 22, 2018.
- The Bhawan, located near the India Gate, will be built on a plot of 4.33 acres, belonging to previous Directorate General of Supplies and Disposals (DGS&D).

RBI proposes Board of Management for urban co-operative banks

- Before being considered for conversion into commercial banks, Urban cooperative banks will need to have a separate board of management set up by the board of directors to oversee daily business operations. The Reserve Bank has said that this board should have well qualified members who do not have any business relation with the bank, in the draft guidelines it released on Monday.
- The Reserve Bank has suggested that in order to strengthen governance standards Urban cooperative banks should have a separate board of management (BoM) and have make a provision in their bye laws. According to RBI's guidelines, regulatory approvals such as expansion of area of operation and opening of new branches may be allowed only for UCBs that have made such a provision in their bye law. The board of management may be appointed by the board of directors whose term end at the same time as the board of directors.

Saudi ARAMCO, ADNOC sign MoU for participating in Ratnagiri Refinery project of Maharashtra

- Saudi Aramco and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) on June 25, 2018 a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to jointly develop and build an integrated refinery and petrochemicals complex at Ratnagiri, Maharashtra.
- The MoU was signed by Amin H. Nasser, Saudi Aramco President and CEO and Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Minister of State & ADNOC Group CEO.

- The project will be implemented by Ratnagiri Refinery & Petrochemicals Ltd. (RRPCL). RRPCL which is promoted by a consortium of India PSUs consisting of IOCL, BPCL and HPCL will now have Saudi Aramco & ADNOC as overseas strategic partners.

Irdai allows LIC to buy up to 51% stake in debt-ridden IDBI Bank

- The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) board on Friday approved Life Insurance Corporation's investment in IDBI Bank, allowing LIC to own up to 51 per cent in the beleaguered lender. LIC will now be able to pump Rs 100-130 billion into IDBI Bank in tranches through a preferential allotment of new equity shares at a price determined by a formula under the Securities and Exchange Board of India's (Sebi's) rules.
- However, Irdai put some caveats and directed the insurer to bring down its stake in IDBI Bank over a period of five-seven years. "The regulator has asked LIC to submit a plan with a timeline for paring its stake in the bank," said a government official in the know.

Nissan inks MoU with Ker govt for 1st global digital hub in India

- Japanese auto major Nissan Motor Co today signed an MoU with the Kerala government for its first global centre for digital operations in India and said it will hire around 500 people for the facility by the end of this fiscal.
- The Nissan Digital Hub, to be set up here, is the first of a number of software and information technology development centres planned in Asia, Europe and North America, the company said.

Government notifies Electoral Bond Scheme 2018

- As per provisions of the Electoral Bond Scheme 2018, Electoral Bonds may be purchased by a person, who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India.
- A person can buy Electoral Bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals.
- Only the Political Parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (43 of 1951) and which secured not less than 1 percent of the votes polled in the last General Election or the Legislative Assembly, shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds.

President Ram Nath Kovind launches Solar Charkha Mission

- President Ram Nath Kovind on June 27, 2018 launched the 'Solar Charkha Mission' on the occasion of the UN MSME Day to mark the important economic role played by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- The Solar Charkha Mission was launched with an aim to employ artisans in 50 identified clusters.
- The mission will entail a subsidy of Rs 550 crore in the initial two years for 50 clusters and every cluster will employ 400 to 2000 artisans.

Sampark portal

- President Kovind also launched the 'Sampark portal', a digital platform to connect five lakh job seekers with recruiters.
- This digital platform will be useful in creating a skill pool of workers and connecting trained youth with job opportunities.

France's EDF and GE sign deal to build 6 nuclear reactors

- French state-run power utility EDF and American conglomerate General Electric (GE) signed strategic cooperation agreement with State-run Nuclear Power Corporation of India (NPCIL) to build 6 EPR (European Pressurized Reactors) type nuclear reactors of capacity 1650 megawatt (MW).
- The reactors will be built at Jaitapur nuclear plant in Ratnagiri district, Maharashtra.
- This strategic cooperation agreement is for long term partnership for construction of conventional island on each of 6 reactor units of Jaitapur nuclear plant.

NITI Aayog's WEP signs five Sols with financial institutions and social organisations

The Women Entrepreneurs Platform (WEP) of the NITI Aayog on June 27, 2018 signed five separate Statements of Intent (Sols) with financial institutions and social organizations.

These organizations are:

- Shri Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank Limited
- Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited
- SREI Infrastructure Finance Limited
- Sreemanta Sankar Mission
- Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA).

Highlights of the Sols

- The Sols signed with financial institutions such as the Shri Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank, Indiabulls Housing Finance and SREI Infrastructure Finance will be included under the WEP-Finance vertical. These Sols will provide financial assistance to women entrepreneurs and address the finance related challenges.
- WEP's partnership with the Sreemanta Sankar Mission of Guwahati aims to empower established as well as aspiring women entrepreneurs in North East India through WEP North East Chapter and will work to popularise WEP in North East.

India and states related news

Maneka Gandhi lays the foundation of India's first Advanced DNA Forensic Lab in Chandigarh

- Union Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi on Friday laid the foundation stone of an advanced DNA forensic laboratory here as part efforts to reduce the backlog of cases needing advanced forensic analysis.
- Built at a cost of Rs 99.76 crore from the Nirbhaya Fund, the state-of-the-art 'Sakhi Suraksha' lab, will come up at the Central Forensic Science Laboratory campus to assist in investigation and prosecution of crimes including those committed against women and children, an official release said.

India, Singapore ink MoU on cyber security, public administration

- India and Singapore on Friday signed Memorandums of Understandings (MoU) and agreements in the area of cyber security, nursing and personnel management and public administration among others.

- Both the countries have signed an implementation agreement between Indian Navy and Singapore Navy concerning mutual coordination, logistics and services support for Naval Ships', Submarines and Naval Aircraft (including Shipborne Aviation Assets) visits.

Home Ministry launches online analytical tool to monitor foreign funding of NGOs

- A Union home ministry-sponsored online analytical tool was launched today to facilitate closer monitoring of the flow and utilisation of foreign contributions received by NGOs and other organisations registered under the FCRA.
- This web-based tool enables decision-makers in various departments of the government to scrutinise source of foreign funds and their actual use in India, an official statement said.
- The online analytical tool gives them the capacity to take data-driven and evidence-based decisions regarding the compliance of the provisions of the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010, it said.

Facebook ties-up with National Women Commission to launch digital literacy programme

- Social networking giant Facebook on May 31, 2018 partnered with the National Commission for Women (NCW) to launch a Digital Literacy Programme.
- The Digital Literacy Programme will be launched in collaboration with the Cyber Peace Foundation (CPF). Cyber Peace Foundation is a Ranchi, Jharkhand-based civil society organisation involved in training related to all aspects of cyber security.
- As part of the digital literacy programme, awareness training will be conducted for 60000 women in universities across major cities in Haryana, Delhi-NCR, Manipur, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu over a one-year period.

Press Council of India reconstituted

- The Union Government on May 31, 2018 reconstituted the Press Council of India (PCI) for a three-year term. However, the names under medium newspaper category have not been declared yet as the matter related to it is sub-judice.
- On March 16, 2018, the government notified the names of eight nominated members of the reconstituted PCI.
- Parliamentarians nominated to the new body were Meenakshi Lekhi, TG Venkatesh Babu, Prathap Simha, Vinay P Sahasrabuddhe and Swapan Dasgupta.

Haryana to have one-stop centres for women affected by violence

- In Haryana, each district will now get one-stop centres to facilitate integrated services for women affected by violence.
- A spokesperson for the women and child development department has said that at present seven one-stop centres are functional in many districts and now Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has accorded approval for the setting up of 15 more centres in other districts.

HC sets aside policies to regularise services of contractual employees in Haryana

- The Punjab and Haryana High court on June 1, 2018 set aside the previous Bhupinder Singh Hooda-led Haryana government's policies to regularise services of contractual employees.

- The previous Congress-led government had framed policies to regularise thousands of employees in group B, C and D in 2014.

NTPC adopts Charminar under Swachh Iconic Places Project

- NTPC Ltd has adopted the iconic Charminar in Hyderabad under the Swachh Iconic Places Projects of India. This is part of a special drive under the Centre's Swachh Bharat Mission. NTPC Ltd and the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation have signed a memorandum of understanding for implementation of development and beautification works under the Charminar Pedestrianization Project in Hyderabad.
- D.K. Dubey, Regional Executive Director(South), NTPC and B. Janardhan Reddy, Commissioner, GHMC signed the MoU in the presence of Bonthu Rammohan, H.W. Mayor and the Standing Committee Members of GHMC.

India Successfully Test-Fires Nuclear Capable Agni-5 Ballistic Missile

- India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed nuclear capable Long Range Ballistic Missile Agni-5 from Dr Abdul Kalam Island off the Odisha coast.
- The surface-to-surface missile has a strike range of 5,000 km, which was launched with the help of a mobile launcher from launch pad-4 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Dr Abdul Kalam Island in the Bay of Bengal at 9.48 am, defence sources said.

Taj Declaration to Beat Plastic Pollution adopted in Agra

- A Taj Declaration to Beat Plastic Pollution was adopted here today as part of which efforts would be made to make the 500-metre area around the historic ivory-white marble monument litter-free and phase out single-use plastic.
- The adoption of the declaration – in presence of Minister of State for Environment Mahesh Sharma, UN Environment Programme Executive Director Erik Solheim, UNEP Goodwill Ambassador Diya Mirza – came ahead of the World Environment Day on June 5.

Government launches new scheme 'SevaBhojYojna'

- The Union Ministry of Culture on June 1, 2018 introduced a new scheme called 'SevaBhojYojna' to reimburse the central share of CGST and IGST on items for food/prasad/langar/bhandara offered free of cost by charitable religious institutions.
- The scheme has been launched for financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20 with a total outlay of Rs. 325.00 crores.
- The scheme seeks to reimburse the central government's share of Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST) and Integrated Goods and Service Tax (IGST) on purchase of raw items such as ghee, edible oil, atta, maida, rava, flour, rice pulses, sugar and jaggery, which go into preparation of food/prasad/langar/bhandara offered free of cost by religious institutions.

Piyush Goyal flags off Humsafar Jodhpur Bandra Express

- Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday flagged off Humsafar Jodhpur Bandra Express at Bhagat Ki Kothi Railway Station in Rajasthan's Jodhpur.
- Speaking at the inauguration, Goyal said that adequate arrangements have been made in the trains, including mobile charging points, CCTVs and Bio Toilets.

- He also mentioned that railway projects worth over Rs 13,000 crore have been undertaken in Rajasthan at present.

49th Conference of Governors begins in Delhi

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the two-day Conference of Governors on June 4, 2018 at the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi. This is the 49th such Conference to be held in Rashtrapati Bhavan and the second to be presided over by President Kovind.
- The conference will involve discussions on important agendas including clean India mission, internal security, higher education and skill development.

Karnataka government issues notice to Ola, Uber cabs

- Karnataka government on June 2, 2018 issued showcause notices to Ola and Uber cabs for introducing dynamic pricing in peak hours and sought an explanation on why they charge fares on time base and not kilometre base, as per rules.
- The transport department issued the notices, asking them to explain within seven days why they violated the 'Karnataka On-demand Transportation Technology Rules, 2016', promulgated for web based taxi services.

Haryana government to give paternity leave to all male government employees

- Haryana Government has decided to give 15 days paternity leave to all male government employees to take care of the new-born child.
- Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said in Rohtak that the state government has also decided to raise the strength of women in police force from existing 11 percent to 20 percent.

Sports academy to be established for underprivileged children: Himachal Governor

- Himachal Pradesh Governor Acharya Dev Vrat has announced that a sports academy will be established in the state for underprivileged children so that the talent of India in sports could be utilised.
- The academy would be established in public-private partnership mode with combined efforts of sportsmen, NGOs and the state government.

Haryana to provide sanitary napkins to girl students at Re 1

- The Haryana government would be providing sanitary napkins at just Re 1 to girl students of government schools starting from August 2018.
- The scheme will cover women belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) families too.
- The decision to provide sanitary napkins at Re 1 per packet was taken by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar after a meeting with senior functionaries of school education department and health department.

Government launches 'Suvidha'- affordable, biodegradable sanitary napkin

- The Union Minister of State for Chemicals and Fertilizers, Mansukh L Mandaviya, launched the 'Janaushadhi Suvidha', the oxo-biodegradable sanitary napkin, under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) in Delhi on June 4, 2018.

- The affordable sanitary napkin will now be made available at over 3600 Janaushadhi Kendras functional in 33 states and union territories across the country.

Key Highlights

- The average price of sanitary napkins available in the market currently is around Rs 8 per pad, whereas the Suidha napkins will be available at Rs 2.50 per pad.
- The initiative will make the basic hygiene requirement aid affordable for the underprivileged women.

Ola continues to lead the fight against traffic congestion with #FarakPadtaHai

- Taxi aggregator Ola has announced the return of #FarakPadtaHai (#FPH), a national movement against traffic, carbon footprint, and resulting pollution through the adoption of shared mobility.
- For the second year in a row, through this initiative, Ola calls its customers and communities at large to switch to shared mobility solutions. As part of this campaign, Ola is launching a week-long offer, starting June 5th where commuters can book free rides from mass transit locations such as metro stations, railway stations, and bus stops across top 7 cities i.e. Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Kolkata.

Centre proposes to ban obscene depiction of women on internet

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development on June 4, 2018 proposed amendments to the Indecent Representation of Women (Prohibition) Act (IRWA), 1986 with an aim to ban obscene and indecent depiction of women on internet.
- The amendments have been proposed keeping in view the recent technological developments in the field of electronic communication and are similar to the provisions under section 67 of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2000.
- Sections 67 and 67A of the IT Act lay down a punishment of three to five years for circulating obscene material and five to seven years for circulating sexually explicit material, respectively.

SC allows reservation in promotion to SC/ST employees

- The Supreme Court on June 5, 2018 allowed the Union government to go ahead with reservation in promotion for employees belonging to the SC and ST category in accordance with law.
- The vacation bench comprising Justices Adarsh Kumar Goel and Ashok Bhushan took into account the Centre's submissions that entire process of promotion has come to a standstill due to the orders passed by various high courts and the apex court had also ordered for status quo in a similar matter in 2015.

Government to develop Yoga Protocol for women

- Government is developing a Yoga Protocol for women in the age group of 40 plus in consultation with Indian Menopause Society.
- Inaugurating the 3rd National Health Editors' Conference on Yoga in New Delhi, AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik said, the International Day of Yoga, which will be celebrated on the 21st of this month, is the only occasion where people across the globe come together in such a large number and take active participation.

WCD Ministry organises day-long National Consultation on Child Protection

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development organised a day-long National Consultation on Child Protection in New Delhi on June 5, 2018.
- The event aims to seek information and expertise from all the concerned stakeholders, including police personnel and civil society members, on crime against children.
- The effort is a part of many initiatives taken by the government to ensure that children grow up in a violence free atmosphere.

Center forms 3 key panels for 'Prime Ministers of India' Museum Project

- The Union Culture Ministry on June 5, 2018 formed three high-powered panels that will work to set up a unique museum on the 'Prime Ministers of India' in the national capital Delhi.
- The Culture Ministry has long been planning to set up a modern museum that will tell the story of all the prime ministers of the country at the premises of the iconic Teen Murti Estate in the Chanakyapuri area, the official residence of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.
- The iconic landmark Teen Murti Estate belongs to the government.

Shakti Sinha Content Committee

- The Content Committee headed by Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) Director Shakti Sinha as its Chairman will have author-historian Makhan Lal, Professor Sriprakash Singh and some officials as its members.

Swapan Dasgupta Committee

- Another panel, headed by Rajya Sabha MP Swapan Dasgupta, will have Prasara Bharati chief A Surya Prakash as a member. It will vet the content for curation for the museum on Prime Ministers of India, an official said.

Project implementing Committee headed by Shakti Sinha

- The third panel, also headed by NMML Director Shakti Sinha, has senior CPWD officials on board. This project implementation panel will work on setting up the museum.

India, Russia collaborate to create common engineering facility center

- The Jharkhand-based Common Engineering Facility center, a joint collaboration of Indian public sector undertaking named 'Heavy Engineering Corporation Limited' and Russian-based Atomenergomash's subsidiary JSC RPA "CNIITMASH" has started functioning here on Wednesday.
- The engineering center has initiated a training program named 'Technologies and Equipment for Welding of Items for Heavy and Power Engineering' for the Indian students.

Uttarakhand to ban use of polythene from July 31

- The Uttarakhand Government has decided to completely prohibit the use of polythene or plastic from July 31, 2018.
- The move is aimed at curbing rampant use of plastic, which is increasingly becoming a huge environmental challenge. The announcement was made by the state on the occasion of World Environment Day on June 5, 2018.

Key Highlights

- All the polythene vendors in Uttarakhand have been asked to finish the polythene stock before July 31.
- The state would also be launching a comprehensive public awareness campaign on the environmental damage caused by polythene, one week before the complete ban on polythene.

Status-cum-Progress Report of “Special Committee for Inter-Linking of Rivers”

- The Union Cabinet was apprised of the progress report of Special Committee for Inter-Linking of Rivers.
- The Status Report consists of substantial progress made in three priority links - Ken-Betwa Link, Damanganga-Pinjal Link and Para-Tapi-Narmada Link.

Heli-taxis between Shimla-Chandigarh launched

- Himachal Pradesh CM Jairam Thakur flagged off a helicopter taxi service that will reduce the travel time between Shimla and Chandigarh to 20 minutes.
- The service is operated by Pawan Hans and can accommodate 19 persons.

Copper-Bronze age chariots discovered

- The “first ever” physical evidence of chariots dating from 2000 BC – 1800 BC has been found by the Archeological Survey of India.
- It was found during a trial excavation in Sanauli village near Baghpat.

India hosted 11th edition of Geo Intelligence Asia

- The eleventh edition of Geo-Intelligence Asia 2018 was held at Manekshaw Centre in New Delhi on June 4-5, 2018.
- The annual event was organised by GeoSpatial Media and Communication in collaboration with Directorate General of Information System as Knowledge Partners and Military Survey as co-organisers.

India among top 5 countries in e-waste generation

- India is among the top five e-waste generating countries in the world besides China, the US, Japan and Germany, according to a report released by Assocham and NEC.
- Among states, Maharashtra contributes the largest e-waste of 19.8 percent but recycles only about 47810 tonne per annum (TPA).

India’s forest cover stood at 21.34 percent in 2015

- India’s forest cover stood at 21.34 percent in 2015, an increase of 1.29 percent from 2009, as per the Status of Environment Report India 2015 that was released by Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan.
- Mizoram has the highest forest cover among the states and Union territories in the country with 89 percent.

India, US, Japan to begin naval war game

- India, the US and Japan will hold the Malabar naval exercise from next week off the coast of Guam in the Philippine Sea.
- It will deepen cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region where China has been expanding its military footprint.

Cabinet approves Continuation Programme for GSLV Mk-III

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved funding for the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark-III continuation programme (Phase-I) consisting of ten GSLV Mk-III flights, at a total estimated cost of Rs 4338.20 crores.
- The GSLV Mk-III continuation programme – Phase 1 is the first phase of operational flights that will enable the launch of 4 tonne class of communication satellites to meet the country's satellite communication requirements.

Cabinet approves Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark-III Continuation Programme – Phase 6

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 6, 2018 approved the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) Continuation Programme (Phase 6) and funding of thirty PSLV operational flights under the programme.
- The programme will meet the launch requirement of satellites for earth observation, navigation and space sciences. It will also ensure the continuity of production in Indian industry.

India records 22 per cent reduction in Maternal Mortality Ratio

- India recorded 22 per cent reduction in Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) since 2013, as per the Sample Registration System (SRS) bulletin that was released by the Office of the Registrar General of India on June 6, 2018.
- According to the bulletin, the Maternal Mortality Ratio in India declined from 167 in 2011-2013 to 130 in 2014-2016. The MMR is defined as the proportion of maternal deaths per 1, 00,000 live births.
- The decline in the ratio was most significant in Empowered Action Group (EAG) states from 246 to 188.
- Among the southern states, the decline was from 93 to 77 and in other states from 115 to 93.
- Kerala topped the list with 46 MMR, followed by Maharashtra with 61 and Tamil Nadu with 66.

Election Commission launches its online RTI Portal

- The Election Commission of India on June 6, 2018 launched an online RTI Portal to help applicants seeking information under the Right to Information Act.
- Chief Election Commissioner O P Rawat, Election Commissioners Sunil Arora and Ashok Lavasa were present on the occasion.
- The portal can be accessed by the general public on the home page of the commission's website 'eci.nic.in'.

Coast Guard interceptor ship commissioned

- The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) on June 7, 2018 commissioned an interceptor boat- ICGS C-439 at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- The Indian Coast Guard Ship (ICGS) C-439 was commissioned by Additional Director General K Natarajan, Coast Guard Commander of Western Seaboard. The ceremony was attended by senior dignitaries from central, state government and the armed forces.

President inaugurates 73 km long National Highway in Tripura

- President Ram Nath Kovind on June 7, 2018 inaugurated a 73 km long National Highway from Matabari (Udaipur) to Sabroom along the Gomati and South Tripura districts.
- Speaking on the occasion, the President stated that infrastructure plays a very important role in the development of any state.

Health Ministry bars 82 medical colleges to admit students for academic session 2018-19

- The Health Ministry has barred 82 medical colleges in the country to admit students for the academic session 2018-19, based on the recommendation of the Medical Council of India.
- The MCI has pointed out various deficiencies such as inadequate infrastructure, faculty and resources during its inspections of these colleges.

Tata launches India-made portable MRI scanner to take diagnosis to remote villages

- Tata group's philanthropic vehicle Tata Trusts has launched a portable India-made MRI scanner which, it claims, could be helpful in taking healthcare diagnostic services to far flung villages where such services are otherwise not available.
- The portable MRI scanner is developed by VoxelGrids, a Bengaluru based Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) technology startup supported by Tata Trusts' Foundation for Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship (FISE).

17th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India & Myanmar hold in New Delhi

- The 17th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Myanmar were held in New Delhi.
- The Indian side was led by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale and the Myanmar side by Permanent Secretary in Ministry of Foreign Affairs, U Myint Thu.

CUK signs MoU with HDFC bank to strengthen industry-academia linkage

- The Central University of Kashmir (CUK) on Saturday signs Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) bank with an aim and objective to strengthen and further the industry-academia linkage and to provide modern banking facilities and solutions to the varsity, staff, students and other stakeholders.
- On behalf of CUK, registrar Prof. M Afzal Zargar and on behalf of HDFC Bank, senior president state head Jammu and Kashmir Zubair Iqbal signed MoU in the presence of varsity Vice-Chancellor Prof. Mehrajud Din Mir at a small function here.

India to soon start producing first indigenous Lithium-Ion batteries

- The Central Electro Chemical Research Institute (CECRI), Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu under Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) and RAASI Solar Power Pvt Ltd on June 10, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MoU) for transfer of technology for India's first Lithium Ion (Li-ion) Battery project.
- The Agreement was signed by Dr Vijayamohan K Pillai, Director, CECRI and C Narasimhan, Chairman-cum-Managing Director of RAASI Group in the presence of Union minister for Science & Technology Dr Harsh Vardhan.

India, China sign 2 MoUs on sharing of Brahmaputra river data and supply of non-Basmati rice

- India and China June 9, 2018 signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for sharing the hydrological data of the Brahmaputra River; and for supplying non-Basmati rice to China.
- The two MoUs were signed after Prime Minister Narendra Modi held detailed discussions with Chinese President Xi Jinping on bilateral and global issues. PM Modi was on a two-day visit to the picturesque coastal city of China's Shandong province to attend the annual summit of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

MoU on sharing of Brahmaputra River data

- Under this MoU, China will start sharing hydrological information of the Brahmaputra River with India again during the flood season from May 15 to October 15 every year.
- This MoU was signed between China's Ministry of Water Resources and India's Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.

MoU on supply of non-Basmati rice

- India and China also signed an agreement under which China has agreed to import non-Basmati rice from India.
- This MoU was signed between China's General Administration of Customs and India's Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare on Phytosanitary requirements for exporting rice from India to China.

Rural sanitation coverage crosses 85 per cent mark

- The sanitation coverage in rural India has risen to 85 per cent under Swachh Bharat Mission, the largest cleanliness drive in the world.
- A recent survey conducted by an Independent Verification Agency across 90,000 households in over 6000 villages found that the usage of toilets in rural India had risen to 93.4%. Two independent surveys conducted in the past by the Quality Council of India in 2017 and National Sample Survey Organization in 2016 also recorded the usage of toilets in rural India to be around 91 per cent and 95 per cent respectively.

Union Government to constitute two border battalions

- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh announced recently that nine new battalions would be constituted, among which two would be for the border areas.
- Singh added that two new women battalions have also been sanctioned for the J&K police, one for Kashmir Division and for Jammu Division. The battalions will primarily deal with incidents like stone pelting in Kashmir valley and other law and order duties. The move is expected to provide employment to around 2000 women from the state.

India and Norway sign MoU to extend health cooperation

- The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on June 7, 2018 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to extend the cooperation within health sector.
- The cooperation will be extended through the Norway India Partnership Initiative (NIPI) for a period of three years starting from 2018 to 2020.
- This cooperation between India and Norway is aligned with the development goals of Indian Government as outlined in its National Health Policy 2017 for achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

India's first national police museum to come up in Delhi

- The Union Government has decided to establish India's first national police museum in Lutyens' Delhi.
- The unique museum, depicting the history, artefacts, uniforms and gear of central and state police forces, will come up as an underground facility in the premises of the national police memorial in Chanakyapuri area of the national capital.

Piyush Goyal launches 'Rail Madad' App and 'Menu on Rails' App

- Piyush Goyal, Minister of Railways & Coal on June 11, 2018 launched two mobile apps, namely, Rail Madad and Menu on Rails.
- These apps are in line with the 'Digital India' initiative of PM Narendra Modi.

Rail Madad App

- Indian Railways has for the first time completely digitised the Complaint management system through the launch of the Rail Madad App.
- The Rail MADAD (Mobile Application for Desired Assistance During travel) app seeks to expedite passenger grievance redressal.

'Menu on Rails' App

- Indian Railways also launched a app named 'Menu on Rails', developed by IRCTC for creating awareness for the items served to passengers on their Rail Journey.
- The mobile app is available on Android and iOS platforms and its Website version is also available for users.

13 Indian beaches will become Asia's first 'Blue Flag' environment-friendly beaches

- A total of 13 Indian beaches will now have environment-friendly resources and will live up to international standards as they are now going to be awarded with the Blue Flag certification.
- Beaches from Maharashtra, Odisha and Goa are going to be developed into Blue Flag beaches to attract more tourists and create a hospitable and clean environment for all the visitors. They will be Asia's first beaches to be awarded with this certificate.

NGT directs hill states to file report on forest fires

- The National Green Tribunal has directed the hill states to file a report on the steps taken by them to control recurring forest fires.
- The bench headed by acting NGT Chairperson Jawad Rahim impleaded the Ministry of Environment and Forests as well as the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Sikkim, Jammu and Kashmir and West Bengal in the case.

8 States to implement 'Ayushman Bharat'

- Eight States and four Union Territories signed MoUs with the Union Health Ministry to implement the government's ambitious national health protection mission — Ayushman Bharat.
- Ayushman Bharat aims to provide a cover of Rs 5 lakh per family annually to 10 crore vulnerable families.

Andhra Pradesh declared as open-defecation free

- Andhra Pradesh CM Chandrababu Naidu has declared the state Open-Defecation Free after achieving the goal of constructing 2.77 lakh individual toilets.
- Notably, the state's urban areas were declared ODF in 2016.

NITI Aayog announces 3000 additional Atal Tinkering Labs

- NITI Aayog on June 12, 2018 announced creation of 3000 additional Atal Tinkering Labs under the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).
- For this purpose, NITI Aayog has selected 3000 additional schools for the establishment of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs), bringing the total number of ATL schools to 5441.
- The selected schools will receive a grant of Rs 20 lakh in the next five years to establish Atal Tinkering Labs for nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial spirit among secondary school children.

Mauritius to host 11th World Hindi Conference

- The 11th World Hindi Conference will be held in Mauritius from August 18 to August 20, 2018 with an aim to increase the popularity of Hindi globally.
- The Union External Affairs Ministry has already undertaken the work on the international meet.
- The main theme of the Conference is 'Hindi Vishwa Aur Bharatiy Sanskriti'.

Union Government launches 5000 Wi-Fi Choupals in villages

- The Union Government on June 11, 2018 launched 5,000 Wi-Fi Choupals in villages and delivery of rail tickets through Common Service Centres (CSCs).
- The service was inaugurated by Union Electronics and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and Railway Minister Piyush Goyal in New Delhi.
- The move is aimed at transforming rural internet connectivity through BharatNet. It will provide 60,000 WiFi hotspots in rural areas.
- The WiFi Choupals will enable people in rural areas with an effective internet access for their various digital processes.

Government sets up T.C.A. Anant panel to bring transparency in jobs data

- The union government has set up a committee headed by former chief statistician of India TCA Anant to bring in transparency in the jobs data calculation and presentation.
- The labour bureau conducts two major surveys on employment scenario—Annual Employment-Unemployment Survey and Quarterly Employment Survey.
- The Annual Employment Unemployment Survey was later replaced by Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) being conducted by ministry of statistics and programme implementation (MoSPI).

Britain assures India of full cooperation in bringing to book any fugitive

- The United Kingdom has assured India of full co-operation towards bringing to book anybody whether it is Vijay Mallya or Nirav Modi who is wanted in India by Indian courts or agencies.
- This was stated by Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju after his meeting with UK Minister of state for counter terrorism Baroness Williams in New Delhi on June 11, 2018.

- The UK Minister clarified that Britain should not be viewed as a safe haven for men wanted by the law of the other country for various offences.

Assam to launch awareness programme against superstition

- The state government of Assam plans to introduce an awareness programme called 'Sanskar' in all its development blocks and panchayats.
- The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by the state's Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal in Guwahati on June 11, 2018. It comes in the wake of incidents triggered by superstition and ignorance including the lynching of two people in Karbi Anglong district.
- The state has directed the authorities concerned to frame modalities for the programme and a suitable roadmap to implement the programme at all levels of the state in order to avoid any unfortunate situation due to superstitions.

India showed global leadership by pledging to phase out single-use plastics by 2022: UN Environment chief

- Calling the World Environment Day celebrations in India "historic", UN Environment chief Erik Solheim has said that by announcing that it will phase out single-use plastics by 2022, India has demonstrated global leadership.
- During an event to celebrate the WED-2018 on June 5 in New Delhi, Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan pledged to eliminate single-use plastics from India by 2022.

Haryana government to increase duty of home guard volunteers

- The Haryana government has decided to increase the duty of home guard volunteers from 90 days to 150 days per year.
- The government has also decided that the remuneration to the home guard volunteers would be made through e-payment in their bank accounts.

Haryana to develop Madhogarh Fort

- Haryana Minister Ram Bilas Sharma has said the Madhogarh Fort in Mahendragarh would be developed on the pattern of the Mughal Gardens in Pinjore
- Sharma added that with the completion of the Madhogarh-Mahendragarh-Narnaul-Rewari Heritage Circuit, the pace of development would be accelerated in southern Haryana.

Swachh Bharat Mission: Union Government announces 10 new Swachh Iconic Places

- Parameswaran Iyer, Secretary of the Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, on June 12, 2018 launched the Phase III of 'Swachh Iconic Places' (SIP) under PM Narendra Modi's Swachh Bharat Mission.
- The Ministry also launched ten new iconic sites under the third phase of the flagship Swachh Iconic Places project.
- The Ministry launched the project at the Mana village which is situated close to the Badrinath temple in Uttarakhand. The Mana village now becomes a Swachh Iconic Place.

KVIC creates world record by distributing 2330 bee-boxes in one day

- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has created a world record of distributing maximum number of bee-boxes in one day under 'Honey Mission'.
- Speaking on the occasion, KVIC Chairman, Vinai Kumar Saxena, said that the 'Honey Mission' is aimed to fulfill the call of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, for a sweet Kranti.

President Kovind to embark on three nation tour to Greece, Suriname, Cuba from June 16

- President Ram Nath Kovind will embark on a three nation tour to Greece, Suriname and Cuba from June 16-22, 2018.
- On the first leg of the visit, the President will visit Athens, the capital of Greece on June 16. He will be accompanied by a large delegation including Minister of State for Steel Vishnu Deo Sai.
- President Kovind will meet Greek President Prokopis Pavlopoulos, Greek PM Alexis Tsipras and the Leader of Opposition during his visit. He is also scheduled to visit Monument of Unknown Soldiers and lay a wreath there.

PM Inaugurates India's first Integrated Greenfield Smart City, Naya Raipur

- Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first integrated greenfield smart city project at Naya Raipur, the capital of Chhattisgarh, today.
- Schneider Electric- the global leader in the digital transformation of energy management and automation, announced the implementation of the integrated Command and Control Centre (CCC) along with utility management system (Electrical and Water SCADA) and intelligent Building Management System (BMS) there.
- The integrated project has been executed by Schneider Electric along with consortium partner, IL&FS Technologies Limited. The contract was awarded to the consortium in 2017.

PM Modi inaugurates Air Odisha flight route

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a regional airline- Air Odisha flight route - Jagdalpur-Raipur-Visakhapatnam under Centre's UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) scheme on Thursday.
- The Prime Minister inaugurated the flight route from Chhattisgarh's Bhilai via a live video conference.
- Passengers travelling from Raipur to Jagdalpur (288 km by road) will be benefitted from this regional airline as they can cover it in a mere 40 minutes at a cost of Rs.1, 670. Previously, it took 15 hours by train and six to seven hours by road to cover the distance.

20 States sign MoU for implementing Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM)

- Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare exchanged the Memorandum of Understanding with the State Health Ministers of 20 States marking their commitment towards the launch of the Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM).
- Shri J. P. Nadda emphasized that the success of the scheme hinges upon the active participation of the States. States need to own the scheme while Centre will design the policy framework with all possible flexibility and support. Exchanging of Memorandum of Understanding is an important step in formalizing the partnership between Centre and States, he added.

NITI Aayog to launch Composite Water Management Index

- NITI Aayog on June 13, 2018 announced to launch the Composite Water Management Index with an aim to achieve the objective of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'.
- The Composite Water Management Index will be a useful tool to assess and improve the performance in efficient management of water resources.

Arunachal Govt Inks MoU with Smart Village Movement

- Arunachal Pradesh Government on Wednesday inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Smart Village Movement (SVM) to facilitate relevant technology innovations, R&D, open innovation, technology interventions and curriculum development in select villages of the state.
- The MoU was signed by Director-cum-Member Secretary of the State Council for IT & e-Governance, Neelam Yapin Tana on behalf of the state government and Shreya Evani, Project Director, Smart Village Movement, in presence of Chief Minister Pema Khandu, Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein and Chief Secretary Satya Gopal.

Solar Charkha Mission to be launched soon in 50 clusters

- The Solar Charkha Mission of the Ministry of Micro Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) will be launched by President Ram Nath Kovind on June 27, 2018 in New Delhi.
- The Mission has been approved by the Government of India and will disburse subsidy of Rs 550 crore to the artisans. It will cover 50 clusters and every cluster will employ 400 to 2000 artisans.
- The information was shared by Giriraj Singh, Minister of State (I/C), MSME, at a press conference in New Delhi on June 13 while releasing a booklet on the 4 years' achievement of his Ministry.

J P Nadda inaugurates 10th Meeting of Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis

- J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, inaugurated the 10th meeting of Global Alliance to Eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (GAELF) on June 13, 2018.
- Nadda said that India as a Global leader is committed to eliminate Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) transmission and disease burden so that future generations are free from Lymphatic Filariasis.
- The Minister also released the Accelerated Plan for Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) 2018 for India.
- Lymphatic Filariasis (LF) or commonly known as Elephantiasis is one of the oldest and most debilitating neglected disease, which is currently endemic in 73 countries of the world, including India.

CRIS develops 'utsonmobile' app to enable cashless ticketing

- The Centre for Railway Information System (CRIS) has developed a mobile-based application 'utsonmobile' to enable cashless ticketing.
- The initiative is another step towards digitalisation and achieving a cashless economy.
- The mobile app will enable booking and cancellation of unreserved tickets, issue and renewal of season and platform tickets and checking and loading of R-wallet balance.

Swajal Launched in 115 Aspirational Districts of India

- A National Consultation on the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) and Swajal was held in the Capital today to discuss the reforms needed in NRDWP and to outline a road map for the Swajal scheme.
- The consultation was chaired by the Union Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Sushri Uma Bharti.

- Union Minister for Drinking Water and Sanitation announced that Swajal schemes in 115 aspirational districts of the country will involve an outlay of Rs 700 crores through flexi-funds under the existing NRDWP budget.

National Tribal Museum proposed to be set up at Delhi

- A National Tribal Museum along with a National Level Tribal Research Institute is proposed to be set up at Delhi by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- Briefing mediapersons on four years of initiatives and achievements of the Tribal Affairs Ministry, the Minister of Tribal Affairs Shri Jual Oram said that the Museum will showcase the rich tribal culture and heritage using state-of-the-art technologies.

India to host European Union Film Festival

- Putting a spotlight on the latest European cinema, the European Union Film Festival (EUFF) will premiere in New Delhi on 18th June, 2018 at the Siri Fort Auditorium.
- With a selection of 24 latest European films from 23 EU Member States, this years' film festival brings some unusual stories for the world cinema enthusiasts.

Bombay High Court rules that any notice delivered through WhatsApp in PDF is valid

- Bombay High Court has just ruled that any notice that is delivered using the online messaging platform WhatsApp in PDF format will be considered valid.
- According to a report by LiveLaw, "Justice GS Patel was hearing an execution application". Rohit Jadhav, the respondent was evading the "service of notice under Order XX1 Rule 22 of the Code of Civil Procedure 1908."
- To simplify, a notice was required to be sent to him according to the law but he was repeatedly trying to evade it.

Narendra Modi to chair 4th meeting of Niti Aayog's governing council on 17 June

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will chair the fourth meeting of Niti Aayog's governing council on Sunday to discuss various issues, including measures taken to double farmers' income and progress of flagship schemes.
- Besides, development agenda for 'New India 2022' is expected to be approved in the meeting. The council, apex body of Niti Aayog, includes all chief ministers, lieutenant governors of union territories, several union ministers and senior government officials.

Indian Railways to repaint 30,000 conventional coaches

- The Indian Railways have announced to repaint 30,000 conventional coaches manufactured at the Integral Coach Factory in Chennai.
- The new colour scheme of Indian Railways is beige and brown.
- Except Rajdhani, Shatabdi, Duronto and newly launched Tejas, Gatimaan and Humsafar Express Indian Railways would be repainting all Mail and Express trains.

Foundation stone for ALIMCO's production unit laid in Faridabad

- Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar laid the foundation stone of a production unit of the Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO) at Nawada village of Faridabad district of Haryana.
- The purpose of this production unit is to cater to the needs of the differently-abled persons from Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh.

Dhanush, India's first indigenous artillery gun clears final test

- Dhanush, India's first indigenous artillery gun has cleared the final test.
- The indigenously upgraded artillery gun Dhanush is now ready for induction into the Indian Army.

Financial assistance of Rs 5.5 lakh per family approved to Refugees settled in J&K

- The government has approved financial assistance upto Rs. 5.5 lakh per family to West Pakistan Refugees (WPRs).
- A total of 5764 families of WPRs settled in Jammu and Kashmir will be benefited and it will be effective from June 2018.

Naval Women Mountaineers Summit held at Mount Deotibba

- All women Naval mountaineering team led by Lt Cdr Kokila Sajwan summited Mount Deotibba in June 2018.
- Mount Deotibba is the second highest peak (6001M) in the Pir-Panjal range in Himachal Pradesh.

India's largest national data centre to come up in Bhopal

- The government will be setting up the country's largest national data centre in Bhopal, with capacity for 500,000 virtual servers.
- The country has four such centres for hosting government websites, services and apps. These are at Pune, Hyderabad, Delhi and Bhubaneswar.
- With growing digitalisation of government services, this capacity needs to be increased.

HRD Minister launches National Digital Library

- The Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Prakash Javadekar launched the National Digital Library of India (NDLI) on June 19, 2018. The library aims to become a single window platform for all educational needs.
- The main objective of the library is to integrate several national and international digital libraries in one single web-portal

Union Government collaborates with Google for flood forecasting

- The Central Water Commission (CWC), India's apex technical organisation in the field of Water Resources, on June 18, 2018 signed a Collaboration Agreement with Google for flood forecasting.
- Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Nitin Gadkari has expressed that collaboration with Google will help in effective flood management in India.

Merger of shikshakarmi with state school education department approved by Chhattisgarh

- The Chhattisgarh Government on June 18, 2018 approved the merger of 'shikshakarmi' with the state school education department. The move would come into effect from July 1.
- The decision was taken at a cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Raman Singh in Raipur.
- In the first phase, the merger of 1.03 lakh shikshakarmi who have completed eight years of service will be carried out from July 1.

Government directs CBSE to conduct CTET exam in all 20 languages

- Government has directed the CBSE to conduct the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) examination in all Indian languages as was being done earlier.
- The announcement was made by the Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar through a tweet on June 18.

Workshop on Cyber Security Framework – 2018 organised

- A workshop on Cyber Security Framework for Department of Defence was organised by Ministry of Defence.
- The workshop was inaugurated by Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Google to train 8,000 Indian journalists on fact checking

- Google India on June 19, 2018 announced to provide training to 8,000 journalists in English and six other Indian languages on fact checking in the next one year.
- For this, the Google News Initiative India Training Network will select 200 journalists from cities across India who will sharpen their skills in verification and training during five-day train-the-trainer boot camps.

World's first International Centre for Humanitarian Forensics launched in Gujarat

- The world's first of its kind and state-of-the-art International Centre for 'Humanitarian Forensics' (ICHF) was launched at the Gujarat Forensic Sciences University in Gandhinagar, Gujarat on June 20, 2018.
- The centre is a joint venture of the regional delegation of the International Committee of the Red Cross in India, Bhutan, Nepal and the Maldives and also Gujarat Forensic Science University.

President Ram Nath Kovind approves Governor's rule in J&K after BJP-PDP split

- President Ram Nath Kovind on June 20, 2018 approved the Governor's rule in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) following the resignation of Mehbooba Mufti as Jammu and Kashmir's Chief Minister.
- The move came hours after the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) pulled out of its alliance with Mehbooba Mufti's Peoples Democratic Party (PDP), citing the "critical security situation" in the Valley.

4 MoUs signed under 'Adopt a Heritage' Scheme: Culture Ministry

- Four Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) have been signed under 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme and six more are at an advanced stage. The information was shared by Raghvendra Singh, Secretary, Ministry of Culture on June 19, 2018.

- The scheme, implemented by the Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India, is reported to be making good progress. Around 31 more Adarsh Monuments have been enlisted for coverage under the scheme.

The four MoUs include:

1. Mount Stok Kangri Trek Route, Ladakh: The MoU for adoption was signed between Ministry of Tourism, Adventure Tour Operators Association of India (ATOAI) and the state government of Jammu & Kashmir.
2. Gangotri Temple Area & Trail to Gaumukh, Uttarakhand: The MoU was signed between Ministry of Tourism, ATOAI and Uttarakhand Government.
3. Red Fort, Delhi: The MoU was signed between Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture, ASI and Dalmia Bharat Limited.
4. Gandikota Fort, Andhra Pradesh: The MoU was signed between Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture, ASI and Dalmia Bharat Limited.

Health Ministry launches National Health Resource Repository project

- Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda launched the National Health Resource Repository (NHRR) on June 19, 2018 in New Delhi. The repository is India's first ever national healthcare facility registry of authentic, standardised and updated geo-spatial data of all public and private healthcare establishments.
- The Minister also released the National Health Profile (NHP)-2018 prepared by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI) on the occasion. The E-book of the annual document was also released. The National Health Profile covers demographic, socio-economic, health status and health finance indicators, along with comprehensive information on health infrastructure and human resources in health.

India, Australia agree to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation

- India and Australia have agreed to strengthen counter-terrorism cooperation through regular exchange of information and sharing of best practices on countering violent extremism.
- The decision was taken during the 10th Meeting of the Joint Working Group on Counter-Terrorism in New Delhi.

PM Modi to lead 4th International Yoga Day celebrations in Dehradun

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead the 4th International Yoga Day Celebrations in Dehradun on June 21, 2018.
- The Prime Minister will join thousands of volunteers, performing Yoga asanas in the lawns of Forest Research Institute, Dehradun, located in the lap of the Himalayas.

Shillong gets selected as the 100th Smart City

- Shillong, the capital city of Meghalaya, has been selected as 100th Smart City after evaluating the proposal submitted by it.
- Till now, 99 smart cities had been selected in four rounds of competition and with today's announcement; selection of 100 cities has been completed under the Smart Cities Mission.

KVIC adopts Jagatpur village in Delhi for Swachhata Abhiyaan

- The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has adopted Jagatpur village in Delhi for its Swachhata Abhiyaan.
- The sanitation drive by KVIC began with a plantation drive and ended with cleanliness drive along the bank of the Yamuna river.

Joint India-Russia military exercise Indra 2018 to be conducted in India

- The tri-service joint military exercise Indra-2018 between India and Russia will take place at Indian military base in second half 2018.
- In this regard, Russian military delegation visited India to discuss logistics of the exercise.

India's first robotic telescope opens in Ladakh

- India's first robotic telescope launched in one of the world's highest astronomical observatories Hanle, Ladakh.
- The telescope located at the Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO) at Hanle in Ladakh is the country's first robotic telescope and the first one designed to observe dynamic or transient events in the universe.
- Called GROWTH-India, the facility at Hanle is part of a multi-country collaborative initiative known as 'Global Relay of Observatories Watching Transients Happen' (GROWTH) to observe transient events in the universe.

Gujarat government launches Wind-Solar Hybrid Power Policy-2018

- The state government of Gujarat on June 21, 2018 announced its wind-solar hybrid power policy - 2018 to promote setting up of wind as well as solar power projects at one location.
- The 'Wind-Solar Hybrid Power Policy-2018' will remain in force for five years.
- It will provide encouragement to renewable power producers supplying to the grid as well as to those having captive use.

IIT-BHU Signs An MoU With Amazon To Establish Cloud Research Lab On AI & ML

- The Indian Institute of Technology (BHU) Varanasi and Amazon Internet Services Private Limited (AISPL) signed a memorandum of understanding this week to develop cloud-ready job skills by providing access to the AWS Educate program.
- The key reason for this venture is to establish a Cloud Research Lab on artificial intelligence and machine learning.
- According to a statement put out by the Press Information Bureau, Government of India and the Ministry of Human Resource Development, the Cloud Research Lab will provide students with opportunities to use AWS Cloud technology to pursue research initiatives that focus on AI and ML innovation for India.

India & Tajikistan agree to enhance mutual cooperation for sustainable water development

- India and Tajikistan have reaffirmed their commitment to promote bilateral relations and agreed to enhance economic cooperation, particularly in sustainable water development.
- Nitin Gadkari, the Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation, Road Transport & Highways and Shipping, currently on a two-day official visit to the central Asian republic, held wide-ranging talks with Sirodjiddin Muhridin, Foreign Minister of Tajikistan in Dushanbe on June 20.

7th India Minerals and Metals forum inaugurated in New Delhi

- The 7th India Minerals and Metals forum was inaugurated in New Delhi on June 21, 2018.
- The forum seeks to come up with solutions to leverage in the sector with the changing global scenario.

Rajasthan: Record set at State Level yoga celebration in Kota

- In Rajasthan, a record has been set at State level yoga function in Kota on June 21, 2018 where around one lakh 60 thousand people performed yoga at one place at a same time on International Yoga Day.
- The function has set a world record for largest number of people performing yoga at one place at the same time.

Surat to receive 'City Award' under India Smart Cities Award 2018

- Surat smart city has been selected for 'City Award' for showing great momentum in the implementation of projects under 'India Smart Cities Award' 2018.
- Overall, nine awards have been announced under the India Smart Cities Awards.

Priyanka Chopra to come out with memoir in 2019

- Actor Priyanka Chopra will come out with her memoir next year in which she will write about things which she has never spoken before.
- "Unfinished" is a collection of personal essays, stories and observations of the actor, producer, activist and UNICEF goodwill ambassador.

1.50 lakh wellness centres to be set up by 2022: Nadda

- Over 1.50 lakh wellness centres will be set up by 2022 across the country and each centre will have yoga facility, Minister of Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda said at an event to mark the fourth International Yoga Day in Shimla on June 21.
- The Union minister along with Himachal Governor Acharya Dev Vrat, Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur, and Education Minister Suresh Bhardwaj participated at the event held in the historic Ridge Ground here. It was organised by the Department of Ayurveda.

ISRO clears GSAT-11 for launch

- The 5,700-kg GSAT-11 satellite was slated for launch on May 26 from Kourou, a site in South America which India uses to launch its heavy-weight satellite.
- In a setback to the ISRO, the space agency lost contact with GSAT-6A after it was launched in March this year. Although the ISRO has been trying to establish with GSAT-6A, a satellite meant for military communication, it has found little success.

Re-development of 7 Delhi colonies to increase green coverage by 3 folds

- The redevelopment of the seven government colonies in Delhi will lead to an increase the green area coverage by about 3 times from the existing green space area, as per Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs.

- The government colonies include Nauroji Nagar, Netaji Nagar, Sarojini Nagar, Mohammadpur, Srinivasपुर, Kasturba Nagar and Thyagaraj Nagar.

Rajasthan ranked No. 1 in water conservation

- Rajasthan has been ranked first by the NITI Aayog among all states after it registered a significant increase in groundwater level due to the water conservation structures built under Chief Minister's Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan.
- The state also witnessed an increase of 81% in irrigation capacity.

India, Cuba sign MoUs to enhance co-operation in field of Biotechnology, medicine & homoeopathy

- India and Cuba on June 22, 2018 signed two Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) in the field of biotechnology, traditional medicine and homoeopathy.
- The agreements were signed following delegation-level talks between President Ram Nath Kovind and his Cuban counterpart Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel at Revolution Palace in Havana, Cuba.

Maharashtra bans single-use plastic; announces stiff actions against violators

- Maharashtra Government on June 23, 2018 imposed the statewide ban on single-use plastic items; announced heavy fine on those caught using these items.
- The announcement was made after a review meeting with Maharashtra Pollution Control Board officials.

India, Seychelles sign six MoUs on education, technology

- India and Seychelles signed six Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) for establishing cooperation in the field of education, information technology, culture, and technology.
- A MoU was signed to provide Indian Grant Assistance for Implementation of small development projects through local bodies, educational and vocational institutions under the presence of Minister of State for External Affairs MJ Akbar and Minister for Habitat Infrastructure and land transport in Seychelles Pamela Charlette.
- A twinning agreement was also signed to establish friendship and cooperation between the Corporation of the City of Panaji (Municipal Corporation) and the City of Victoria of the Republic of Seychelles.
- Another MoU was signed between the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-in), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, Republic of India and, the Department of Information Communications Technology of the Republic of Seychelles on Cooperation in the area of cyber-security in the presence of Minister MJ Akbar and Minister for Fisheries and Agriculture Charles Bastienne.
- MoU for Cultural Exchange Program was also inked between the Government of the Republic of India and the Government of the Republic of Seychelles for the years 2018-2022 under the presence of Minister MJ Akbar, and Minister for Habitat Infrastructure and Land Transport Pamela Charlette.
- A technical Agreement on Sharing White Shipping Information was signed between the Indian Navy and the National Information Sharing and Coordination Center of the Republic of Seychelles in the presence of Minister MJ Akbar, and Minister for Fisheries and Agriculture Charles Bastienne.

Health Ministry inks MoU with IGNOU To scale-up healthcare courses

- The Health Ministry today inked an MoU with the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) to scale-up short-term healthcare courses and produce over 14 lakh trained manpower by 2025.
- The signing ceremony of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) was presided over by Union Health Minister of Health J P Nadda and Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar.
- Union Minister for Skill Development Dharmendra Pradhan was also present.

PM approves E Sreedharan panel to lay down standards for metro rail systems

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved a proposal to set up a committee which will lay down standards for India's metro rail systems in the country.
- The decision aims at cutting the costs in the construction and operation of metro rail systems in the country and brings them under the Make in India umbrella.
- The committee will be headed by E Sreedharan, who is also popularly known as the "Metro Man".

Government proposes to set up 3000 Van Dhan Kendras involving 30,000 SHGs across the country

- The Government proposes to set up 3000 Van Dhan Kendras involving 30,000 SHGs across the country under the Van Dhan Scheme of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- In a new game changing initiative, the Prime Minister launched the Van Dhan Scheme of Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED on 14th April, 2018 during the celebrations of Ambedkar Jayanti at Bijapur Chattisgarh.
- Emphasizing the important role of value addition in increasing tribal incomes, the Prime Minister stated that Van Dhan, Jandhan and Goverdhan Schemes had the potential to change the tribal-rural economic system.
- All these three schemes in tandem need to be promoted for this purpose by the State Governments.

Government to make 24 degrees celsius as default setting for air conditioners

- The Union Ministry of Power is considering making 24 degrees celsius as mandatory default setting and labeling of air conditioners within few months.
- This has been planned after six months campaign was launched to promote energy efficiency in the area of air-conditioning.
- The campaign was launched on voluntary basis to increase awareness and encourage consumers to adopt the guidelines.

India, Bangladesh Navies agree to institute Coordinated Patrol

- India and Bangladesh Navies on June 24, 2018 agreed to institute a Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) as an annual exercise between both the Navies.
- The first edition of CORPAT will be inaugurated by Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba during his visit to Bangladesh from June 24 to June 29, 2018. The visit is aimed at consolidating bilateral defence relations between India and Bangladesh and exploring new avenues for naval cooperation.
- The first edition of CORPAT will be held from June 27 to June 29, 2018.

Suresh Prabhu launches 'ReUnite' Mobile App

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu on June 29, 2018 launched a mobile application 'ReUnite' to track and trace missing and abandoned children in India.
- The app has been developed jointly by NGO 'Bachpan Bachao Andolan' and IT major Capgemini.

Odisha signs MoU for early warning system

- The Odisha government on Friday entered into a collaboration with the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES), a body of 48 members and collaborating countries, aimed at automating risk management, advisory generation and dissemination.
- Bishnupada Sethi, Odisha State Disaster Management Authority managing director, and A.R. Subbiah (for RIMES) signed an MoU in the presence of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik here.

Prime Minister lays the foundation stone of National Centre for Ageing at AIIMS

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the National Centre for Ageing at AIIMS, New Delhi on June 29, 2018.
- The Prime Minister also dedicated the underground connecting tunnel between AIIMS and JNPA Trauma Centre, and Power Grid Vishram Sadan at AIIMS along with the 500 bedded New Emergency Block and 807 bedded Super Specialty Block at the Safdarjung Hospital to the nation.

National Generic Document Registration System adopted in Punjab and Andaman& Nicobar Islands

- The Union Minister for Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Mines, Narendra Singh Tomar inaugurated the National Generic Document Registration System (NGDRS) in all sub-registrar offices in Andaman & Nicobar Islands from New Delhi through a Video-Conferencing.
- This generic customisable software will enable 'anywhere access' to data and information to both the common man and the enforcement and regulatory agencies.
- The transparency will be promoted due to registration through digital means and people will get the benefits in a hassle-free manner.

Ayush Ministry to introduce Ayurvedic medicine as subject for Sanskrit students

- Ayush Ministry is in the process of introducing Ayurvedic medicine as a subject for Sanskrit students.
- This subject will help in identifying the medicines and ayurvedic practices from the Sanskrit scriptures that are unexplored.

Government institutes Home Minister's Special Operation Medal

- The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) approved institution of Home Minister's Special Operation Medal.
- It also has instituted three more Medals- Antarik Suraksha Medal, Asadharan Aashuchan Padak, and Utkrisht & Ati-Utkrisht Seva Medal. These medals will be awarded annually.

Madhya Pradesh awarded for reducing maternal mortality

- Madhya Pradesh awarded for reducing maternal mortality under Prime Minister's Safe Motherhood Campaign.
- The Prime Minister's Safe Motherhood Campaign has been launched to ensure quality care of over 3 crore pregnant women of the country before delivery.

India increases grant from USD 12 million to USD 15 million in the Global Environment Facility

- India announced to increase its grant to the Global Environment Facility's (GEF) new four-year investment cycle GEF-7 from USD 12 million to USD 15 million.
- It was announced at the GEF Council meeting held at Da Nang, Vietnam.
- India's increased financing commitment shows its crucial role to mitigate climate change and other environmental challenges across the globe.

Venkaiah Naidu to inaugurate new State Cancer Institute Block at Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu will inaugurate the new State Cancer Institute Block at Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- Naidu will also dedicate to the nation the new linear accelerators installed in the Institute with financial assistance from the Central Government.

Law & Justice Ministry organises meeting on functioning of LIMBS

- Law and Justice Ministry organised a joint secretary level meeting on the functioning of a web-based tool, Legal Information Management and Briefing System (LIMBS) in New Delhi.
- The nodal officers from the various Ministries participated in the event.

FSSAI proposes life imprisonment, Rs10 lakh fine for food adulteration

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) on June 26, 2018 recommended stringent punishment for those adulterating food products following the Supreme Court order. Now, those adulterating food products could face life imprisonment and penalty of up to Rs 10 lakh.
- The recommendations are the part of amendments proposed by the FSSAI to amend the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006.

Government approves draft Act to replace UGC with Higher Education Commission of India

- The Union Ministry of Human Resource Development on June 27, 2018 proposed a draft bill to repeal the University Grants Commission (UGC) and set up the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), a move that aims to reform higher education in India.
- The Minister also stated that "The draft Act is in accordance with the commitment of Government for reforming the regulatory systems that provide for more autonomy and facilitate holistic growth of the education system." The Minister has appealed to all educationists, stakeholders and the general public to give comments and suggestions on the draft legislation before July 7, 2018.

Oxytocin formulations ban to come into effect from July 2018

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has restricted the manufacture of Oxytocin formulations to public sector for domestic use only from July 2018.
- It has also banned the import of Oxytocin and its formulations.

Appointments in June 2018

India

Person Name	Appointed As	Organisation
Virendra Kumar	Director General of Police	West Bengal
Mahesh Kumar Jain	Deputy Governor	Reserve Bank of India
Sunil Sood	Chairman	Cellular Operators Association of India
West Bengal Governor Keshari Nath Tripathi	Governor	Tripura
Rajiv Suri	MD & CEO	Shoppers Stop
Arvind Saxena	Acting Chairman	Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)
Virat Kohli	Brand Ambassador	Remit2India
Sandeep Bakshi	COO And Whole Time Director	ICICI Bank
Dr. Inderjit Singh	Secretary	Ministry of Coal
Rama Subramaniam Gandhi	Advisor	Paytm Board
B Sriram	MD & CEO	IDBI Bank
K Vijay Kumar	Advisor	Governor of Jammu and Kashmir
BB Vyas	Chief Secretary	Jammu & Kashmir
A R Rahman	Brand Ambassador	Sikkim
Arijit Basu	Managing Director	State Bank of India
Ranveer Singh	Brand Ambassador	Kotak Mahindra Bank
Santosh Kumar Mohanty	Whole Time Member	SEBI
Ananta Barua	Whole Time Member	SEBI
Girish Chandra Chaturvedi	Non-Executive Chairman	ICICI Bank
Bhushan Kumar Sinha	Joint Secretary	Department of Financial Services
T M Vijay Bhaskar	Chief Secretary	Karnataka
Justice Meenakshi Madan Rai	Acting Chief Justice	Sikkim High Court
Ram Pravaesh Thakur	Director General	Karnataka Police
Anup Chandra Pandey	Chief Secretary	Uttar Pradesh
Subodh Jaiswal	Commissioner	Mumbai Police
S Ramesh	Chairman	Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)

World

Person Name	Appointed As	Organisation/Nation
Pedro Sanchez	Prime Minister	Spain
Giuseppe Conte	Prime Minister	Italy
Nikesh Arora	CEO & Chairman	Paolo Alto Networks
Priyanka Das (Assam)	Ambassador	"For Girls and Science" in France
Tommy Thomas	Attorney General	Singapore
Ecuadorean Foreign Minister Maria Fernanda Espinosa Garces	President	United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)
Dhivya Suryadevara	Chief Financial Officer	General Motors
Ivan Duque	Youngest President	Colombia
Pradeep Parameswaran	President	Uber (India & South Asia)
Recep Tayyip Erdogan	President	Turkey

Dedar Singh Gill	judicial commissioner	Singapore's Supreme Court
Kanwaljeet Jawa	Board member	Daikin

Days Observed in June 2018

Days	Observed on	Theme/Info
World Milk Day	June 1	Raise a Glass
World Bicycle Day	June 3	This was the first time.
International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression	June 4	
World Environment Day	June 5	Theme: ' Beat Plastic Pollution ' Hosted by: India
Global Running Day	June 6	Million Kid Run
World Oceans Day	June 8	
World Day against Child Labour	June 12	'Generation Safe & Healthy'
World Blood Donor Day	June 14	'Be there for someone else. Give blood. Share life.'
World Elder Abuse Awareness Day	June 15	"Moving from Awareness to Action through a Human Rights based approach".
Global Wind Day	June 15	
World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought	June 17	Land has true value. Invest in it.
International Day for the Elimination of Sexual Violence in Conflict	June 19	"The Plight and Rights of Children Born of War"
Year of Disabled Soldiers in Line of Duty	2018	Observed by Indian Army
World Refugee Day	June 21	#WithRefugees
International Yoga Day	June 21	Yoga for Peace
World Music Day	June 21	
World Hydrography Day	June 21	Bathymetry - the foundation for sustainable seas, oceans and waterways
International Widows' Day	June 23	"Invisible Women, Invisible Problems"
United Nations Public Service Day	June 23	
Day of the Seafarer	June 25	'Seafarers' wellbeing'
World Vitiligo Day	June 26	"Children, Research, and Hope for the Future"
International Day of Parliamentarism	June 30	First ever observed in 2018
National Statistics Day	June 29	
International Asteroid Day	June 30	
International Day of the Tropics	June 29	

Awards & Honors in June 2018

Teejan Bai to receive Fukuoka Prize 2018

- Pandavani folk singer Teejan Bai has been chosen as a recipient of this year's Fukuoka Prize.
- She has been announced the winner of the Arts and Culture Prize.
- The Fukuoka Prize, which has been awarded yearly since 1990 in Fukuoka, Japan, is conferred on outstanding individuals or groups that preserve and create the unique and diverse cultures of Asia.

India's Sanjana Ramesh wins the MVP award at Basketball Without Borders Asia

- India's Sanjana Ramesh was awarded the 'Most Valuable Player' (MVP) even as compatriot Vaishnavi Yadav won the 'Girls Grit Award' on the fourth and final day of Basketball Without Borders Asia, which featured 66 campers from 16 countries from the Asia-Pacific region.
- The camp got underway with the girls championship game between the New York Liberty and the Minnesota Lynx. Coached on the sidelines by Ruth Riley and Sakshi Sheoran, the Lynx defeated the Liberty 20-13.

14-year-old Indian-American kid Karthik spells 'koinonia' to win Spelling Bee

- Karthik Nemmani, a 14-year-old Indian-American boy, on Friday won the prestigious Scripps National Spelling Bee, taking home more than \$42,000 in cash and prizes after correctly spelling "koinonia" to become the 14th champion from the community in 11 consecutive years.
- An eighth-grader from McKinney, Texas, Karthik won the spelling competition after numerous rounds against Naysa Modi, another Indian-American student, underscoring the overwhelming dominance of Indian-Americans in the competition.

Sulabh International founder honoured with Japan's prestigious Nikkei Asia Prize

- Bindeshwar Pathak, noted social reformer and founder of Sulabh International, was on June 13, 2018 honoured with Japan's prestigious Nikkei Asia Prize.
- The award was conferred to Pathak under the 'Culture and Community' category for his significant work in tackling poor hygiene and discrimination.
- Speaking after receiving his award at the 23rd Nikkei Asia Prize ceremony in Tokyo, 75-year-old Pathak said that the honour will be another milestone in his commitment to the service of the society in Asia in particular and the world in general.

Anukreethy Vas crowned as Femina Miss India World 2018

- Anukreethy Vas was crowned Femina Miss India World 2018 on June 19, 2018.
- The Tamil Nadu girl was named the winner at a function held in Mumbai with last year's Miss World Manushi Chhillar awarding her the crown.
- Anukreethy, who beat 30 contestants to bag the honour, will now represent India at this year's Miss World.
- Haryana's Meenakshi Chaudhary was announced as the first runner-up, Shreya Rao Kamavarapu of Andhra Pradesh was adjudged the second runner-up.

IIFA 2018 Awards: 'Tumhari Sulu' best film, Irrfan Khan best actor

- Vidya Balan-starrer "Tumhari Sulu" won the Best Picture Award at the International Indian Film Academy Awards 2018 in Bangkok.
- Irrfan Khan was adjudged the Best Actor for his role in the film "Hindi Medium".
- Sridevi was posthumously awarded the Best Female Actor for "Mom".
- The Best Director trophy was won by Saket Chowdhary for his film "Hindi Medium".
- "Newton", which was India's official entry to Oscars this year, won the award for Best Story for director Masurkar.
- Anupam Kher, who has over 500 films to his credit, was honoured with the Outstanding Achievement Award at the ceremony.

- The award ceremony was held at Bangkok's Siam Niramit theatre on June 24, 2018 and was hosted by director Karan Johar and actor Riteish Deshmukh.

Current Affairs around the World

Denmark Parliament bans wearing of face veils in public

- Denmark's Parliament on May 31, 2018 banned the wearing of face veils (burqa and niqab) in public places, a move that will criminalise Muslim women who choose to wear the niqab or burqa.
- The Danish parliament voted 75-30 with 74 absentees. The measure will come into force on August 1, 2018.

UNSC elects 5 non-permanent members for two-year term

- The United Nations General Assembly voted to elect Germany, Belgium, South Africa, the Dominican Republic and Indonesia for a two-year term in the Security Council with effect from January 1, 2019.
- The council makes legally binding decisions and has the power to impose sanctions and authorise the use of force.

WIPO notifies declaration by India

- The World Intellectual Property Organization notified a declaration referring to the deposit by India, on October 7, 1974, of its instrument of ratification on the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works.
- India has been the Member of Berne Convention since April 28, 1928.

Milky Way disc much bigger than thought

- Scientists recently discovered that it will take us 200000 years to cross the Milky Way disc, even if we travel at the speed of light.
- Spiral galaxies, such as the Milky Way, have discs which are really thin.

Trump-Kim Summit: Historic document signed

- In a historic first, delegation level talks between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un began in Singapore on June 12, 2018.
- The world's two of the most powerful leaders held a brief one-on-one meeting at the Capella Hotel in Sentosa Island before beginning with their delegation level talks.
- Speaking after the one-on-one meet, US president Trump said that both the nations have a terrific relationship ahead and this historic summit would be successful.

China to launch broader environmental inspections this month

- China will expand environmental inspections to more cities and regions in a new round of checks from June 2018 to April 2019, as a part of its three-year anti-pollution plan.
- Apart from smog-heavy Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei and nearby areas, the inspections will also target the Yangtze River Delta region, including Shanghai and Jiangsu, Zhejiang and Anhui provinces and some 11 cities in the northwestern provinces of Shanxi and Shaanxi.

US government clears sale of six AH-64E Apache attack helicopters to India for \$ 930M

- US government has approved a deal to sell the Indian military six AH-64E Apache attack helicopters for 930 million dollars.
- The agreement has been passed to the US Congress for approval and if no US lawmaker raises an objection, the contract will go ahead.
- Boeing and Indian partner Tata have begun to produce Apache fuselages at a plant in India, but the recent approval concerns a direct sale of finished products from the US manufacturers.

International Conference on ICT to be held in Kathmandu from June 17

- The International Conference on Information and Communication Technology (ICT) will be held in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal from June 17, 2018.
- The Theme of two day conference is "Sustainable Development Goals for Smart Society".
- The conference will be organised by the Federation of Computer Association Nepal (CAN).

Nuclear Suppliers Group plenary meeting held in Jurmala, Latvia

- The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) plenary meeting was held in Jurmala, Latvia.
- Latvia assumed chairmanship of NSG for 2018-19.
- Latvia became first Baltic state to chair the NSG.

Record-breaking spacewoman Peggy Whitson retires as NASA's astronaut

- Less than a year after returning from her last and longest spaceflight NASA's record-breaking spacewoman, Peggy Whitson announced her retirement as astronaut.
- She spent a total of 665 days in space — more than any other NASA astronaut, and record for women worldwide.

Russia successfully launches Glonass-M satellite

- Russia successfully launched Glonass-M positioning satellite.
- The satellite is part of GLONASS (Russian acronym for Global Navigation Satellite System) Network.

Social Enterprise Development Programme to be launched by SAARC Development Fund

- As a part of its social window the SAARC Development Fund (SDF) will be launching the Social Enterprise Development Programme (SEDP).
- The primamry aim of this programme is to identify and build social enterprises by using mix of grants and concessional returnable capital.

US President Donald Trump orders US Military to form 'Space Force'

- US President Donald Trump on June 18, 2018 ordered the US Defense Department and the Pentagon to create a "Space Force", an independent sixth branch of the armed forces.
- The Space Force military branch would be "separate but equal" to the Air Force. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, would oversee the creation of the force.

Canada lawmakers vote to legalise cannabis

- The Canadian Parliament has passed a bill to legalise cannabis that would make Canada the first G7 country to allow free consumption of the mind-altering drug.
- The bill was passed by 205 votes to 82 in the House of Commons on June 18.

Japan halts evacuation drills simulating North Korean missile attack

- Japan has halted evacuation drills simulating a North Korean missile attack in the wake of historic talks between Washington and Pyongyang.
- Yaita in Tochigi prefecture north of Tokyo had been planning an evacuation drill for next week involving some 800 residents including 350 school children.

Canada legalises recreational use of marijuana nationwide

- Canadian Senate has passed a landmark law that legalises the recreational use of marijuana nationwide.
- The Cannabis Act passed its final hurdle on June 20 in a 52-29 vote in the Senate. The bill controls and regulates how the drug can be grown, distributed and sold.

US President Donald Trump orders to end separation of immigrant families

- US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order to keep together immigrant families who have been detained at the border with Mexico.
- With the decision, Trump reversed his own policy amid heavy pressure from his fellow Republicans, Democrats and the international community, over the separation of undocumented parents and children.

WHO releases new ICD 11

- The World Health Organization in Geneva released the latest edition (11th) of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11).
- The ICD is the standard disease coding for statistics and information regarding diseases around the world.

Nepal, Bhutan spend more than India on health

- India spends 1% of its gross domestic product on public health.
- According to the National Health Profile 2018 report, there is one allopathic doctor for 11,082 people in the country's villages.

In a historic first, Saudi Arabia lifts ban on female drivers

- In a first, women across Saudi Arabia were legally allowed to drive for the first time since 1957 on June 24, 2018, thus, ending the world's last ban on female drivers which was seen as a symbol of women's repression in the deeply conservative Muslim kingdom.
- Following the lifting of ban, women in Saudi Arabia fired up their engines and hit the roads, marking the moment they had waited for since the issuance of the royal decree by King Salman on September 26, 2017 to lift the driving ban on women.

North Korea named as 'worst human trafficking country' for 16th year

- The US State Department on June 28, 2018 categorised North Korea as the "worst human trafficking country" for the 16th straight year in its annual '2018 Trafficking in Persons Report'.
- North Korea has been named in the lowest ranked Tier 3 category along with China, Russia and Iran. However, South Korea has been ranked at the highest category in the list of Tier 1 countries for the 16th consecutive year along with the US, UK, France and Canada.

US postpones '2 plus 2 dialogue' with India

- The United States has postponed the '2 plus 2 dialogue' with India scheduled to be held in Washington next week.
- US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo spoke to External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and expressed his regret and deep disappointment for having to postpone the dialogue due to unavoidable reasons.

Emergency declared in Papua New Guinea over Polio outbreak

- A public health emergency has been declared in three Papua New Guinea (PNG) provinces as the country responds to its first polio outbreak in 18 years when it was declared free of the disease.
- As per the Health Ministry report, at least three provinces Morobe, Madang and the Eastern Highlands confirmed the outbreak of the potentially deadly virus.

US Supreme Court upholds Trump's travel ban on people from 5 Muslim-majority countries

- The US Supreme Court ruled in favour of the Trump administration's travel ban targeting people from several Muslim-majority countries.
- Lower courts had deemed the ban as unconstitutional, but the US top court reversed the decision in a 5-4 majority ruling.

World's largest multilateral naval exercise RIMPAC to begin in Hawaii

- The world's largest multilateral naval exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) will begin on June 27, 2018 in Hawaii in the Western Pacific Ocean.
- The two-month long biennial exercise is likely to be attended by navies of 26 countries including India.

Indexes, Lists and Reports

India moves one notch up to 136th place in Global Peace Index

- India has moved one notch higher to 136th position in the 2018 Global Peace Index prepared by the international think-tank Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), which was topped by Iceland.
- The report that covers 99.7 per cent of the world's population and uses 23 qualitative and quantitative indicators grouped into three key domains -- ongoing conflict, safety and security, and militarisation, noted that "the world is less peaceful today than at any time in the last decade".
- Besides Iceland, some of the other most peaceful country in the world include New Zealand (ranked 2nd), Austria (3rd), Portugal (4th), Denmark (5th), Canada (6th), Czech Republic (7th), Singapore (8th), Japan (9th) and Ireland (10th).

Gujarat topped Composition Water Management Index (CWMI) by NITI Aayog

- Nitin Gadkari released Niti Aayog's Composition Water Management Index (CWMI) report.
- This index ranked all the states in India on the basis of their composite water management.
- Gujarat was ranked the best state on the water management index followed by Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka while Rajasthan was ranked the lowest on the index.
- The states were ranked on the basis of groundwater, restoration of water bodies, irrigation, farm practices, drinking water, policy and governance.

India ranks 35th on Global Real Estate Transparency Index 2018

- India was ranked 35th among 100 countries (countries) in recently released Global Real Estate Transparency Index (GRETI).
- The index was released by realty consultant JLL.
- India was ranked 36th in the index during the last bi-annual survey conducted in 2016 and 40th in 2014.
- The top 10 countries are United Kingdom (1st), Australia (2nd), United States (3rd), France (4th), Canada (5th), Netherlands (6th), New Zealand (7th), Germany (8th), Ireland (9th) and Sweden (10th).

NITI Aayog releases first Delta Ranking of Aspirational Districts

- The NITI Aayog on June 29, 2018 launched the first Delta Ranking (Incremental Progress) of the Aspirational Districts based on self-reported data of districts between March 31, 2018 to May 31, 2018.
- The data was received
- Resources, Financial Inclusion and Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure.
- These rankings were launched as a part of 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' programme of PM Narendra Modi.

Rankings of few districts

- Dahod district of Gujarat improved 19.8 points to rank 1st in the Delta ranking and was Ranked 17th in Baseline ranking.
- Asifabad district of Telangana, which was ranked 100 in Baseline ranking released in March 2018, made significant improvements in past two months and stood at 15 in Delta ranking.
- West Sikkim district of Sikkim stood second with 18.9 points, a huge improvement from being in the 30th position in Baseline ranking.

CWG gold medallist weightlifter Sanjita Chanu fails dope test

- Two-time Commonwealth Games champion weightlifter Sanjita Chanu, who had won a gold in the women's 53kg category in the 2018 Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, was tested positive for a banned anabolic steroid, testosterone.
- As a consequence, the Athlete would be provisionally suspended in the view of a potential anti-doping rule violation.

Raunak Sadhwani from Nagpur is Maharashtra's youngest International Master

- Raunak Sadhwani of Nagpur proves his worth as a brilliant strategist, analyst and a chess prodigy. He has secured the title of International Master (IM) at a young age of 12.
- Raunak is the youngest International Master (IM) from Maharashtra and the second IM from Nagpur. The first IM from Nagpur is Anup Deshmukh who secured the honorary title in 1999.

India to host Asia Cup International Bridge C'ship

- India would be hosting the third Asia Cup International Bridge Championship in Goa from June 4 to June 11, 2018.
- The championship, to be held in Goa, will be contested in five categories namely men, women, mixed, super-mixed and senior.
- It will see participation from players belonging to countries including Australia, Bangladesh, Singapore, China, Japan, Indonesia, Pakistan and Korea.

Indian paddler Suhana claims gold in ITTF Oman Open

- India's Suhana Saini claimed the gold medal in the Oman Junior and Cadet Open, an ITTF Premium Circuit event.
- The 12-year-old from Haryana beat Egypt's Hana Goda in the Hopes Girls singles final 3-1 to annex the coveted title.

Mithali Raj becomes first Indian to score 2,000 runs in T20 International

- Mithali Raj on June 7, 2018 became the first Indian cricketer to score 2,000 runs in T20 Internationals. She achieved the feat during India's seven-wicket win over Sri Lanka in the Women's Asia Cup T20 at Kaula Lumpur.
- Mithali now has 2,015 runs in 75 matches. Indian men's team captain Virat Kohli with 1,983 runs is the next on the list, followed by Rohit Sharma and Suresh Raina.

Sports ministry approves upward revision of pension to meritorious sportspersons

- Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Rajyavardhan Rathore has approved the upward revision of pension to meritorious sportspersons.
- Under the revised rates, the rate of pension has been doubled off the existing rate of pension on winning medals in international sports events.

The revised pension rates are as follows:

- The medalists at the Olympic/Para-Olympic Games will now get Rs 20,000, double from earlier Rs 10000 per month.
- The gold medalists at World Cup/World Championship in Olympic and Asian Games disciplines will get Rs 16,000, which is also double from earlier Rs 8,000 per month.

Revised Guidelines for Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy

- Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports Rajyavardhan Rathore approved the revised guidelines for Maulana Abul Kalam Azad (MAKA) Trophy.
- Under the revised guidelines, the applications from the universities, which were hitherto used to be invited and scrutinised by the Association of Indian Universities (AIU), will now be invited by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports or Sports Authority of India.

Intercontinental Cup final: India beat Kenya 2-0 to win

- India lifted the Intercontinental Cup on Sunday after defeating Kenya 2-0 at Mumbai Football arena under the captaincy of Sunil Chettri.
- India started itself on a victory note as seven minutes into the game it managed to score its first goal which was a flick from a free-kick.
- Though the second half of the game belonged to Kenya, Chettri steered the team to victory as he became the joint second highest goal scorer among active players along with Argentinean star player Lionel Messi. The highest active goal scorer is Cristiano Ronaldo.

Asian Junior Athletics: Middle distance runner Anu Kumar bags gold

- Middle distance runner Anu Kumar help India bag third gold medal in the men's 800m on the third day of the 2018 Junior Asian Athletics Championships here on Saturday.
- With a single day of competition remaining, Indian athletes have already won three gold medals, one silver and nine bronze medals.
- The Uttarakhand based runner, clocked 1:54.11 seconds to get the better of Iran's Abdolrahim Dorzadeh who clocked 1:54.23 seconds.

French Open: Nadal wins record 11th title

- World No. 1 and Spaniard tennis star Rafael Nadal outclassed Dominic Thiem of Austria in the men's final match of French Open to lift a record 11th Roland Garros title here on Sunday.
- Thiem, who was considered the underdog and the only player to beat Nadal twice on clay in the last two years, was no match for the Spaniard's swift serves and aggressive athleticism. He was defeated 6-4, 6-3, 6-2 in straight sets in a match that lasted beyond 2.5 hours.

French Open: Simona Halep beats Sloane Stephens for first Grand Slam title

- Top seed and Romanian tennis ace Simona Halep won her first ever grand slam title after surging past a fighting Sloane Stephens of the United States in the final of women's singles at the Roland Garros here on Saturday.
- Halep, who had lost the last three major finals, won the match 3-6, 6-4, 6-1 in just over two hours.

- The Romanian was outclassed in the first set by Stephens, but recovered well to win the second set.

Shikhar Dhawan is first Indian to score century before lunch

- Indian opener Shikhar Dhawan on Thursday became the first Indian opener to have scored a century before lunch on the first day of the one-off test against Afghanistan in Bengaluru.
- The first batsman to do so was Australia's V.T. Trumper against England in 1902. The other four batsmen are Australia's C.G. Macartney, Don Bradman, David Warner and Pakistan's Majid Khan. Out of six batsmen, four are from Australia, one from Pakistan and one from India.

New Zealand's Amelia Kerr hits 232 to smash women's ODI record

- New Zealand's Amelia Kerr hit a world record 232 not out in the third one-day international against Ireland and then took five wickets to complete a remarkable day for the 17-year-old.
- Kerr batted through the innings and surpassed the 229 not out set by Australia's Belinda Clark against Denmark in 1997 with a four-four-six sequence from the final three deliveries as New Zealand posted 440 for three.

Boxing: India bag 1-Gold, 2-Silver medals at Umakhanov Memorial Tournament in Russia

- Indian boxers bagged one Gold and two Silver medals at the Umakhanov Memorial Tournament in the Russian city of Kaspiysk on June 12, 2018.
- Saweety Boora won the coveted yellow metal in the Women's 75 kg category after beating local favourite Anna Anfinogenova in the Final.

Football: United States, Mexico and Canada win right to host 2026 World Cup

- The United States, Mexico and Canada won the right to host the 2026 World Cup after beating Morocco in a vote by FIFA member nations in Moscow.
- The North American bid received 134 of the 203 votes, while Morocco polled 65 in the ballot at a FIFA Congress held in Moscow.

Afghanistan lose maiden Test to India by innings in two days

- Afghanistan succumbed to top-ranked India by an innings and 262 runs inside two days of its maiden cricket Test on Friday.
- India completed its first innings in the morning on 474 then bowled out the Afghans for 109 and 103.

Uttarakhand to debut in Ranji Trophy this season

- For the first time Uttarakhand will be playing in Ranji Trophy.
- This was confirmed by Committee of Administrators member Vinod Rai.
- Till date, 29 teams played in Ranji Trophy making Uttarakhand the 30th team.

18-year-old Manav Thakkar trumps World No. 18 in Ultimate Table Tennis 2018-06-22

- Young Indian table tennis player Manav Thakkar stunned World No. 18 Kristian Karlsson 2-1, inspiring Empowerji Challengers to a 15-6 victory over Maharashtra United in the CEAT Ultimate Table Tennis in New Delhi on June 21.
- The 18-year-old Thakkar rattled his Swedish rival, ranked 223 places above him with an attacking display to win 11-9, 8-11, 11-8.

England set a new ODI world record with 481/6

- England made the highest one-day international total of 481-6 as they defeated Australia by 242 runs at Trent Bridge. The England broke their own record of 444-3 set against Pakistan in 2016 at same venue.
- With this the England captain, Eoin Morgan became the highest ODI run scorer for his country.
- This is England's biggest ODI win and Australia's heaviest defeat in terms of runs.

Archery World Cup: Deepika Kumari clinches gold medal

- In Archery, Deepika Kumari clinched a gold medal in the women's recurve event at stage three of World Cup in Salt Lake City of the US.
- Deepika defeated Michelle Kroppen of Germany by 7-3.
- With this win, the four-time World Cup final silver medalist has automatically qualified for the Archery World Cup Final to be held in Samsun, Turkey in 2018.

Obituaries

Legendary mimicry artist Nerella Venumadhav passes away

- Mimicry artist Nerella Venumadhav passed away on June 19, 2018 following a brief illness at his home in Mattewada in Warangal city. He was 85.
- He gained international fame after his enthralling performance at the United Nations.
- He began mimicry at the age of 15 and has mastered the art over the years and inspired scores of people to take up the art form.

Veteran journalist Prabhakar Choubey passes away

- Veteran journalist and litterateur Prabhakar Choubey passed away after a prolonged illness at a city hospital in Raipur on June 21, 2018. He was 83-year-old.
- Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh condoled Choubey's death and said that the senior journalist, in his career spanning 54 years, made invaluable and memorable contribution in the fields of journalism and literature,.