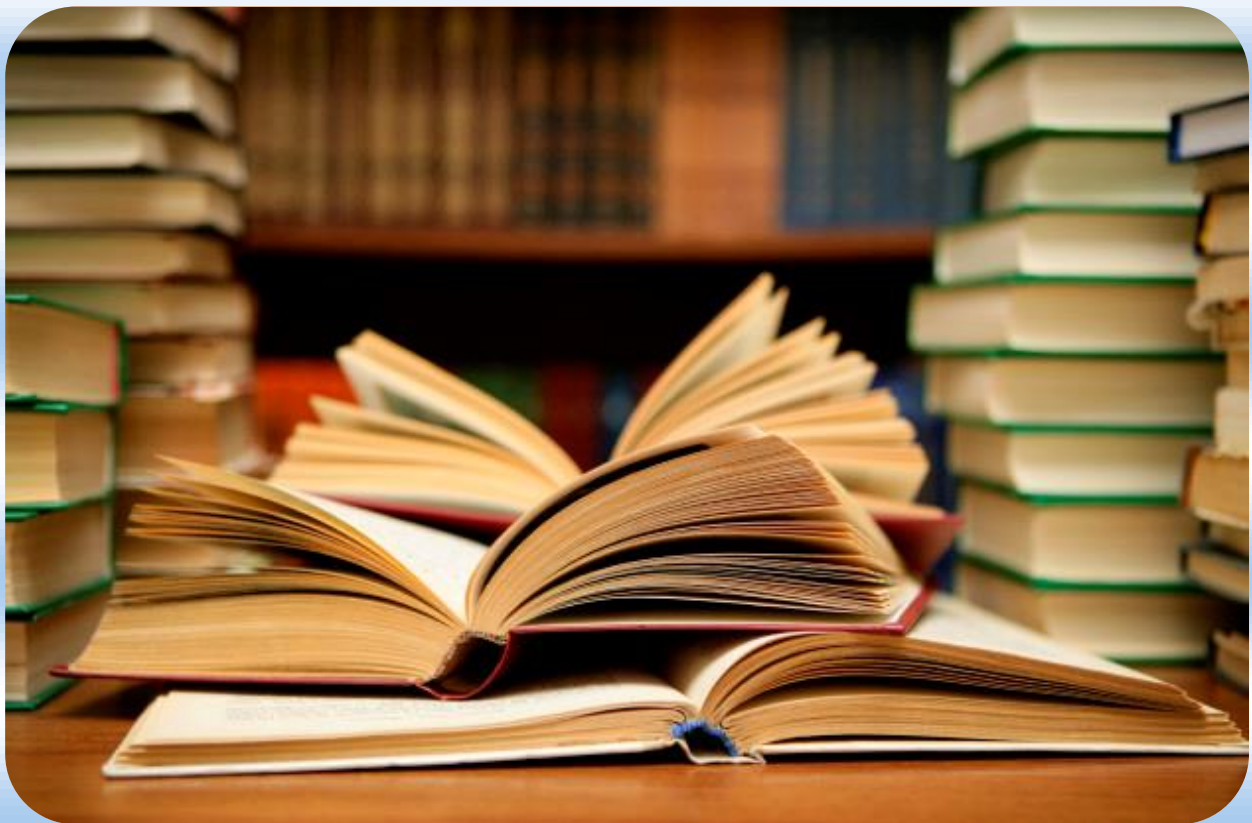


## LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA

## GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



# JUNE-2018

# NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## ***Government launches Online Analytical Tool to monitor foreign contributions under FCRA***

New Delhi: The Centre on Friday launched a web-based analytical tool to closely monitor the flow and utilisation of foreign contributions received by different organisations registered or permitted under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA). "The tool enables decision-makers in various government departments/Ministries to scrutinise the sources of foreign funds and their actual use in India. It gives them the capacity to take data-driven and evidence-based decisions regarding compliance with the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 2010," Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh said while launching the tool.

## ***India's First Advanced Forensic Lab dedicated to women related cases to come up in Chandigarh***

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. Speaking at the event, the minister said forensic analysis plays critical role in criminal investigation and the upcoming lab will contribute in addressing the gap in forensic DNA analysis of pending sexual assault cases in the country.

## ***New Humsafar Express Flagged Off between Jodhpur and Bandra***

Bandra Terminus-Bhagat Ki Kothi Weekly Humsafar Express train service: A new weekly train service – Humsafar Express train has recently been flagged off by Railway Minister Piyush Goyal. The train will run between Mumbai's Bandra Terminus and Bhagat Ki Kothi (near Jodhpur in Rajasthan). The Bandra Terminus – Bhagat Ki Kothi Weekly Humsafar Express train made its inaugural run on June 2, 2018. The train, which was shown the green flag by Railway Minister Piyush Goyal was launched from Bhagat Ki Kothi station railway station in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.

## ***Reservations in Promotions: Centre gets go ahead from SC***

The Supreme Court today allowed 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. The government said there were separate verdicts by the high courts of Delhi, Bombay and Punjab and Haryana on the issue of reservation in promotion to SC/ST employees.

### ***India's Current Maternal Mortality Ratio is 130: Key Facts***

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Jagat Prakash Nadda on Wednesday said India has seen a decline in its Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) from 139 to 130. India's MMR has significantly fallen from 167 in 2011-13 to the present figure of 130, as per the latest Sample Registration System (SRS) figures. "The latest Sample Registration System (SRS) figures reveal that India has gone beyond the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) target of Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) of 139 by 2015. We reached 130," the Union Minister said.

### ***Government to raise 5 Indian Reserve Police battalions in Jammu & Kashmir***

SRINAGAR: Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Friday said the Centre had decided to raise five Indian Reserve Police (IRP) battalions in which people from border areas of Jammu and Kashmir would be given 60 per cent reservation. The minister was speaking after meeting people living in border areas in the frontier Kupwara district, on the second day of his two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir.

### ***WHO commends India for reducing maternal mortality ratio by 77%***

The WHO has commended India's progress in reducing the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) by 77 percent, from 556 per 1,00,000 live births in 1990 to 130 per 1,00,000 live births in 2016. It said this progress puts the country on track towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) target of an MMR below 70 by 2030. India's present MMR is below the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target.

### ***Government launches Rail Madad app to expedite and streamline passenger grievance redressal***

Have a complaint while travelling on an Indian Railways train? Do you want to track the status of grievance redressal? Indian Railways has launched a new 'Rail MADAD' app for the very purpose of speedy redressal of passengers complaints. Railway Minister Piyush Goyal has launched the 'Rail MADAD' (Mobile Application for Desired Assistance During travel) App that aims to expedite and streamline passenger grievance redressal.

### ***IRCTC inks MoU with CSC for delivery of rail tickets***

Common Service Centres (CSCs) that provide Internet infrastructure to rural areas will act as banking correspondents and there are plans to sell insurance too in the future, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister for Electronics, Information Technology, Law & Justice, said. "These centres apart from providing digital literacy are transforming into agents of banking and later insurance. The idea is to deliver digital, Wi-Fi enabled services like Aadhaar payments, pension, banking, and insurance. The government will also push private participation in providing digital services through these platforms," he told reporters here.

### ***Government launches 5000 Wi-Fi Choupals in partnership with CSC***

"My dream will come true if you accept the challenge to open extension counters of banks in 2.9 lakh places. If required we can collaborate with renewable and power ministry to set-up small solar units at your places so that electricity becomes free," Goyal said after IRCTC and CSC e-Governance signed an agreement for train ticket bookings. Railway Minister Goyal, who is also the interim Finance Minister, said that WiFi service is already being made available at CSCs. "Along with these, we can connect with core banking.

### ***Seva Bhoj Yojna: Centre to refund GST on rations used for langar, similar meals***

The Centre on Friday announced a scheme to reimburse its share of GST on raw material used to prepare meals in community kitchens run by religious organisations, such as langar. The scheme, called Seva Bhoj Yojna, has an outlay of Rs 325 crore for financial years 2018-19 and 2019-20, according to a statement by the Ministry of Culture. Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma told The Indian Express, "We have been getting representations from many social and religious organisations in this regard and have been working towards this for some time."

### ***Atal Tinkering Labs: NITI Aayog selects 3,000 more schools***

NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has selected 3,000 additional schools for the establishment of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs), bringing the total number of ATL schools in India to 5,441. The selected schools shall receive a grant of Rs 20 lakh spread over the next five years to establish Atal Tinkering Labs for nurturing innovation and entrepreneurial spirit among secondary school children across India.

### ***Ten new iconic sites selected under Phase III of Swachh Iconic Places of Swachh Bharat Mission***

The government today added ten Swachh Iconic Places (SIP) under phase III of its flagship programme, Swachh Bharat Mission. Raghavendra Swamy Temple (Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh), Hazardwari Palac (Murshidabad, West Bengal), Brahma Sarovar Temple (Kurukshetra, Haryana), Vidur Kuti (Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh), Mana village (Chamoli, Uttarakhand), Pangong Lake (Leh-Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir), Nagvasuki Temple (Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh).

### ***Cabinet extends tenure of Commission constituted to examine issue of OBC sub-categorisation***

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the final extension of the term of the Other Backward Classes in the Central List currently mandated upto 20th June 2018, till 31st July, 2018. The Commission held extensive meetings with the stake holders including the State Governments, the State Backward Classes Commissions, various community associations and general public belonging to various Backward Classes and Communities.

### ***NITI Aayog launches Composite Water Management Index***

NEW DELHI: Gujarat has emerged as the best state on Niti Aayog's composite water management index (CWMI) in the country followed by Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra. In northeastern and Himalayan states, Tripura has been adjudged as the top state in 2016-17 followed by Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Assam. Niti Aayog has ranked all states through first of its kind index on the composite water management, comprising 9 broad sectors with 28 different indicators covering various aspects of ground water..

### ***Government hikes import duty on non-palm oils by 5-10%***

New Delhi, Jun 14 () The Centre today raised the import duty by 5-10 per cent on non-palm edible oils, both crude and refined ones, in order to protect the interest of domestic oilseeds growers and processors. In March, the government had raised the import duty on crude palm oils from 30 per cent to 44 per cent, while that on refined palm oils to 54 per cent from 40 per cent. But the customs duty on non-palm crude and refined edibles was kept unchanged even as the industry body SEA had demanded.

### ***PM Naraendra Modi inaugurates Integrated Command and Control Centre at Naya Raipur***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today dedicated to the nation the Integrated Command and Control Centre set up at Naya Raipur - the upcoming capital city of Chhattisgarh. The centre will control and monitor online water and power supply, sanitation, traffic movement, integrated building management, city connectivity and Internet infrastructure (data centre), under one roof. The monitoring of Naya Raipur city will also be carried out from the facility.

### ***20 States sign MoU for implementing Ayushman Bharat – National Health Protection Mission***

NEW DELHI: Twenty states and Union Territories have signed initial agreements to implement the Prime Minister's scheme to provide health insurance to 10 crore poor families in the country. Punjab and West Bengal, which earlier did not confirm whether they would implement the scheme, have expressed interest in participating in the Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission.

### ***Government to expand BPO promotion scheme for rural youth to 1 lakh seats***

New Delhi, June 18 () The government plans to expand its BPO promotion scheme to one lakh seats, and will also set up India's largest National data centre in Bhopal, IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said today. "We want to make India a hub for BPO movement," Prasad said at a conference to highlight the achievements of IT and Electronics Ministry over the last four years. The government will increase the capacity under the BPO promotion scheme to one lakh seats from the current 48,000 seats.

### ***CWC, Google sign agreement for flood forecasting and dissemination of flood related information***

New Delhi, Jun 18 () The Central Water Commission (CWC) has entered into an agreement with Google to improve flood forecast systems and disseminate flood-related information by using technology developed by the tech giant. "The initiative is likely to help crisis management agencies to deal extreme hydrological events in a better manner. Under this agreement, the CWC and Google will share technical expertise in various fields, including geospatial mapping and analysis of hydrological observation data.

### ***National Testing Agency to train paper setters***

The National Testing Agency, which is being set up to relieve the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) of the burden of conducting multiple examinations, will also train paper setters to set better question papers and provide better model answers. "There is no system for paper-setter training till now. We will introduce it as part of the National Testing Agency's mandate," HRD minister Prakash Javadekar told journalists on Tuesday, while listing the "achievements" of the Modi government in the field of education.

### ***Government declares national targets for off-shore wind power: 5 GW by 2022 and 30 GW by 2030***

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has declared medium- and long-term targets for offshore wind power capacity addition. An official statement said the target is 5 GW by 2022 and 30 GW by 2030. The MNRE had earlier invited Expressions of Interest (EoI) for the first 1 GW offshore wind project in India. "While this may look moderate in comparison to India's onshore wind target of 60 GW and its achievement of 34 GW and solar.

### ***Chief Ministers Subgroup constituted to Coordinate Policy approaches for Agriculture and MGNREGS***

The government today said it has constituted a chief ministers' sub-group to coordinate policy approaches for agriculture and MGNREGS with the Madhya Pradesh CM Shiv Raj Singh Chauhan as the convener. Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Sikkim along with NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand are the members of the subgroup, an official statement said.

### ***Government launches National Digital Library of India***

Union Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar on Tuesday launched the National Digital Library to provide a platform for schools, universities, teachers, students and anyone who has a curiosity to learn. Addressing the media here, Javadekar said, "The National Digital Library would become a single-window platform for all the educational needs. It will have 1,70,00,000 books in 200 languages." There are around 11 lakh government schools in India.

### ***NHRR Project: Government launches India's first Nationwide Healthcare Establishment Census***

New Delhi: The Union ministry of health and family welfare on Tuesday launched the National Health Resource Repository (NHRR), the first ever registry in the country registry of authentic, standardised and updated geo-spatial data of all public and private healthcare. The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is the project technology partner for providing data security.

### ***Governor's Rule imposed in Jammu and Kashmir***

A day after BJP pulled out of its alliance with PDP, the state of Jammu and Kashmir has come under Governor's rule with immediate effect. Last evening, Governor NN Vohra had forwarded a report to President Kovind for imposing Governor's rule in J&K under Section 92 of the Constitution, after holding widespread consultation with all the political parties. This will be the fourth time in the last 10 years that a Governor's rule is imposed in Jammu and Kashmir.

### ***Government bans two affiliates of al Qaeda and IS under UAPA***

The Home Ministry has banned the Al Qaeda in Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) and the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) under the anti-terror law, the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA). The Ministry issued a notification that the AQIS, an affiliate of the Al Qaeda and ISKP, the Afghanistan wing of the Islamic State are "terrorist organisations." AQ and IS are already banned under the UAPA.

### ***Use of AADHAAR biometric data for criminal investigation is not permissible: UIDAI***

NEW DELHI: A day after NCRB made a case for limited Aadhaar data access for the police to crack crimes, UIDAI on Friday asserted that use of Aadhaar biometric data for criminal investigation is not allowed under the Aadhaar Act. It also informed that Aadhaar data has never been shared with any crime investigating agency. The statement from Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) came after National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) director Ish Kumar on Thursday made a strong pitch.

### ***Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays foundation stone of Vanijya Bhawan***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday laid the foundation stone of Vanijya Bhawan at Akbar Road here and said India has made great progress in making the country investment friendly. After laying the foundation stone, Modi said the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has transformed the way trade is done in the country in less than one year. More than one crore have already registered with the GST, he said. The Bhawan, which is likely to be ready by December 2019, will be a completely networked and paperless office equipped with smart access control.

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

NEW DELHI: Power minister RK Singh said on Friday that the government will consider making 24 degrees celsius as mandatory default setting for air conditioners within a few months. At a meeting with the minister, AC makers were also advised to have labelling indicating the optimum temperature setting, which is between 24 and 26 degrees Celsius, for the benefits of consumers both from financial and their health points of view, the power ministry said in a statement.

### ***PM approves setting up of E Sreedharan committee to lay down standards for metro rail systems***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today approved a proposal to set up a committee to lay down standards for metro rail systems in the country. The committee will be headed by E Sreedharan, also known as the “Metro Man”, official sources said here. A retired Indian Engineering Service (IES) officer, Sreedharan has served as the managing director of Delhi Metro from 1995 to 2012. Inaugurating Delhi Metro’s Mundka-Bahadurgarh section earlier today.

### ***Credit Rating Model: Government testing big data system to aid banks assess credit risks***

The government is testing a new system that will assist banks in assessing credit risks and the probability of frauds using big data analysis. The system is expected to help lenders, particularly rural and cooperative banks, tackle the issue of rising non performing assets (NPAs). A credit rating model has been developed “that can assist the rural and cooperative banks to quantify risks under the big data context.

### ***Gender inequality extremely high in work & politics in India: Report***

Gender inequality in India is extremely high at the workplace and in terms of legal protection and political voice, according to a recent report by the McKinsey Global Institute (MGI) for the Asia-Pacific region. The report assessed inequality on the basis of a Gender Parity Score (GPS) that uses 15 indicators of gender equality in work and society. With 1.0 signifying parity, India’s score was 0.30 in gender equality at work and 0.78 in legal protection and political voice.

### ***Monsoon Session of Parliament to begin from July 18, 2018***

NEW DELHI, JUNE 25, The Monsoon session of Parliament is set to begin on July 18 and end on August 10 with the triple talaq bill among the legislative items topping the government’s agenda. The session will have nearly 18 sittings, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Ananth Kumar told reporters here. The Cabinet Committee of Parliamentary Affairs (CCPA), chaired by Home Minister Rajnath Singh, met here today to recommend the dates. President Ram Nath Kovind will now formally convene the session.



### ***Van Dhan Scheme: Government proposes to set up 3,000 Van Dhan Kendras involving 30,000 SHGs***

The government has proposed to set up 3,000 Van Dhan Kendras involving 30,000 self-help groups across the country under a scheme of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs for providing skill up-gradation and capacity building training for value addition of forest produce. The prime minister had launched the Van Dhan Scheme of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED on April 14 during the celebrations of B R Ambedkar's birth anniversary in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur.

### ***Women Entrepreneurs Platform: NITI Aayog signs Sol with Financial Institutions & Social Organisations***

Niti Aayog's Women Entrepreneurs Platform (WEP) today signed statement of intent (Sol) with financial institutions & social organisations with an aim to increase the number of women entrepreneurs. According to an official statement, the Aayog signed Sols with financial institutions such as the Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank, Indiabulls Housing Finance, Sreemanta Sankar Mission, Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA) and SREI Infrastructure Finance.

### ***President launches Solar Charkha Mission***

President Ram Nath Kovind today launched the Solar Charkha Mission covering artisans in 50 identified clusters and the Sampark portal -- a digital platform to connect five lakh job seekers with recruiters -- at an event to mark the important economic role played by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). Appreciating the role of the MSME sector in leveraging the demographic dividend of the country and promoting inclusive growth in rural and backward areas, Ram Nath Kovind pointed out that the sector accounted for around 60 per cent employment in India.

### ***COP CONNECT: Telangana Police launches app to support communication needs of police***

COP CONNECT', a mobile app to support the professional communication and collaboration needs of the entire police department of Telangana, was launched here today by the DGP, M Mahendar Reddy. "Telangana Police is now equipped with yet another powerful and transformative tool in its digital arsenal through COP CONNECT, connecting over 60,000 police force across 31 districts in the state", he told reporters here.

### ***7-Star Gram Panchayat Rainbow scheme: Haryana rank its panchayats on basis of 7 social parameters***

In a novel initiative, Haryana government has decided to give star rankings to its panchayats on the basis of seven social parameters under the state's 7-Star Gram Panchayat Rainbow scheme. As many as 1,120 villages of the state have achieved the rankings under the scheme, launched in January this year, an official release said. Speaking at a State level Panchayat Performance Assessment Committee (SPPAC) meeting at Chandigarh on Tuesday, Haryana Agriculture minister O P Dhankar said the panchayats will be judged on sex ratio, education, hygiene.

### ***Gujarat Government launches Suryashakti Kisan Yojana***

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.

### ***Andhra Pradesh: First state to use auto-disable syringes for all clinical purposes***

The medical device sector on Thursday hailed Andhra Pradesh's move to use auto-disable syringes for all clinical purposes from World Hepatitis Day on July 28 to prevent infection. Andhra Pradesh would be the first state in the country to take this move, which will be enforced from the World Hepatitis Day, said Association of Indian Medical Device Industry (AIMED) Forum Coordinator Rajiv Nath.

### ***Nipah virus: Kerala lifts high alert; schools to reopen***

The Kerala government on Sunday decided to lift the high alert sounded in northern Kozhikode and Malappuram districts in the wake of the outbreak of deadly Nipah virus last month that has so far claimed 17 lives. Addressing a press conference in Kozhikode district after an all-party meet that discussed the situation post-Nipah, state Health Minister KK Shylaja said the virus has been brought under control and its spread checked. "It has been decided to reopen educational institutions, schools and professional colleges on June 12, which was postponed due to the virus outbreak," she said.

### ***India receives first shipment of cheapest LNG from Gazprom Russia***

India on Monday received its cheapest LNG under a long-term deal as Russia began shipping natural gas at a delivered price of close to \$7 per million British thermal unit. At current oil prices, the Russian rate is \$1.5 per mmBtu less than the price at which Qatar, India's oldest supplier, delivered liquefied natural gas (LNG). Russian supplies are also cheaper by \$1-1.5 per mmBtu than the LNG sourced from Australia and the U.S.

### ***RBI's Monetary Policy Review: RBI Hikes Repo Rate to 6.25%***

The six-member monetary policy committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday increased the repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25%. The MPC arrived at the unanimous decision as the outlook for inflation had become 'uncertain' following a surge in international crude oil prices. This is the first rate hike in four-and-a-half years; the last was in January 2014. Interest rates may go up Banks may have anticipated the RBI's move as major.

### ***FDI in India rises to US \$61.96 billion in 2017-18: DIPP***

New Delhi: Foreign direct investment in India increased to USD 61.96 billion in 2017-18, DIPP Secretary Ramesh Abhishek said today. FDI inflows stood at USD 60 billion in the previous fiscal. He also said during the four years of the Modi government, foreign inflows jumped to USD 222.75 billion from USD 152 billion in the previous four-year period. However, according to an UNCTAD report, foreign direct investment (FDI) to India decreased to USD 40 billion in 2017.

### ***TCS becomes first Company to close over Rs. 7 Trillion Market Cap***

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Friday became the first company to close the trading session with a market valuation of over Rs 7 trillion on a day when its board approved a share buyback of up to Rs 160 billion. Shares of the company jumped 2.75 per cent to close at Rs 1,841.45 on BSE. During the day, it surged 3.16 per cent to Rs 1,849. At NSE, the scrip closed at Rs 1,840, up 2.93 per cent.

### ***Women Wizards Rule Tech programme launched by NASSCOM to increase number of women in senior levels in IT industry***

In an effort to increase the number of women in senior levels in the Information Technology (IT) industry, Nasscom on Tuesday unveiled its 'Women Wizards Rule Tech' programme for women techies, the Indian IT industry's apex body said. "This programme is designed to support women who are moving up the career ladder, while also paving the way for potential leaders of the future," said Senior Director of Nasscom Ashok Pamidi on the occasion.

### ***Global Real Estate Transparency Index: India ranks 35***

India has improved its ranking by one notch to 35th in the global real estate transparency index, driven by policy reforms and liberalisation of FDI rules in property as well as retail sectors, realty consultant JLL said. India was ranked 36th in the index during the last bi-annual survey conducted in 2016 and 40th in 2014. The country's real estate market is currently placed in the 'semi-transparent' zone. The ranking is expected to improve further in the next survey in 2020, on the back of several government initiatives such as Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act (RERA),

### ***Central Government forms Cauvery Water Management Authority***

NEW DELHI: Acting on the Supreme Court's direction, the Centre today constituted a Cauvery Water Management Authority (CMA) to address the dispute over sharing of river water among Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Puducherry. On February 16, the apex court had directed the government to form the CMA within six weeks in a verdict that marginally increased Karnataka's share of Cauvery water, reduced the allocation for Tamil Nadu and sought to settle the protracted water dispute.

### ***Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana: Odisha's Health Insurance Scheme for Journalists***

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Thursday launched "Gopabandhu Sambadika Swasthya Bima Yojana" for working journalists. The health insurance scheme for working journalists will be implemented with effect from June 1, 2018. In the first phase, as many as 3,233 working journalists from across the state will get health insurance coverage up to Rs 2 lakh, according to a statement from the Chief Minister's Office.

### ***Queen Pineapple declared as State Fruit of Tripura***

President Ramnath Kovind would come to Tripura tomorrow for a two-day visit during which he would declare the 'Queen' variety of pineapple as the state fruit, officials said here today. The declaration of state fruit would be made at a civic reception organised by the state government in honour of the President tomorrow evening. Kovind would land at the Agartala airport earlier in the day and leave for Udaipur, the headquarters of Gomati district 55 km from here.

### ***International Yoga day: June 21***

Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India. The word 'yoga' derives from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolizing the union of body and consciousness. Today it is practiced in various forms around the world and continues to grow in popularity. Recognizing its universal appeal, on 11 December 2014, the United Nations proclaimed 21 June as the International Day of Yoga by resolution 69/131. The International Day of Yoga aims to raise awareness worldwide of the many benefits of practicing yoga.

### ***India's Sunil Chhetri becomes joint second highest international goal scorer***

MUMBAI: Talismanic Indian football team captain Sunil Chhetri on Sunday became the joint second highest international goal scorer among active players along with Argentine superstar Lionel Messi with his 64th strike for the country against Kenya in the Intercontinental Cup summit clash in Mumbai. Chhetri, who had come into the match with 62 goals, gave India the lead in the eighth minute before scoring the second goal in the 29th minute to put him on par with Meesi.

### ***India Smart Cities Award 2018: Surat Smart City selected for City Award for implementation of projects***

Surat has been awarded for showcasing "great momentum" in the implementation of projects under the Smart Cities Mission, the Housing and Urban Affairs (HUA) Ministry said today. Under 'India Smart Cities Award' 2018, Bhopal and Ahmedabad were selected in the 'Innovative Idea' category for their "transformative approach towards sustainable integrated development, while nine smart cities, including NDMC (New Delhi Municipal Council), bagged 'Project' awards for innovative and successful projects in seven categories", it added.

### ***Government appoints S Ramesh as Chairman of CBIC***

New Delhi, Jun 26 () Senior bureaucrat S Ramesh has been appointed as chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC), the apex policy-making body for indirect taxes, according to an official order. He will succeed Vanaja N Sarna, who superannuates on June 30. Ramesh, a 1981 batch officer of the Indian Revenue Service (Customs and Central Excise), is at present the member in the board, mandated with the responsibility of implementing the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

### ***Arvind Saxena appointed as acting Chairman of UPSC***

NEW DELHI: UPSC member Arvind Saxena has been appointed as the acting chairman of the commission from June 20, a government order said. Saxena, a 1978-batch Indian Postal Service officer, will take over the charge from incumbent Vinay Mittal who completes his term at the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on June 19. A latest government order said Saxena will "perform the duties of the post of Chairman, UPSC" with effect from June 20 till further orders or till completion of his tenure on August 7, 2020.

### ***Former NIA chief Sharad Kumar appointed vigilance commissioner in CVC***

Former NIA chief Sharad Kumar was on June 10 appointed vigilance commissioner in the probity watchdog CVC, officials said. The 62-year-old Kumar, a 1979-batch IPS officer of the Haryana cadre, retired in September 2017 after heading the National Investigation Agency for over four years. According to an official order, Mr. Kumar has been appointed vigilance commissioner in the Central Vigilance Commission for a term of four years or till he attains the age of 65.

### ***AR Rahman appointed as Brand Ambassador of the Sikkim government***

Famed Indian composer and singer-songwriter A.R. Rahman has been appointed the brand ambassador of the Sikkim government, a senior minister said on Wednesday. "We have appointed Rahman as the state government's brand ambassador for a year," Sikkim Minister for Tourism, Civil Aviation and Commerce and Industries Ugen T Gyatso, told IANS over phone. As the government's brand ambassador, Rahman would keep coming to the Himalayan state from time to time and promote it, said the Minister.

### ***Anant Barua appointed as whole-time member of SEBI***

NEW DELHI: Anant Barua has been appointed as a wholetime member of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), according to an official order. Barua, at present, executive director in the market regulator, has been appointed to the post for three years on the pay as admissible to additional secretary to the central government or a consolidated salary of Rs 4 lakh per month.

### ***Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Ordinance, 2018 Promulgated***

NEW DELHI: President Ram Nath Kovind has given his nod to promulgate an ordinance amending the insolvency law, recognising homebuyers as financial creditors to real estate developers and providing for a special dispensation for small sector enterprises. Under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code Amendment Ordinance, 2018, homebuyers will get due representation in the committee of creditors (CoC) that takes a call on resolution proposals, making them an integral part of the decision making.

### ***Cabinet approves enactment of Dam Safety Bill, 2018***

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet on approved a proposal for enacting the Dam Safety Bill 2018, which will help the states and union territories to adopt uniform safety procedures to ensure safety of reservoirs. The bill also seeks to constitute a national committee on dam safety which shall evolve safety policies and recommend necessary regulations, finance minister Piyush Goyal told reporters. There are over 5,200 large dams in India and about 450 are under construction. In addition, there are thousands of medium and small dams.

### ***Cabinet approves withdrawal of Nalanda University (Amendment) Bill, 2013***

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a proposal to withdraw the Nalanda University (Amendment) Bill, 2013 pending in the Rajya Sabha, an official statement said. The bill, introduced in the Parliament in 2013, had then been referred to the Standing Committee on External Affairs which submitted its report in the same year. However, before the bill could be passed in 2014, the Parliament was prorogued.

### ***Taj Declaration to Beat Plastic Pollution adopted in Agra***

Agra, Jun 3 ( ) 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.

### ***India's E-waste Generation: Key Facts from ASSOCHAM-NEC Study***

MANGALURU: Despite the government's emphasis on Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan and Smart Cities project, India continues to be generating highest e-waste vis-à-vis China, USA, Japan and Germany an ASSOCHAM-NEC recent study coinciding with the "Environment Day" noted. In India, Maharashtra contributes the largest e-waste of 19.8% but recycles only about 47,810 TPA (tonnes per annum) whereas as its counterparts Tamil Nadu (13%) recycles about 52,427.

### ***Punjab government launches 'i-Hariyali' app' to increase state's green cover***

To increase the state's green cover, the Punjab government today launched a smartphone application that lets users order free plant saplings, officials said. The 'i-Hariyali' app under 'Mission Tandarust' can be downloaded from the app store for free, an official spokesperson said. The users can book a sapling of their choice, a maximum of 25 per person, from a nearby government nursery, the official added. Once the booking is done.

### ***Aldabra Giant Tortoise: Seychelles gifts two giant tortoise to India***

In a goodwill gesture, Seychelles has gifted a pair of giant Aldabra tortoise to India. Thanking Seychellois President Danny Faure for the gift, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the creatures with long life span have witnessed three centuries and are a symbol of "our ever-lasting" friendship. "In India, this creature and other animals are seen with a lot of love and compassion," he said in his press statement. The pair will be kept at Hyderabad Zoo, a Ministry of External Affairs official said.

### ***Dr Bindeshwar Pathak: Sulabh International founder honoured with Nikkei Asia Prize***

Noted social reformer and founder of Sulabh International, Bindeshwar Pathak, was today honoured with Japan's prestigious 'Nikkei Asia Prize for Culture and Community' for his significant work in tackling poor hygiene and discrimination. Launched in 1996, the award honours people in Asia who have made significant contributions in one of the three areas: regional growth; science, technology and innovation; and culture and community. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Infosys Chairman Narayan Murthy.

### ***COMCASA: US experts to discuss key military agreement with India***

AS PART of preparations for the 2+2 dialogue between the foreign and defence ministers of India and the US in Washington next month, a team of specialists from the Pentagon will be meeting their counterparts on the Indian side in Delhi from Monday to negotiate the text of a "foundational" military communications agreement. Official sources told The Indian Express that the US team, which will include lawyers, and policy and technical experts.

### ***Haryana to host World Union of Wholesale Markets Conference***

Chandigarh, Jun 28 () Haryana will host 33rd World Union of Wholesale Markets (WUWM) Conference in Gurugram from October 10-13 this year, in which heads of 200 mandis from across the world will participate. This was informed during a meeting held today, under the chairmanship of Abhilaksh Likhi, Principal Secretary, Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department, with the officers of World Union of Wholesale Market. Haryana State Agricultural Marketing Board will organise this conference.

### ***Government institutes Home Minister's Special Operation Medal***

NEW DELHI: Home minister Rajnath Singh has approved institution of 'Home Minister's Special Operation Medals' to honour officers of state police, central paramilitary forces and other security organisations engaged in special operations. Three more medals — Antarik Suraksha Medal, Asadharan Aashuchan Padak and Utkrisht & Ati-Utkrisht Seva Medal — have been instituted. While the Home Minister's Special Operation Medal and Asadharan Aashuchan Padak will be awarded on August 15, Antarik Suraksha Medal and Utkrisht & Ati-Utkrisht Seva Medal will be announced on Republic Day.

### ***ReUnite Mobile app launched to trace missing children***

Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu on Friday launched a mobile application -- ReUnite -- to trace missing and abandoned children in India. "This effort to reunite parents whose children have gone missing is a wonderful use of technology to address real life social challenges," he said. The app is multiuser where parents and citizens can upload pictures of children, and provide detailed description like name, birth mark, address, report to the police station, search and identify missing kids. The photographs will not be saved in the mobile phone's physical memory.

## **INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS**

### ***Peggy Whitson: NASA's record-breaking spacewoman retires as astronaut***

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — NASA's record-breaking astronaut, Peggy Whitson, retired Friday less than a year after returning from her last and longest spaceflight. She's spent more time off the planet than any other American: 665 days over three space station missions. She's also the world's most experienced female spacewalker, with 10 under her spacesuit belt. Whitson was the first woman to command the International Space Station, holding the position twice, and the oldest woman ever to fly in space. She was also the only woman to have served as chief of NASA's male-dominated astronaut corps.



### ***World Food Prize 2018 awarded to Lawrence Haddad and Dr. David Nabarro***

The Global Farmer Network would like to congratulate the Laureates for the 2018 World Food Prize, Dr. Lawrence Haddad and Dr. David Nabarro. The recipients were announced June 25 at a ceremony in Washington, DC. Please visit the World Food Prize website for more coverage of this year's Laureates. The press release text is below. Nutrition Champions Win 2018 World Food Prize for Leading Global Movement to Reduce Child Stunting Drs.

### ***Friendship Medal: China awards its first highest state honour to Russian President Vladimir Putin***

BEIJING - China has awarded its highest state honour to Russian President Vladimir Putin, a move that experts say signals the close relationship between the two countries at a time that ties of both with the United States are under strain. The Friendship Medal of the People's Republic of China was presented to Mr Putin personally by Chinese President Xi Jinping in a grand ceremony held at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Friday (June 8).

### ***Mauritius to host 11th World Hindi Conference***

The upcoming 11th World Hindi Conference in Mauritius is likely to produce directives to increase the popularity of Hindi globally, a source familiar with the preparation for the event says. Work on the international meet from August 18 to 20 is under way in the External Affairs Ministry, even as some prominent Hindi literary figures expressed their disappointment at the way the event has shaped up over the years.

### ***SAARC Development Fund to launch Social Enterprise Development Programme***

Thimpu-based SAARC Development Fund will soon be launching a social enterprise development programme (SEDP) to fund 80 entities annually across the 8-member states including India, said SDF CEO Sunil Motiwal. SDF was established by the Heads of the eight SAARC member states in April 2010 and its Governing Council comprises finance ministers of these eight countries. SDF is in the process of launching the SEDP as part of its social window, Motiwal said in an interview to PTI.

### ***Financial Action Task Force places Pakistan in Grey List for failing to curb terror financing***

ISLAMABAD: In a blow to Pakistan, the Financial Action Task Force has placed it on the 'grey list' for failing to curb anti-terror financing despite Islamabad submitting a 26-point action plan and launching a concerted diplomatic effort to avert the decision, officials said on Thursday. The decision was taken late on Wednesday night at the global financial watchdog Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) plenary session in Paris where finance minister Shamshad Akhtar represented Pakistan, according to official sources.

### ***29th Anniversary of Tiananmen Massacre Observed***

China's police kept a tight watch on surviving families of the Tiananmen Square massacre in Beijing on Monday, marking the 29th anniversary of the military crackdown on a student-led pro-democracy protest that remains a taboo in China, Hong Kong media reported. A handful of members of Tiananmen Mothers, a group formed by parents of students killed in the bloody crackdown who have been calling for a redress and accountability for those responsible, gathered at the Wan'an Public Cemetery, 15 kilometers west of Beijing.

### ***IBSA Ministerial Meet held at Pretoria, South Africa***

External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj along with Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, Ms. Lindiwe Sisulu and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Mr. Marcos Bezerra Abbott Galvo called for development cooperation and South-South cooperation. Swaraj while on her five-day visit to South Africa's capital Johannesburg to attend the BRICS ministerial meeting also took part in the India-Brazil-South-Africa (IBSA) summit held in Pretoria.

### ***5 countries elected as non-permanent members of UNSC***

Five new countries on Thursday joined the U.N. Security Council as non-permanent members, while Chile assumed the rotating presidency for January. With the start of a new year, five new countries — Angola, Malaysia, New Zealand, Venezuela and Spain — have begun their two-year term, replacing Argentina, Australia, Luxembourg, South Korea and Rwanda, Xinhua reported.

### ***Global Peace Index 2018: India ranks 136th***

LONDON: India has moved up four places to the 137th rank among 163 countries on the 2018 Global Peace Index, due to a reduction in the level of violent crime driven by increased law enforcement, according to a report by an Australian think tank. Iceland remains the most peaceful country in the world, a position it has held since 2008. New Zealand, Austria, Portugal and Denmark also sit in the top five most peaceful rankings.

### ***Qingdao declaration: SCO summit adopts declaration calling for 3-year plan to combat terrorism***

The SCO summit concluded with the adoption of the Qingdao declaration. The declaration calls for implementing the three-year plan to combat terrorism, separatism and extremism. It also calls for implementation of the treaty on long-term good neighbourliness, friendship and co-operation. All the heads of SCO countries held a restricted meeting before the summit. Mr Modi will have bilateral meetings with Presidents of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan later in the day.

### ***Japan adopts economic plan to allow more foreign workers***

TOKYO: Japan's Cabinet on Friday adopted an economic plan that would allow more foreign workers as the rapidly aging country seeks to make up for its declining workforce. Under the plan, Japan would relax visa requirements in sectors facing severe labor shortages such as nursing care, agriculture, construction and transport - new categories it would start accepting in addition to highly skilled professionals.

### ***US slaps 25% tariff on \$50 billion worth of Chinese goods***

The Trump administration will impose a 25 percent tariff on up to \$50 billion in Chinese goods, a decision that brought swift retribution from Beijing as trade conflicts between the world's two largest economies escalate. In a statement Friday, President Donald Trump said the measures will affect Chinese goods "that contain industrially significant technologies." The action comes "in light of China's theft of intellectual property and technology and its other unfair trade practices," he added.

### ***China imposes additional duties on US \$50 billion worth of American products***

BEIJING, JUNE 16: In a tit-for-tat action, China today imposed additional duties on \$50-billion worth of American products, a day after US President Donald Trump slapped a stiff 25 per cent tariff on Chinese goods worth similar amount, triggering a full-fledged trade war between the world's two largest economies. Trump yesterday accused China of intellectual property theft and unfair trade practices as he announced 25 per cent tariff on \$50 billion worth of Chinese goods.

### ***NSG plenary meeting held in Jurmala, Latvia***

With New Delhi's application before the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) in Latvia, the NSG, after a two-day meeting on Thursday and Friday, said that it discussed "NSG relationship with India" and continues to consider all matters pertaining to implementation of the 2008 NSG waiver for India. In fact, two years after India first approached the NSG plenary in Seoul, the group "noted that discussions were continuing on the requests for participation that had been submitted".

### ***International Classification of Diseases: WHO classifies gaming addiction as mental health disorder***

Gaming addiction is to be listed as a mental health condition for the first time by the World Health Organization. Its 11th International Classification of Diseases (ICD) will include the condition "gaming disorder". The draft document describes it as a pattern of persistent or recurrent gaming behaviour so severe that it takes "precedence over other life interests". Some countries had already identified it as a major public health issue.

### ***9 nuclear countries have total 14,935 nuclear warheads: SIPRI***

(Stockholm, 3 July 2017) The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) today launches its annual nuclear forces data, which highlights the current trends and developments in world nuclear arsenals. The data shows that while the overall number of nuclear weapons in the world continues to decline, all of the nuclear weapon-possessing states are in the process of modernizing their nuclear arsenals and will not be prepared to give them up for the foreseeable future.

### ***Canada legalises recreational use of marijuana nationwide***

Canada's parliament has passed a law legalising the recreational use of marijuana nationwide. The Cannabis Act passed its final hurdle on Tuesday in a 52-29 vote in the Senate. The bill controls and regulates how the drug can be grown, distributed, and sold. Canadians will be able to buy and consume cannabis legally as early as this September. The country is the second worldwide to legalise the drug's recreational use.

### ***United States quits United Nations Human Rights Council***

The US is withdrawing from the United Nations human rights council, the Trump administration announced on Tuesday, calling it a “cesspool of political bias” that targets Israel in particular while ignoring atrocities in other countries. The US ambassador to the UN, Nikki Haley, said she had traveled to the council’s headquarters in Geneva a year ago to call for reforms, to no avail. “Regrettably it is now clear that our call for reform was not heeded,” Haley told reporters at the state department.

### ***World’s hungry population on rise again due to conflict, climate change: UN report***

The number of hungry people in the world has risen for the first time in more than a decade, according to a United Nations report released on Wednesday. There are now approximately 38 million more undernourished people in the world, rising from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016, the year for which the latest statistics are available. According to the United Nations’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2018 report, conflict is now one of the main drivers of food insecurity in 18 countries.

### ***Mongolia launches construction of its first oil refinery with \$1 billion Indian aid***

ULAANBAATAR, June 22 (Reuters) - Mongolia launched construction of its first oil refinery on Friday, a long-awaited project that is funded by India and designed to end the country’s dependence on Russian fuel. Friday’s ground-breaking ceremony was attended by Mongolian Prime Minister Khurelsukh Ukhnaa and Indian Minister of Home Affairs Rajnath Singh. The refinery, in southern Dornogovi province will be capable of processing 1.5 million tonnes.

### ***12 June: World Day against Child Labour***

The International Labour Organization (ILO) launched the World Day Against Child Labour in 2002 to focus attention on the global extent of child labour and the action and efforts needed to eliminate it. Each year on 12 June, the World Day brings together governments, employers and workers organizations, civil society, as well as millions of people from around the world to highlight the plight of child labourers and what can be done to help them.

### ***June 14: World Blood Donor Day***

Every year, on 14 June, countries around the world celebrate World Blood Donor Day. The event serves to thank voluntary, unpaid blood donors for their life-saving gifts of blood and to raise awareness of the need for regular blood donations to ensure the quality, safety and availability of blood and blood products for patients in need. Transfusion of blood and blood products helps save millions of lives every year. It can help patients suffering from life-threatening conditions live longer and with a higher quality of life.

### ***June 15: World Elder Abuse Awareness Day***

Virtually all countries are expected to see substantial growth in the number of older persons between 2015 and 2030, and that growth will be faster in developing regions. Because the numbers of older persons are growing, the amount of elder abuse can be expected to grow with it. While the taboo topic of elder abuse has started to gain visibility across the world, it remains one of the least investigated types of violence in national surveys, and one of the least addressed in national action plans.

### ***June 16: International Day of Family Remittances***

The International Day of Family Remittances (IDFR), celebrated every year on 16 June, is aimed at recognizing the significant financial contribution migrant workers make to the wellbeing of their families back home and to the sustainable development of their countries of origin. It is also aimed at encouraging the public and private sectors, as well as the civil society, to do more together and collaborate to maximize the impact of these funds in the developing world.

### ***June 17: World Day to Combat Desertification and Drought***

Desertification is the degradation of land in arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas. It is caused primarily by human activities and climatic variations. Desertification does not refer to the expansion of existing deserts. It occurs because dryland ecosystems, which cover over one third of the world's land area, are extremely vulnerable to overexploitation and inappropriate land use. Poverty, political instability, deforestation, overgrazing and bad irrigation practices can all undermine the productivity of the land.

### ***June 18: World Sustainable Gastronomy Day***

Sustainable Gastronomy Day emphasizes the need to focus the world's attention on the role that sustainable gastronomy can play. It also reaffirms that all cultures and civilizations are contributors and crucial enablers of sustainable development. The UN General Assembly adopted on 21 December 2016 its resolution A/RES/71/246 and designated 18 June as an international observance, Sustainable Gastronomy Day. The decision acknowledges gastronomy as a cultural expression related to the natural and cultural diversity of the world.

### ***June 20: World Refugee Day***

Today, more than 68 million people around the world are refugees or internally displaced as a result of conflict or persecution. That is equivalent to the population of the world's 20th largest country. Last year, someone was displaced every two seconds. Mostly, in poorer countries. On World Refugee Day, we must all think about what more we can do to help. The answer begins with unity and solidarity. I am deeply concerned to see more and more situations where refugees are not receiving the protection they need and to which they are entitled.

### ***International Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day: June 27***

Last year on 27 June we celebrated for the first time the Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day. Those enterprises, which generally employ fewer than 250 persons, are the backbone of most economies worldwide and play a key role in developing countries. Those enterprises, which generally employ fewer than 250 persons, are the backbone of most economies worldwide and play a key role in developing countries.

