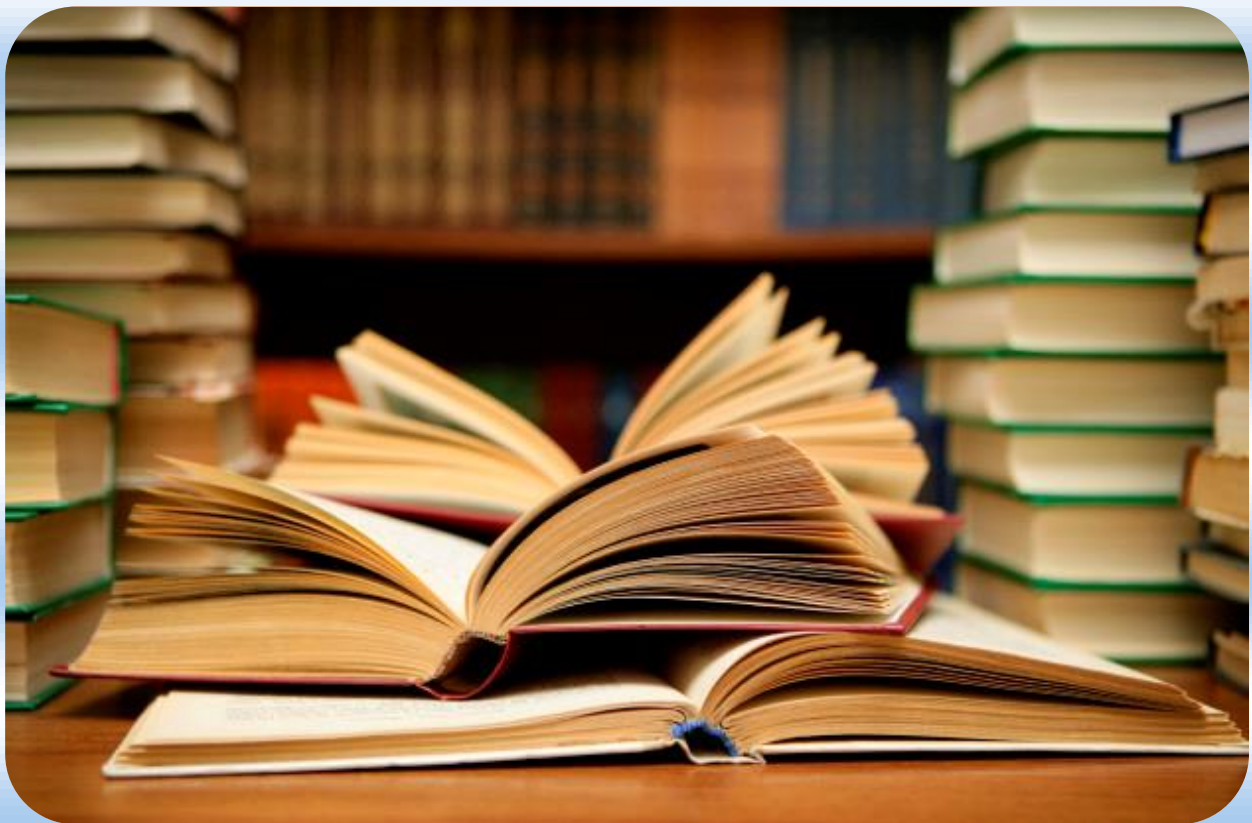


# LIBRARY & RESOURCE CENTER, NOIDA

## GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



# MARCH-2018

# NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## ***Arunachal Express connecting Naharlagun-Anand Vihar flagged off***

Arunachal Express, a fully air conditioned new weekly train service between Naharlagun and New Delhi, will be flagged off tomorrow, a railway release today said. The new service will complement an existing weekly train service between the two places. It will also be the 14th direct train connecting Northeast with the national capital, a Northeast Frontier Railways (NFR) release said. Union Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju and Minister of State for Railways Rajen Gohain will flag off the train from Naharlagun tomorrow.

## ***Sukhad Yatra App and Toll-free Emergency number for Highway users***

NEW DELHI: The government will launch mobile app Sukhad Yatra to provide users with real-time data, including expected wait at toll plazas and report any accident to NHAI, the Road, Transport and Highways Ministry said today. Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari will launch the mobile app and toll-free emergency number 1033 for highway users tomorrow, the ministry said in a statement. Sukhad Yatra mobile app has been developed by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to empower the highway users, it said adding the key feature of the app includes provision.

## ***I – Metros: Government launches association of all Indian Metro Rail companies***

The Union Housing Ministry on Thursday launched 'I-Metros', an association of all-India metro rail companies, which will act as a forum of exchange of ideas and innovations. The association was launched by Cabinet Secretary P.K. Sinha at an event "Indian Metros: Collaborating for Excellence" here in the presence of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Managing Director Mangu Singh. "'I-Metros' will go a long way if it progresses in the right way in terms of sharing of best practices and adoption of the latest technologies," a government statement quoted Sinha as having said during the launch.

## ***Government launches Udyam Sakhi Portal for Women Entrepreneurs***

Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) ministry launched 'Udyam Sakhi', a portal for women entrepreneurs on the occasion of the International Women's Day. The portal is a network for nurturing entrepreneurship and creating business models for low cost products and services in order to empower women and make them self-reliant and self-sufficient, the ministry said in a statement. After launching the portal, Minister of State of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), Giriraj Singh said that India has around 8 million women who have started and are running their own businesses.

### ***Government expands Beti Bachao Beti Padha to pan India***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit Rajasthan's Jhunjhunu on March 8 to inaugurate the pan-India expansion of the "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao" scheme on the occasion of the International Women's Day. An official release on Wednesday said: "Giving a fillip to the government's initiative to save and educate the girl child, the Prime Minister will inaugurate the pan-India expansion of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme up from the existing 161 districts to 640 districts across the country."

### ***First ever 'crime-free zone' along India, Bangladesh international border launched***

KALYANI BOP (BONGAON): In a first for both countries, the director generals of the Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) declared an 8.3 km stretch of the Indo-Bangladesh border as a 'crime-free zone' on Friday. Both border guarding forces with the help of the civil administrations of the two countries, NGOs and the local populace will help in ensuring that no crime takes place along the stretch that covers the Gunarmath.

### ***Supreme Court allows passive euthanasia, living will***

NEW DELHI: Stating that human beings have the right to die with dignity, the Supreme Court (SC) today allowed passive euthanasia, but made sure to set out strict guidelines that will govern when it is permitted. The top court also allowed an individual to draft a living will specifying that they not be put on life support if they slip into an incurable coma in the future. In a 'living will', a person can make a statement in advance that their life should not be prolonged.

### ***India wins Best Exhibitor Award at ITB – Berlin***

NEW DELHI: Announcing India winning the best exhibitor award at International Tourism Festival ITB-Berlin, tourism minister KJ Alphons thanked the Indian prime minister and credited him for the surge in interest in India as a destination. Alphons was speaking at a press meet in New Delhi on Monday. "These are the biggest awards in the world and India was the big hit in Germany. It's the first time India has won this prize..

### ***Foreign law firms can't practice in India, but their lawyers can advise: SC***

The Supreme court on Tuesday said that foreign law firms cannot set up offices in India but their lawyers could give legal advise on foreign laws. However, the bench headed by Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel and Justice Uday Umesh Lalit said that foreign lawyers could come to the country and participate in international commercial arbitration. Justice Goel, while pronouncing the judgement, said that even for the limited purposes they would be subject to the Bar Council of India's Code of Conduct.

### ***Lok Sabha passes Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill, 2017***

Parliament today passed a key bill that will empower the government to fix the amount of tax free gratuity and the period of maternity leave with an executive order. The Rajya Sabha, which has failed to transact any significant business over the last fortnight due to protests by various parties, today passed the Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill without discussion. The bill moved by Labour Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar was passed by a voice vote.

### ***CISF launches mobile app for lost items at airports***

NEW DELHI: The CISF has launched a mobile application through which travellers can register complaints to recover items they lost or forgot at various airports. The app called 'Lost and Found' can be downloaded from the website of the Information and Technology Ministry. "The main advantage of this mobile app is that the passengers can directly register complaints and get status of their complaint immediately from the airports under our security cover," CISF spokesperson.

### ***Airbnb inks four MoUs for promotion of tourism in North-East***

Online accommodation platform major Airbnb today said it has signed agreements with North Eastern Council (NEC) and NETDC to boost tourism in the hilly region. Apart from NEC and NETDC, MoUs have also been signed with North East Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP) and North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Society (NERCRMS), Airbnb said in a statement. "Through the partnership, the NEC, NETDC and Airbnb will collaborate to boost tourism and create positive travel experiences for both domestic and international visitors.

### ***Government to set up Plastic Park in Jharkhand's Deoghar District***

New Delhi: Fertiliser and Chemicals Minister Ananth Kumar on Tuesday announced setting up of a plastic park in Deoghar district in Jharkhand with an investment of Rs 120 crore, which will create 36,000 direct and indirect jobs. The minister also said a plastic recycling unit will be established with an investment of Rs 3.50 crore in the district, the second unit in India after Guwahati.

### ***UGC grants full autonomy to 62 higher educational institutes***

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has granted full autonomy to 62 higher educational institutions, including five central and 21 state universities, which maintained high standards, Human Resource Development minister Prakash Javadekar said on Tuesday. The institutions granted full autonomy will be free to decide their admission procedure, fee structure and curriculum. "In line with the vision of PM @narendramodi towards liberalised regulatory regime.

### ***North-East Industrial Development Scheme 2017***

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday has approved the North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS), 2017 with financial outlay of Rs 3,000 crore up to March 2020, an official statement said. It said government will provide necessary allocations for remaining period of scheme after assessment before March 2020. The NEIDS is a combination of the incentives covered under the earlier two schemes with a much larger outlay.

### ***Cabinet extends term of commission on sub-categorisation of OBCs***

The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved a 12 week extension of the term of the Commission set up to examine the issue of sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes in the central list up to June 20, 2018, an official statement said. The commission, headed by Justice (retd.) G. Rohini, commenced functioning on October 11, 2017 and has since interacted with all the states and union territories which have subcategorized OBCs and the State Backward Classes Commissions.

### ***India's first sign language dictionary of 3000 words launched***

Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot on Friday launched the first 'Indian Sign Language' (ISL) dictionary containing 3000 words at a function here in the national capital. Developed by Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC), the dictionary aims to give deaf people the constitutional right to speech and opportunity of freedom of expression while bringing them into the main stream.

### ***Videsh Aaya Pradesh ke Dwaar: MEA launches engagement programme with Regional Media***

To better communicate the country's foreign policy priorities, the Ministry of External Affairs today launched the 'Videsh Aaya Pradesh ke Dwaar' initiative that will see its greater engagement with the regional media, a statement by the ministry said. The initiative was launched in Hyderabad, a key centre for Telugu and Urdu media, by MEA spokesperson and Joint Secretary (External Publicity) Raveesh Kumar.

### ***President inaugurates World Hindi Secretariat in Port Louis, Mauritius***

President Ram Nath Kovind today inaugurated the World Hindi Secretariat building in Mauritius on the third day of his visit to the country. He also launched the World Hindi Secretariat's logo, an Early Digital Learning Programme as well unveiled foundation stones of a social housing project and a large ENT hospital being built with Indian assistance. Later in the day, the president attended a reception hosted by the High Commissioner of India in his honour.



### ***Maharashtra's first Mega Food Park inaugurated at Satara***

Satara Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd, Maharashtra's maiden mega food park, was inaugurated in Degaon, a village in Satara District, by Harsimrat Kaur Badal, minister of food processing industries, Government of India, in the presence of state chief minister Devendra Fadnavis. This was the twelfth mega food park operationalised in the country so far, and the tenth to be operationalised during the tenure of the current government.

### ***Maharashtra Government bans use of plastic***

The implementation of the Maharashtra government's ambitious plan to ban almost all plastic carry bags and single-use plastic, such as disposable plates and cutlery, food packaging and dozens of other items, kicked in on Friday after the Environment Department issued a notification in the evening. The government has proposed fines of Rs 5,000, Rs 10,000 and Rs 25,000 for the first three offences, with the maximum punishment for violation.

### ***Shakti Sthala: World's largest solar park launched in Karnataka***

Bengaluru: The Karnataka government on Thursday inaugurated the first phase of a 2,000 megawatts (MW) solar park in the drought-prone Pavagada region of Tumkur district, about 180km from Bengaluru. The first phase of the Rs16,500 crore park called "Shakti Sthala" will generate 600MW, while the balance 1,400MW is expected to be commissioned by the end of this year, the government said in a statement.

### ***Karnataka Government approves state flag proposal***

The Siddaramaiah government on Thursday unveiled the State flag (nada dhwaja) for Karnataka. If approved by the Centre, Karnataka will be the second State to have a flag after Jammu and Kashmir. The yellow-white-red flag has the State emblem at the centre. The proposal will be now sent to the Union Home Ministry for approval, since a State has no powers to announce its own flag.

### ***Odisha Government launches Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas programme***

In a new initiative, Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Monday launched the 'Ama Gaon, Ama Bikas' (Our village, Our development) programme from the State Secretariat to reach out to people in rural areas and involve them in the development process. The programme was launched on the occasion of the birth anniversary of former Chief Minister Biju Patnaik, which is observed as Panchayati Raj Day in the State every year. Mr. Patnaik reminded the people about Biju Patnaik's contribution to strengthen the Panchayati Raj institutions in the State.

### ***India's first HeliTaxi service launched in Bengaluru***

App-based taxi service took on a whole new meaning on Monday when Bengaluru's first helitaxi service took off, ferrying passengers from Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) to Electronics City in 15 minutes. The helitaxi made two trips, with the first one taking off at 6.30 a.m. The helitaxi, touted to be the first such service in the country, was announced in August 2017 by Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha.

### ***Arunachal Pradesh Assembly passes bill to have two-tier Panchayati Raj***

ITANAGAR: Arunachal Pradesh Assembly on Thursday passed a bill to do away with the Anchal Samiti, the intermediate level of the three-tier panchayati raj system, and set up a two-tier system in the state. This is being done following the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution that enables a state having less than 20 lakh population not to have the intermediate level, and Arunachal has a population of 13.84 lakh, Panchayat Minister Alo Libang said.

### ***Surat: First district to have 100% solar powered health centres***

At a time when global warming is mounting with each passing day, Gujarat's Surat district has switched to solar power to combat the issue. Surat has become the first district in the country to have 100 percent solar powered Primary Health Centers (PHC). There are a total of 52 PHCs in the district and all of them are now powered by solar system. This initiative will not only bring down the electricity bill by 40 percent but also help fight global warming. "Other than PHCs, there are 572 gram panchayats in the Surat District.

### ***Indian Navy's warship INS Ganga decommissioned***

INS Ganga, an indigenously built frigate of the Indian Navy, was decommissioned here this evening, after over three decades of service. Commissioned on December 30, 1985, the ship represented a big step forward in the nation's warship building capability, an official statement issued here tonight said. The ceremony was attended by several officers and men many now retired who had served on board the ship. The poignant and impressive ceremony, which saw the naval ensign hauled down for the last time at sunset.

### ***BrahMos missile with indigenous seeker successfully test-fired for first time***

India today successfully test fired the Brahmos supersonic cruise missile with an indigenous seeker at Pokhran test range in Rajasthan. Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the missile hit the target with "pin-point" accuracy and the success will further bolster India's national security. The test firing comes three months after the Brahmos cruise missile was successfully test fired for the first time from the Indian Air Force's frontline Sukhoi-30 MKI combat jet.

### ***Sach-Gaurav: India's first cloned Assamese buffalo born***

Hisar (Har), Mar 15 (PTI) A cloned Assamese buffalo male calf has been born for the first time, the Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes (CIRB) claimed here. "We used unique methods and produced this clone calf, Sach-Gaurav, on December 22, 2017 through a normal delivery," CIRB cloning team head P S Yadav said today. The calf was born to a Murrah buffalo. It was also the first to be born in the field, 100 kms from the cloning laboratory at Hi Tech Sach Dairy Farm here, he said.

### ***ISRO postpones launch of Chandrayaan-2 mission***

Chennai: The launch of India's second lunar mission 'Chandrayaan-2', slated for next month, has been postponed to October as the experts have suggested some tests, the Isro said on Friday. The experts had met recently and suggested the tests, following which the mission will now be launched in October, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chairman K.Sivan said. "Chandrayaan 2 will not be in April, it has been changed to October,".

### ***Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India inks MoU with RBI***

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for effective implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and its allied rules and regulations, through a quick and efficient resolution process. Furthermore, the two parties have agreed to assist and co-operate with each other for the effective implementation of the Code, subject to limitations imposed by the applicable laws.

### ***India ranks 78th on WEF Energy Transition Index***

India has been ranked at 78th, lower than its emerging market peers like Brazil and China, among 114 countries on the World Economic Forum's Energy Transition Index that was topped by Sweden. The report titled "Fostering Effective Energy Transition", ranks countries on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability. According to the report India has taken "bold measures" to improve energy access, energy efficiency, and to improve the deployment of renewable sources of energy.

### ***Pune tops in urban governance: ASICS 2017 report***

Pune has emerged as the best city, and Bengaluru the worst, in terms of quality of urban governance, according to a 23-city survey conducted by a Bengaluru-based non-profit organisation Janaagraha. Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy released the 5th edition of its Annual Survey of India's City-systems (ASICS) report which shows Pune as having scored 5.1 on a scale of 10, followed by Kolkata, Thiruvananthapuram, Bhubaneswar and Surat.



### ***MCX launches world's first brass futures contracts***

Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) today launched futures trading in brass for the first time globally, which will facilitate brass stakeholders to hedge their price risk. The country's largest commodity exchange will commence futures trading in brass on March 26 and will offer three contracts ending in April, May and June for trading, with a lot size of one tonne. Brass futures will not only provide its stakeholders with a more organised and robust price discovery platform.

### ***GPI Tracker system: SWIFT broadens payment tracking capabilities***

Secure financial messaging services provider SWIFT said today that it has expanded the GPI Tracker system to help banks track their global transactions at all times, keeping full vigil on the payments activity. Extension of its GPI Tracker will cover all payment instructions sent across the network, SWIFT said in a statement. The over Rs 13,000 crore fraud which has been unearthed at Punjab National Bank (PNB).

### ***Jaipur to witness 8th Theatre Olympics***

Jaipur is all set to be one of the co-hosts of the 8th Theatre Olympics, the largest international theatre festival to be held for the first time in India. The Jaipur chapter of Theatre Olympics 2018 is organised by the National School of Drama (NSD) under the aegis of Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India in collaboration with Ravindra Manch Society and Art & Culture Department, Government of Rajasthan.

### ***Navjot Kaur: First Indian woman to win gold medal at Asian Wrestling Championships***

Navjot Kaur on Friday scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman wrestler to win a gold in the Senior Asian Championships as she clinched the yellow metal in the 65kg freestyle category in Bishkek. Navjot outclassed Japan's Miya Imai 9-1 in a one-sided final bout of the women's 65kg freestyle category to bag the gold. This was also India's first gold in the ongoing championships.

### ***India-US team test-fires M777 ultra-light howitzers in Pokhran***

A group of officials from India and the United States were at the Pokhran firing range on Monday to test-fire M777 ultra-light howitzers in the wake of an accident during its trial in September last year. In May 2017, the Army took delivery of two M777 ultralight howitzers made by the BAE Systems US under a contract signed in 2016. During trial firing, a projectile had burst in the barrel. After the accident, the two sides formed a joint team to examine the issue. The team will review Monday's results.

### ***JS Rajput nominated as India's representative to Executive Board of UNESCO***

The Ministry of Human Resource Development has nominated former NCERT director J S Rajput as India's representative to the Executive Board (EXB) of UNESCO, the ministry said in a statement on Sunday. Rajput, who was awarded the Padma Shri in 2014, recently completed a project aimed at achieving religious amity through education and is also known for regulating the B.Ed correspondence courses as the first chairman of NCTE and for starting the innovative two-year B.Ed course.

### ***Bihar Governor Satya Pal Malik given additional charge as Governor of Odisha***

BHUBANESWAR: Bihar governor Satya Pal Malik received additional charge of Odisha as incumbent S C Jamir completed his five-year term on Tuesday. "President Kovind directs Shri Satya Pal Malik, governor of Bihar, to discharge the functions of governor of Odisha, in addition to his own duties, following the completion of the tenure of Shri S C Jamir," tweeted the President's office.

### ***Krem Puri: World's longest sandstone cave discovered in Meghalaya***

The world's longest sandstone cave at 24,583 metres in length has been discovered in Meghalaya, the northeastern state known for its complex cave systems hidden under its undulating hills. Called Krem Puri, the cave was discovered in 2016, but its actual length was found during an expedition by the Meghalaya Adventurers' Association (MAA) to measure and map it between February 5 and March 1 this year, said Brian Daly Kharpran, a founding member of the organisation.

### ***ICMR wins 2017 Kochon Prize for TB research***

The 2017 Kochon Prize was awarded to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) today in New Delhi for building a tradition of excellence in TB research and development. The \$65,000 Prize is awarded annually by Stop TB Partnership to individuals and/or organizations that have made a significant contribution to combating TB. The ICMR emerged the winner from amongst 18 nominations.

### ***Balkrishna Doshi wins Pritzker Prize***

Architect Balkrishna Doshi, a pioneer of low-cost housing design, won the prestigious Pritzker Prize on Wednesday, considered architecture's Nobel equivalent. The 90-year-old Mr. Doshi — one of the last living architects to have apprenticed with the Franco-Swiss trailblazer Le Corbusier — distinguished his work by committing to sustainable architecture and inexpensive housing, bringing modernist design to a country rooted in traditionalism.

### ***India B wins Deodhar Trophy 2018***

India B lifted the Dodhar Trophy, courtesy a superlative batting effort as they comfortably beat Karnataka by six wickets in the summit clash, in Dharamsala on Thursday. Ravikumar Samarth (107, 120 balls) was once again on the forefront as Karnataka scored a respectable 279 for 8 despite tottering at 64 for 4 at one stage. In reply, India B romped home in 48.2 overs with as many as four batsmen hitting half-centuries.

### ***Skill India partners with Ministry of Power for implementation of Saubhagya Scheme***

In a first of its kind institutional arrangement, the government on Tuesday launched a programme of skill development to speedily implement its Saubhagya scheme for universal household electrification with the Power and Skill Development Ministries joining hands for the purpose. The two ministries are pooling their resources in this initiative to meet the target of the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana, or Saubhagya, launched last year aimed at providing power to all homes by March 2019.

### ***Atal Innovation Mission ink SOI with SAP Global to foster innovation***

Global software firm SAP SE on Tuesday said it has signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) with NITI Aayog for the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), a flagship programme of the Indian government to promote entrepreneurship and innovation. As part of the SOI, SAP would adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATL) to promote Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education among secondary school students in the country in 2018, a company statement said.

### ***Department of Posts launches Cool EMS Service between India and Japan***

Ministry of Communications has launched the Cool EMS Service which will come into force from 29.03.2018. Cool EMS service is one-way service from Japan to India which allows customers in India to import Japanese food items for personal use which is allowed under Indian regulations. Initially, Cool EMS Service will be available in Delhi only. Food items will be carried by Japan Post in special cool boxes containing refrigerant to preserve the quality of the food items and addressee will collect them from Foreign Post office, Kotla Road, New Delhi in-person.

### ***India and China agree roadmap for addressing Trade Imbalance***

The eleventh session of the China-India joint-group on Economic Relations, Trade, Science & Technology was held on March 26, 2018. The session was co-chaired by the Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Shri Suresh Prabhu and the Minister of Commerce of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Zhong Shan. The two Ministers while reaffirming and reiterating their commitments to promote a balanced and sustainable bilateral trade, agreed to continue to take forward the initiatives identified in the Five Year Development Programme.

# INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## ***Bidya Devi Bhandari: Nepal's 1st woman President re-elected for 2nd term***

Nepal's first woman president Bidya Devi Bhandari was on Tuesday re-elected for a second term in office. Incumbent President Bhandari defeated Nepali Congress leader Kumari Laxmi Rai with an overwhelming majority in the presidential election. Bhandari, 56, won since her nomination was backed by the ruling Left alliance of the CPN-UML and CPN (Maoist Centre), the Sanghiya Samajbadi Forum-Nepal and other fringe parties. She became Nepal's first woman president in 2015.

## ***Neil Basu: Indian-origin UK officer appointed new Chief of Scotland Yard's Counter-terrorism Unit***

Scotland Yard has appointed a new counter-terrorism chief, viewed by many as the toughest job in British policing. Neil Basu, a Metropolitan police deputy assistant commissioner, is to succeed Mark Rowley, who retires this month, as assistant commissioner responsible for leading counter-terrorism policing nationally. Basu is a former Met commander overseeing organised crime and gangs. He has specialised in counter-terrorism policing for the past three years and was in effect Rowley's deputy.

## ***Krishna Kumari Kohli: Pakistan elects first Hindu woman to Senate***

Pakistan elected its first Dalit woman Senator over the weekend, in polls which also saw the ruling party strengthen its hand ahead of general elections in the country. Opposition candidate Krishna Kumari Kohli's surprise victory stirred a wave of optimism on social media, as Pakistanis celebrated the rare win for a woman from a marginalised community that lies at the bottom of the Hindu caste hierarchy. "I feel proud, I am thankful to Pakistan People's Party that they nominated me," Ms. Kohli told AFP on March 4. "Kudos to PPP for electing #KrishnaKohli.... Our parliament should have representatives of all religions.

## ***Canadian mathematician Robert P. Langlands wins Abel Prize 2018***

Canadian mathematician Robert Langlands on March 20 won the prestigious Abel Prize for developing a programme connecting representation theory to number theory, Norway's Academy of Sciences and Letters said. "The programme has enlisted hundreds of the world's best mathematicians over the last 50 years. No other project in modern mathematics has as wide a scope, has produced so many deep results, and has so many people working on it,"

### ***90th Academy Awards (Oscars 2018)***

“The Shape of Water” wins best picture, the drama’s fourth win out of 13 nominations. Frances McDormand wins best actress for “Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri” and asked the female nominees in every category to stand before adding, “Look around, ladies and gentlemen. We all have stories to tell and projects we need financed. Invite us into your office in a couple days — or you can come to ours, whichever suits you best — and we’ll tell you all about them.”

### ***Australia wins 2018 Sultan Azlan Shah Cup***

India’s hopes of making it to the final of the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup were crushed on Tuesday when they were beaten 4-2 by Australia in Ipoh. Having lost to Argentina 2-3 in their campaign opener and drawn 1-1 against England in the next match, the loss leaves India with just one point from three games. India went into the half-time break 1-0 down, but conceded three goals in the third quarter.

### ***India, Hong Kong sign double tax agreement***

BEIJING: India and Hong Kong on Monday signed an agreement to avoid double taxation and prevent tax evasion. India's Ambassador to China Gautam Bamabwale and Hong Kong's Financial Secretary Paul Chan Mo signed the treaty. A former British colony, Hong Kong is a special administrative region of China which enjoys a high degree of autonomy under which it has an independent taxation system.

### ***TESS: NASA, SpaceX collaborate to search for exoplanets***

WASHINGTON — NASA has selected SpaceX to launch the Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) aboard a Falcon 9 rocket in mid-2017, the U.S. space agency announced Dec. 17. NASA will pay \$87 million for the launch, which is slated to lift off from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida, in August 2017. NASA says the contract covers the launch service, spacecraft processing, payload integration, tracking data and telemetry, and other launch support requirements.

### ***China develops artificial heart with rocket technology***

BEIJING: Chinese scientists have developed an artificial heart using rocket technology and it is currently undergoing testing after thorough experiments on animals, a media report said today. The heart was developed jointly by the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology (CALT) and the Teda International Cardiovascular Hospital in North China's Tianjin. The artificial heart has been sent for testing and inspection after thorough experiments.

### ***Marshall Islands to launch world-first digital legal tender***

The Marshall Islands will launch the world's first legal tender cryptocurrency after a law passed by parliament earlier this week went unopposed by an official council. The nuclear-ravaged nation has partnered with Israeli company Neema to issue 24 million units of the Sovereign (SOV) digital currency. It will cap the number to prevent inflation. The move follows Venezuela's launch of the Petro cryptocurrency in February.

### ***Earth Hour 2018 observed across the world***

Our connection to Earth and nature is undeniable: Our planet's gain is everyone's gain. Biodiversity – the rich variety of life on Earth – continues to decline year on year. We must urgently prioritise our planet's biodiversity and nature. #Connect2Earth was created to organise our efforts, allowing us to shed light on topics impacting our planet's well-being. How do you #Connect2Earth? Get involved now by starting conversations.

### ***Global carbon emissions hit record high in 2017: IAE***

LONDON: Global energy-related carbon emissions rose to a historic high of 32.5 gigatonnes last year, after three years of being flat, due to higher energy demand and the slowing of energy efficiency improvements, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said. Global energy demand rose by 2.1 percent last year to 14,050 million tonnes of oil equivalent, more than twice the previous year's rate, boosted by strong economic growth, according to preliminary estimates from the IEA.

### ***Pakistan admits being added grey list of FATF***

After days of ambiguity, Pakistan on Wednesday confirmed that it will be on the 'grey list' of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) in June but disputed claims of being put on a 'black list'. "Pakistan will be assigned to the 'grey list' in June, once an action plan has been mutually negotiated. The statement that Pakistan will be transferred from the 'grey' to the 'black' list in June is therefore not true. The FATF website clearly demarcates the countries in the 'black'.

### ***15th March: World Consumer Rights Day***

The consumer movement marks 15th March with World Consumer Rights Day every year, as a means of raising global awareness about consumer rights and needs. Celebrating the day is a chance to demand that the rights of all consumers are respected and protected, and to protest against market abuses and social injustices which undermine those rights. World Consumer Rights Day was inspired by President John F Kennedy.



### ***22 March: World Water Day (WWD)***

World Water Day, on 22 March every year, is about focusing attention on the importance of water. The theme for World Water Day 2018 is 'Nature for Water' – exploring nature-based solutions to the water challenges we face in the 21st century. Damaged ecosystems affect the quantity and quality of water available for human consumption. Today, 2.1 billion people live without safe drinking water at home; affecting their health, education and livelihoods.

### ***World Happiness Index 2018: India ranks 133***

India has been ranked 133rd in a global list of the happiest countries, according to a UN-based report. The World Happiness Index 2018, which measures 156 countries in terms of happiness, has placed India in the 133rd position, a drop of 11 places from last year's 122nd rank. The country was ranked 118th in 2016. India's ranking was far behind from other neighbouring countries such as Pakistan, Nepal and China to name a few.

