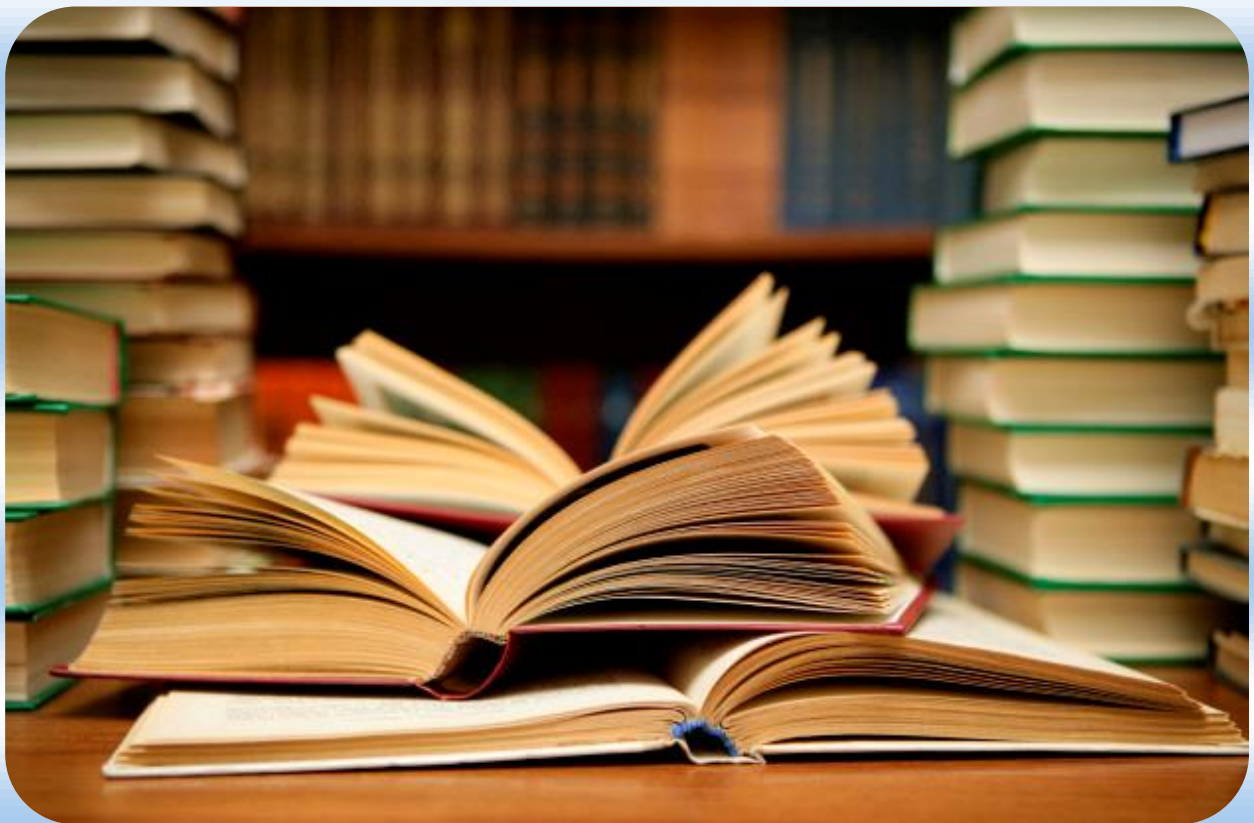


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## GENERAL KNOWLEDGE MONTHLY



# MAY-2018

# NATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS

## ***Government approves Restructuring of Indian Bureau of Mines***

NEW DELHI: The government today approved the restructuring of Indian Bureau of Mines to reform the mineral sector regulation. The restructuring would enable the adoption of IT and space technology by the bureau to improve its effectiveness in mineral regulation and development, the mines ministry said in a statement. It said the Union Cabinet has approved "the restructuring of the Indian Bureau of Mines (IBM) by upgradation, creation and abolition of certain posts of Joint Secretary-level and above".

## ***Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana: Cabinet doubles investment limit for senior citizens***

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved extending the investment limit from Rs 7.5 lakh to Rs 15 lakh under the Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY). It also extended the last date for subscription to the scheme till March 31, 2020. The time limit was earlier supposed to end on May 4 this year. The PMVVY is being implemented through Life Insurance Corp (LIC) to provide social security during old age and protect the elderly aged 60 years and above against a future fall in their interest income due to uncertain market conditions. The scheme provides an assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8 per cent per annum for 10 years.

## ***National Digital Communications Policy 2018: DoT releases draft Telecom policy***

The draft of National Telecom Policy (NTP) 2018 aka National Digital Communications Policy 2018 has been uploaded for public consultations on the Department of Telecom's (DoT) website late Tuesday night. One of the key strategies in the draft talks of recognising spectrum as a key natural resource for public benefit to achieve India's socio-economic goals, optimise availability and utilisation by making adequate spectrum available to be equipped for the new broadband era. On spectrum pricing, it said there should be optimal pricing of spectrum to ensure sustainable and affordable access to digital communications and simplifying the process of obtaining permissions from various agencies.

## ***President to preside over PM-headed panel on Gandhi 150th birth Anniversary***

The first meeting of the national committee for commemoration of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, held in Delhi on Wednesday, resolved to create a smaller executive committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for better planning. Maintaining that the event should serve to increase awareness about Gandhiji globally as well, Prime Minister Modi said it is important that this occasion be celebrated in a manner that ensures Mahatma Gandhi continues to be an inspiration for future generations.

### ***9th India-Japan Energy Dialogue held in New Delhi***

New Delhi: Amid rising persuasion for countries to adapt to the concept of electric vehicles (EVs), India and Japan on Tuesday agreed to initiate discussion on the same by collaborating with "Policy dialogue on next generation/Zero emission vehicles". In the 9th India-Japan Energy Dialogue held here earlier in the day, both countries agreed to work together in promoting well-functioning energy markets, energy security, energy access and issues pertaining to climate change.

### ***GOBAR-DHAN Scheme launched to promote wealth and energy from waste***

The scheme also aims at creating new rural livelihood opportunities and enhancing income for farmers and other rural people. The Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) comprises two main components for creating clean villages – creating open defecation free (ODF) villages and managing solid and liquid waste in villages. With over 3.5 lakh villages, 374 districts and 16 States/UTs of the country being declared ODF, the stage is set for ODF-plus activities, including measures to enhance solid and liquid waste management.

### ***Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana: Cabinet approves setting up of 20 AIIMS***

New Delhi: In a major boost to expansion of health care infrastructure in the country, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the continuation of the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) beyond 12th Five Year Plan to 2019-20. The PMSSY, which is a central sector scheme, aims at correcting the imbalances in the availability of affordable tertiary health care facilities in different parts of the country in general.

### ***CBDT inks 200th Unilateral Advance Pricing Agreement***

The CBDT today said it has signed its 200th unilateral advance pricing agreement (UAPA), which is aimed at promoting government's resolve of non-adversarial tax regime. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) had entered into one UAPA during April, thus taking the total count to 200. The UAPA entered into during April 2018 pertains to provision of sourcing support services. With the signing of one agreement in April.

### ***Meteorological Department issues warning of another dust storm in UP, Rajasthan***

After some inactivity on Thursday and Friday, another set of thunderstorms is likely to hit India's northwestern plains on Saturday, the Met department said. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), regions including northern Rajasthan, western Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and parts of Uttarakhand will be affected. Thunderstorms, along with squall, are very likely at isolated places over Assam and Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura as well, added the IMD.

### ***EPFO launches View Pension Passbook Service on Umang App***

NEW DELHI: Pensioners would now be able to view their pension passbook on mobile phones with the help of Umang app. Retirement fund body EPFO today announced the launch of a facility to extend the special service to pensioners. A labour ministry statement said 'View Pension Passbook' service for pensioners will be available through Umang app. The introduction of this facility is part of EPFO's plan to go paperless by August this year and provide all services online.

### ***SWAYAM: Government notifies 75 National Resource Centres for Higher Education faculty***

To better the quality of teaching in the country, Human Resource Development Ministry has launched an initiative to train teachers using digital platform. Using the Massive Open Online Courses platform SWAYAM, the central government intends to update the teaching technique of 1.5 million higher education faculty with focus on new and emerging trends. To achieve this, in the first phase.

### ***GST Council constitutes 2 Group of Ministers on digital payments and Cess on Sugar***

New Delhi, May 4 () The all-powerful GST Council today deferred a decision on levying a cess on sugar and referred the issue of incentivising digital payments to a group of state finance ministers. The panel, the highest decision making body of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, in its 27th meeting agreed to a proposal to convert the GST Network -- the company that provides IT backbone to the new indirect tax regime -- into a government-owned entity.

### ***Government launches National Water Informatics Centre***

NEW DELHI: The government has set up a central body - National Water Informatics Centre (NWIC) - to maintain a comprehensive water resources data. It will be a single window source of updated data on water resources in India. The NWIC will also collaborate with leading national and international research institutes to provide technical support to central and state organisations dealing with water emergency response of hydrological extremes.

### ***GST Council approves converting GSTN into government owned entity***

NEW DELHI: The GST Council has approved making GST Network (GSTN) a government entity by taking over stakes held by private entities, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said on Friday at the end of the 27th meeting of the council. Jaitley said the GST Network or GSTN currently is 24.5 per cent owned by the central government and a similar percentage is held by state governments collectively. The remaining 51 per cent is with five private financial institutions -- HDFC Ltd, HDFC Bank Ltd, ICICI Bank Ltd, NSE Strategic Investment Co and LIC Housing Finance Ltd.

### ***NITI Aayog ink Sol with IBM to develop Precision Agriculture using Artificial Intelligence***

New Delhi, May 4 (IANS) The government's policy think-tank NITI Aayog on Friday decided to partner with leading technology company IBM to develop a crop yield prediction model using artificial intelligence (AI) to provide real time advisory to farmers in "aspirational districts". "The partnership aims to work together towards use of technology to provide insights to farmers to improve crop productivity, soil yield, control agricultural inputs with the overarching goal of improving farmers' incomes," an official statement said.

### ***India to host 15th Asia Media Summit***

India will host the 15th Asia Media Summit from May 10-12 in which representatives from nearly 40 countries will delve on issues related to the media sector, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting said today. With the theme, 'Telling Our Stories Asia and More', India is hosting the annual summit of the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) Kuala Lumpur for the first time.

### ***First Apex Conference for CEOs of Smart Cities held in Bhopal***

Minister of Housing & Urban Affairs Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday inaugurated the first of its kind conference of the CEOs of the 'Smart Cities' that aims at cross-sharing of knowledge among the cities. Apart from the Smart City CEOs, the participants include representatives from municipal, state and central government and various other stakeholders in the Smart City Mission from the civil society, academia, industry etc.

### ***CBDT notifies Protocol amending DTAA between India and Kuwait***

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has notified a protocol to amend the existing double taxation avoidance pact (DTAA) between India and Kuwait. The protocol, which was signed on January 15, 2017, was notified on May 4 this year, an official release said. It had entered into force on March 26, updating the provisions in the DTAA for exchange of information as per international standards. Further, the protocol enables sharing of the information received from Kuwait for tax purposes.

### ***NITI Aayog ink Sol with Google to help grow AI ecosystem in India***

Aiming to foster growth for India's nascent artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) ecosystem, NITI Aayog and Google have come together to work on a range of initiatives to help build the AI ecosystem across the country. A Statement of Intent (Sol) was signed to this effect by Ms. Anna Roy, Advisor, NITI Aayog and Shri Rajan Anandan, Vice President, India and South East Asia, Google in the presence of the Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog.



### ***Government to set up additional 100 One Stop Centres for women safety***

As many as 100 additional districts would have One Stop Centres (OSC) aimed at supporting women affected by violence, as part of plans to cover all districts of the country in due course, an official statement said on Monday. "In the Programme Approval Board (PAB) meeting of the Ministry of Women and Child Development today, 100 additional One Stop Centres have been approved in the states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh.

### ***Bhupathy's shieldtail: New species of shieldtail snake discovered in Western Ghats***

Just 40 cm long and iridescent brown, Bhupathy's shieldtail is the latest addition to the snake fauna of the Western Ghats. The snake, currently observed only in the forests of the Anaikatty hills in Tamil Nadu's Coimbatore district, has been named *Uropeltis bhupathyi*, after the late herpetologist S. Bhupathy, for his contributions to the field. The reptile belongs to a family of snakes found only in peninsular India and Sri Lanka..

### ***Arun-3 Hydropower Project: Nepal grants license to India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Ltd to generate power***

Nepal has granted an Indian government-owned subsidiary the power generation licence from a 900-megawatt hydropower project, days ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's two-day visit to the country from May 11. Investment Board Nepal (IBN) recently granted the licence to Satluj Jala Vodyut Nigam Power Development Company, a subsidiary of Indian government-owned Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam Ltd, to generate power from the Arun-3 Hydropower Project located in eastern Nepal.

### ***TRAI releases draft of telecom interconnection regulation***

The Indian telecom regulator on Tuesday released the draft amendment of telecommunication interconnection where it has set time-frame for provisioning of ports for initial interconnection and augmentation to be increased to a maximum 42 working days. The draft said a service provider may request the other service provider for additional ports at a Point of Interconnection (POI), if the projected utilisation of the capacity of such POI at the end of 60 days from the date of placing the request.

### ***Asia Power Index: India ranks fourth in Asia-Pacific region***

New York: India has ranked fourth out of 25 nations in the Asia-Pacific region on an index that measures their overall power, with the country being pegged as a "giant of the future" but trails behind in indicators of defence networks and economic relationships. The Lowy Institute Asia Power Index measures power across 25 countries and territories in the Asia-Pacific region, reaching as far west as Pakistan, as far north as Russia, and as far into the Pacific as Australia, New Zealand and the US.

### ***Government approves green licence plates for private electric vehicles***

To promote electric vehicles in India, the government has approved green licence plates bearing numbers in white fonts for private e-vehicles and yellow for taxis, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said today. The government also plans to allow youth in the age bracket of 16-18 years to drive electric scooters, besides mandating taxi aggregators to have a certain percentage of e-vehicle fleet.

### ***Government launches Digital India Internship Scheme portal***

NEW DELHI, MAY 9 , In an effort to enhance skills of the youngsters, Ministry of Electronics and Information technology (MeitY) on Wednesday has launched 'Digital India Internship Scheme' portal in which a token of ₹10,000 will also be offered to interns as remuneration per month. The MeitY's internship scheme will offer 25 slots in each session – summer and winter, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Minister of Electronics and IT and Law & Justice.

### ***Stanford University to assist UP in combating chronic diseases***

Uttar Pradesh Health Minister Sidharth Nath Singh on Wednesday informed that the United States Stanford University will come in a partnership with the state to combat disease like Japanese Encephalitis (JE) and Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES). Singh, who headed the high-powered delegation of top state officials to the United States, said this in a press briefing here. "Stanford University will come in a partnership with us to combat disease like Japanese Encephalitis (JE) & Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) in Uttar Pradesh," Singh said.

### ***IAF for first time successfully conducts online scheduled test for airmen recruitment***

NEW DELHI: The Indian Air Force successfully conducted scheduled test for airmen recruitment (STAR) online last week for the first time, the IAF said in a statement on Thursday. A total of 4,09,169 candidates had registered for the online examination for airmen. The online examination was successfully conducted at 439 centres spread over 102 cities across the country from May 3-6.

### ***Atal Tinkering Marathon: Top 30 Innovations showcased***

To promote innovation among students, the NITI Aayog will set up 5,000 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) by March 2019 covering all districts in the country, NITI Aayog Vice-Chairman Rajiv Kumar said on Thursday. Kumar's remarks came during an event showcasing top 30 innovations by school students which emerged out of the six-month-long nationwide Atal Tinkering Marathon conducted in over 2,000 such labs set up till now. NITI Aayog had in December selected an additional 1,500 schools for setting up ATLs under the government's.

### ***India, Nepal flag offs bus service between Janakpur and Ayodhya under Ramayan Circuit***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepalese counterpart K P Sharma Oli on Friday jointly inaugurated a direct bus service between Janakpur and Ayodhya - the two sacred cities for Hindus. "Janakpur and Ayodhya are being connected. This is a historic moment," Prime Minister Modi said while inaugurating the bus service as part of the Ramayan Circuit to promote religious tourism in Nepal and India.

### ***Government to expand Buddhist tourism circuit to 21 more states***

EARLIER envisaged by the government as mainly comprising seven major Buddhist pilgrimage sites, in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, the 'Buddhist Circuit' will now be expanded to 21 other states. The Ministry of Tourism has identified stupas and viharas in these states, around which small intra-state Buddhist zones will be developed. These include the election-bound states of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, as also Kerala, West Bengal, Goa, Gujarat and Jammu & Kashmir.

### ***IMD to deploy 30 more doppler radars across India***

New Delhi: The India Meteorological Department (IMD) will add 30 Doppler radars in the next two-three years across the country, of which several will be in the northeast, a senior IMD official said. Doppler radars provide precise information about thunderstorms, dust storms, hailstorms, rainfall and wind patterns. With a radius of 250km, they help in issuing nowcasts 2-3 hours prior to severe weather events. By the next year, Jammu and Kashmir will get four Doppler radars, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh three each, additional director general (ADG) Devendra Pradhan said.

### ***Government to link 200 more mandis to eNAM***

The Government will link additional 200 wholesale mandis to the online trading platform eNAM this fiscal and also encourage inter-mandi transactions, Agriculture Secretary SK Pattanayak has said. At present, 585 regulated mandis in 14 States are linked with the electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM) launched in April 2016. "There were initial hiccups but those have been overcome. The eNAM system is now more established. Farmers are very happy and more States have started showing interest," Pattanayak said.

### ***First all-woman Post Office Passport Seva Kendra starts operations in Phagwara, Punjab***

In a first, a Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) run by an all-woman team has started operations here today. The seva kendra was inaugurated by Union Minister Vijay Sampla in the local head Post Office. It was 192nd POPSK in the country, but first one to be operated by an all-woman team. "It was part of the Centre's initiative for women empowerment," Sampla said. According to Jalandhar regional Passport Officer Harmanbir Singh Gil.



### ***4 states, 1 UT sign MoUs for implementation of Ayushman Bharat scheme***

Four BJP-ruled north Indian states and one Union Territory signed a pact here on Monday with the National Health Mission to implement government of India's Ayushman Bharat scheme that aims to provide free treatment to the poor. However, Congress-ruled Punjab refused to sign the memorandum of understanding (MoU), saying the state had "some issues that needs to be resolved first before the scheme launch".

### ***Government issues National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy***

MUMBAI: With an aim to boost renewable power generation, the government today announced a national wind-solar hybrid policy, which seeks to promote new projects as well as hybridisation of the existing ones. The government has set an ambitious target of achieving 175 gigawatt (gw) of installed capacity from renewable energy sources by 2022, which includes 100 gw of solar and 60 gw of wind power capacity.

### ***Atal Pension Yojana's subscriber base crosses 1 crore mark: PFRDA***

Atal Pension Yojana (APY) Scheme's subscriber base crossed 1 crore on completion of 3 years of the Scheme launch. APY was launched by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi at a function in Kolkata on 9th May, 2015 and the current number of subscribers stands at 1.10 Crore. Atal Pension Yojana (APY), a guaranteed Pension Scheme for citizens of India announced by the Government of India, is focused on the unorganised sector workers which constitute more than 85% of workforce. Under the APY, the guaranteed minimum pension of Rs. 1,000/-.

### ***First International Rail Coach Expo held in Chennai, Tamil Nadu***

CHENNAI, MAY 16, For the first time in India, an International Rail Coach Expo (IRCE) event on rail coaches and train sets will be held in Chennai providing a platform to bring together different suppliers under one roof and create synergies for 'Make in India.' Hosted by Integral Coach Factory in coordination with CII and RITES Ltd, the expo will be held from May 17 to 19 at ICF, the world's largest rail manufacturing unit and part of the Indian Railways.

### ***Cabinet approves setting up of Central University in Andhra Pradesh***

NEW DELHI, MAY 16, The Cabinet today approved the setting up of a central university in Jantalur district of Andhra Pradesh. A provision of Rs 450 crore has been approved for meeting the first phase expenditure towards establishment of the university. "The Union Cabinet gives in principle nod for setting up of 'Central University in the State of Andhra Pradesh' in village Jantalur of Anantapur district. The Cabinet also approved provision of Rs 450 crore for meeting the first phase of expenditure towards establishment of university," Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar said in a series of tweets.

### ***CSTT adopts AYUSH word for scientific and technical purposes***

The Commission for Scientific and Technical Terminology (CSTT) has decided to adopt the acronym "AYUSH" as a word, both in the English and Hindi languages, for scientific and technical purposes, an official release said today. The CSTT adopted the acronym as a word based on a proposal of the Ministry of AYUSH. The ministry in the release said "AYUSH" became popular as the acronym for five traditional systems of medicine -- Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy.

### ***WHO publishes its first Essential Diagnostics List***

NEW DELHI; The World Health Organisation (WHO) has published its first 'essential diagnostics list', a catalogue of tests needed to diagnose the most common conditions as well as a number of global priority diseases. The step was taken to address the problem of people's inability to access diagnostic services, thus failing to receive the correct treatment. "An accurate diagnosis is the first step to getting effective treatment.

### ***Parcel Cargo Express Train connecting northeast to West Coast begins operation***

Railway Minister Piyush Goyal-led Indian Railways takes another big step to improve freight movement from North-East! This time the national transporter has connected North-east Region to the West Coast by running a Parcel Cargo Express Train (PCET) for transportation of agricultural produce of Northeast region such as pineapple, turmeric, ginger, cane, tea, wax as well as industrial finished goods from New Guwahati Yard (NGC) in Guwahati to Kalyan in Maharashtra.

### ***PM Narendra Modi inaugurates Kishanganga Hydroelectric project in J&K***

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday dedicated the state run NHPC Ltd's Kishanganga hydro power project in Jammu and Kashmir to the nation. The development assumes significance given the strategic importance of the 330 megawatt (MW) project on the river Kishanganga, a tributary of Jhelum. While Pakistan had challenged the project under the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960.

### ***Supreme Court approves draft Cauvery Management Scheme***

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court today approved the Centre's draft Cauvery Management Scheme for smooth distribution of water among four southern riparian states. A bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra rejected the suggestions of Karnataka and Kerala governments over the scheme, terming them as devoid of merits. The bench, also comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud, said the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal's award, which was modified by the apex court,

### ***IIT Kanpur sets up India's first advisory centre for energy***

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT-K) has set up first of its kind Centre for Energy Regulation (CER) in the country to strengthen policy and regulatory limitations in energy and power sector. PK Pujari, chairperson, CERC unveiled the centre's logo and its web portal at the launch ceremony held in New Delhi on May 17. Anoop Singh, an associate professor in the department of industrial and management engineering at IIT-K and the coordinator of CER, said.

### ***Zojila tunnel: PM Narendra Modi launches construction of Asia's longest road tunnel***

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the Zojila tunnel project, which will provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh and, at 14.2 km, will also be the country's longest road tunnel. The tunnel will cut down the time taken to cross the Zojila pass from the 3.5 hours to 15 minutes. It will also be Asia's longest bi-directional tunnel and will be built at a cost of ₹6,809 crore. It is expected to be completed in five years.

### ***UJALA scheme: EESL distributes over 30 crore LED bulbs across the country***

NEW DELHI: State run Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) today said it has distributed over 30 crore light emitting diode (LED) bulbs across the country under the Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) scheme. The UJALA scheme was launched by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi in January 2015 and is currently the largest LED distribution programme in the world.

### ***e-Visa Scheme: Government earns Rs.1,400 crore***

NEW DELHI: The government has earned Rs 1,400 crore as revenue from the highly successful e-Visa scheme, offered to citizens of 163 countries visiting India as tourists, since its launch in 2014. Union Home Ministry officials said the popular e-Visa scheme was availed by 19 lakh tourists in 2017 and it is expected that more than 25 lakh tourists will avail the facility in 2018. Since its launch in 2014, the e-Visa scheme has earned revenue of more than Rs 1,400 crore.

### ***India ranks 145th among 195 countries in healthcare access, quality: Lancet Study***

NEW DELHI: India ranks 145th among 195 countries in terms of quality and accessibility of healthcare, behind its neighbours like China, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan, according to a Lancet study. The Global Burden of Disease study, however, mentioned that India has seen improvements in healthcare access and quality since 1990. In 2016, India's healthcare access and quality scored at 41.2 (up from 24.7 in 1990). "Although India's improvements on the (healthcare access and quality) HAQ index hastened from 2000 to 2016, the gap between the country's highest and lowest scores widened (23.4-point difference in 1990, and 30.8-point difference in 2016)," the study stated.

### ***Election Commission to launch App to help voters to share malpractice proof***

The Election Commission will launch a multi-lingual mobile application empowering people across the country to share evidence of malpractice by political parties, their candidates and activists ahead of the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, directly with the electoral body. Tried in Karnataka Chief Election Commissioner O.P. Rawat told The Hindu on Tuesday that such an application, called Model Code of Conduct Violation Reporting App, was made available for the first time in Bengaluru in the run-up to the recently concluded Karnataka Assembly polls.

### ***Government launches Samagra Shiksha scheme to improve quality of school education***

Human Resource Development Minister Prakash Javadekar on Thursday launched Samagra Shiksha scheme for school education. The scheme focuses on improving quality of education, enhancing the Learning outcomes and using technology to empower children and teachers. The Minister said, an annual grant of five thousand to 20 thousand rupees will be provided for strengthening libraries in schools. The scheme will be focus on digital education.

### ***UNICEF launches data visualisation app on education scenario in India***

NEW DELHI, MAY 24, The UNICEF today launched a 'data visualisation app' which provides a user-friendly visual representation of complex analytics of the education scenario in the country. The app has been made with technical inputs from the UNICEF, in collaboration with the National Institute of Education Planning and Administration (NIEPA) and the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

### ***NIC sets up cloud-enabled National Data Centre in Bhubaneswar***

NEW DELHI: IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad is all set to inaugurate, on May 28, a cloud-enabled National Data Centre at Bhubaneswar, which will offer round-the-clock operations with secure hosting for e-governance applications of ministries and departments. The National Informatics Centre (NIC) has set up the data centre at Bhubaneswar, an official release said. The NIC has national data centres at Delhi, Hyderabad and Pune, and the upcoming one at Bhubaneswar is expected to en ..

### ***India-Netherlands launches Clean Air India Initiative***

Prime Minister of Netherlands Mark Rutte, who is in India on a two-day visit, launched the 'Clean Air India Initiative' in the national capital on Thursday. The campaign aims to curb air pollution in Indian cities by promoting partnerships between Indian start-ups and Dutch companies and build a network of entrepreneurs working on business solutions for cleaner air. The Clean Air India Initiative is a collaborative project between Get In The Ring, a platform for start-ups, the government of the Netherlands.

### ***ASEAN India Film Festival held in New Delhi***

NEW DELHI: Around 32 films from 11 countries are to be screened for six days during the ASEAN India Film Festival, which will be inaugurated in Siri Fort Auditorium by the minister of information and broadcasting, Rajyavardhan Rathore on May 25. As a vehicle of Cultural Exchange, the Directorate of Film Festival aims to provide access to new trends in filmmaking by providing the platform for an exchange of ideas, culture and experiences in the field of cinema.

### ***MHA creates Women Safety Division to address issues of women security***

NEW DELHI: Amid rising concerns over women safety, the Home Ministry has created a new division to address issues related to security of women comprehensively. A home ministry statement said the division would deal with all aspects of women safety in coordination with the relevant ministries, departments and the state governments. The new division will deal with subjects like crimes against women, SCs & STs, crimes against children, elderly persons, anti-trafficking cell.

### ***IMD to team up with BSNL for sending extreme weather warnings***

NEW DELHI, MAY 27, The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is teaming up with state-run Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) to send extreme weather warnings to people, a senior Ministry of Earth Sciences official said. The move comes after IMD came under criticism from several quarters, including some state governments, for not sending out specific alerts, a charge denied by the weather body.

### ***Tata Trusts signs MoU with Government to provide development support in Naxal-hit districts***

The Tata Trusts has joined hands with the government to help it in development initiatives in eight worst Naxal-affected districts in Chhattisgarh, which were covered under the "transformation of aspirational" districts programme. The Home Ministry officials said the Tata Trusts, the philanthropic organisation started by the promoters of the Tata group, has signed an MoU with the government to provide technical and human resource assistance to the special development programme launched by the NITI Aayog.

### ***Eastern Peripheral Expressway: PM Narendra Modi inaugurates India's first smart and green highway***

PM Modi inaugurates Eastern Peripheral Expressway: India's first smart and green 6-lane highway is impressive for several reasons. For one, it will decongest Delhi-NCR (National Capital Region) and connect crucial areas of Palwal, Gautam Budh Nagar, Faridabad and Ghaziabad. For another, it's an eco-friendly highway that has been made in record time of 500 days as against a target of 910 days! Prime Minister Narendra Modi is inaugurating the Eastern Peripheral Expressway today. The expressway.



### ***Management of Widows Home: Ministry of WCD signs MoU with UP Government***

An MoU has been signed between the Women and Child and Development Ministry and the Uttar Pradesh government for managing a shelter home for widows built by the former at Sunrakh Bangar in Vrindavan. The shelter home for widows has a capacity of 1,000 inmates. The memorandum of understanding shall be in force for a period of two years which may be renewed for a further period on satisfactory running of the home, a release by the WCD ministry said.

### ***PRAAPTI App and Web portal launched to bring transparency in electricity payments to Generators***

Minister of State (I/C) for Power has beneficially launched a web portal and an App namely PRAAPTI (Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators), [www.praapti.in](http://www.praapti.in) PRAAPTI App and web portal has been developed to bring transparency in power purchase transactions between Generators and Discoms. The App and Web Portal will capture the Invoicing and payment data.

### ***India, World Bank ink \$21.7 million loan agreement for Rajasthan's Public Financial Management Project***

India on Tuesday signed a \$21.7 million loan agreement with the World Bank for strengthening public financial management in Rajasthan. The project will contribute towards improving budget execution, enhancing accountability and greater efficiency in revenue administration in the state, an official statement said. "The project size is approximately \$31 million, of which \$21.7 million will be financed by the World Bank, and the remaining amount will be funded-out of the state budget," it added.

### ***Swadeshi Samridhhi SIM cards: Baba Ramdev's Patanjali ties up with BSNL***

After becoming India's most trusted Fast Moving Consumer Goods brand, Yoga guru Baba Ramdev's Patanjali on Sunday entered the telecom sector. At an event, Baba Ramdev launched Swadeshi Samridhhi SIM cards, in alliance with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL). Initially, only the employees and office bearers of Patanjali will be able to avail the benefits of the SIM card. After its full-fledged launch, people will get discount of 10 per cent on Patanjali products with t ..

### ***TCS becomes first company to achieve 7 lakh crore market capitalisation milestone***

NEW DELHI: IT bellwether Tata Consultancy Services' market valuation briefly crossed the Rs 7-lakh crore mark on Friday, making it the first company to achieve this milestone. The market valuation of TCS jumped to Rs 7,03,309 crore during the intra-day session on the BSE today. The m-cap was calculated at the stock's 52-week high price of Rs 3,674 hit today on the exchange. At the close of trade, however, the m-cap of TCS slipped below the Rs 7-lakh crore mark and stood at Rs 6,87,123.96 crore.

### ***SIDBI, CSC SPV ink MoU to provide financial support to village level entrepreneurs***

NEW DELHI, MAY 24, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) will provide financial support to village level entrepreneurs who operate the Common Service Centres that act as access points for delivery of electronic services. An MoU to this effect was signed between SIDBI and Common Service Centres (CSC) in the presence of Minister for Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad here today.

### ***MCX launches India's first copper options contracts***

Kolkata: Multi Commodity Exchange of India Ltd. (MCX) on Monday launched India's first options contract on copper futures. As at 5:00 pm today, the contract has clocked a traded volume of 461 lots with value of Rs. 21.89 crore. Currently, June, August and November 2018 option contracts are available for trading, with one MCX copper futures contract (1 MT) as the underlying. The exercised positions of the options contract post expiry.

### ***India is 6th wealthiest country in the world***

India is the sixth wealthiest country in the world with a total wealth of \$8,230 billion, while the U.S. is the richest nation globally, says a report. According to the AfrAsia Bank Global Wealth Migration Review, the US is the wealthiest country in the world with a total wealth of \$62,584 billion, followed by China (\$24,803 billion) in the second place and Japan (\$19,522 billion) in third.

### ***BSE becomes first Indian stock exchange to get US SEC's DOSM recognition***

BSE is first Indian bourse to get SEC recognition BSE, Asia's oldest stock exchange, has become the first Indian exchange to be recognised as a designated offshore securities market (DOSM) by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) "The DOSM status allows sale of securities to U.S. investors through the trading venue of BSE without registration of such securities with the U.S. SEC and thus eases the trades by U.S. investors in India," the BSE said in a statement while adding that it will primarily benefit securities issued in US private placements to institutional investors.

### ***Bharat Inclusion Initiative: IIM Ahmedabad unveils \$25 million initiative to fund start-ups***

IIM-Ahmedabad's Centre for Innovation, Incubation and Entrepreneurship (CIIE) has launched the Bharat Inclusion Initiative ,with a commitment of \$25 million from The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Omidyar Network and Michael and Susan Dell Foundation. The initiative will focus on incubating and backing startups that work in areas such as financial inclusion, livelihood, education and health. With seed support from Tata Trusts, CIIE's new initiative has received an initial commitment of \$12.5 Million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

### ***India emerges third largest solar market in the world in 2017***

India emerged as the third largest solar market in the world in 2017 behind China and the US, Mercom Communications India said in a report. "In 2017, India emerged as the third largest solar market ...having grown at a CAGR of approximately 170 per cent since 2010," it said. As per the report, India set a new record with 9.6 GW of solar installations in 2017, which was more than double the 4.3 GW installed in 2016.

### ***FDI Confidence Index 2018: India ranks 11th***

NEW DELHI: India has slipped by three notches to 11th position in the FDI Confidence Index 2018 of global consultancy firm A T Kearney. "India falls by three spots, reversing its two-year streak of rising in the rankings," the report said. It said that India fell out of the top 10 for the first time since 2015. China (5), India (11), and Singapore (12) all rank lower this year, while Australia rises to 8th and New Zealand jumps to the 16th spot in only its second year ..

### ***Explained: Nipah Virus (NiV) Infection***

Nipah Virus is an emerging infectious disease that broke out in Malaysia and Singapore in 1998 and 1999. It first appeared in domestic pigs and has been found among several species of domestic animals including dogs, cats, goats, horses and sheep. The infection is also known to affect human beings. The organism which causes Nipah Virus encephalitis is an RNA or Ribonucleic acid virus of the family Paramyxoviridae, genus Henipavirus, and is closely related to Hendra virus.

### ***RBI appoints Sudha Balakrishnan as its first Chief Financial Officer***

MUMBAI: NSDL executive Sudha Balakrishnan has been appointed the first ever chief financial officer (CFO) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) effective May 15, in what is the biggest organisational change since Urjit Patel took over as RBI governor in September 2016, three people familiar with the information said. Balakrishnan, a chartered accountant, was till recently vice president with the National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL), India's first and largest depository, before joining ..

### ***Former SC judge CK Prasad appointed as Chairman of Press Council of India***

Former Supreme Court judge C K Prasad has been appointed the chairman of the Press Council of India (PCI) for a second term, an official notification said. Prasad headed the media watchdog for three years from November 2014. He had succeeded Justice Markanday Katju. The central government hereby notifies the re-nomination of Justice C K Prasad, retired judge of the Supreme Court of India, as the chairman of the Press Council of India, said the notification of the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, dated May 22.

### ***BCCI and UN Environment sign agreement to promote Green Cricket in India***

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and UN Environment on Sunday signed an agreement to promote 'green' cricket in India. BCCI acting secretary Amitabh Choudhary and Erik Solheim, Executive Director of UN Environment, signed a letter of intent at the BCCI headquarters ahead of the IPL final between Chennai Super Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad. READ | Indian cricket Board decides to wait and watch on pitch-fixing sting

### ***India's first National Sports University in Manipur: Union Cabinet approves ordinance***

NEW DELHI: The Union Cabinet today approved an ordinance to set up the country's first national sports university in Manipur. Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said a bill to set up the university in Imphal (west) is already pending in parliament. He said things will start moving fast once the president signs the ordinance. The Manipur government has already allocated land for the proposed university, he said.

## **INTERNATIONAL CURRENT AFFAIRS**

### ***3 May: World Press Freedom Day***

World Press Freedom Day was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in December 1993, following the recommendation of UNESCO's General Conference. Since then, 3 May, the anniversary of the Declaration of Windhoek is celebrated worldwide as World Press Freedom Day. It is an opportunity to: celebrate the fundamental principles of press freedom; assess the state of press freedom throughout the world; defend the media from attacks on their independence; and pay tribute to journalists who have lost their lives in the line of duty.

### ***President Donald Trump withdraws US from Iran nuclear deal***

Donald Trump on Tuesday afternoon announced the US would violate the Iran nuclear agreement, nearly three years after the the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was struck. In exiting the JCPOA, Trump broke from US allies in Europe and has potentially triggered a new crisis in the Gulf. We're closing down the live blog, but more news and analysis is coming this evening. Here's where things are at now: Trump justified the exit by claiming that Iran is building a nuclear program, without providing evidence that this is true.

### ***SCO Tourism Ministers' conference held in Wuhan, China***

The first tourism ministerial meeting between member countries of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) successfully concluded in Wuhan, the capital city of central China's Hubei Province, on Wednesday. Delegates agreed on the progress made in tourism cooperation between SCO member countries under the framework of the 2017-2018 action plan, initiated in 2017 to implement the SCO Tourism Cooperation Program inked by the heads of the member states during the 16th SCO Summit on June 24, 2016.

### ***Nepal to host 2018 BIMSTEC summit***

Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Saturday announced to host the 2018 Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit. During his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Nepali Prime Minister said Nepal will hold the BIMSTEC summit, while expressing commitment towards building the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal initiative.

### ***May 15: International Day of Families***

Although families all over the world have transformed greatly over the past decades in terms of their structure and as a result of global trends and demographic changes, the United Nations still recognizes the family as the basic unit of society. The International Day of Families provides an opportunity to promote awareness of issues relating to families and to increase knowledge of the social, economic and demographic processes affecting them. It has inspired a series of awareness-raising events, including national family days. In many countries, this day is an opportunity to highlight different areas of interest and importance to families.

### ***WHO launches REPLACE campaign to eliminate trans-fat in foods by 2023***

The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched a comprehensive plan to eliminate industrially-produced artificial trans fats from the global food supply by 2023. Elimination of trans fats is key to protecting health and saving lives, the WHO said. The global health body estimates that every year, trans fat intake leads to over 5,00,000 deaths worldwide from cardiovascular diseases.

### ***Pakistan named among top 3 sources for money laundering in UK***

LONDON: Pakistan has been identified among three main source countries for money laundering in the UK, according to an analysis by the National Crime Agency (NCA). The agency found that Britain was the prime destination for corrupt "politically exposed persons" (PEPs) to invest their funds and the most common source countries of those funds were Russia, Nigeria and Pakistan. "The UK is a prime destination for foreign corrupt PEPs.



### ***Nepal becomes first country in south-east Asia to eliminate Trachoma: WHO***

Nepal has become the first country in south-east Asia to eliminate trachoma, world's leading cause of preventable blindness of infectious origin, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said in a statement today. Nepal's achievement is commendable and results from a strong political commitment, intense community engagement and impressive leadership demonstrated by civil society," said Poonam Khetrapal Singh, Regional Director of WHO South-East Asia Region.

### ***Pakistan hosted SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure meeting in Islamabad***

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is hosting a three-day Shanghai Cooperation Organisation-Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (SCO-RATS) meeting in Islamabad from today – its first ever since the country became a member of SCO in June last year. Legal experts from the eight member states, including India, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan, as well as representatives of the SCO and RATS Executive Committee are participating in the meeting.

### ***Germany to host first edition of Global Wind Summit***

HAMBURG (GERMANY), MAY 26, The first edition of the Global Wind Summit will be held here from September 25-28, 2018. The organisers of the four-day event are expecting speakers from about 100 countries, including India, China, the US, Spain and Denmark. "A number of Indian companies would be participating in the global event. We are also in touch with the Indian government," Anja Holinsky, project director, WindEnergy Hamburg, Hamburg Messe and Congress GmbH, told PTI here.

### ***Colombia joins NATO as global partner***

One year after reaching partnership deal through a peace agreement with South America, Colombia on Friday (local time) has formally joined the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. As reported by the Deutsche Welle, Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos announced the formalising of its global partner status. "We will formalize in Brussels next week - and this is very important - Colombia's entry into NATO in the category of the global partner. We will be the only country in Latin America with this privilege," Santos said in a televised address.

### ***Operation Insaniyat: India sends second relief consignment to Bangladesh for displaced Rohingyas***

Dhaka: India has sent to Bangladesh its second relief consignment to help tens of thousands of displaced Rohingya Muslims who fled Myanmar following a military crackdown, triggering one of the world's worst refugee crises. Over 6,00,000 Rohingya have fled Myanmar's violence-hit Rakhine State to neighbouring Bangladesh since August when the military intensified crackdown against alleged militant outfits in the area.

### ***Gender bias caused excess deaths of girls under 5: Study***

Washington: Gender discrimination results in "excess" deaths of girls under the age of five per year in India, according to a recent study. The study conducted by the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis found that there was an average of 239,000 excess deaths per year of girls under the age of five in India or 2.4 million in a decade, and excess female child mortality was found in 90 percent of districts in the country.

### ***Akademik Lomonosov: Russia unveils world's first floating nuclear power plant***

MURMANSK: Russia on Saturday unveiled the world's first floating nuclear power station at a ceremony in the port of the far northern city of Murmansk, where it will be loaded with nuclear fuel before heading to eastern Siberia. Built in Saint Petersburg, the Akademik Lomonosov arrived in Murmansk on Thursday, where it was moored in the port and presented to the media on Saturday.

### ***Queqiao satellite: China launches relay satellite to explore dark side of Moon***

China has successfully launched a relay satellite today to enable a rover to communicate with Earth from the Moon's mysterious far side, as part of the Communist giant's ambitious goal of being the first country to send such a probe. Named Queqiao (Magpie Bridge), the 400-kg satellite has a designed life of three years. It was carried by a Long March-4C rocket that blasted off at 5.28 am (local time) from southwest China's Xichang Satellite Launch Center, the China National Space Administration (CNSA) said.

### ***GRACE-FO satellites: SpaceX launches NASA satellites to track Earth's water Cycle***

A twin spacecraft to track the global water cycle has been successfully launched aboard the a SpaceX rocket, along with five communications satellites today, NASA said. The Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment Follow-On (GRACE-FO) is a joint mission by NASA and the German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ). It lifted off on a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from the Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, US, sharing their ride into space with five Iridium NEXT communications satellites.

### ***India's freshwater stocks in danger: NASA***

India is among the hotspots where overuse of water resources has caused a sharp decline in the availability of freshwater, according to a first-of-its-kind study using an array of NASA satellite observations of the earth. Scientists led by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in the U.S. used data on human activities to map locations where the availability of freshwater is rapidly changing. The study, published in the journal Nature.

