

# My Notes....

## National

India elected president of UN-Habitat

India has been unanimously elected as the president of the UN-Habitat, an organ of the United Nations to promote sustainable human settlements across the globe. Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation Minister M Venkaiah Naidu chaired the four-day meeting of the 58-member Governing Council (GC) of UN-Habitat in Kenya from 8 May 2017. Naidu presided over the deliberations of the GC of UN-Habitat for the next two years.

What

1. Since the UN-Habitat came into being in 1978, it is the third time that India has been elected to lead this organisation after 2007 and 1988.
2. The theme of the 26th meeting of the GC is 'Opportunities for effective implementation of the New Urban Agenda'.
3. The New Urban Agenda, which sets a global standard for sustainable urban development, was adopted at Quito, Ecuador last year.
4. Naidu also chaired the 'Bureau Meeting of the Asia- Pacific Ministers' Conference on Housing and Urban Development' beginning in Nairobi from 8 May 2017.

### ICJ Stays Kulbhusan Jadhav's hanging

India has received a stay order preventing Pakistan from executing the death sentence awarded to the former naval officer Kulbhusan Jadhav from the International Court of Justice at The Hague. **India's team of lawyers** led by senior advocate Harish Salve accused Pakistan of gross violations of international laws. They also pointed out the violations of the Geneva Convention that deals with Consular relations.

Who are its members?

1. All members of the UN are de facto members of the ICJ.
2. Accordingly, India was among the founding members when the ICJ was established in 1945.
3. Pakistan became a member after a month of its independence on 30 September 1947.
4. However, as per the UN Charter, a non-member state can be included in the ICJ as a party to a dispute on the recommendation of the Security Council and the General Assembly.

What are its origins?

1. The creation of the ICJ is the culmination of multi-pronged efforts aimed at establishing peace, stability and international security.
2. After World War I, the League of Nations was established as a measure to avoid a second such war. In accordance with this spirit, Article 14 of the League of Nations called for the establishment of a court to solve international disputes in 1920.

What is the ICJ?

1. The principal judicial wing of the United Nations, the ICJ was established in June, 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations.
2. It is the only organ of the UN that is not headquartered in New York.
3. The seat of the Court is in the Peace Palace in The Hague, Netherlands.
4. It consists of 15 judges elected for a period of 9 years by the UN General Assembly and the Security Council.
5. Once elected, the judges cease to be representatives of their countries and functions as officers of the Court.
6. **The Court's current president** is Justice Ronny Abraham of France and Justice Dalveer Bhandari from India is among the 15 members

3. This became a reality when the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) was founded at the Peace Palace in The Hague in Netherlands in 1922.
4. However, the beginning of the World War II in 1939 was a strong indication of the failure of the League of Nations. Moreover, the war meant the role of PCIJ was all but relevant and the court for some years now had experienced diminished activity.
5. The Dumbarton Oaks and San Francisco Conferences held by the Allied powers of WWII in 1944-1945 period recognised the growing need for an international body that would **work impartially to protect 'succeeding generations from the scourge of war'**. In view of this, a UN Charter was adopted which legitimised the established of a UN body and 6 principal organs, including the International Court of Justice.

What is its jurisdiction and binding value?

1. The ICJ is a world court with dual jurisdictional powers: advisory jurisdiction and jurisdiction in contentious cases.
2. The former relates to the jurisdiction of the Court in providing legal opinions and recommendations on matters referred to it by the organs and specialised agencies of the UN.
3. Jurisdiction in contentious cases arises when disputes of a legal nature are submitted to it by the States. It has jurisdiction to rule in disputes pertaining to UN member states.
4. India and Pakistan are signatories to the Optional Protocol of the Vienna Convention concerning Compulsory Settlement of Disputes.
5. As per the Protocol, all disputes relating to the interpretation and/or application of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations falls **under "compulsory jurisdiction" of the ICJ**.
6. The judgements of the ICJ are considered binding and are without appeal for the parties concerned.
7. It is rare for a decision not to be implemented. However, the Court itself has no direct powers to ensure implementation of its judgements and members States can approach the UN Security Council for matters relating to non-compliance with ICJ rulings.

How does this relate to the Kulbushan Jadhav trial?

1. In a petition filed by senior advocate Harish Salve on May 8, India listed **details of the Jadhav case and accused Pakistan of "egregious violation" of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations**.
2. **This includes Pakistan's denial of information regarding Jadhav's trial, demands for consular access that were repeatedly turned down over 15 times, and suggesting that access would only be granted in exchange for information about Jadhav's life in India.**
3. **The Court has now directed the Pakistan Prime Minister "to act in such a way as will enable any order the Court may make on this request to have had its appropriate effects". In saying so, the Court has effectively stayed his execution.**

How is the ICJ different from the International Criminal Court?

1. The International Criminal Court (ICC) was established in July, 2002 as per the provisions of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
2. The Court deals with four core international crimes which are genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and crimes of aggression and is allowed to act only **when States are "unable" or "unwilling" to act by themselves**.
3. While the ICC is charged with criminal prosecution of individuals involved in the above mentioned crimes, the ICJ is solely meant to address legal questions and disputes between States. Moreover, governing doctrines vary, with ICJ falling

under the UN Charter and the Statute of the ICJ; the ICC is governed by the Rome Statute.

- All members of the UN are de facto members of the ICJ while only 103 States that are party to the Rome Statute are members of the ICC.

#### New steel policy Cleared

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for National Steel Policy (NSP) 2017. The new Steel Policy enshrines the long term vision of the Government to give impetus to the steel sector. It seeks to enhance domestic steel consumption and ensure high quality steel production and create a technologically advanced and globally competitive steel industry.

#### Highlights of New Steel Policy

- The Indian steel sector has grown rapidly over the past few years and presently it is the third largest steel producer globally, contributing to about 2% of the country's GDP. India has also crossed 100 MT mark for production for sale in 2016-17.
- The New Steel Policy, 2017 aspires to achieve 300MT of steel-making capacity by 2030. This would translate into additional investment of Rs. 10 lakh Crore by 2030-31.
- The Policy seeks to increase consumption of steel and major segments are infrastructure, automobiles and housing.
- New Steel Policy seeks to increase per capita steel consumption to the level of 160 Kgs by 2030 from existing level of around 60 Kg.

#### Key features

- Create self-sufficiency in steel production by providing policy support & guidance to private manufacturers, MSME steel producers, CPSEs
- Encourage adequate capacity additions,
- Development of globally competitive steel manufacturing capabilities,
- Cost-efficient production
- Domestic availability of iron ore, coking coal & natural gas,
- Facilitating foreign investment
- Asset acquisitions of raw materials &
- Enhancing the domestic steel demand.

#### South Asia Satellite lifts off successfully

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro's) Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F09) carrying South Asia Satellite, a 'gift' from India to its neighbouring countries, lifted off successfully. The rocket blasted off from the Sriharikotta space port's second launch pad near Chennai. This is one of the very few launches for which the media was not invited and Isro officials remained tight-lipped on the details. In 2014, Prime Minister Modi had asked Isro to develop a satellite which can be dedicated as a 'gift' to the neighbours. It was earlier referred to as the SAARC satellite, but was renamed after Pakistan opted out of the project.

#### What

- GSAT-9 is a geostationary communication satellite whose objective is to provide various applications in Ku-band to the seven countries that are part of this project.
- GSAT-9 is configured around Isro's standard I-2K bus, with lift off mass of 2,230 kg.
- The main structure of the satellite is cuboid in shape, built around a central cylinder, with a mission life of more than 12 years.
- The satellite will facilitate DTH television, VSAT links, tele-education, telemedicine and disaster management support. It will provide critical communication links in times of disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, floods, and tsunamis.

#### India's comsat constellation

The GSAT-09 is not only a gift to India's neighbours but will augment India's communications sector. It'll join 13 other communication satellites in orbit, allowing India to offer a series of applications to its citizens. Adding to over 200 transponders Isro

owns, the 12 transponders which will be shared with its South Asian neighbours will **add to India's communication** infrastructure. Isro chairman AS Kiran Kumar, in September 2016, **had conceded that India was** "significantly short in space". India currently has a 36-satellite constellation spread across observation, communication, navigation and space science.

What

1. According to estimates, a third of the 286 satellite transponders India uses were non-Indian with more than 90 hired transponders used specifically for direct to-home broadcasting, and the severe shortage — with a growing population and increasing number of phone and internet users — had prompted Isro to issue a request for proposal seeking to lease out some more transponders in December 2016.
2. While the launch of GSAT-09 will not completely solve this problem, four other launches Isro has lined up for this year is seen to be providing a major boost areas such as telephone, broadcasting and internet service.
3. The communication satellites in service are: Five in the INSAT family (3A, 3C, 4A, 4B, 4CR) and eight in the GSAT family (6, 8, 10, 12, 14, 16, 15 and 18).
4. **Augmenting the INSAT and GSAT capacity was Isro's focus during the 12th Five Year Plan.**
5. However, of the 14 communication satellites Isro hoped to launch during the period, only seven were achieved, which has pushed the space agency to line up a series of launches this year.
6. In what will become a personal record if achieved (launch of five communication satellites in a year), Isro has lined up the launches of: GSAT-19, GSAT-17, GSAT-6A — for the defence forces — and GSAT-11. Of these, GSAT-11 and 17 are scheduled to be launched by foreign vehicles.

The Banganapalle mango gets a GI tag

The succulent Banganapalle mango has received a Geographical Indication (GI) tag, making Andhra Pradesh the proprietor of the variety known for its sweetness.

What

1. A GI tag indicates that the product comes from a specific region.
2. Banganapalle mangoes have been grown for over 100 years in the State. It also known as Beneshan, Baneshan, Benishan, Chappatai and Safeda.
3. The prominent characteristic of Banganapalle mangoes is that their skin has very light spots; stone is oblong in shape and has very thin seed with sparse and soft fibre all over.
4. The primary centre of origin of the fruit is Kurnool district comprising Banaganapalle, Paanyam and Nandyal mandals, according to Andhra Pradesh government which mentioned Rayalaseema and coastal Andhra as secondary centres of origin.
5. GI is covered under the Intellectual Property Rights and the Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights.
6. A GI tag certifies the origin of a product or produce from a particular region as the quality or other features of the product are attributable only to the place of its origin.

J&K to get world's highest railway bridge

In around two years from now, the Chenab river in Jammu and Kashmir will be spanned by the world's highest railway bridge that is expected to be 35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower. The bridge is massive arch-shaped structure, being constructed above the river bed. Designed to withstand wind speeds of upto 260 km per hour, the 1.315 km long "engineering marvel" will connect Bakkal (Katra) and Kauri (Srinagar).

What

1. The bridge forms a crucial link in the 111-km stretch between Katra and Banihal, which is part of the Udampur- Srinagar-Baramulla rail link project.
2. Slated to be completed by 2019, it is expected to become a tourist attraction in the region. There will also be a ropeway in the bridge for inspection purposes.
3. The concrete pillars of the bridge will be designed to withstand explosions and painted with a special corrosion- resistant paint, which lasts for 15 years.

#### Discom rankings

The four power distribution companies (discoms) of Gujarat have topped an annual ranking by the Union power ministry for the fifth year in a row. Uttar Pradesh had not budged from its position at the bottom. These rankings mean more now as financially beleaguered power utilities undergo restructuring under the Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana (UDAY) scheme.

#### What

1. Uttrakhand Power Corporation, which has made continuous improvements in curbing transmission losses and has a collection efficiency of 107.8 per cent with no subsidy from the state government, has moved to the top slot alongside the Gujarat utilities.
2. The cost coverage ratio for 25 of the 41 rated utilities remained below 0.9 due to increase in expenses and non-cost reflective tariffs.
3. Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh were the best performers in cost coverage and Tamil Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation, Kanpur Electricity Supply Company, Madhyanchal Vidyut Vitaran Nigam and Jodhpur Vidyut Vitaran Nigam have shown more than 15 per cent improvement on this parameter.

#### Flashpoint

1. The rating methodology was developed by the power ministry in 2012 and covers only state-owned power distribution utilities.
2. It is assisted by Central Electricity Authority, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, Power Finance Corporation, Rural Electrification Corporation, distribution utilities and credit rating agencies CRISIL, Ica and CARE.
3. The methodology is given final shape in consultation with Department of Financial Services (Ministry of Finance), IBA and major public sector banks.

#### India's first no-fly rules are out

India proposes ban between two months and life-time ban for unruly passengers in domestic flights in the country. It categorised unruly passengers under three levels and the quantum of flying ban will range between three months and two years and beyond, which would also include a life-time ban.

#### What

1. According to the proposed norm, every airline will have to form a three-member standing committee to look into the complaint filed by the crew and a decision on the ban should be taken within ten days of the filing of the complaint.
2. The proposal, however, does not propose a blanket ban by all airlines on a passenger.

#### India's first 'village of books' opens

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated **India's first 'village of books' in the picturesque mountain village of Bhilar in Satara district.** With this concept, the residents of Bhilar have carved a niche for themselves in the country's social scene. Henceforth, Bhilar will be the definitive destination for bibliophiles.

#### What

1. Geographically modelled on the similarly idyllic market town of Hay-on-Wye — the Welsh mecca for bibliophiles — Bhilar, with its robust collection of literature in Marathi, aims to be the one-stop destination for lovers of vernacular literature.

- The idea of a book village sited close to the hill-station town of Mahabaleshwar was to transform Bhilar into a haven where bibliophiles can devour books.

### India behind in ratifying treaty on torture

India stands behind 161 nations, including Pakistan, as it is yet to ratify the 30-year-old United **Nations' Convention Against Torture** by making a law on it despite signing it way back in 1997. It may sound bizarre, but India is among the only nine countries worldwide which are yet to ratify this crucial convention, an essential condition for a signatory state to ratify the international human rights treaty.

#### What

- This fact has been taken strong note of by the Supreme Court which has asked the government why it was not making at **least a "good faith commitment" about** its intention to legislate in the matter.
- The remarks were made when Congress leader and former Law Minister Ashwani Kumar pointed out that India was among the only nine nations left in the world which have not yet ratified the treaty despite signing it.
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading **Treatment or Punishment', also known as United Nations Convention against Torture**, is an international human rights treaty aimed to prevent torture and other acts of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment around the world.

### India Solar Handbook 2017

India will become the third biggest solar market globally in 2017 says India Solar Handbook 2017 by Bridge to India, a consulting and knowledge service provider in the clean technology market. With 8.8 gw (giga watt) of projected capacity addition — a growth of 76 per cent over 2016 — India is set to become the third-largest photovoltaic market (PV) market in 2017, which will overtake Japan.

#### What

- As of March 2017, India has already installed 12.2 gw of utility scale solar power.
- About 79 gw of solar capacity is expected to be added globally in 2017, with Asian countries continuing to dominate and Europe falling by the wayside.
- It said India's solar capacity is expected to touch the 18.7 gw mark by the end of 2017, about 5 per cent of the global pie, growing 89 per cent over the last year.
- Total new solar capacity addition in the next 5 years is expected at 56 gw.
- Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have emerged as the fastest growing states in India in terms of solar installation and in 2017, nearly 60 per cent of total new capacity addition is expected to come from southern states.

### Nirbhaya case verdicts

The Supreme Court upheld the death sentence on all four convicts in the December 2012 Delhi gang-rape. Mukesh, Pawan, Vinay Sharma and Akshay Thakur were convicted on charges of brutally raping and assaulting a 23-year-old paramedical student inside a bus that led to her death. 'It is a barbaric incident', Supreme Court said in its order. The Delhi High Court earlier upheld their conviction and death sentence.

### **Spyder' missile test fired**

**India test fired 'Spyder' surface-to-air missile** from a test range in Odisha as part of a series of tests of the short-range quick reaction missile. The trial was carried out for validating various parameters of the sophisticated weapon system to further strengthen its air defence system.

What

1. **'Spyder', an acquired missile system from Israel**, is a short-range, quick reaction surface-to-air missile designed to strike an enemy air target within a very short time, they said.
2. The state-of-the-art missile has a strike range of about 15 km in low altitude. However, it is shorter than **India's indigenously developed surface-to-air 'Akash' missile**, which has a 25 km strike range.

Solar car made of desi resources

The Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) recently demonstrated a solar hybrid electric car, designed and developed using in-house resources, at Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) in Thiruvananthapuram.

What

1. VSSC is Isro's centre for making various types of rockets like the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle and the Reusable Launch Vehicle.
2. The car is run using high-energy lithium ion batteries, which can be recharged using sunlight.

Agni II test fire fails desired parameters

India on 4 May 2017 test-fired its medium-range nuclear-capable Agni II missile having a strike ranges of more than 2,000 km from an island off the Odisha coast as part of a user trial by the Army. The test, however, did not meet all the desired parameters.

What

1. The trial of the surface-to-surface missile was conducted from a mobile launcher at the Integrated Test Range (ITR) on Abdul Kalam Island.
2. **Agni II has already been inducted into the services and today's test from Launch Complex 4** of the ITR was carried out by the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) as part of a training exercise.
3. The Strategic Forces Command (SCF), a specially raised missile-handling unit of the Indian Army. Agni-II has two solid fuel stages and a Post Boost Vehicle (PBV) integrated into the missile's Re-entry Vehicle (RV).

29th India- Indonesia Corpat

The 29th series of India-Indonesia CORPAT is scheduled from 09 – 25 May 17 with the opening ceremony being conducted from 09 -12 May 17 at Port Blair under the aegis of Andaman and Nicobar Command. The Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Sutedi Senoputra has arrived at Haddo Wharf, Port Blair to mark the commencement of the 29th series of IND-INDO CORPAT.

What

1. The CORPAT reflects the shared concerns between the two countries for a peaceful Indian Ocean for the benefit of international community.
2. The close defence relations between India and Indonesia have been growing steadily with regular joint activities and exchanges of personnel between the Armed Forces of the two countries.
3. Under the broad ambit of this strategic partnership, Indonesian Navy (TNI AL) and the Indian Navy have been carrying out coordinated patrolling twice a year since 2002 near the International Maritime Boundary Line to keep this part of the Indian Ocean region safe and secure for commercial shipping and international trade.

19 years of Pokhran-II tests

It has been 19 years since India conducted its second nuclear test at Pokhran, Rajasthan on May 11 is now commemorated as National Technology Day for India's successful foray into nuclear weapons development.

What

1. In 1998, India conducted Pokhran-II tests where five nuclear explosives were tested. The tests took place between May 11 and May 13.
2. The first explosive was a fusion device while the rest four were fission devices.
3. India has gone on to develop what is called a nuclear triad—nuclear strike capabilities from land, air, sea/undersea.

LCA Tejas successfully test fires

Light combat aircraft Tejas on 12 May 2017 "successfully" test fired an air-to-air missile, paving the way for powering the indigenously-built aircraft with missiles having beyond visual range capabilities (BVR). The test-firing was conducted on a manoeuvrable aerial target at the interim test range in Chandipur in Odisha.

What

1. The objective of the test was to assess integration of the Derby BVR missile with avionics, fire-control radar, launchers and missile weapon delivery system of Tejas.
2. The flawless launch was demonstrated with all on-board systems performing satisfactorily and the missile scored a direct hit on the target with complete destruction of it.
3. The test firing achieved all its planned objectives. The Derby firing is a major step towards clearing BVR capabilities on light combat aircraft for FOC (final operational clearance).
4. The sensors at the interim test range tracked the target and the missile.
5. The missile launch was performed in lock on after launch mode for a BVR target in the look down mode and the target was destroyed.

New Pneumococcal Vaccine Launched

Minister for Health and Family Welfare J P Nadda has launched new Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine, PCV, for Pneumonia at Lal Bahadur Shastri Medical College Hospital in Mandi district of Himachal Pradesh. **The vaccine is a part of government's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP).** Henceforth, the vaccine will be administered under routine immunization programme. The vaccine would help in controlling pneumonia and reducing the child mortality rate. In India, more than 1 lakh children die of pneumonia every year.

What

1. The vaccine will provide protection against 13 types of pneumococcal bacteria which results in pneumonia.
2. This is the twelfth disease for which the Health Ministry has launched a vaccine.
3. The vaccine Pneumococcal Conjugate protects against Streptococcus pneumonia and diseases such as pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections and meningitis.
4. PCV was first introduced in 2000.

Background

1. Pneumonia Pneumonia is caused by inflammation of the airspaces in the lungs.
2. It is most commonly due to an infection. It is a leading cause of death for children under the age of five years around the world.
3. It may be caused by bacteria, viruses or fungi.
4. The most common bacterial type that causes pneumonia is Streptococcus pneumoniae. Signs and symptoms include fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, and fatigue.

- The whole of Himachal Pradesh as well as six districts of Uttar Pradesh and seventeen districts of Bihar will be covered under the first phase of the immunisation programme.

#### Swachh Bharat rankings 2017

Indore in Madhya Pradesh has been declared the cleanest city in India under the Swachh Survekshan 2017. Gonda in Uttar Pradesh has been ranked the dirtiest among the cities judged. The rankings came out of a survey meant to gauge the progress of Modi government's flagship Swachh Bharat Mission. The cleanliness rankings of 434 cities and towns were announced under the survey.

#### What

- After Indore, Madhya Pradesh's capital Bhopal ranked as the second cleanest city in the country.
- Visakhapatnam, in Andhra Pradesh, came third, Gujarat's Surat fourth and Karnataka's Mysuru fifth.
- Mysuru had ranked as the cleanest city during the 2015 iteration of the survey.
- New Delhi Municipal Council missed out on the top five ranks and came in at the seventh position, followed by Navi Mumbai.

Ranking	City	State
1	Indore	Madhya Pradesh
2	Bhopal	Madhya Pradesh
3	Visakhapatnam (Vizag)	Andhra Pradesh
4	Surat	Gujarat
5	Mysuru (Mysore)	Karnataka
6	Tiruchirappalli (Trichy)	Tamil Nadu
7	New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC)	Delhi
8	Navi Mumbai	Maharashtra
9	Tirupati	Andhra Pradesh
10	Vadodara	Gujarat
430	Katihar	Bihar
431	Hardoi	Uttar Pradesh
432	Bagaha	Bihar
433	Bhusawal	Maharashtra
434	Gonda	Uttar Pradesh

## International

#### Nepal signs up to new Silk Road plan

**Nepal on 12 May 2017 signed up to China's new Silk Road drive**, a massive infrastructure project spanning some 65 countries at the centre of the Asian giant's push to expand its global influence. The long discussed deal between impoverished Nepal and its much bigger neighbour comes just days before China hosts a summit for 28 leaders near Beijing, showcasing the ambitious plan.

#### What

- The One Belt, One Road Initiative (OBOR) spearheaded by President Xi Jinping would see 60% of the global population and around a third of global GDP linked through a network of Chinese-bankrolled ports, railways, roads and industrial parks.

2. The deal will see China plough money into Nepal for a series of projects including boosting its road network, power grid and a new railway connecting the capital Kathmandu with Lhasa in Tibet.
3. **The newly inked deal will be closely watched by Nepal's other large neighbour, India, which has traditionally played the role of big brother to the much smaller country.**
4. Landlocked Nepal remains dependent on India for the majority of its imports, but the previous administration aggressively courted China as part of a nationalist drive to **decrease the country's reliance on New Delhi.**

#### ASEAN sidetracks SCS dispute

Steering clear of accusing China for the maritime disputes in the South China Sea (SCS), the 10-country Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has focused on a regional trade pact and shoring up economies of some of the lesser developed countries **in the grouping. A Chairman's statement issued at the end of the** Manila summit took note of the improving cooperation between ASEAN and China. It welcomed the progress to complete a framework of the Code of Conduct in the South China Sea (COC) by mid-2017 in order to facilitate the early conclusion of an effective COC.

#### What

1. The COC is a non-binding document that urges self-restraint and resolution of disputes through direct negotiations on the sidelines of the summit.
2. The document welcomed the operationalisation of the Guidelines for Hotline Communications among senior officials of the ministries of foreign affairs of ASEAN countries and China in response to maritime emergencies.
3. The leaders focused on the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations, pointing out that the giant free trade pact will boost global trade.
4. The RCEP is a proposed Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between ASEAN and the six other states —Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand.
5. The document highlighted a commitment to assist Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam to enable them to bolster regional integration.
6. The ASEAN comprises Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

#### **Nepal's first female chief justice suspended**

**Nepal's first female Supreme Court chief justice was suspended** after an impeachment motion was filed in parliament accusing her of bias and interfering with executive powers. Sushila Karki, who had one of the highest positions ever held by a woman in Nepal, was suspended automatically after the motion signed by nearly half the members in parliament was registered.

#### What

1. Karki was accused of interfering with executive powers and issuing biased decisions.
2. Karki was known for zero tolerance against corruption. She was appointed chief justice in April 2016 and was due to retire next month.

#### UK Annual rich list

The Hinduja brothers have topped the 2017 list of the richest people in the UK with a wealth of 16.2 billion pounds, a massive 3.2 billion pound hike in their fortunes over the previous year. 'The Sunday Times Rich List' says that Brexit does not seem to have affected the country's billionaires, who grew in numbers with a 14 per cent rise in their fortunes since the referendum last June to earn a record 658 billion pounds collectively.

#### What

1. Srichand and Gopichand Hinduja, aged 81 and 77, lead the pack of 134 UK-based billionaires on the list and have made their fortune from investments in

industries such as oil and gas, automotive, IT, energy, media, banking, property and healthcare sectors.

2. Their latest project is converting the Old War Office in London into a five-star hotel and luxury apartments, the newspaper notes.
3. This year's list was also described as more diverse in composition, with more women, more people from ethnic backgrounds, and more from surprising walks of life, with egg farmers and pet food makers among the super-rich line-up.
4. The figure in 2016 was 103 million pounds. The top 20 in the list alone are worth a total of 191.77 billion pounds, increasing their wealth by 35.18 billion pounds over the past 12 months.

#### South Korea's Moon sworn in

**South Korea's new president was sworn in** on 10 May 2017, just a day after a landslide election victory, and immediately declared his willingness to visit Pyongyang amid high tensions with the nuclear-armed North. Left-leaning Moon Jae-In, a former human rights lawyer, backs engagement with North Korea in the quest for peace — in contrast to the threatening rhetoric from the Trump administration.

What

1. Moon will have a difficult diplomatic path to tread in his approach to the North, which dreams of a missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to the continental United States, and has vast artillery forces trained on Seoul.
2. At the same time the South is embroiled in disputes with China over a US missile defence system, and former colonial occupier Japan over wartime history.

## Economy

New IIP, WPI series introduced

The new-look index of industrial production (IIP) and the wholesale price index (WPI), which was declared on 12 May 2017 and have been built on the new series of data, paint a much healthier picture of the Indian economy than the old series did. The base year for the indices in the new series has shifted to 2011-12, against the earlier 2004-05.

For instance, in none of the months in 2016-17 did the IIP contract in the new series, while it declined in six months — April, July, August, October, December, and February — in the old series.

What

1. The new series of the IIP shows higher growth rates in most months in the period April 2012 to March 2017 than was the case when the computation was done in accordance with the old series.
2. This is attributable to the base shift, increase in the number of factories in the panel for the reporting data and excluding closed ones, and including new items and keeping out old ones.
3. Calculated in accordance with the new series, while the IIP rose 2.7% in March, against 1.9% in February, the WPI inflation rate declined to a four-month low of 3.85% in April, against 5.29% in the previous month.
4. The consumer price index (CPI), which had moved to the new series earlier, declined to a record 2.99% in April, against 3.81% in the previous month.
5. Even if one assumes that demonetisation did not have much impact in November 2016 as it would have come with a lag, in none of the four months from December to March did the IIP return to the level of November, when it had grown by 5.7%.
6. The same trend was found even in the old series, by which IIP growth in November was 5.6%, the highest in the post-demonetisation period.

7. Cumulatively, the IIP grew five% in 2016-17, against 3.4% in the previous year. But the old series shows growth to be dismal. It would have been 0.7% in 2016-17, against 2.5% in the previous year.
8. In the new series of the IIP, there are 809 items, against 620 in the old one. As many as 149 items such as steroids, cement clinkers, prefabricated concrete blocks, and refined palm oil have been added in the new series, while 124 items such as calculators, colour TV picture tubes, and gutka have been deleted.
9. In the new series of the WPI, the number of items covered has increased from 676 to 697. In all, 199 new items have been added and 146 old items have been dropped.
10. Among the primary articles, new vegetables and fruit such as radish, carrot, cucumber, bitter gourd, mosambi (sweet lime), pomegranate, jackfruit, and pear have been added. In the mineral group, items like copper concentrate, lead concentrate and garnet have been added whereas copper ore, gypsum, kaolin, dolomite, and magnesite have been taken out. Natural gas has been added as a new item.
11. Among manufacturing items, around 173 new items such as conveyer belt, rubber tread, steel cables, tissue paper, and wooden splint have been added, while 135 items like khandsari (unrefined raw white sugar), poppadom, and video CD players have been dropped.
12. The weight of manufactured items has decreased to 64.2% in the WPI in the new series from 64.9% in old series, and fuel and power to 13.1% from 14.9%, while those of primary items rose to 22.6% from 20.1%.

#### New NPA policy approved

The Union Cabinet on 3 May 2017 has approved a new framework to deal with Rs 6 lakh crore worth of non-performing assets in the banking system. The framework includes an ordinance to amend the Banking Regulations Act to give more teeth to the Reserve Bank of India and its oversight committees to act on behalf of banks while deciding on toxic assets.

#### What

1. The framework also envisages amendments to the Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA), and Banking Regulations Act.
2. The new framework envisages setting up multiple oversight committees under the aegis of RBI to monitor progress of the top 35-40 NPAs in value terms, which constitute 60 per cent of all NPAs.
3. The framework will also enable a JLF to deal more effectively with NPAs by possibly tweaking the current guidelines and reduce the threshold in terms of exposure as well as the number of banks within a joint lending forum (JLF) for taking a decision on NPAs.
4. As per current rules, decisions regarding a bad loan or toxic assets are binding on all lenders in a JLF if they are approved by 75 per cent in terms of exposure or 60 per cent in terms of absolute numbers.

#### Gujarat passes state GST Bill

The Gujarat assembly on 9 May 2017 passed the state goods and services tax (GST) Bill in a special one-day session. Admitting that Gujarat would lose some income under GST regime because of the state's dependence on manufacturing, deputy chief minister and finance minister Nitin Patel said the five-year compensation from the Centre should suffice.

#### What

1. Earlier, Parliament had passed four legislations related to GST for a nationwide rollout on July 1, after which state assemblies were required to pass the state GST Bill. With this, Gujarat joined the likes of Goa, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Bihar, among others in passing the state GST Bill.

2. The existing Value Added Tax (VAT) act will be withdrawn after the passing of the new GST bill in the assembly. VAT will continue to be levied on petroleum products such as petrol, diesel, crude oil, natural gas, liquor and aviation turbine fuel (ATF).
3. Nearly 190 countries across the globe have GST or similar taxes where the same has been capped at 14.5-16.8 per cent even in high-income countries.

#### E-Nivaran scheme

Taxpayers can now get tax related and PAN related grievances redressed online using the 'E-Nivaran' facility launched by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT). **E-Nivaran offers a paperless mode of lodging one's complaint, uploading necessary documents, getting the complaint processed and track status of redressal of the same.** The CBDT started work on the issue of unresolved taxpayer grievances during his review of the department and had asked authorities to ensure that steps should be urgently taken in this regard so that honest tax paying people do not suffer.

What is Income Tax Department 'e-nivaran' Scheme?

1. To promote the paperless environment, the Income Tax department launched 'e-nivaran', a special electronic system in order to fast track taxpayer grievances and ensures early resolution or redressal of their complaints.

#### NHAI's first Masala Bond

National Highways Authority of India's first Masala Bond was launched on 11 May 2017 at the London Stock Exchange with Union Minister Nitin Gadkari ringing the opening bell. The rupee-denominated offshore bond offered by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) on the exchange is targeted at raising capital for India's infrastructure projects.

What

1. India gives the highest priority for infrastructure development. Our economy is the fastest growing in the world. NHAI is a flagship organisation, with AAA rating and we have many big projects to offer.
2. This is a symbolic transaction for a number of reasons. We are hoping it would be the world's largest-ever Masala Bond. This bond will support the largest road building and transport infrastructure programme in the world. There is a huge appetite for investments in Indian infrastructure and confidence in the Indian economy," said Nikhil Rathi, CEO of London Stock Exchange, who described Gadkari as a "reformer and innovator."

#### MoAs signed for first wind auction Scheme

The Memorandum of Agreements (MoAs) for purchase of 1000 MW wind power **under MNRE's first wind auction Scheme** were signed between PTC India, the trading company, and Discoms of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Delhi, Odisha and Assam.

What

1. As per MoAs the Discoms of UP to buy 449.9 MW, Bihar- 200 MW, Jharkhand – 200 MW, Delhi – 100 MW, Assam – 50 MW and Odisha – 50MW of wind power for meeting their non-solar RPO.
2. The Letter of Award (LoA) to the successful wind power developers under the first wind auction scheme have been issued by Solar Energy Corporation of

How does 'e-nivaran' scheme work?

1. e-nivaran will integrate all the online and physical complaints received by the income tax department which will further be monitored by the Assessing Officer of the case up to the supervisory officers.
2. The e-portal will transfer issues to the concerned department like for refunds and for the other IT matter of an assessee.
3. As per the higher priority to this issue, the CBDT had also brought a new mechanism where officers of the department receive a specific quota of complaints to monitor and track, from their origin to the successful resolution.

India (SECI) on 5 April 2017 and the projects are to be commissioned within 18 months from the date of issue of LoA.

3. This was the first time such auction process was done in the country for wind power through e-reverse auction and its success can be seen from the fact that a record low tariffs of Rs. 3.46 per kWh was obtained.
4. Further, provision of 10% additional capacity for Central Public Sector Entities (CPSEs) has been kept under the Scheme without participation in the bidding, however, they have to supply wind power at lowest discovered tariff through bidding process.

#### ESCAP annual flagship report

India is expected to clock 7.1% growth this year before edging up to 7.5% in 2018, according to a UN report, which warned that the country faces heightened risks related to the concentration of bad loans in the public sector banks. The UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) said in its annual flagship report **'The Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2017'** launched that the economic growth for India is projected to be stable at 7.1% in 2017 before edging up to 7.5% in 2018, underpinned by higher private and public consumption and increased infrastructure spending.

#### What

1. Growth in India is forecast at 7.1% this year as **“re-monetisation restores consumption, and infrastructure spending increases”**.
2. Inflation is projected to reach 5.3-5.5% in 2017 and 2018, which is somewhat above the official target of 4.5-5%.
3. The recent budget called for various measures that seek to mitigate the large temporary adverse shocks on income and wealth, such as expanding a low-cost housing scheme and providing more relief to the agricultural sector and credit support for small enterprises.
4. **The country's medium-term** economic development will also benefit from recent reforms that are aimed at easing domestic supply bottlenecks, such as the implementation of the goods and services tax, amendment of a bankruptcy law and opening up of the pharmaceuticals, defence and civil aviation sectors.
5. Economic conditions are broadly stable in China and higher value-added sectors are gradually replacing excess capacity sectors as drivers of output and employment.

#### Background

1. Ministry sanctioned a Scheme for setting up of 1000 MW ISTS connected Wind Power Project on 14 June 2016 with the objective to encourage competitiveness through scaling up of project sizes and introduction of efficient and transparent e-bidding and e-auctioning processes.

## Science and Technology

### Digital Management System in SC

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the integrated case management system of the Supreme Court - the first step taken by the top court towards becoming a paperless and digital.

#### What

1. The new system will help litigants access data and retrieve information online.
2. The Supreme Court had decided to collect all such records electronically from lower courts and high Courts so that there is no requirement to file printed copies in Supreme Court.
3. Every central and state government department will know if they have been made party to the case and help them prepare accordingly.

- The court fee and process fee will be calculated online, which will help the litigant about the cost involved. Justice Khehar said it will help the bar and not increase its workload.

#### 'Express Wi-Fi' in India

Social networking giant Facebook has rolled out in India, its 'Express Wi-Fi' service that offers Internet facility through public hotspots to users in rural parts of the country. The commercial roll out of the project comes a year after Facebook pulled the plug on the controversial 'Free Basics' programme that drew severe criticism from advocates of net neutrality. Unlike Free Basics that provided access to selected websites for free, Express Wi-Fi works on a "paid" model and the access will not be restricted to any particular websites. Users can log onto public wi-fi hotspots made available through partner telecom operators and buy daily, weekly or monthly data packs being sold through local entrepreneurs.

#### What

- Facebook has also on boarded as a partner, telecom giant Bharti Airtel, which will deploy over 20,000 wi-fi hotspots over the next few months.
- Express Wi-Fi is part of our global initiative and we want to expand Internet connectivity to underserved locations.
- Facebook is working with internet services providers (ISPs) and over 500 local entrepreneur retailers.
- Tech giant Google has also rolled out free Internet access through public wi-fi hotspots at various railway stations in partnership with RailTel.
- Facebook's Express Wi-Fi service is available through nearly 700 hotspots across the four Indian states of Uttarakhand, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Meghalaya. Facebook had started testing Express Wi-Fi in India in 2015.
- Express Wi-Fi is also live in four other countries -- Kenya, Tanzania, Nigeria and Indonesia.
- The US-based company had launched the Free Basics programme in 2015 in partnership with Reliance Communications and allowed access to selected websites.

#### First synthetic retina created

The first synthetic, soft tissue retina developed by Oxford University researchers could offer fresh hope to visually impaired people. Until now, artificial retinas have only been made from hard, rigid materials. The new research is the first to successfully use biological, synthetic tissues, developed in a laboratory environment. The study could revolutionise the bionic implant industry and the development of new, less invasive technologies that more closely resemble human body tissues, helping to treat degenerative eye conditions such as retinitis pigmentosa. Just as photography depends on camera pixels reacting to light, vision relies on the retina performing the same function.

#### What

- The retina sits at the back of the human eye, and contains protein cells that convert light into electrical signals that travel through the nervous system, triggering a response from the brain, ultimately building a picture of the scene being viewed.
- The retina replica consists of soft water droplets (hydrogels) and biological cell membrane proteins. Designed like a camera, the cells act as pixels, detecting and reacting to light to create a grey scale image.
- At present the synthetic retina has only been tested in laboratory conditions, and researchers want to explore potential uses with living tissues.

#### Massive lava waves spotted on Jupiter's moon Io

Scientists have detected two massive waves sweeping across the largest lava lake on Jupiter's moon Io – the most volcanically active body in our solar system. Taking advantage of a rare orbital alignment between two of Jupiter's moons, Io and Europa,

researchers at University of California (UC) Berkeley have obtained an exceptionally detailed map of the largest lava lake on Io.

What

1. On March 8 in 2015, Europa passed in front of Io, gradually blocking out light **from the volcanic moon. Since Europa's surface is coated in water ice, it reflects** very little sunlight at infrared wavelengths, allowing researchers to accurately isolate the heat emanating from **volcanoes on Io's surface**.
2. The most active volcanic site on Io, Loki Patera is about 200 kilometres across. The hot region of the patera has a surface area of 21,500 square kilometres. **"If Loki Patera is a sea of lava, it encompasses an area more than a million times that of a typical lava lake on Earth.**

**World's biggest X-ray laser generates first light**

**The world's biggest X-ray laser** has generated its first beam of light that will allow scientists to get a glimpse of new materials, drugs and chemical reactions at the atomic level. The 3.4-kilometre-long European XFEL, most of which is located in underground tunnels in Germany, will usher a new era of European research, according to scientists. The X-ray light has a wavelength of 0.8 nanometre – about 500 times shorter than that of visible light. At first lasing, the laser had a repetition rate of one pulse per second, which will later increase to 27,000 per second.

What

1. The achievable laser light wavelength corresponds to the size of an atom, meaning that the X-rays can be used to make pictures and films of the nanocosmos at atomic resolution -such as of biomolecules, from which better understanding of the basis of illnesses or the development of new therapies could be developed.
2. This is an important moment that our partners and we have worked towards for many years. The European XFEL has generated its first X-ray laser light.
3. The first laser light produced today with the most advanced and most powerful linear accelerator in the world marks the beginning a new era of research in Europe.
4. The European XFEL will provide us with the most detailed images of the molecular structure of new materials and drugs and novel live recordings of biochemical reactions.
5. The German research centre DESY, the largest shareholder of the European XFEL, put the accelerator into operation at the end of April. In a 2.1 km long accelerator tunnel, the electron pulses were strongly accelerated and prepared for the later generation of X-ray laser light.

Novel molecule to treat cancer

A novel small molecule, designed and synthesised by Indian researchers, has shown promise in targeted killing of cancer cells. The molecule (Disarib) works by binding itself to a protein called BCL2, which suppresses the death of cancerous cells. While BCL2 protein is produced in excess in cancer cells, its expression is almost undetectable in normal cells. Hence, Disarib targets and kills only cancer cells while sparing normal cells. Inside a cell there is always a balance between proteins that promote cell death (apoptosis) and those that suppress cell death. When the proteins BAX and BAK that promote cell death get bound to BCL2, cell death is suppressed and cancer cells are able to live longer.

What

1. A team led by Sathees C. Raghavan at the Department of Biochemistry, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru, showed that Disarib was able to disrupt the binding of BCL2 and apoptosis-causing BAK protein. This action induced the death of cancer cells.
2. Disarib is the culmination of eight years of research involving 24 researchers from eight different research groups across various labs.

3. Unlike the FDA-approved BCL2 inhibitor ABT199, the small molecule synthesised by Prof.

#### Generic hepatitis C drug in India

Natco Pharma said it has launched generic sofosbuvir 400 mg/velpatasvir 100 mg tablets, used for treatment of chronic hepatitis C, in India. The company has launched a generic version of sofosbuvir 400 mg/velpatasvir 100 mg fixed dose combination in India under the brand name 'Velpanat', Natco Pharma said in a BSE filing.

#### What

1. The company's product is generic version of Gilead Sciences Inc's Epclusa tablets.
2. The company "has signed a non-exclusive licensing agreement with Gilead Sciences Inc to manufacture and sell generic versions of its chronic hepatitis C medicines in 101 developing countries.
3. Shares of Natco Pharma were trading 0.77 per cent up at Rs 908.50 on BSE.

#### Ransomware Cyber Attack

A global cyberattack has crippled nearly hundred countries, including India. A cyber gang called Shadow Brokers, which is a mysterious organisation is held responsible for this massive cyberattack. The organisation has carried out the attack by stealing a **hacking tool called 'Eternal Blue' from the National Security Agency (NSA), America's powerful military intelligence unit.** The hacking tool Eternal Blue gives unprecedented access to all computers using Microsoft Windows. It was developed by NSA to gain access to computers used by terrorists and enemy states. The cyberattack is considered as the biggest ransomware attack of its kind.

#### What

1. Hackers have spread ransomware known as WannaCry, WanaCrypt0r 2.0, WannaCry and WCry, often through emails.
2. The files in the infected computers gets locked up in such a way that the user cannot access them anymore.
3. It then demands payment in cryptocurrency Bitcoin to retrieve the locked files.

#### World's first quantum computing machine

Chinese scientists have successfully built the **world's first quantum computing machine** that is 24,000 times faster than its international counterparts and may dwarf the processing power of existing supercomputers. The scientists announced their achievement at a press conference at the Shanghai Institute for Advanced Studies of University of Science and Technology of China.

#### What

1. Quantum computing could in some ways dwarf the processing power of **today's supercomputers**. The manipulation of multi-particle entanglement is the core of quantum computing technology and has been the focus of international quantum computing research.
2. Quantum computers could, in principle, solve certain problems faster than classical computers. Despite substantial progress in the past two decades, building quantum machines that can actually outperform classical computers in some specific tasks – **an important milestone termed "quantum supremacy"** – remains challenging.
3. It is the first quantum computing machine based on single photons that goes beyond the early classical computer, and ultimately paves the way to a quantum computer that can beat classical computers.

#### World's fastest film camera developed

Scientists have developed a super-fast camera that can film at an unprecedented rate of five trillion images per second, fast enough to visualize the movement of light. The camera will be able to capture incredibly rapid processes in chemistry, physics, biology and biomedicine, that so far have not been caught on film. A

research group at Lund University in Sweden successfully filmed how light – a collection of photons -travels a distance corresponding to the thickness of a paper. In reality, it only takes a picosecond, but on film the process has been slowed down by a trillion times. Currently, high-speed cameras capture images one by one in a sequence, filming 100,000 images per second.

What

1. The new technology called Frequency Recognition Algorithm for Multiple Exposures (FRAME) is based on an innovative algorithm, and instead captures several coded images in one picture.
2. The object reflects the light flashes which merge into the single photograph. They are subsequently separated using an encryption key.
3. The film camera is initially intended to be used by researchers who literally want to gain better insight into many of the extremely rapid processes that occur in nature.

## Miscellaneous

### World bank's Power Accessibility List

India **has jumped 73 spots to be ranked 26th in World Bank's electricity accessibility list.** The country was ranked 99th in 2014. Out of the 18,452 villages which lacked electricity, over 13,000 has been provided access to electricity. In addition, a person applying for new electricity connection would be able to get the connection within 24 hours in areas where power infrastructure is available and in areas where there is no power infrastructure; electricity connection would be given in a week.

What

1. The flagship scheme Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with an aim to provide 24x7 uninterrupted electricity supply to each rural household across the country by 2022.
2. It aims to strengthen sub-transmission and distribution network to prevent power losses. It focuses on feeder separation for rural households and agricultural purpose.
3. The other features include metering at all levels including at input points, feeders and distribution transformers and strengthening of Micro grid and off grid distribution network of rural electrification.
4. The Ministry of Power has also launched a new app, GARV-II to provide real-time data of all six lakh villages of the country.
5. The app is envisaged to ensure transparency in the implementation of rural electrification programme.

May Day 2017

International Workers' Day, also known as Labour Day in some countries, is a celebration of labourers and the working classes that is promoted by the international labour movement, socialists, communists or anarchists. It occurs every year on May Day which is May 1st. It is the day to pay tribute to the labourers. In India, the first Labour Day, or May Day, was celebrated in 1923 in Chennai. And around India, organisations and trade unions arrange pageants, children enter contests so they can understand the importance of fairness for workers, and political leaders make speeches.

History of Labour Day

1. The history of the Labour Day, or International Workers' Day, goes back to May 1, 1886.
2. On this day, labour unions in the United States of America decided to go on a strike with the demand that workers should not be allowed to work more than 8 hours a day.

3. This strike was followed by a bomb blast in Chicago's Haymarket Square on the 4th of May. This led to the death of several people and police officers.
4. Labour Day in India or May Day was first celebrated in Chennai on May 1, 1923. The initiative was taken by the Labour Kisan Party of Hindustan. The leader of the party, Comrade Singaravelar arranged two meetings to celebrate this occasion.

#### Highest Wicket-**Taker in Women's One**-Day Internationals

Jhulan Goswami has become the highest wicket-taker in one-day internationals. Goswami has so far taken 181 wickets in 153 matches. She has broken the world record held by Australia fast bowler Cathryn Fitzpatrick who has taken 180 wickets **during India's ongoing match against South Africa in the Women's Quadrangular Series in Potchefstroom**. She achieved this feat with the wicket of No.11 batsman Raisibe Ntozakhe of South Africa.

What

1. Jhulan Goswami is a right arm fast bowler who made her one-day debut back in 2002.
2. She is **regarded as one of the fastest bowlers in the women's cricket**.
3. Her best bowling figures is 6 for 31. So far, she has two five-wicket hauls in ODIs.
4. She has awarded with Arjuna Award in 2010 and Padma Shri in 2012.

Meeting of NPDRR

The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the two-day second meeting of National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR). The theme of the **Second meeting of NPDRR is "Disaster Risk Reduction for Sustainable Development: Making India resilient by 2030"**. The NPDRR is a multi-stakeholders National Platform headed by the Union Home Minister and it promotes participatory decision making in disaster management, and strengthens federal policy of our country.

What

1. NPDRR is a multi-stakeholders National Platform for sharing the experiences in disaster management and for making a collective effort for disaster risk reduction.
2. The role of prevention and mitigation in reducing disaster losses. Global agreements like Sendai Framework, Sustainable Development Goal and Paris Agreement on Climate Change (COP21) for disaster risk reduction.
3. He highlighted the ongoing efforts of Governments in disaster risk reduction like preparation of disaster management plan and policy, development of early warning systems, construction of cyclone shelters and saline embankments, raising of disaster response forces at national and state levels and capacity building of communities through continuous training and awareness programme.
4. He referred to 10 point-agenda for disaster risk reduction given by our Prime Minister during AMCDRR 2016 and urged the participants to draw concrete plans to implement this agenda into reality. He requested the disaster managers to give proper consideration to geo-physical condition of the particular State/UTs, while making any action plan for disaster risk reduction.

#### **First ever 'genderless' award**

Hollywood actor Emma Watson has received the first-ever Genderless Acting Award for the Best Actor category at the MTV Movie and TV Awards. This is the first ever **genderless award that doesn't separate nominees based on their sex**. The 2017 edition of the MTV Movie & TV Awards were held on May 7, 2017, in Los Angeles, California. It was the 26th edition of the awards. The MTV Movie & TV Awards is a film and television awards presented annually to winners decided online by the general public. Emma Watson is a British actress, model, and activist. She is famous for her role as Hermione Granger in the Harry Potter film series.

First Indian woman to get WW Award

ICICI Bank chief Chanda Kochhar has become the first Indian woman to be conferred with the prestigious Woodrow Wilson Award for Global Corporate Citizenship. Kochhar, 55, received the annual award which was instituted in 1998 by the prestigious Wilson Center to felicitate individuals whose actions and accomplishments, either in their careers or through service.

What

1. She has joined the league of former Indian recipients-- former President and space scientist APJ Abdul Kalam and IT honcho Narayana Murthy.
2. Previous recipients of the award include former US vice president Richard Cheney, US Secretary of State Rex W Tillerson as well as four former US Secretaries of State- Henry Kissinger, General (rtd) Colin Powell, Hillary Clinton and Condoleezza Rice.
3. Kochhar began her career with the erstwhile ICICI Limited in 1984 and was elevated to the Board of Directors of ICICI Bank in 2001 and was instrumental in establishing ICICI Bank during the 1990s.

First Telugu actor to feature at Madame Tussauds

Protagonist Prabhas has become the darling of the masses and has garnered rave reviews for his performance not only by the audiences but also from critics all over the world. In fact, he has now beaten the likes of Rajinikanth and Kamal Haasan to become the first South Indian actor to have a wax statue at Madame Tussauds. The feat has **been attained only by Bollywood's A-listers** who have had the opportunity to become immortal through their statues **at the several Madam Tussauds' museums across the world.** Prabhas' wax statue was unveiled at Bangkok museum. The statue features him as his popular character Amarendra Baahubali from Rajamouli's epic drama.

What

1. Amitabh Bachchan is the first living Asian and Bollywood star to be immortalised at London's Madame Tussauds wax museum in 2000. Not only this, his wax statues were placed in New York in 2009, Hong Kong in 2011, Bangkok in 2011 and Washington, DC in 2012.
2. Aishwarya Rai Bachchan was the first Bollywood actress to have her wax statue at the prestigious Madame Tussauds wax museum in London in 2004, joining her father-in-law Amitabh Bachchan.

New President of France

Thirty-nine-year-old Emmanuel Macron has been elected as the president of France. He has become the youngest President and occupant of the Élysée Palace. He is also the **first President of France outside of that country's two traditional main parties.**

First woman judge of Delhi High Court dies

Justice (retd) Leila Seth, the first woman chief justice of a state high court in the country and mother of celebrated author Vikram Seth, has died. She was 86 and passed away at her residence in Noida. She died of cardiac seizure last night.

What

1. Seth was the first woman to have topped the London Bar exam, first woman judge of the Delhi High Court and also the first woman chief justice of a state high court (Himachal Pradesh).
2. Seth was also one of the three members of the Justice Verma Committee which was constituted in 2012 to recommend amendments to the Criminal Law so as to provide for quicker trial and enhanced punishment for criminals accused of committing sexual assault against women, post the gruesome December 16 gangrape in Delhi.
3. The eminent jurist, the mother of "A Suitable Boy" writer, was herself an author and her autobiography 'On Balance' was a bestseller.

4. Seth had also authored 'Talking of Justice: People's Rights in Modern India', published in 2014, which talked of several critical issues that she had engaged with in a legal career spanning over 50 years.

#### First Indian to Win a GP3 Race

The 19-year-old **Motorsports' Indian driver Arjun Maini**, who drives for Jenzer Motorsport, has become the first Indian to win a GP3 Series (a feeder series to GP2) race at the Circuit de Catalunya in Barcelona. Arjun Maini is supported by JK Racing and TVS. **This victory has moved Arjun Maini into third place in the driver's championship standings** after completion of the first round of the eight-round GP3 series. He has 23 points.

#### India's First Bio Refinery Plant inaugurated

Union Minister for Road Transport, Highways and Shipping Nitin Gadkari has inaugurated **India's First Integrated Bio-refinery** for Renewable Fuels & Chemicals for producing ethanol from a variety of biomass. The plant is situated at Rahu in Pune district of Maharashtra. The demonstration plant has been built by Praj industries. The inaugurated Bio-refinery plant is capable of producing one million litres of ethanol per annum by processing a variety of biomass like rice and wheat straw, cotton stalk, bagasse, cane trash, corn cobs & stover with superior product yields.

#### Background

1. Biofuels are fuels which are in some way derived from biomass.
2. The term covers solid biomass, liquid fuels and various biogases and also denotes Biodiesel, Bio-alcohol and bio-gasoline. Common Biofuel Crops The most common Biofuel crops include Corn, Rapeseed/Canola, Sugarcane, Palm Oil, Jatropha, Soyabean, Cottonseed, Sunflower seeds, Wheat, Sugarbeet, Cassava, Algae, Coconut, Jojoba, Castor Beans etc.

#### World Press Freedom Index released

India is ranked 136 in the World Press Freedom Index, three points down from last year. Norway is in the apex and North Korea in the bottom of the 180 list of nations. It was released annually by Reporters Without Borders, the Index ranks 180 countries according to the level of freedom available to journalists.

#### What

1. A total of 21 countries are now colored black on the press freedom map **because the situation there is classified as "very bad"** and 51 [two more than last year] are colored red, meaning that the situation in these countries is classified as "bad."
2. **India has gone down from last year's 133 rank.**
3. The report says that it is increasingly difficult for journalists to report from sensitive zones such as Kashmir, where internet connectivity are often snapped during conflicts and reporters are targets of violence from both ends.

#### India's First Private Sector Small Arms Manufacturing Plant

India's first private sector small arms manufacturing plant has been inaugurated in Madhya Pradesh to supply world class weapons to the armed forces in line with the **India's defence indigenisation programme**. The plant is a joint venture between India's Punj Lloyd and Israel Weapon Systems. The plant will manufacture four products, namely, X95 carbine and assault rifle, Galil sniper rifle, Tavor assault rifle and Negev Light Machine Gun (LMG). The joint venture company named as Punj Lloyd Raksha Systems will help in replacing the weapons used by the armed forces with sophisticated and high precision products.

#### Rafael Nadal Wins Madrid Open Title

Rafael Nadal beat Dominic Thiem to clinch his fifth Madrid Open title. With this victory, he has won three straight titles after Barcelona Open and Monte Carlo Masters victories. **Nadal will also move into the world's top four replacing** 18-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer in the new rankings. Nadal has won his 30th ATP World Tour Masters 1000 title tying the all-time record with Serbia's Novok Djokovic.

## Background

1. The **Madrid Open is a men's and women's professional tennis tournament** held every year in early May in Madrid, Spain.
2. The tournament is classified as an ATP World Tour Masters 1000 event on the Association of Tennis Professionals tour.

## India's Second Tallest Flag Pole inaugurated

**India's second tallest flag pole has been Inaugurated in Kolhapur.** The pole which is 303 feet high has been constructed in the Police training academy garden as a part of the Kolhapur beautification project. The poll is 90 metres tall and 60 metres wide and weighs 24 tonne. Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inaugurated the pole by unfurling a national flag of 5400sq ft as a part of the 'Maharashtra Din' celebrations in the state.

## US-India Business Council award

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu has been selected for the **'Transformative Chief Minister Award'** in recognition for his role in advancing the US-India partnership at the state level. The award was presented by the US-India Business Council during the USIBC West Coast Summit in the Silicon Valley on May 8.

## What

1. The summit will convene 150 industry leaders from sectors such as information technology, banking, food processing, healthcare, clean energy, digital payments, manufacturing and Government of India officials to explore the impacts of manufacturing in India, digitisation.
2. **The summit will also honour Sundararajan with the 'Transformative Leadership Award'** for excellence in public service and for her commitment to advancing US-India cooperation and Digital India.
3. The companies which will attend the summit include Amazon, Paypal, Deloitte, Facebook, Nuveen, Mastercard, Dell, TransAsia, Varian Medical, Visa among others.

## India Ranked 100th in FIFA Rankings

As per the updated FIFA world football rankings, the Indian national football has managed to secure a 100th spot and entered into the top 100 of FIFA rankings. This is the first time in 21 years that India has been ranked into top 100. India has been placed 100th alongside Nicaragua, Lithuania and Estonia with a total of 331 points. India had ranked 101st in the FIFA rankings for April. The team climbed one spot up owing to the recent wins over Cambodia and Myanmar. The current ranking is a 72-place jump from being 173rd in March 2015. In 1996, India managed to secure **the 94th spot. Till date, it remains the country's best ever FIFA ranking.**

## New Goodwill Ambassador for Hepatitis in South-East Asia Region

World Health Organization (WHO) has appointed Amitabh Bachchan as its Goodwill Ambassador for Hepatitis in South-East Asia Region. He has been appointed to boost awareness to stop the spread of hepatitis, which is one of the leading causes of liver cancer and cirrhosis. As an ambassador, Amitabh Bachchan will participate in public awareness programmes to scale up prevention measures, early diagnosis and treatment.

## What

1. The FIFA World Rankings ranks **the men's national teams in association football.**
2. The rankings were first introduced in 1992.
3. The teams are ranked based on their game results of all FIFA-recognised full international matches.
4. The teams are ranked based on its performance over the last four years.
5. The rankings are currently led by Brazil.
6. The teams like Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Spain have also held top positions previously.

### What

1. Hepatitis viruses is one of the common cause of liver damage but other infections, toxic substances such as alcohol, certain medicine, food contaminants, bad lifestyle and autoimmune diseases may also result in chronic hepatitis.
2. Of the five hepatitis viruses, namely, types A, B, C, D and E, types B and C are the most deadly.
3. These two types are mostly responsible for liver damage. Hepatitis viruses B, C and D spread by contact with contaminated blood or body fluids.
4. Hepatitis A and E spreads through unsafe food and drink.

### Vijayawada Airport becomes International Airport

The Union Cabinet has granted international airport status for the Vijayawada Airport. The approval was given as per provisions of Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014. The decision was taken as the airport is witnessing significant growth in passenger traffic and also to cater to the demands made by airlines as well as the Andhra Pradesh government. The airport is currently undergoing infrastructural upgradations and improvement in facilities for international operations. The upgradation works are being carried out by the Airports Authority of India.

### New Chairman of FIFA Governance Committee

Retired judge of Delhi High Court Justice Mukul Mudgal has been elected as the Chairman of FIFA Governance committee **at the FIFA's 67th Congress held in Bahrain's** capital city of Manama. Justice Mudgal was proposed for the vacant position by the FIFA Council after former chief Miguel Maduro was removed for his role in allegedly blocking Russian World Cup official Vitaly Mutko from retaining his seat on ruling council. Justice Mudgal will have a term of office of four years which would come into effect immediately. **Olli Rehn of Finland has been elected as Justice Mudgal's deputy.** Olli Rehn is the former Vice-President of the European Commission.

### New Country Director of Twitter

Twitter has elevated Taranjeet Singh as its Country Director for India. Prior to this **appointment, Singh was responsible for sales and marketing support for Twitter's** advertisers in India. Before joining twitter, Taranjeet Singh held various positions at BBC Advertising and Outlook Publishing etc. India is among the lucrative social media markets in the world. **It is already among the world's fastest growing markets for** companies like Facebook, WhatsApp and Google. Recently, Twitter launched its lighter version called Twitter Lite to cater to the needs of users in India.

### First State to Shift Financial Year to Jan-Dec Format

Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to shift its financial year from the present April-March cycle to January-December. **The state's budget session** for the next financial year would be held in December-January. Hence, the state government plans to finish the current budget proceedings by December this year.

### What

1. Shifting of the financial year format to January-December would require shifting of the tax assessment year.
2. It also necessitates changes to be made in infrastructure especially at the level of companies.
3. The decision of the Madhya Pradesh state government comes in the backdrop of **Prime Minister Narendra Modi's suggestion of shifting the fiscal year** to January-December period during NITI Aayog governing council meeting on April 23 held at New Delhi.

### Delhi school gas leak

**Over 300 students of two girl's schools were rushed to hospital** after they complained of dizziness and headache following gas leak from a chemical container near their schools in south Delhi. Noxious fumes from the container caused eye and throat irritation, and dizziness to the students of Rani Jhansi Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya and

Government Girls Senior Secondary School, Number 2, in Tughlaqabad area, in the morning. Around 30 students had fainted.

What

1. Over 310 students were treated at different hospitals after Chloro (methyl) diphenylsilane, a chemical, leaked from a container depot in Tughlaqabad.

The students were rushed to four nearby hospitals -- Batra Hospital, Apollo Hospital, Majeedia Hospital and ESI Hospital.