

## AWARDS & HONOURS

India's Umang App won the **Best M-Government Service award** in the Accessible Government category while Aadhaar won the best emerging technology award at the 6th edition of the World Government Summit 2018 in Dubai, where India had the status of 'Guest of Honour' country.

A veteran expert from Biozentrum University of Basel, Switzerland, Professor Michael N. Hall was bestowed with 2018 **Genome Valley Excellence Award of Telangana** for his pioneering work in discovering the nutrient-activated TOR (Target of Rapamycin) proteins and their central role in the metabolic control of cell growth.

The Odisha government won the **Geospatial World Excellence Award- 2018** for successful IT application for tracking of mineral production, dispatch and value accrued on real time basis through its i3MS website based software.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with the '**Grand Collar of the State of Palestine**' by President Mahmoud Abbas for his key contribution to promote relations between India and Palestine.

Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, former Liberian President, was honored with the 2018 **Ibrahim Prize for Achievement in African Leadership** for excellence in African leadership.

Jayant Madhab Bora was conferred with the 2017 **Sahitya Akademi Award for Assamese literature** for his novel "Moriahola".

Eminent Kannada critic T P Ashoka was selected for the 2017 **Sahitya Akademi Award for Kannada language** for his literary criticism work "Kathana Bharathi".

K P Ramanunni from Kerala was conferred with the 2017 **Sahitya Akademi Award for Malayalam literature** for his novel "Daivathinte Pusthakam".

Shesh Anand Madhukar, an eminent Magahi writer & scholar, was honoured with the 2018 **Sahitya Akademi Bhasha Samman award**.

Shabnam Asthana was awarded the '**Times Power Women of the Year 2017**'- Pune for Global PR.

Shyam Benegal, the noted film producer and director, was bestowed with the prestigious **V. Shantaram lifetime achievement Award** 2018 for his contribution to the promotion of the documentary movement.

## BUSINESS & CORPORATE

The 12th edition of International Conference on **Corporate Social Responsibility** was held in Bengaluru, Karnataka with the theme "Responsible CSR: a New Agenda Beyond Governance".

The Union Minister for Finance and Corporate Affairs Arun Jaitley launched **CriSidEx**. It is India's first sentiment index for micro and small enterprises (MSEs) developed jointly by CRISIL & SIDBI. CriSidEx is a composite index based on a diffusion index of 8 parameters and measures MSE business sentiment on a scale of 0 (extremely negative) to 200 (extremely positive).

**Google** launched a new online security campaign #SecurityCheckKiya in India to promote security awareness among general public.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) signed a pact with **Google** to integrate a course on 'Digital Citizenship and Safety' in information and communication technology curriculum.

Hardayal Prasad was appointed as Managing Director and CEO of **SBI Card**. SBI Card has a customer base of over 5.7 million and a market share of 16 per cent.

The Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu launched three new tools for States and Union Territories for ranking of **startups** in the country in order to encourage strengthening of the startup ecosystem at the local level. The tools are: the State and Union Territory Startup Ranking Framework, the Compendium of Good Practices for Promoting Startups in India and the Startup India Kit. These will act as catalysts to help the Startup India initiative to drive India's economic growth. India is home to about 20,000 startups, with about 1,400 beginning operations every year.

## BILLS / ACTS / COMMITTEES / SCHEMES / POLICIES

- West Bengal became the first state to opt out of the National Health protection scheme unveiled in the Union Budget, with CM Mamata Banerjee announcing the state will not “waste” its hard-earned resources to contribute its share to the programme. On February 1, the Union Budget announced the National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS), the biggest such global plan to provide quality health coverage to a population larger than the combined citizenry of the US, France, Germany and the UK. Called ‘Modicare’, the plan seeks to extend health insurance to 500 million people from financially vulnerable households.
- The India-Russia Agriculture Business Summit 2018 was held in New Delhi with the two countries discussing trade relations in the agricultural sector.
- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman constituted a 13-member advisory committee to monitor and expedite capital acquisition projects for the modernisation of the armed forces. The committee will be headed by Vinay Sheel Oberoi, former secretary in the government. It will have a tenure till the end of August 2018.
- A MoU was signed between Ministry of Railways and Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy) to augment the AYUSH system services in its zonal hospitals at New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai and Guwahati.
- The Uttar Pradesh Government launched massive door to door campaign DASTAK in association with UNICEF to eradicate the deadly Acute Encephalitis Syndrome (AES) and Japanese Encephalitis (JE) diseases in the state.
- The Haryana government launched the 'Gobardhan Yojana' to provide for the sale of organic manure and cow urine with an aim to benefit farmers. A provision of Rs 11 crore has been made to provide benefits of various projects under this scheme.
- The Central Government announced a Rs 1.4 lakh-crore KUSUM (Kisan Urja Suraksha Utthaan Maha Abhiyaan) Scheme to promote decentralised solar power production of up to 28,250 MW to help farmers. In the Union Budget 2018-19, the Centre has allocated Rs 48,000 crore on the 10-year KUSUM scheme.
- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) signed a project agreement with the World Bank , even as the latter entered into a US \$ 375 million loan agreement with the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance for Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP). The signing of the Agreement follows the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, for the implementation of the US \$ 800 million JMVP for capacity augmentation of navigation on National Waterway-1(River Ganga) from Varanasi to Haldia.

## ECONOMY & FINANCE

- The Loan Agreement for financing of Rajasthan Water Sector Restructuring Project for the Desert Areas was signed between Government of India and the New Development Bank (NDB). This is the first tranche loan of USD 100 million approved by the NDB under the Multi Tranche Financing Facility of USD 345 million for this project. The objective of this Project is to rehabilitate the 678 km long Indira Gandhi Canal system built during 1958-63 to prevent seepage, conserve water, and enhance water use efficiency as mandated by both national and state level policies on water use.
- Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu were the top rankers in NITI Aayog's latest Health Index report, with Kerala topping the list. Uttar Pradesh appeared at the bottom among larger states in terms of overall performance. The document has been developed by NITI Aayog with technical assistance from the World Bank and in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- India was ranked 44th out of 50 countries in the 6th edition of Intellectual Property Index, released by U.S. Chamber of Commerce Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC). The United States topped the list, followed by the U.K and Sweden.
- In the sixth bi-monthly Monetary policy statement for 2017-18, the Reserve Bank of India kept the repo rate (key interest rate) unchanged at 6% and reverse repo at 5.75%. Also, the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate were kept at 6.25%.
- In the Union Budget 2018 Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced the government's plan to build a tunnel through the Sela Pass located at an elevation of 13,700 ft which will ensure faster movement of troops in Tawang, a strategically-located town in Arunachal Pradesh bordering China.
- India joined the Ashgabat Agreement, which envisages creation of an International Transport and Transit Corridor connecting Central Asia with the Persian Gulf. This corridor is set to facilitate connectivity, trade and transportation of goods between the Central Asian Republics (CARs) and the Gulf countries. With accession to the Agreement, India has taken a step forward in its efforts in enhancing connectivity with Eurasia.
- Jai Ram Thakur, the Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, launched Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) project to promote organic farming. The ZBNF, a farming practice that believes in natural growth of crops without adding any fertilizers and pesticides, aims to increase agriculture produce and the income of farmers by the year 2022.
- China remained the world's largest steel producer in 2017 by producing 831.7 million tonnes (MT), according to a latest report published by World Steel Association (WSA). Japan acquired 2nd position while India overtook the US to become the world's 3rd largest steel producer.
- India slipped to 42nd place on the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual Global Democracy Index amid the "rise of conservative religious ideologies" and increase in vigilantism and violence against minorities as well as other dissenting voices. While Norway again topped the list, followed by Iceland and Sweden, India moved down from 32nd place last year and remains classified among "flawed democracies".

## PEOPLE IN NEWS

Lt. Gen **Anil Chauhan** took charge as the new Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of the Indian Army.

Justice **Antony Dominic** was sworn in as the new Chief Justice of Kerala.

Renowned lawyer and human rights activist **Asma Jahangir** passed away at age 66. She was an outspoken critic of the powerful military establishment, including during her stint as the first-ever female leader of Pakistan's top bar association. In 1987 she co-founded the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan and became its Secretary General until 1993 when she was elevated as commission's chairperson.

**B.G. Banakar**, the former speaker of Karnataka legislative assembly, passed away at age 91.

**Biswamohan Mahapatra** was appointed as the non-executive chairman of the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) for a period of two years.

Former Union minister and veteran Telugu Desam Party leader **Bolla Bulliramaiah** died at age 92.

Prof. **Chandrashekhara Kambar**, a noted Kannada writer and Jnanpith winner, was elected as the new president of Sahitya Akademi.

The doyen of Odia literature **Chandrasekhar Rath** passed away at age 89. The writer was nominated for the prestigious Padma Shri award and several other awards, including Kendra Sahitya Akademi Award, Odisha Sahitya Akademi Award and Atibadi Jagannath Das Samman, for his contribution in the field of literature.

**Dinesh Srivastava**, a distinguished scientist, took over as the Chief Executive of Nuclear Fuel Complex (NFC).

Dr **Harsh Vardhan**, the Union Minister of Earth Sciences (MoES), launched a 2.8 Peta Flops capacity High Performance Computer (HPC) system 'Mihir' in Noida to improve India's weather forecasting.

Dr **Harsh Vardhan**, the Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change, launched the people-oriented campaign "Green Good Deeds" to sensitize people and students, in particular, about climate change and global warming.

**Indra Nooyi**, the PepsiCo Chairman and CEO, was appointed to the International Cricket Council Board as its first independent female director.

**Jerome Hayden Powell** was sworn-in as the new Chairman of the Federal Reserve for a four-year term.

**Johann Johannsson**, a reputed musician from Ireland, passed away at age 48. He won a Golden Globe in 2015.

**Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli**, the chairperson of Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), was sworn-in as the 41st Prime Minister of Nepal, by beating the ruling Nepali Congress.

Kathakali maestro **Madavoor Vasudevan Nair** died at age 89. A recipient of several awards, including Padma Bhushan, he was the follower of the Kaplingattu School, the particular style of south Kerala.

Eminent journalist, author and thinker **Muzaffar Hussain**, known for his strong views on Muslim politics, passed away at age 78. He was conferred PadmaShree in 2002 and with Lokamanya Tilak Jeevan Gaurav award for

journalism by the government of Maharashtra in 2014. Known for his strong views, Muzaffar Hussain came into contact with the RSS and wrote extensively on pro-Hindutva issues.

Prime Minister **Narendra Modi's** 'Exam Warriors', a book that he penned to reach out to the students across the country ahead of their exams, was launched in New Delhi.

**Neelam Kapoor**, a 1982 batch officer of the Indian Information Service (IIS), was appointed as the new director general of the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

The Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation **Nitin Gadkari** released India's first ever Highway Capacity Manual. The manual has been developed by CSIR – CRRRI on the basis of an extensive, country-wide study of the traffic characteristics on different categories of roads.

**Parbati Ghose**, the first female filmmaker of Odisha, passed away in Bhubaneswar at age 85.

**Sudeep Lakhtakia**, a 1984-batch IPS officer of the Telangana cadre, took charge as the new Director General of the 'black cats commando' force National Security Guard (NSG).

**Sudha Karmarkar**, a veteran theatre artist, director, and pioneer of Children's Theatre in Maharashtra, passed away at age 83.

**Syed Mahmud Hossain** was sworn-in as the 22nd chief justice Chief Justice of Bangladesh.

## SPORTS

**Haryana** emerged as overall champions at the inaugural Khelo India School Games. The Khelo India School Games are a part of the Khelo India programme introduced by the Union Sports Ministry to revive the sports culture in the country at the grassroots level and make India a sporting nation.

**India** won the 12th edition of ICC Under-19 Cricket World Cup 2018 after thrashing Australia in the final match.

**Jhulan Goswami**, India's veteran pacer, became the first female cricketer in the world to take 200 wickets in One-Day Internationals (ODI) cricket.

Defending champion **Kishan Gangolli** from Karnataka won the 13th edition of the National 'A' Chess Championship for the blind.

Five-time world champion **Mary Kom** clinched gold in the 48 kilogram category among women at the 2018 India Open boxing Tournament in New Delhi .

The **Railway Sports Promotion Board** won the 8th edition of Senior National Women's Hockey Championship 2018.

Pune-based swimmer, **Rohan More** became the first Asian as well as the first Indian to swim across the Ocean Seven. Rohan is the youngest person in the world to swim across the Ocean Seven. The Ocean's Seven marathon consists of seven long-distance open-water swims, which includes the North Channel, the Cook Strait, the Molokai Channel, the English Channel, the Catalina Channel, the Tsugaru Strait and the Strait of Gibraltar.

**Sharmila Nicollet** from Bengaluru became the first Indian golfer to qualify for the China Ladies PGA Tour.

**Shubhankar Sharma** from Chandigarh became the highest ranked Indian golfer after securing 72nd position in the Official World Golf Ranking (OWGR).

**Tamil Nadu** beat Manipur to lift their maiden title in the 23rd edition of the Senior Women's National Football Championship.

**Zhang Beiwen**, a professional badminton player from America, won the 4th edition of India Open Badminton tournament 2018.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### World

- Bermuda became the world's first country to legalise and then repeal same-sex marriage.
- The 6th edition of World Government Summit 2018 was held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Indian delegation was led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The World Cancer Day was observed on 4th February with the theme "We can. I can".
- The United Arab Emirates (UAE) launched the world's longest zip Line "Jebel Jais Flight " in Ras al-Khaimah.
- The World Leprosy Day was observed on 28<sup>th</sup> January with the theme 'Zero Disabilities in Girls and Boys'.

### India

- India's first-ever radio festival was held in New Delhi on February 15, 2018 to mark World Radio Day. The festival was organised by International Association of Women in Radio and Television in partnership with UNESCO. India's 1st Online Radio Station 'Radio Umang' was launched on this day. Listeners can tune in to this online radio station through web streaming or download the app. Radio Umang is a Hindi international online radio station themed around peace, humanity and hope.
- India and Russia celebrated 70 years of bilateral relations in the field of agriculture at Suratgarh in Rajasthan.
- India's financial capital Mumbai, with a total wealth of \$950 billion, was named among the top 15 wealthiest cities globally, while New York topped the list. According to a report by New World Wealth, the economic hub of India is the 12th wealthiest city, followed by Toronto with a total wealth of \$944 billion, Frankfurt (14th, \$912 billion) and Paris (15th, \$860 billion).
- Rajnath Singh, the Union Home Minister, launched the Centre for learning Sanskrit language in Gujarat University in Ahmedabad. This is the first-of-its-kind spoken Sanskrit centre in India.
- The 2018 International Conference on Unani Medicine was inaugurated by Dr Jitendra Singh (the Union Minister of Development of North-East Region) with the theme "Integration of Unani System of Medicine in Mainstream Healthcare" in New Delhi.
- The South Central Railway became the first railway zone in India to complete 100% LED lighting at all the 733 stations under its jurisdiction.
- The National Unani Day was celebrated on 11th February to mark the birth anniversary of great Unani researcher Haqim Ajmal Khan.
- The Government of Assam signed a Memorandum of Understanding with cab-hailing company Ola for a pilot project of app-based river taxi services in Guwahati.



- The first-ever Pelican Bird Festival-2018 was held at the Atapaka Bird Sanctuary on Kolleru lake in Andhra Pradesh. Atapaka Bird Sanctuary is the home for thousands of pelicans that migrate to the lake.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) in collaboration with Department of Forests, Assam government organized national-level celebration of World Wetlands Day (WWD), 2018. The 2018 theme was 'Wetlands for a sustainable urban future'. Every year, February 2 is celebrated as World Wetlands Day, to mark the date of adoption of Ramsar Convention on Wetlands. The Convention on Wetlands, called the Ramsar Convention, is an intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. It was adopted in 1971 at the Iranian City of Ramsar. India is a party to the Convention since 1982, and committed to the Ramsar approach of wise use of wetlands.
- The Maharashtra Government approved Ghodazari Wildlife Sanctuary in Chandrapur district as a new wildlife sanctuary in the state.
- The first-ever International Kala Mela was inaugurated by the Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu in New Delhi.
- The 2018 Kala Ghoda Arts festival was held in Mumbai, with the theme "Hara Ghoda" to promote sustainable living, recycling and environment-friendliness.
- The Assam Government signed an MoU with the National Building Construction Corporation (NBCC) Limited to build a Twin Tower Trade Centre in Guwahati at a cost of Rs 1950 crore.
- The 32nd Surajkund International Crafts Mela 2018 was held at Faridabad, Haryana. The Mela is organized every year by the Surajkund Mela Authority and Haryana Tourism in collaboration with Union Ministries of Tourism, Textiles, Culture and External Affairs. This year, Uttar Pradesh was the theme state and Kyrgyzstan was the Partner Nation.

## AWARDS & HONOURS

Sagar Chaya Vanchar, director of Marathi film 'Redu' (Radio), bagged the prestigious **Aravindan Puraskaram** for the best debutant director of 2017, instituted in memory of iconic Malayalam filmmaker late G Aravindan.

Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri won the best film award at the 71st **British Academy Film Awards**. The main awards were as under:

- **Best Film** : Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- **Outstanding British Film** : Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- **Leading Actor** : Gary Oldman
- **Leading Actress** : Frances McDormand

Sanjiv Bajaj, Managing Director of Bajaj Finserv, was named the **EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2017** for solutions in lending, life and general insurance and wealth advisory.

Vikas Sathaye, a Pune-born person was honoured with the **Scientific and Engineering Academy Award** at the Oscars Scientific and Technical Awards 2018 in California.

Milkbasket, India's first and largest micro-delivery platform, was recognised as '**Startup of the Year**' 2017 at the 7th Small Business Awards held in New Delhi.

Legendary singer Asha Bhosle was conferred with the 5th edition of **Yash Chopra Memorial Award 2018** for her outstanding contribution to the Hindi film industry.

## BUSINESS & CORPORATE

**Aditya Birla Idea Payments Bank Ltd (ABIPBL)** started operations, making it the fifth payments bank to roll out operations after the central bank gave its in-principle approval to 11 applicants in August 2015. The other payments banks that have started operations include Airtel Payments Bank Ltd, India Post Payments Bank Ltd, Paytm Payments Bank Ltd and Fino Payments Bank Ltd.

The Khadi and Village Industries Board of Uttar Pradesh signed a pact with **Amazon India** to facilitate online selling of Khadi products.

State-owned telecom firm **BSNL** and Japan's NTT AT along with their Indian partner Virgo Corps signed agreement to collaborate in futuristic technologies. The agreement is in line with the vision of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to collaborate on the next generation technologies and use the expertise of India in software and Japanese expertise in manufacturing.

Digital payments entity PhonePe, partnered with **Indian Oil Corporation Limited** (IOCL) for adoption of its indigenously-designed Point of Sale (POS) device at IOCL retail outlets.

Reaffirming its commitment towards transforming the education landscape, the government of Tamil Nadu announced signing an agreement with IT Major **Microsoft** to improve the integration of technology in teaching and learning in the state. The partnership aims to reform education sector, build tech capacity and enhance digital literacy across all levels.

The **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation** (ONGC) announced to launch Asia's first large scale CO2-injected project in its Gandhar oil field in Gujarat.

## BILLS / ACTS / COMMITTEES / SCHEMES / POLICIES

- Second India-Korea Business Summit was held in New Delhi, to strengthen the economic relationship, boost trade relations and increase investments between India and Republic of Korea.
- The high-level committee for Central Assistance Chaired by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh approved financial assistance of Rs 1711 crore for Bihar which was affected by floods in 2017.
- The 15th Edition of BioAsia conference 2018 was held in Hyderabad with the theme "Right Time, Right Now". It is the annual flagship life sciences and pharmaceuticals conference of the Telangana Government.
- Union Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Sushri Uma Bharti, launched the Swajal pilot project at Village Bhikampura, Karauli, Rajasthan. Besides ensuring the availability of clean drinking water to every household round the year, the project would also generate employment.
- The 21st edition of National conference on e-Governance was held in Hyderabad, Telangana with the theme "Technology for Accelerating Development".
- The Telangana government signed a technology partnership agreement with Taoyuan City, Taiwan. The Telangana government and Taoyuan City will engage in an economic exchange of technology companies.
- The Haryana government launched Parivartan, a scheme designed to address 10 issues, including cleanliness and pollution, in 46 developmental blocks of the state.
- The Kerala government made vaccination compulsory for school admissions to Class 1 from the 2018-'19 academic year, as per the new health policy draft released by the health minister of Kerala KK Shailaja. The purpose of the new health draft policy is to reduce maternal mortality rate from 66 per lakh to 30 per lakh in the short term, and infant mortality from 12 per lakh to eight.
- As a special initiative, Union Minister of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Uma Bharti, launched the Bagori Ganga Gram project, New Swajal Project at Bagori and Gangotri Iconic Place at Dunda village in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand. Besides creating cleanliness, providing basic amenities to the people of Ganga bank villages, these projects would also generate employment.
- The National conference on "Agriculture 2022- Doubling Farmers' Income" was held in New Delhi, with a view to identifying various critical issues relating to agriculture and farmers' welfare and finding appropriate solutions.
- The Union Government constituted a committee headed by Rajiv Kumar, the Vice Chairman of the NITI Aayog, to study the Brahmaputra and flood control measures in Assam and neighboring states .
- The UK – India Joint research projects on 'Water Quality Research' and 'Energy Demand Reduction in Built Environment' were launched in New.
- Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and Natural History Museum (NHM), UK signed a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in the field of genetic/taxonomic studies, research and training, conservation in India, including species and habitat conservation assessments, etc.
- The Maharashtra government announced to launch cheap sanitary pad scheme "Asmita Yojana" on the International Women's Day for rural women. Under the scheme, girls in Zilla Parishad schools will get a sanitary napkin packet at Rs 5 while rural women can avail it at a subsidised rate of Rs 24 and Rs 29.

- India and Iran signed an Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation (DTAA) and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on income.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally inaugurated the World Sustainable Development Summit 2018 in New Delhi. Organised by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), the three-day summit saw participation from over 41 countries, bringing together different stakeholders in the fields of sustainable development, energy and environment sectors.

## ECONOMY & FINANCE

- Compromised by low usage and poor quality, India was ranked 47th out of 86 countries with respect to inclusive Internet and connectivity for all, as per a Facebook report. Facebook, which commissioned the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) to create a comprehensive "Inclusive Internet Index," found India in the middle of Asian countries (12th out of 23) when it came to connectivity. The index was topped by Sweden, followed by Singapore and the US.
- Moody's Investors Service estimated India's GDP growth forecast for year 2018 & 2019 at 7.6 % and 7.5 % respectively. In its global growth forecasts for 2018 and 2019, Moody's said the Budget for fiscal year beginning April 1 (2018-19) included some measures to stabilize rural economy that was disproportionately hit by scrapping of high denomination 500 and 1000 rupee notes.
- Currency futures trading received a boost after the Reserve Bank of India raised the position limit for trading in currency derivatives on stock exchanges, for both resident and non-resident Indians, to \$100 million across all currency pairs involving the rupee.
- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank signed a \$84 million loan for improvement and expansion of water supply in Bhagalpur and Gaya towns in Bihar.
- The Reserve Bank of India launched the Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFC) for redressal of complaints against NBFCs registered with RBI. The Scheme will provide a cost-free and expeditious complaint redressal mechanism relating to deficiency in the services by NBFCs covered under the Scheme. To begin with, the Scheme will cover all deposit-taking NBFCs. Based on the experience gained, the RBI would extend the scheme to cover NBFCs having asset size of Rs. One Billion and above with customer interface.
- India was ranked 81st out of 180 countries in the global Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2017, released by Transparency International. In 2016 India was in the 79th place among 176 countries. New Zealand and Denmark were ranked 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> respectively. Somalia was found to be the most corrupt country in the world.
- In the wake of the Rs 11,300 crore fraud at the Punjab National Bank, the Reserve Bank of India constituted a five member panel under former board member Y H Malegam to look into the wide divergence by banks in asset classification and provisioning and reasons for frauds and measures to prevent it.

## PEOPLE IN NEWS

Archaeologist and historian **Arvind P. Jamkhedkar** will be the next Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR). He will replace Prof. K. Sudershan Rao.

Flying officer **Avani Chaturvedi** from Madhya Pradesh created history by becoming the first Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo.

**Cyril Ramaphosa**, head of the ruling African National Congress (ANC), was sworn-in as the new President of South Africa.

Noted Odia author **Kanakalata Mohanty** died at age 82. She has written several novels and more than 100 short stories. She was also a noted lyricist and respected for her devotional songs on Lord Jagannath. Kanaklata received several awards for her contribution to Odia literature.

**Bhanu Kumar Shastri**, the founder member of Bharatiya Jana Sangh and a former MP, passed away at age 93. He was a member of Lok Sabha from Udaipur in Rajasthan and was also chairman of Khadi Board.

**Billy Graham**, the charismatic 20th-century global Christian evangelist leader who became a spiritual adviser to U.S. presidents, passed away at the age of 99. From the 1930s until the early years of this century, Graham drew crowds of thousands to hear his rallying cry for Christianity. Over almost six decades, it is estimated that he preached to more than 200 million people. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1983 from President Ronald Reagan and the Congressional Gold Medal in 1996, two of the highest awards given to an American civilian.

**Haruhiko Kuroda** was reappointed as the governor of Bank of Japan (BOJ) for second five-year term by the Government of Japan.

**Khwaja Haleem**, a former Uttar Pradesh minister and senior Samajwadi Party leader, passed away at age 78.

**Kunhiraman Panoor**, a reputed author and human rights activist, passed away at age 84. He had won the Kerala Sahithya Akademi award for comprehensive contribution in 2006.

**Kunwar Bai**, a 106-year-old woman from Chhattisgarh who was chosen as a mascot for the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan', passed away. Kunwar Bai shot to fame in 2016 when the story of how she sold her goats to build a toilet at home got nationwide publicity. She was felicitated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a public meeting and later made a mascot for the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

Noted violinist **M.S. Anantharaman**, an exponent of Parur style of violin playing, passed away at the age of 94.

The University Grants Commission constituted a four-member Empowered Expert Committee (EEC), to conduct the appraisal of applications for short listing 20 Institutions of Eminence. **N Gopalaswami**, former Chief Election Commissioner of India is the Chairperson of the committee.

Television journalist **Rahul Mahajan** was appointed as the new editor-in-chief of the television channel Rajya Sabha TV.

**SR Subramanian**, a former Cabinet Secretary of the Union government of India, died at age 79. Subramanian was a 1961-batch officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre. He served as Cabinet Secretary from August 1996 to March 1998.

Dr. **Satya Pal Singh**, Union Minister of State for Human Resource Development (Higher Education), led the Indian delegation at the 20th Conference of the Commonwealth Education Ministers in Nadi, Fiji. The theme of the Conference was "Sustainability and Resilience: Can Education Deliver?"

Former Madhya Pradesh minister and senior Congress leader **Suresh Seth** passed away at age 86. He was popularly known as 'Sher-e-Indore' for fearlessly raising issues of public interest and corruption.

**Vijayendra Saraswathi** became 70th Shankaracharya of Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, traditionally referred to as Kamakshi, with the demise of Sri Jayendra Saraswati Swamiji. Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, a Hindu monastic institution, is located in Kanchipuram, Tamil Nadu. It is known as Shri Kanchi Kamakoti Peetam, and the head of the matha is referred to as a "Shankaracharya". The mutt was established by Adi Shankaracharya about 2520 years ago.

## SPORTS

**Aruna Budda Reddy**, the 22-year-old from Hyderabad, Telangana, created history when she became the first Indian gymnast to win a World Cup Series medal. Aruna bagged a bronze at the World Cup Gymnastics Series event in Melbourne, finishing third in vault. Aruna is the third Indian gymnast after Ashish Kumar and Dipa Karmakar, who won bronze in the 2010 and 2014 Commonwealth Games respectively, to win a medal in competitions organised by the international gymnastics federation (FIG). Her achievement is all the more credible because she was participating in the World Cup Series, which is an invitational event involving 16 selected gymnasts across the world.

The **Indian** team, led by Kiran Nadar, won the 5th Commonwealth bridge championship, in Gold Coast, Australia.

Star India, the official broadcaster for the Indian Premier League (IPL), got the audio-visual production rights of the 11th edition of the **Indian Premier League (IPL-2018)**.

**Karnataka** cricket team won the 2018 Vijay Hazare trophy thus winning the Vijay Hazare trophy 3 times.

Reigning Commonwealth Games champion **Parupalli Kashyap** won men's singles title at the 2018 Austrian Open International Challenge badminton tournament.

Twenty-time tennis grand slam champion **Roger Federer** won the 2017 Laureus World Sportsman of the Year and Comeback of the Year awards. The 36-year-old Swiss won the Australian Open and Wimbledon titles in 2017 after nearly five years without a major. Serena Williams took the World Sportswoman of the Year award after winning her 23rd grand slam in 2017.

**Roger Federer**, a Swiss professional tennis player, won the 2018 Rotterdam Open men's singles tennis tournament by defeating Grigor Dimitrov in the final.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### World

- China was elected as the vice-president of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) at the plenary meeting in Paris. The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) was set up in 1989 with the primary goal of setting standards to combat money laundering, but in 2001 its mandate was expanded to include countering terror financing. It can take action such as financial restrictions against any country.
- The International Mother Language Day was celebrated by UNESCO on February 21 to promote awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity, with the theme "Linguistic diversity and multilingualism count for sustainable development".
- The Government of India contributed \$1 million aid for the rehabilitation efforts in kingdom of Tonga after the Tropical Cyclone Gita caused massive destruction in the Pacific island nation.
- The Singapore government will impose a 'carbon tax' from 2019 to cut its greenhouse gas emissions and make companies more competitive as global agreements on climate change take effect.
- The World Day of Social Justice was observed on February 20 with the theme : "Workers on the Move: the Quest for Social Justice".
- The world's tallest hotel 'Gevora' opened in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

### India

- The National Science Day was observed on February 28 to mark the discovery of Raman effect by Physicist CV Raman. The theme was "Science and Technology for a Sustainable Future".
- The three day India International Textiles Expo (IIT Expo) was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka.
- The 6th edition of annual joint military exercise 'Garuda Shakti-2018' was organized between the armies of India and Indonesia in Bandung, Indonesia.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gave its approval to the construction of 4.531 km long 2-Lane Bi-Directional Silkyara Bend-Barkot Tunnel in Uttarakhand as part of 'Chardham Mahamarg Pariyojana'.
- In a first, India will be getting an institute for artificial intelligence (AI) in Mumbai. Maharashtra state government will be setting up the institute in India's financial capital, to give a fresh impetus to the fourth industrial revolution and promote Mumbai as an investment destination in innovation and data analysis.
- The National Banana Festival was held at Kalliyoor, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- The third-edition of international conference and exhibition on pharmaceuticals industry and medical devices- India Pharma 2018 and India Medical Device 2018 – was held in Bengaluru, Karnataka.