

## AWARDS & HONOURS

*The English Patient* by Michael Ondaatje (Bloomsbury) was crowned the best work of fiction from the last five decades of the **Man Booker Prize**. The winner of this special one-off award for the Man Booker Prize's 50th anniversary celebrations was chosen by the public. All 51 previous winners were considered by a panel of five specially appointed judges, each of whom was asked to read the winning novels from one decade of the prize's history, before the books faced a month-long public vote on the Man Booker website.

Noted artist Anjolie Ela Menon, 78, received the **National Kalidas Samman** for visual arts from the Madhya Pradesh government. The award was conferred in recognition of her insightful and sensitive portrayal of the identity and spirit of women through her meaningful paintings in a variety of media.

The famed 'art district of south Mumbai' comprising Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles was named as the latest - and India's 37th - entrant to the coveted **World Heritage Sites** list, as per a Unesco announcement.

## BUSINESS & CORPORATE

State-run telecom firm **BSNL** unveiled the country's first internet telephony service that will allow users to dial any telephone number in India through its mobile app.

The Union Cabinet approved the proposal submitted by **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry regarding accession to the WIPO Copyright Treaty and WIPO Performers and Phonograms Treaty which extends coverage of copyright to the internet and digital environment. The approval is a step towards the objective laid in the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy adopted by the Government on 12th May 2016 which aims to get value for IPRs through commercialization by providing guidance and support to IPR owners about commercial opportunities of e-commerce through Internet and mobile platforms.

The Rajasthan government signed a MoU with **Microsoft** to provide free digital training to 9,500 students of 50 government colleges in a year.

**Numaligarh Refinery Ltd** (NRL) in Assam became the first oil public sector undertaking (PSU) to adopt an online legal compliance system by introducing 'Legatrix'.

South Korean consumer electronics major **Samsung** inaugurated the world's largest mobile phone factory here which will double its annual handset production capacity to 120 million units by 2020. The new plant will help the company raise its capacity in a phased manner, from 68 million units at present, to 120 million.

The Telangana Government signed an MoU with Singapore-based **Surbana Jurong** for preparing a roadmap for Genome Valley 2.0. The Genome Valley cluster has emerged as the largest life sciences destination in Asia, being home to over 200 companies employing 10,000 people.

Odisha government and **Tata Trust** will jointly spend Rs 1,000 crore for development of cancer care facilities in the state in next five years. The estimated cost towards the infrastructure development in five years would be around Rs 1000 crore, which would be equally shared by the Tata Trust and the state government.

## BILLS / ACTS / COMMITTEES / SCHEMES / POLICIES

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) constituted a 10 Member Committee, headed by the Injeti Srinivas (Secretary of Ministry of Corporate Affairs), for review of the penal provisions in the Companies Act, 2013. The basic aim of the committee is to examine de-criminalisation of certain offences and to suggest ways to replace it with in-house mechanism, where a penalty could be levied in instances of default.
- The Andhra Pradesh government launched the much-awaited 'Anna Canteens' in various parts of the state. Setting up 'Anna Canteens', where breakfast, lunch and dinner would be offered at Rs 5 each, was one of the promises the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) made ahead of the 2014 polls.
- The Maharashtra government will launch 'One farmer one transformer' scheme from 15th August to curb electricity losses. Under this scheme, the state Government will provide electrical connection for high voltage distribution line to about two lakh farmers of the state to ensure uninterrupted power supply in the state.
- The Union Human Resource Development Ministry granted "Institutions of Eminence" status to IIT-Delhi, IIT-Bombay and Indian Institute of Science (Bengaluru) in the public sector, and Manipal Academy of Higher Education, BITS Pilani and Jio Institute by Reliance Foundation, in the private sector. The goal is to bring them into the top 500 institutions in the world within the next 10 years, and eventually in top 100. The Government will grant Rs 1,000 crore funds to the three public institutions in the next five years though; the private institutes will not be eligible for government funding.
- The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) launched a mobile help centre "Saathi" to reach out to people undertaking the annual pilgrimage to the 3,880-metre high holy cave shrine of Amarnath.
- The Union government granted another extension to the K. Kasturirangan Committee tasked with drafting a new education policy. The committee, which was supposed to submit the report by 30 June, now has till 31 August. This is the third extension for the committee established in June 2017, and could potentially delay the formulation of the new policy, touted as the biggest reform in education in India.
- Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani launched 'Poshan Abhiyan'--a statewide mission to eradicate malnutrition among children by providing them nutritious food through Anganwadi centres. The chief minister also launched 'Purna' project to eliminate malnutrition among girls in the age group of 14 to 18. 'Purna' stands for Prevention of Under Nutrition and Reduction of Nutritional Anaemia among Adolescent Girls.
- Starting July 12, children studying in classes 1-8 at Delhi government schools will spend 45 minutes every day in attending 'Happiness Classes', which will comprise exercises such as storytelling, meditation and question and answer sessions. The 'Happiness Curriculum' – which will focus on activity-based learning, value education and mental exercises, will be inaugurated by Dalai Lama.
- The Union Cabinet gave its approval for continuance of the 8 existing schemes of the Ministry of Home Affairs upto March 2020 for relief and rehabilitation of migrants and repatriates under the Umbrella scheme "Relief and Rehabilitation of Migrants and Repatriates". The financial implication for this purpose is Rs. 3183 crore for the period 2017-18 to 2019-20. The schemes will provide relief and rehabilitation assistance to the refugees, displaced persons, civilian victims of terrorist/communal/LWE violence and cross border firing and mine/IED blasts on Indian Territory and riot victims of various incidents etc.
- In Madhya Pradesh, the government launched an outstanding power bill waiver scheme and subsidised power scheme 'Sambal' for labourers and poor families. Under the scheme, the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families would be provided electricity at a cost of 200 rupees per month. AIR correspondent reports that the objective of this scheme to make sure that all the households have power facility in the state.

## ECONOMY & FINANCE

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Indian Army and SBI on the Defence Salary Package.
- India became the 69th shareholder of the London-headquartered European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), paving the way for more joint investment with Indian companies across the bank's regions of operation.
- Andhra Pradesh topped the ease of doing annual business ranking of states and Union Territories by the World Bank and Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP). Telangana and Haryana were at the second and third positions, respectively. Others in the top ten were Jharkhand (4), Gujarat (5), Chhattisgarh (6), Madhya Pradesh (7), Karnataka (8), Rajasthan (9) and West Bengal (10). Meghalaya was ranked last at 36th position.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) approved USD 503-million lining project of the Son canal in Shahabad-Bhojpur region of Bihar which would benefit the agriculture sector immensely in the region.
- The government set up a 13-member expert panel, headed by Ravindra H Dholakia, a retired professor of IIM Ahmedabad, to revise the way economic activity is measured at state and district levels as part of a move to update the base year for calculating national income to 2017-18 from 2011-12 now. The idea is to capture the structural changes in the economy and make the calculation of gross domestic product (GDP) more precise. A wider direct and indirect tax base on account of measures to curb black money and reforms like goods and services tax (GST) is expected to improve the assessment of the extent of economic activity at state and lower levels.
- The Union Cabinet approved the extension of the scheme of recapitalization of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) for the next three years i.e. upto 2019-20. This will enable the RRBs to maintain the minimum prescribed Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of 9 per cent. The scheme of Recapitalization of RRBs started in FY 2010-11 and was extended twice in the year 2012-13 and 2015-16. A total amount of Rs. 1107.20 crore, as Gol share, out of Rs.1450 crore, was released to RRBs upto 31st March, 2017.

## PEOPLE IN NEWS

Commander **Abhilash Tomy** of the Indian Navy was the only invitee from Asia to participate in the prestigious Golden Globe Race (GGR) that commenced from Les Sables d'Olonne harbour in France. The participants are required to sail around the world, single-handed and non-stop. The uniqueness of the race is that boat designs and technology newer than 1968 is not permitted, hence use of Global Positioning System (GPS), satellite communication, navigational aids, etc is forbidden.

Supreme Court judge **Adarsh Kumar Goel** was appointed as the chairperson of National Green Tribunal. He is best remembered for passing the controversial judgment on diluting provisions of the SC/ST Act. The post of the chairperson of the green tribunal, which disposes cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources, had been vacant for the past eight months.

The Banks Board Bureau (BBB), the advisory body formed by the government for selection of candidates for top level board appointments, recommended 15 executive directors to be elevated as managing directors (MD) at various public sector banks. The panel headed by former Department of Personnel and Training Secretary B P Sharma recommended **Anushula Kant** Deputy Managing Director and CFO to be promoted as managing director in State Bank of India (SBI).

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) launched a mobile app 'GST Verify' to protect interest of consumers. It is an android app developed by **B Raghu Kiran** joint commissioner GST Hyderabad, and can be used all across the country.

Noted spiritual leader and educationist **Dada J.P. Vaswani** — the moral force behind the Sadhu Vaswani Mission and a tireless promoter of vegetarianism and animal rights — passed away at the age of 99.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres announced the appointment of Major General **José Eladio Alcaín** of Uruguay as Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer for the United Nations.

**Kabutari Devi**, the famous Kumaoni folk singer, passed away in Uttarakhand at the age of 70.

**Kalpesh Yagnik**, a veteran journalist with the Dainik Bhaskar Group, passed away in Indore, at the age of 55.

Prof **NN Wig**, the doyen of psychiatry in India who founded the Psychiatry Department at the PGI (Chandigarh) in 1963, passed away at the age of 88.

Dr. **Sandeep Sancheti**, the Vice Chancellor of SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST), assumed charge as the President of the Association of Indian Universities (AIU).

**Satyarup Siddhanta**, from India, became the 2nd Indian mountaineer after Malli Mastan Babu to climb Mt Ojos del Salado, the highest volcano in the world.

**Sunita Parmar**, a Hindu woman in Sindh province, created history by becoming the first from the minority community to contest the provincial assembly elections in Pakistan held on July 25.

Dr. **TCA Raghavan**, a 1982 batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service, was appointed as Director General of Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA). The post is equivalent to the rank of Secretary to the Government of India.

Rajya Sabha, for the first time in 76 years since it came into being, entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a foreign counterpart for promoting inter-parliamentary dialogue. **Venkaiah Naidu**, in the process, became the first Chairman of Rajya Sabha to sign such an agreement when he inked an MOU with the visiting President of the Senate of the Republic of Rwanda, Mr. Bernard Makuza.

**Vishwas Patel**, Director at Infibeam Avenues, was appointed as the new Chairman of Payments Council of India (PCI), the apex body representing the companies in the payments and settlement system.

## SPORTS

Germany's **Angelique Kerber** won the Wimbledon women's singles title, beating the seven-times champion Serena Williams in the final, thus becoming the first German woman to win the title since Steffi Graf in 1996.

**Anju Khosla**, at the age of 52, became the oldest Indian woman to complete an Ironman Triathlon – one of the toughest one-day sporting events. The New Delhi resident completed her first full Ironman Triathlon, in Carinthia, Austria, in 15 hours, 54 minutes and 54 seconds. It comprises 3.86 km swimming leg, 180.25 km bike leg followed by a marathon (42.2 km), to be completed without a break.

**Bajrang Punia** from India clinched gold in the 65kg category at the 2018 Tbilisi Grand Prix tournament in Georgia.

India's premier gymnast **Dipa Karmakar** from Tripura clinched gold in the vault event of FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Challenge Cup in Turkey.

India's ace squash player **Dipika Pallikal** was appointed as Asia's representative in the prestigious Athletes Advisory Commission of the Commonwealth Games Federation.

Union Minister of State (I/C) Youth Affairs and Sports, Rajyavardhan Rathore sanctioned financial assistance of Rs. five lakh to National Level Archer **Gohela Boro** for her medical treatment.

**Hima Das**, from Assam, created history by becoming the first Indian woman to win a gold at the IAAF World Under- 20 Athletics Championships in Finland.

Indian lifter **Jhilli Dalabehera** from Odisha bagged the bronze medal in the 48 kg category at the 2018 IWF Junior World Weightlifting Championships at Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Former Meghalaya governor **MM Jacob** passed away at the age of 90. Jacob, a former union minister, had also served as deputy chairman of the Rajya Sabha in the 80s.

**MS Dhoni** added yet another milestone to his glittering career after completing 500 international games when playing in the second T20I against England. Dhoni is now the ninth player in the history of cricket and only the third Indian player, after Sachin Tendulkar (664 matches) and Rahul Dravid (509), to complete 500 international games.

Goalkeeper **PR Sreejesh** will lead the 18-member Indian men's hockey squad in the 18th Asian Games, scheduled to begin in Jakarta and Palembang from August 18, 2018.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### World

- India became the Vice-Chair (Regional Head) of the Asia Pacific Region of World Customs Organisation (WCO) for a period of two years, from July, 2018 to June, 2020. The WCO has divided its Membership into six Regions. Each of the six Regions is represented by a regionally elected Vice-Chairperson to the WCO Council. WCO represents 182 Customs administrations across the globe that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade. As the global centre of Customs expertise, the WCO is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters and can rightly call itself the voice of the international Customs community.
- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted a resolution 2428 (2018) to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan. The measure will stop the flow of weapons to armed groups in the country.
- The World Population Day was observed on July 11, like every year with the theme "Family planning is a human right".
- The Union Human Resource Development Minister, Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the 17th World Sanskrit Conference in Vancouver, Canada.
- The International Day of Cooperatives was observed on July 7, the first Saturday of July (like every year), to recognize and reaffirms the role of cooperatives in economic, social and cultural development and in the achievement of social policy objectives. The theme this year was 'Sustainable societies through cooperation'.
- India would operate Sri Lanka's loss-making Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport in Hambantota, as a Sri Lanka-India joint venture. The \$210 million facility, 241km south-east of Colombo, is dubbed the "world's emptiest airport" due to a lack of flights.
- The 5th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) inter sessional ministerial meeting was held in Tokyo, Japan. RCEP is a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) or comprehensive regional economic integration agreement between the 10-ASEAN countries (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) and its six FTA partners (Australia, New Zealand, India, China, Japan and Korea).

### India

- The Government of India (GoI) invited US President Donald Trump to be chief guest at the 2019 Republic Day Parade. The US is yet to officially accept India's invite.
- The Odisha Government constituted Heritage Cabinet headed by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to preserve the history and culture of Odisha.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the Bansagar canal project in Mirzapur (Uttar Pradesh) to the nation, in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.
- Department of Botany in Goa University announced the discovery of a new pigment from local wild mushrooms that may help fight against cancer.

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched a technology challenge on identifying solutions and promoting suitable techniques for cleaning of sewerage systems, to eliminate human entry into septic tanks and manholes.
- India's first private sector unit for manufacturing Unmanned Air Vehicles and Light Bullet Proof Vehicles will be set up by DCM Shriram Industries Group on the campus of Shriram Rayons in Kota.
- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India launched 'The Eat Right' movement to empower the citizens by improving their health and well-being.
- The Western Ghats (India) bagged the 4th best tourist spot in Lonely Planet's top five "2018 Best in Asia" list, a collection of 10 of the best destinations to visit in the continent for the year. The list is topped by Busan in South Korea.
- Indian naval ship, INS Sumitra, became the first-ever warship to enter port of Sabang in Indonesia.
- The Gujarat government granted the status of religious minority to Jews in the state fulfilling a long-pending demand of the community.
- Airports Authority of India (AAI) is setting up a world-class Civil Aviation Research Organization (CARO) at Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad, aimed at finding indigenous solutions to meet the challenges posed by the growing air traffic and for enhancing safety, capacity and efficiency of aircraft operations in the country.
- The Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change declared the 438 sq. km. of area around Mudumalai Tiger Reserve (MTR) in Tamil Nadu, as an Eco-Sensitive Zone.
- The Andhra Pradesh government and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) signed a pact for the establishment of a Gaming Digital Learning Hub in the state.
- In a unique ruling, the Uttarakhand High Court declared the "entire animal kingdom including avian and aquatic" as legal entities with a distinct persona and corresponding rights, duties and liabilities of a living person.
- Kerala Government declared Kozhikode and Malappuram districts free from Nipah virus infection. It is a zoonotic disease (disease transmitted to humans from animals) that causes severe disease in both animals and humans.
- The National Doctors' Day was observed on 1 July across India, with the theme 'Zero tolerance to violence against doctors and clinical establishment'. The observance of the day honours legendary physician and West Bengal's second Chief Minister, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy.
- The Union Cabinet gave its approval to rename the Agartala Airport in Tripura as 'Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore Airport, Agartala. The decision came in the wake of the long pending demand of people of Tripura as well as the Tripura Government for paying tribute to Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore. Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore, who ascended the throne of the erstwhile Tripura Princely State in 1923, was an enlightened and benevolent ruler. Agartala Airport was constructed in 1942 on the land donated by Maharaja Bir Bikram Manikya Kishore.

- The Union Cabinet approved The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill 2018. The primary intended purpose for enactment of "The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill" is for expanding the application of DNA-based forensic technologies to support and strengthen the justice delivery system of the country.



## AWARDS & HONOURS

In the 60th year of an annual tradition, the Board of Trustees of the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF) announced winners of the 2018 **Ramon Magsaysay Award**. The awardees are :

- **Youk Chhang, from Cambodia** : He is being recognized for “his great, unstinting labor in preserving the memory of the Cambodian genocide, and his leadership and vision in transforming the memory of horror into a process of attaining and preserving justice in his nation and the world.”
- **Maria de Lourdes Martins Cruz, from East Timor** : She is being recognized for “her pure humanitarianism in uplifting Timor Leste’s poor, her valiant pursuit of social justice and peace, and hernurturing the development of autonomous, self-reliant, caring citizens, so vital in new, post-conflict nationsin the world.”
- **Howard Dee, from the Philippines** : He is being recognized for “his quietly heroic half-century of service to the Filipino people, his abiding dedication to the pursuit of social justice and peace in achieving dignity and progress for the poor, and his being, by his deeds, a true servant of his Faith and an exemplary citizen of his nation.”
- **Bharat Vatwani, from India** : He is being recognized for “his tremendous courage and healing compassion in embracing India’s mentally-afflicted destitute, and his steadfast and magnanimous dedication to the work of restoring and affirming the human dignity of even the most ostracized in our midst.”
- **Vo Thi Hoang Yen, from Vietnam** : She is being recognized for “her dauntless spirit and prodigious energy in rising above her condition; her creative, charismatic leadership in the sustained campaign to break down physical and mental barriers that have marginalized PWDs in Vietnam; and for being a shining, inspirational model for the young in her country and elsewhere in the world.”
- **Sonam Wangchuk, from India** : He is being recognized for “his uniquely systematic, collaborative and community-driven reform of learning systems in remote northern India, thus improving the life opportunities of Ladakhi youth, and his constructive engagement of all sectors in local society to harness science and culture creatively for economic progress, thus setting an example for minority peoples in the world.”

Aruna Sairam, a renowned Carnatic vocalist, was selected for the 2018 **Sangita Kalanidhi Award** of Madras Music Academy.

## BUSINESS & CORPORATE

**Facebook** lost \$124 bn in one day, marking the largest ever loss of value in one day for a US traded company.

American cult bike-maker **Harley-Davidson** decided to manufacture “more accessible, small displacement” bikes in the 250-500 cc range for Indian and other Asian markets.

**Hindalco**, the metals flagship company of the Aditya Birla Group, agreed to acquire the US-based Aleris for \$2.6 billion, a strategic move that would solidify its position as one of the largest Aluminum players in the world.

IFFCO iMandi, an e-commerce platform, was launched by Fertilizer major **IFFCO** to address all needs of the farming community associated with it.

**Infosys** announced to include the company’s performance in digital revenue as a performance metric against which its top executives’ performance will be measured

## BILLS / ACTS / COMMITTEES / SCHEMES / POLICIES

- “Mission Satyanishtha” was undertaken by the Indian government to sensitize all railway employees on the issue of ethics, integrity and probity in public life.
- Atal Innovation Mission and MyGov jointly launched citizen centric platform, Innovate India, to serve as a common point for all innovation happening across the nation.
- The sub-committee of Drugs Technical Advisory Board recommended prohibition of 343 fixed drug combinations (FDCs) after reviewing 349 and called for regulation and restriction of remaining six.
- The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of National Council on India’s Nutrition Challenges was organized by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development under the POSHAN Abhiyaan scheme.
- In July, 2018 India signed 8 agreements in the fields of defence, trade, agriculture, leather & allied products and dairy with Rwanda.
- The Group of Ministers (GoM) created by the Union Government to deliberate and make recommendations for a separate penal provision on incidents of mob violence will be headed by Rajnath Singh.
- Agartala hosted the first meeting of the India-Bangladesh Joint Committee on Border Haats.
- Five Central Oil PSUs -IOCL, ONGC, GAIL, OIL and NRL- signed agreement for executing 1500 km North-East Natural Gas Pipeline Grid, an initiative to be implemented under Centre’s ambitious Urja Ganga Gas Pipeline Project.
- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved Special Package for Irrigation Projects in drought prone areas of Maharashtra.

- Union Cabinet approved Special Remission Scheme for prisoners as part of commemoration of 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, to be observed in 2019.
- The Union cabinet approved the signing of MoU amongst BRICS Nations with the purpose of establishing institutional framework for cooperation in the field of Civil Aviation.
- All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) inked MoU with IIT Delhi to give scientific validation to Ayurveda.
- Odisha government launched Green Mahanadi Mission, a plantation drive under which 2 crore saplings will be planted along Mahanadi river and its tributaries.
- Haryana launched "Paudhagiri Campaign", a unique programme to increase green cover in the state and improve overall climatic conditions.
- Myanmar became the latest country to join India-initiated International Solar Alliance (ISA), making it 68<sup>th</sup> signatory to the Framework Agreement of ISA.
- In the inaugural 2+2 Dialogue with the US in September 2018 in New Delhi, Sushma Swaraj & Nirmala Sitharaman will host US Secretary of State, Michael Pompeo and US Secretary of Defence, James Mattis.
- Kathmandu will host the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of the BIMSTEC, Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation, from 30 to 31 August, 2018.
- European Union signed the biggest ever trade deal with Japan, creating free trade zone covering nearly third of the world's GDP.
- The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is the first intergovernmental agreement covering wide-ranging dimensions of international migration, agreed upon by all the UN member states minus the US.
- UN Environment Programme (UNEP) entered into partnership with which Google to monitor impact of human activity on world ecosystem by using sophisticated online tools.
- US has designated India as Strategic Trade Authorization-1 country that will allow India to buy highly advanced and cutting-edge sensitive technologies from America.
- The Union Ministry of Earth Science unveiled blueprint of Deep Ocean Mission (DOM) for the exploration of deep-ocean.

## ECONOMY & FINANCE

- India became Vice-Chair or Regional Head of Asia Pacific Region of the World Customs Organization for two years from July 2018 to June 2020.
- As per the 2018 AT Kearney FDI Confidence Index, India is currently ranked 11<sup>th</sup> as an attractive destination for Foreign Direct Investments.
- Invest India (the official Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of Central Government) signed an MoU with Business France to promote investment facilitation and cooperation between startups of the two countries.
- Banks and Financial Institutions in India signed an Inter-Creditor Agreement aimed at faster resolution of stressed assets of Rs. 50 crore or more which are under consortium lending.
- According to Asian Development Bank, India will continue to be the fastest growing major economy, ahead of China, with growth rate of 7.3% in 2018-19.
- India Post Payments Bank would start operations with 650 branches in August 2018, following final clearance from the Reserve Bank of India.
- ICICI Bank reported its first ever loss (since it became a bank in 2002) of Rs 120 crore for the quarter ended June 2018, due to a doubling of bad loan provisions:
- Voicing serious concerns over Chinese goods swamping the Indian market, a Parliamentary Panel sked the government to check Chinese imports across several sectors while noting that shipments from across the border have pushed several MSMEs (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) to shut shop.
- Phiroze Jeejeebhoy Towers, the iconic building of the Bombay Stock Exchange, secured image trademark, making it part of an elite club of distinguished structures around the world that have secured trademark rights.

## PEOPLE IN NEWS

**Anil Sahasrabudhe** was reappointed as the Chairman of the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

**Antonio Guterres**, the UN Secretary General, set up first-of-its-kind panel on digital cooperation to tackle cyber security threats.

Ex-cricketer **Imran Khan** was declared the winner of the 2018 Pakistan General Elections. He led Pakistani cricket team to its maiden World Cup victory in the year 1992.

The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) approved implementation of Strategic Partnership guidelines, a major step towards boosting private sector participation in domestic defence manufacturing. The DAC is chaired by **Nirmala Sitharaman**.

**Rohit Prasad**, an Indian engineer, was ranked No. 9 in Fast Company's 100 most creative people in business (2017). He is also the brain behind "Alexa"-a virtual assistant developed by American e-commerce and cloud computing company, Amazon.

Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Mian Saqib Nisar nominated Justice **Syeda Tahira Safdar** as the Chief Justice of Balochistan High Court (BHC), paving way for her to become the first female chief justice of any court in the country.

Teenager **Tanishq Abraham** was in news because he is an Indo-American prodigy who graduated as an engineer at the age of 15.

## SPORTS

**Angelique Kerber** of Germany beat Serena Williams to win the Wimbledon Championship (2018).

France, Croatia, Belgium and England were the top 4 teams at the 2018 FIFA World Cup, in descending order. **France** lifted the World Cup for the second time.

The "Golden Boot Award" for the top goal scorer of the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia was conferred upon **Harry Kane**.

**Novak Djokovic** of Serbia won the 2018 Men's Singles title at Wimbledon Championship (2018).

Under Khelo India Talent Development Scheme, the **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** selected 734 athletes to be given financial assistance and training at government-accredited residential academies.

## MISCELLANEOUS

### World

- July 28, 2018 was observed as the World Hepatitis Day.
- World Meteorological Organization has designated India as nodal centre for developing customized model to issue advance warning of floods to Asian countries.
- The NASA recently launched "Remote Sensing Toolkit" to promote commercial use of satellite data.
- The UK Space Agency has selected site at Sutherland in Scotland for its first spaceport to launch rockets vertically and put satellites into orbit.
- 29 July, 2018 was celebrated as the "International Tiger Day" to raise awareness about tiger conservation.
- The theme chosen by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime on the occasion of "World Day against trafficking in Persons", July 30 2018, was 'Responding to the trafficking of children and young people'.
- A severe hyperinflation crisis rocked Venezuela, with the International monetary Fund predicting that inflation in the country will skyrocket to 1 million percent by the end of the year.
- Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, founded by cricketing legend Imran Khan in 1996, emerged as the single largest party at the 2018 Pakistan General Elections.

### India

- Odisha unveiled first-ever "Tribal Atlas", a compilation of demographic and cultural information of the tribal population in the state.
- According to Public Affairs Index (PAI) 2018, Kerala topped the list as the best-governed state in the country.
- PM Narendra Modi inaugurated 171 km long Bansagar Canal Project in Mirzapur district of Uttar Pradesh. The Bansagar Dam Project is a joint venture amongst Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh & Bihar.
- SAFAR, the first of its kind and highly advanced Air Quality and Weather Forecast System, was inaugurated by the Ministry of Earth Sciences in Delhi.
- Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur developed "Treadwill", an online tool to help people cope with issues related to mental health.
- Odisha launched a drive to bust an international syndicate that peddles 'endangered' pangolin, one of the world's most illegally traded mammals.
- The 19<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1999 Indo-Pak Kargil War was celebrated across the country on July 26, 2018 to commemorate the success of Operation Vijay of the Indian Army.

- The Indian Air Force for first time will participate in multinational air exercise involving 12 countries hosted by the Air Force of Australia.
- Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) successfully test-fired supersonic cruise missile BrahMos under extreme weather conditions, as part of the service life extension programme for the Indian Army. This powerful missile has been developed by India's DRDO in collaboration with Russia.
- Karnataka became the new national leader in renewable energy generation, overtaking Tamil Nadu which had held the top slot for a long time.
- The Union Food Ministry notified decision to allow sugar mills to manufacture Ethanol directly from sugarcane juice.
- The West Bengal Assembly unanimously passed resolution to rename the state as Bangla.
- The Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas amended Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules 1959 to include Shale in the definition of Petroleum; a change which will allow private companies to explore and produce the resource in the blocks they operate.
- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) launched South East Asia's first ever Centre for Climate Change in Lucknow.
- In a strategic move to strengthen ties between the two countries, PM Narendra Modi launched India-assisted emergency ambulance service in Sri Lanka.