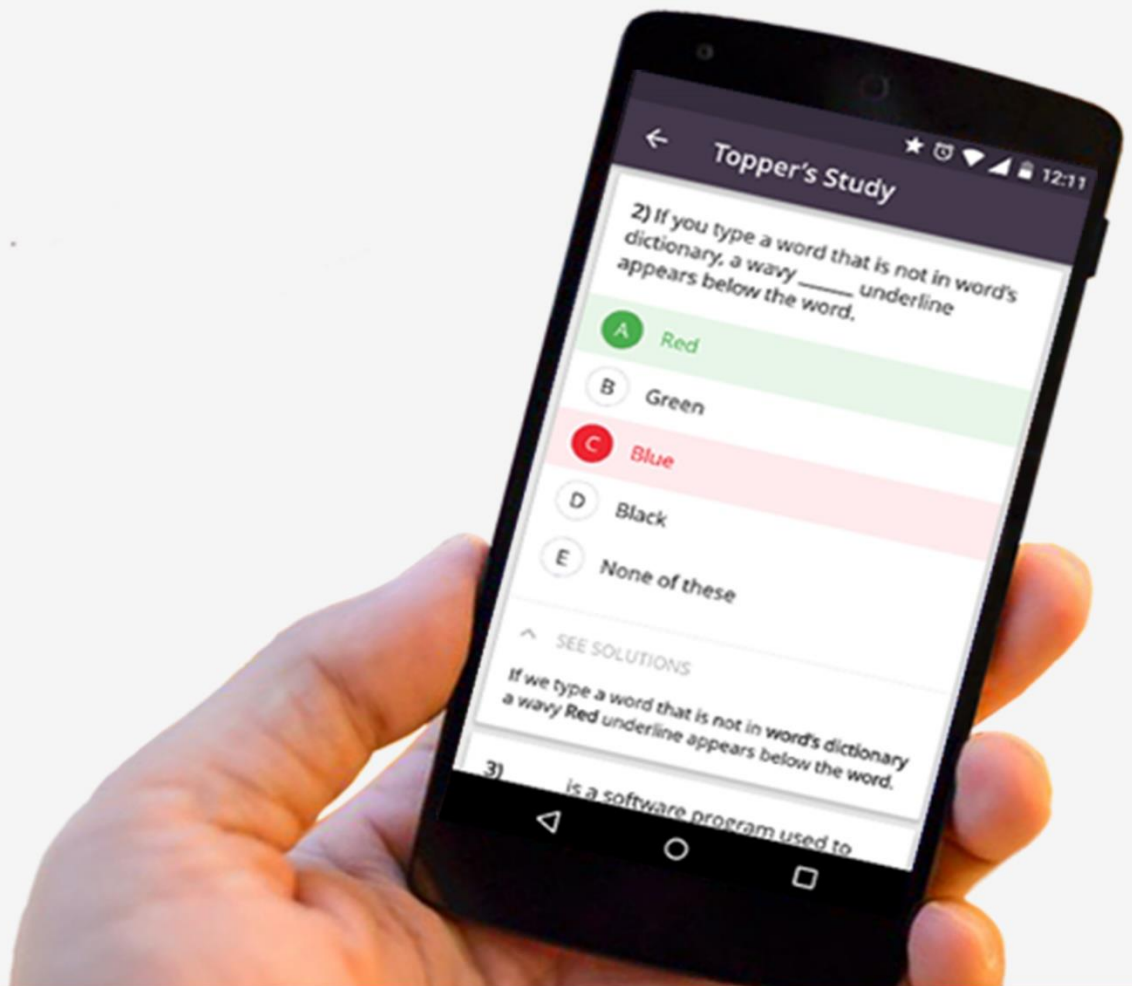




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GK DIGEST

JANUARY 2018



Monthly Digest January -2018

Dear readers,

This **Monthly GK Digest** is a complete docket of important news and events that occurred in a month of **January 2018**. We have compiled important & expected questions, which can be asked in upcoming **Banking interviews** and all upcoming **Banking & Insurance exams**.

Banking & Financial Awareness

1. The Income Tax (IT) Department has launched an on-line chat service on its national **website -- www.incometaxindia.gov.in**.
Note: A customer support executive having expertise in tax-related matters helps the users in resolving their queries on-line. The facility is available on all working days from Monday to Friday between 10 AM and 6 PM.
2. The Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) has signed a MoU with the **India Post Payments Bank** to provide training on payment banking.
Note: Under the agreement, IICA has been entrusted with the key responsibility of capacity building of IPPB through training of its officials/employees besides providing research support by instituting Research Chairs in the emerging area of payment banking.
3. The **Reserve Bank of India (RBI)** will shortly issue new banknotes of **Rs. 10 denomination** in the Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series.
Note: The new denomination has motif of Sun Temple, Konark on the reverse and the base colour of the note, Chocolate Brown. The dimension of the banknote will be **63 mm x 123 mm**.
4. The RBI clearance to register and function as a non-banking finance company (NBFC) --**Telangana Industrial Health Clinic Ltd (TIHCL)**.
Note: It will be the first state promoted and co-financing NBFC. **TIHCL** had won the SKOCH Platinum Award in Sep 2017 under the smart governance category in the MSME segment.
5. The union Govt has launched **Pradhan Mantri Vaya Vandana Yojana (PMVVY)** to provide social security during old age, to protect elderly persons aged 60 and above against a future fall in their interest income due to uncertain market conditions.
Note: The scheme enables old age income security for senior citizens through provision of assured pension/return linked to the subscription amount based on government guarantee to Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC). The scheme provides an assured return of 8% per annum for 10 years.
6. The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority of India (PFRDA) run Atal Pension Yojana (APY) has reached a subscriber base of -- **80 lakhs**.
Note: Uttar Pradesh is the highest contributing state at 11.41 lakh APY subscribers, followed by Bihar and Tamil Nadu. APY became operational from 1st June, 2015 and is available to all citizens of India in the age group of 18-40 years. A subscriber will receive a minimum guaranteed pension of 1000 to 5000 rupees per month, depending on his contribution, from the age of 60 years.
7. The **Punjab National Bank** has signed a MoU with National Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation to provide financial assistance to Scheduled Castes families living below Double Poverty Line.
Note: PNB will be channelizing agency for loan scheme of NSFDC.
8. The first **Advance Estimates of National Income 2017-18**, the Growth in GDP during 2017-18 has been estimated at -- **6.5%**
Note: Agriculture, forestry, and fishing is likely to slow to 2.1% in the current fiscal from 4.9% in the preceding year. The growth rate in per capita income is estimated at 5.3% during 2017-18, as against 5.7% in the previous year.
9. The Customers will not have to pay any transaction charges for payments through debit card, BHIM app and other payment made for up to **Rs 2,000**.
Note: The merchant discount rate (MDR) will be borne by the government for two years with effect from 1st January, 2018 by reimbursing the same to banks.
10. The **State Bank of India (SBI)** has reduced the base rate and benchmark prime lending rates by **30 basis points each**.
Note: State Bank of India revised down the base rate to 8.65% for existing customers from 8.95%. The benchmark prime lending rates is down from 13.7% to 13.4%. Bank also extended its ongoing waiver on home loan processing

- fees till the end of this March for new home loan customers and other customers looking to switch their existing loans to SBI.
11. The union govt has finalized the scheme aimed at cleaning the system of political funding in the country **Electoral Bonds**.
Note: The bonds will be issued and purchased from the specified branches of the State Bank of India for ten days in January, April, July and October. They will be available in the multiples of one thousand, ten thousand, one lakh, ten lakhs, and one crore rupees.
 12. **SEBI** banned auditor major Price **Waterhouse entities** from issuing audit certificates for 2 years.
Note: SEBI also ordered disgorgement of over 13 crore rupees wrongful gains from the audit major and it's two erstwhile partners who worked on the IT major's accounts.
 13. **Niti Aayog** will provide rankings to the 115 aspirational districts.
Note: The ranking will be on 10 parameters which will include nutrition, education and health among others. It will also set up a mechanism for real-time monitoring of government's development programmes by April 2018. 'Niti Aayog' will create a dashboard which will reflect the change in ranking of districts on continuous basis by the end of March this year.
 14. World Bank projects India's growth rate **7.3%** in 2018.
Note: India has enormous growth potential compared to other emerging economies as an ambitious government undertakes comprehensive reforms.
 15. **BSE and NSE** has launched the new interest rate futures (IRF) contracts offering 7.17% yield on government bonds.
Note: An IRF is a contract between a buyer and a seller agreeing to the future delivery of any interest-bearing asset such as government bonds.
 16. Retail inflation crossed the RBI's comfort level and rose **5.21%** in December.
Note: As per the data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) inflation for the food basket increased to **4.96%** in December from **4.42%** in the preceding month.
 17. The commodity Exchange the **National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX)** has launched India's first Agri-commodity options contract in guar seeds.
Note: The Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has launched India's first agri-commodity options contract in guar seeds on the commodity bourse **National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX)**, purpose of this new initiative is to benefit farmers and ensure better prices in the coming days.
 18. According to, the **World Economic Forum** India has been ranked 30th in the Global Manufacturing Index.
Note: In top ten, Japan has been found to have the **best structure of production** in the Geneva-based WEF's first Readiness for the future of production report.
 19. As per the data released by **National Family and Health Survey (NFHS-4)**, the richest state in India is **Delhi**.
Note: As per the data released by **National Family and Health Survey (NFHS-4)**, Delhi is the richest state in India while **Bihar is the poorest state**. The report outlines that poverty is widespread in rural India as 29% of rural India has wealth levels equivalent to bottom 20% of the country's population. While for urban India, the figure is just 3.3%.
 20. International Chemical Company has acquired 'Tata Chemicals Urea Plant, located at **Babrala, Uttar Pradesh**.
Note: A Norwegian Chemical Company **Yara International** has acquired 'Tata Chemicals Urea Plant, located at Babrala in Uttar Pradesh. It is India's first-ever FDI in **Fertilizer sector**.
 21. President Ram Nath Kovind has inaugurated the 'Economic Democracy Conclave' at **Thane, Maharashtra**.
Note: The conclave being organized by **Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini** with an aim to create a platform for **young entrepreneurs** and self-employed individuals.
 22. Indian IT Company **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)** has signed a **USD 690 million deal** with M&G Prudential, the UK and European savings and investments business of Prudential plc
Note: Now, TCS will **digitally transform** M&G Prudential's business and deliver enhanced service for its UK savings and retirement customers. The value of this agreement **exceeds over 10 years** and covers the support of over 4 million customer policies.
 23. The first Indian bank **HDFC Bank Ltd.** to cross Rs. 5 **trillion market capitalization**.
Note: HDFC bank has become first Indian bank to cross Rs. 5 trillion market capitalization, making it only the third Indian company to achieve this milestone. Reliance Industry Ltd remained the most valued company with a market cap of Rs. 5.82 trillion, followed by Tata Consultancy Services Ltd with a market cap of Rs. 5.57 trillion.
 24. **The Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)** has permitted partial withdrawal under the National Pension System for purchase of residential premises, treatment of critical illness, marriage of Children and higher education.

- Note:** The withdrawal will be permitted only three times during the tenure of the subscription.
25. India's rank in the list of wealthiest countries – **Sixth**.
Note: According to a report by **New World Wealth**, India has been **ranked sixth** in the list of wealthiest countries with the total wealth of 8,230 billion US dollars. **The United States is the wealthiest country** in the world as the total wealth held in 2017 amounted to 64,584 billion dollars. The **China** at the **second** place with 24,803 billion dollars and **Japan** with 19,522 billion dollars at third.
26. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), India's ranked among emerging economies on an Inclusive Development Index (IDI-2018) -- **62nd**.
Note: The index takes into the account the living standards, environmental sustainability and protection of future generations from further indebtedness.
27. According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), largest source of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India in FY17 -- **Mauritius**.
Note: It has 21.8% share at market value.
28. According to the IMF's latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) update, India's GDP growth forecast for 2018 -- **7.4%**.
Note: India's GDP growth forecast has projected to 7.4% in 2018 and 7.8% in 2019. China is expected to grow at 6.6% and 6.4% for year 2018 and 2019, respectively.
29. Paytm and AGTech Holdings Ltd have formed a joint venture to launch a gaming platform aimed at mobile users in India -- **Gamepind**.
Note: The joint venture between Alibaba's AGTech (45%) Holdings and Paytm (55%) was originally signed in July 2017.
30. **National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)** has collaborated with DP World to create an investment platform for ports, terminals, transportation, and logistic businesses in India.
31. **Indian Overseas Bank** has signed a pact with National Housing Bank (NHB) for Rural Housing Interest Subsidy Scheme (RHSS) scheme.
Note: The purpose of the RHSS is to provide subsidy for housing loans taken by those living in rural areas for construction and modifications of their dwelling units. Now, IOB will be able to extend the benefit of RHSS to its rural home loan customers of its 923 rural branches spread across India.
32. Indian's first company to cross the Rs. 6-lakh crore mark in market capitalization -- **Reliance Industries (RIL)**.
Note: RIL is owned 40% by its chairman **Mukesh Ambani**. According to Bloomberg's billionaire index, he is the richest Indian with the personal wealth of USD 40.7 billion and the 20th richest globally.

New Appointments

- The Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA) -- **Rajinder Khanna**.
Note: The National Security Advisor (NSA) is the chief executive of the National Security Council (NSC), and the primary advisor to the Prime Minister of India on national and international security.
- The new CEO and MD of Infosys -- **Salil Parekh**.
Note: Salil S Parekh has formally taken charge as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of Infosys.
- The union govt. has appointed the interlocutor on their behalf to hold talks with the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) -- **AB Mathur**.
Note: Mathur served as the former special secretary of the Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW). ULFA is a separatist outfit operating in Assam for the indigenous Assamese and seeks to establish a sovereign Assam with an armed struggle in the Assam conflict.
- The Managing Director (MD) of India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL) -- **Pankaj Jain**.
Note: IIFCL is a state-owned company focused on infrastructure financing and development.
- The new Chief Operating Officer (COO) of National Cricket Academy (NCA) -- **Tufan Ghosh**.
Note: Ghosh will play a key role in setting up the facility and creating a centre of Excellence at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru.
- The Chairman of the **Real Estate Appellate Tribunal** (REAT) for Tamil Nadu and the Union Territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands -- **B Rajendran**.
Note: The Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016, the State government have to establish the Real Estate Appellate Tribunal for Tamil Nadu.
- The Chairman of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) -- **K Sivan**.
Note: Renowned Scientist K Sivan has been appointed as the Chairman of Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), also as Secretary in the Department of Space and Chairman of Space Commission for tenure of three years. He succeeds A S Kiran Kumar. Currently, Sivan is serving as Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Trivandrum.
- The new economic relations secretary -- **T S Tirumurti**.

- Note:** Currently, Mr. Tirumurti is the India's High Commissioner of Kuala Lumpur.
9. NPCI appoints **Dilip Asbe** as new MD and CEO.
Note: The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is the umbrella organization for all retail payment systems in India, which aims to allow all Indian citizens to have unrestricted access to e-payment services.
 10. Indian-origin businessman **Sunny Verghese** has been appointed as the Chairman of the Geneva-based World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD).
Note: National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) is the umbrella organization for all retail payment systems in India, which aims to allow all Indian citizens to have unrestricted access to e-payment services.
 11. **Harjinder Singh** has been appointed as the Chef De Mission for the **23rd Winter Olympic Games**.
Note: Currently, Mr. Singh is the General Secretary in the **Ice Hockey Association of India**.
 12. The Supreme Court collegium has recommended the name of senior advocate **Indu Malhotra** as the first woman lawyer to be directly appointed as a judge of the apex court.
Note: She will be the seventh woman judge since independence to make it to the Supreme Court. In collegium system, the shortlisted candidates are scrutinized by a collegium of five senior-most judges of the apex court headed by Chief Justice of India before being cleared for appointment.
 13. Senior sports administrator has been named **Chairman of the Finance Commission** of the Indian Olympic Association-- **Anil Khanna**.
Note: The IOA also formed a Medical Commission and Games Technical Conduct Committee and nominated office bearers of IOA and National Sports Federations (NSFs) to the Committees.
 14. The Managing Director (MD) and Chief Executive Director (CEO) of National Commodity and Derivative Exchange (NCDEX) -- **Vijay Kumar**.
 15. The new Chairman of **Gems and Jewelry Export Promotion Council (GJEPC)** -- **Pramod Agarwal**.
Note: He is also Chairman of Indian Institute of Gems and Jewelry based in Jaipur. GJEPC was set up by Ministry of Commerce to boost the country's export thrust in 1966. The headquarters of GJEPC is in Mumbai.
 16. Romania's Prime Minister resigned after losing the backing of his party due to internal power struggles -- **Mihai Tudose**.
Note: Mr. Mihai handed in his resignation after senior members of the ruling Social Democrats (PSD) voted to withdraw their support at a leadership meeting. Tudose's resignation will have to be signed off by center-right President Klaus Iohannis.
 17. UK's first-ever Minister for Loneliness to tackle loneliness problems and combat social isolation -- **Tracey Crouch**.
Note: Tracey Crouch is at present the Minister for sports and civil society in UK. She had been given an additional role of Minister for Loneliness.
 18. Senior IAS officer **S Selvakumar** has been appointed as Managing Director and Chairman of Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Ltd.
Note: He succeeded Anurag Agarwal. The state-owned Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Ltd produces bank notes, coins, postage stamps, non-judicial stamps and other official documents.
 19. The new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) -- **Om Prakash Rawat**.
Note: He succeeds the incumbent CEC, A K Joti (retires today). Ashok Lavasa has been also appointed as Election Commissioner to fill the vacancy created by Mr. Rawat's elevation.
 20. The new DG of National Security Guard (NSG) -- **Sudeep Lakhtakia**.
Note: Currently, **Mr. Lakhtakia** is serving as Special DG in the **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)** headquarters New Delhi. The NSG personnel is often referred to as Black Cats because of the black dress and black cat insignia worn on their uniform.
 21. Former international football star sworn in as Liberia's 25th president -- **George Weah**.
Note: He succeeds Ellen Johnson Sirleaf. Weah grew up in Clara Town slum in Monrovia and went on to become the only African to win FIFA World Player of the Year.
 22. The new Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) -- **S Somanath**.
Note: Somanath is known for his contributions to launch vehicle design, particularly in the areas of launch vehicle systems engineering, structural design, structural dynamics, and pyrotechnics.
 23. New Director General (DG) of **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)** -- **Dilip Chenoy**.
Note: FICCI is an association of business organizations in India. It is the largest, oldest and the apex business organization in India, headquartered in New Delhi.
 24. The new Foreign Secretary of India -- **Vijay Keshav Gokhale**.
Note: Earlier, Mr. Gokhale was serving as the Secretary (Economic Relations) in the Ministry of External Affairs

- (MEA). He also served as India's Ambassador to China, Germany and worked in Indian missions in Hong Kong, Hanoi and in New York.
25. The Vice Chairman of the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF) -- **Shantanu Narayen**.
Note: The Indian-American CEO of Adobe Shantanu Narayen has been elected as the Vice Chairman of the US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum (USISPF). The USISPF is a new organization that has been set up to enhance business relations between India and the US.
26. The New President of the Republic of Honduras--**Juan Orlando Hernandez**.
Note: President Hernández is the first president in Honduran running for a second term after the country's Supreme Court lifted a ban on re-election.
27. **Sauli Niinisto** has won the 2018 Finnish presidential election.
Note: Sauli Niinisto has won his second 6-year term with an overwhelming 62.7% of the vote.

Important News – India

- The union minister of Women and Child Development (WCD) **Maneka Gandhi** has launched an online portal “**nari.nic.in**” for the empowerment of women.
Note: The portal will provide easy access to **information on government schemes** and initiatives for women.
- The Union HRD Minister **Prakash Javadekar** has inaugurated the **nine-day World Book fair** at -- **New Delhi**.
Note: Environment issues like climate change, global warming, and water pollution will be the main theme for this year's Fair. The World Book Fair is organized every year by the National Book Trust and India Trade Promotion Organization (ITPO).
- Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL)** has rolled out Aadhaar-based online verification of mobile connections for non-resident Indians, senior citizens above 70 years and physically challenged persons.
Note: The service can be used by **senior citizens** who do not have Aadhaar number or have the **biometric ID** but their mobile number is not registered with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). They can enter his existing mobile number and then the one-time password sent on that number.
- Three Ministries (Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) and Ministry of Science & Technology) have signed MoU (Memorandum of understanding) on Technology Mission for -- **Indian Railways**.
Note: The funding contribution in the Technology Mission is by the railways ministry (30 %), by the HRD ministry (25 %) and by the Department of Science and Technology (25 %). The Technology Mission will conduct research and development projects in the fields of heavy haul, safety, energy, environment, and urban railways.
- Two-day design workshop on **Global Housing Construction Technology** Challenge in **New Delhi**.
Note: Around 600 million people of the country are expected to be living in cities by 2030 and a huge task will be to provide them with affordable housing system.
- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)** has sanctioned Rs. 372.51 crore loan assistance under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) to Odisha for irrigation and rural bridge projects for the last quarter of this fiscal.
Note: NABARD has also sanctioned 14 Rural Bridge Projects under Biju Setu Yojana with RIDF loan assistance of Rs 242.34 crore. The **NABARD** is an apex development financial institution in India, headquartered at Mumbai with branches all over India.
- Goa will host the third edition of the Science Film Festival of India “SCI-FFI” from 16th January 2018.
Note: School students have been invited to submit films shot on a mobile phone on any topic of science to win prizes. The objective of the festival is to boost the culture of science films, all the films submitted should be related to science and technology.
- Govt makes packaging of **90% of food grains** and **20% of sugar products** in mandatory in **Jute material**.
Note: The approval mandates that 90% of the food grains and 20% of the sugar products will be mandatorily packed in jute bags. This decision will benefit farmers and workers located in the Eastern and North-Eastern regions of the country particularly in West Bengal, Bihar, Orissa, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura.
- The Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has commissioned and achieved design throughput of the world's largest refinery off the gas cracker at **Jamnagar, Gujarat**.
Note: This refinery will have a capacity of **1.5 million tonnes per annum** along with downstream plants and utilities. The facility uses off-gases from two refineries of RIL at Jamnagar as feedstock.

10. The Union Home Minister has appointed **B. R. Sharma Committee** to recommend changes in the **existing laws of playing of the National Anthem in cinema halls** and public places.
Note: B. R. Sharma is Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Committee will make recommendations in context of existing Acts and orders relating to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.
11. Indian Railways have launched **SFOORTI** app for freight managers.
Note: The **Smart Freight Operation Optimization and Real Time Information (SFOORTI)** app provides features for monitoring and managing freight business using **Geographic Information System (GIS)**, Views and Dashboard. Now, with this app trains (passenger and freight) can be tracked over Zones, Divisions, and Sections in single GIS View.
12. India and Saudi Arabia has signed an agreement to revive the option of sending Haj pilgrims through sea route for **Haj 2018**.
Note: Now, the ships available are modern and well-equipped to ferry **4000 to 5000 persons** at a time. They can cover the 2300-odd nautical miles one-side distance between Mumbai and Jeddah within just 3-4 days (old ships to take 12-15 days).
13. **Charlie-435** has been commissioned by Indian Coast Guard at Karaikal in the Union Territory of Puducherry.
Note: The 'Charlie-435' is the state-of-art patrol vessel, equipped with modern navigation and communication system. The vessel will strengthen the coastal security between Chennai and Kanyakumari in the Eastern Coastal region.
14. The **Matunga Rly station** has figured in the 'Limca Book of Records 2018' for having an all-woman staff.
Note: A team of 41 women staffers at the station includes personnel from the RPF, commercial and operating departments, under the supervision of station manager Mamta Kulkarni.
15. The **3rd Meeting of Council of Trade Development and Promotion** has been held in **New Delhi**.
Note: Suresh Prabhu unveiled a study named "LEADS-Logistics Ease Across Different States".
16. ISRO has successfully launched a rocket carrying India's **100th satellite**.
Note: The 31 satellites with a combined weight of 1,323 kilograms have been integrated with the PSLV-C40 for deploying them in the earth's lower orbit after lift-off. The Indian satellites are 710 kg Cartosat-2 series for Earth observation, a 100 kgs micro satellite and a five kg nano satellite.
17. **Election Commission (EC) of India** has constituted a 14-member committee headed by **Umesh Sinha** to suggest changes to Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act.
Note: The Act prohibits poll campaign in the last 48 hours of voting. The Committee will study the impact of social media during the silence period and suggest modifications to the election law and model code of conduct.
18. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has slashed international incoming call termination rate to **30 paise** from **53 paise**.
Note: The new rate will be effective from 1st of February. TRAI has reduced the termination charges payable by an International Long-Distance Operator to the access provider.
19. **Madhya Pradesh** hosted the **Annual Conference of Director Generals of Police (DGP) and Inspector Generals of Police (IGP) 2018**.
Note: Prime Minister has attended the conference held at Tekanpur, Gwalior. The Conference is an annual event in which top police officers from all over the country share and discussed security-related issues.
20. The 18th **All India Whips' Conference** has been held in the **Udaipur** of India.
Note: The purpose of this conference is to strengthen the Parliamentary Democracy, its institutions and ultimately serve people at large.
21. **NITI Aayog** has inaugurated the first Global Initiative on Academic Network (GIAN) course on Sustainable Urban Planning at IIT, Kanpur's outreach centre at Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
Note: This course will be instrumental in developing trained manpower for Central Govt's Smart Cities Mission. The GIAN programme is being conducted under the Ministry of Human Resource Development and actively supported by Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs and NITI Aayog.
22. According to the **Global Aviation body** the country, **India** has topped the domestic **air passenger traffic demand in 2017**.
Note: India's domestic air passenger traffic grew by **4%** in November 2017. India continued to witness double digit growth for 39th consecutive month, comprising major air carriers.
23. The Book "**Majuli: Resources & Challenges**" has been edited by the author --**Sanjiv Kumar Borkakoti**.

- Note:** It was published by Authorspress. Majuli is considered to be the world's largest freshwater river island and single island district in India.
24. President Ram Nath Kovind has inaugurated the '**Economic Democracy Conclave**' at **Thane, Maharashtra**.
Note: The conclave being organized by Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini with an aim to create a platform for young entrepreneurs and self-employed individuals.
25. The Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh has inaugurated a two-day **International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure** (IWDR) in New Delhi.
Note: The workshop is organized by the **National Disaster Management Authority** (NDMA) in collaboration with United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).
26. In the Talle Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh, a new **moth species** '**Elcysma Ziroensis**' has been discovered.
Note: This discovery has been published in the Journal of Threatened Taxa. This new species has been scientifically named Elcysma Ziroensis.
27. The autobiography of Sanjay Manjrekar named -- **Imperfect**.
Note: The book is published by Harper Collins. In 'Imperfect', Sanjay Manjrekar brings his famous analytic powers to look back at his own careers as a cricketer.
28. The **Cabinet Advisory Board of Education** (CABE) has launched the "**Operation Digital Board**" at 65th meeting of CABE held in **New Delhi**.
Note: It has been launched on the lines of the 'Operation Black board of 1987' which was started with the purpose of providing minimum education facilities to all primary school. The idea of Operation Digital Board is aimed at providing better digital education in all schools.
29. The Joint Military Exercise "**Vajra Prahar 2018**" will be conducted between India and **USA**.
Note: The aim of the exercise is to promote military relations between two countries by enhancing interoperability and mutual exchange tactics between Special Forces.
30. PM Modi and his Israeli counterpart **Benjamin Netanyahu** embarked on an eight-km long roadshow from the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel airport to **Sabarmati Ashram, Gujarat**.
Note: Around **50 stages** have been erected on the roadside along the stretch to showcase performances by troupes of different states to welcome the guests. Mr. Netanyahu is the third international leader (earlier, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Japanese premier Shinzo Abe) whom Modi is hosting in his home state of Gujarat.
31. The **Ministry of Petroleum** has launched the 'Saksham-2018' campaign to promote energy efficiency in various sector of Indian Economy.
Note: **Saksham** (Sanrakshan Kshamta Mahotsav) is an **annual flagship event of Petroleum Conservation Research Association** aimed at creating focused attention on fuel conservation.
32. **Department of Commerce** has signed a MoU with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for setting-up of an institutional mechanism for the integrated development of Logistics sector in the country.
Note: The objective of the MoU to modernize India's logistics sector and bring it to par with the global best. The Union Govt. has also decided to reduce the Logistics cost in the country from the present 14% of GDP to less than 10% by 2022.
33. The **five-judge constitutional bench** headed by the CJI **Dipak Mishra** has been set up to hear a range of crucial cases of public and constitutional importance.
Note: The cases that the bench will hear include challenging the constitutional validity of the Aadhaar Act and the 2013 apex court judgement re-criminalizing gay-sex between adults.
34. Indian has attended its first **Shanghai Cooperation Organization's military cooperation** meeting at **Beijing, China**.
Note: India and China consider SCO as an important platform to enhance bilateral ties.
35. India has successfully test-fired indigenously developed long range Surface-to-Surface Ballistic Missile -- **Agni-V**.
Note: The three-stage solid propellant Agni-V missile has a strike range of 5000 Kilo meters and can carry a nuclear warhead of more than one tones. The missile has been developed by the DRDO.
36. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the **first Khelo India school Games** in-- **New Delhi**.
Note: The games will be held in 16 disciplines include Athletics, Badminton, Basketball, Boxing, Football, Hockey, Kabaddi, Shooting, Swimming, Weightlifting and Wrestling at five venues. The country's brightest talent in the under-17 age group will compete in the Games.
37. The name of the computer launched for weather forecasting in Noida—**Mihir**
Note: It was launched by Union Minister for Earth Science, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Harsh Vardhan. With an aim to improve India's capacity in weather forecasting including Air quality forecasting at the

- block level, the High-Performance Computer (HPC) System named 'Mihir' (meaning 'Sun') was dedicated to the nation at the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF) in Noida.
38. The Union Home Ministry will set up Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), an apex coordination centre in **New Delhi** to deal with cybercrimes.
39. The state hosted the 8th edition of the International Conference on Wild Silk Moths -- **Assam**.
Note: The conference would help in increasing income of the people of the region who are involved with silk industry. The conference is being organized by the Central Silk Board and International Society for Wild Silk Moths.
40. The fourth edition of the India **International Science Festival** will be held in **Lucknow**.
Note: The first IISF was held at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) New Delhi in December, 2015. 2nd at CSIR-National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi, and the 3rd in Chennai in October, 2017.
41. The cultural extravaganza "2018 Bharat Parv" has been organize at the Indian monument **Red Fort**.
Note: The objective of the 3-day event is to generate a patriotic mood, promote the rich cultural diversity of the country and to ensure wider participation of the general public.
42. Delhi's Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal has launched the three MCD's mobile application App -- **311**.
Note: The app will enhance engagement of citizens in the **resolution of grievances and improvement of civic services** in the city. The Mobile App 311 has been integrated with the Swachhta App of the Ministry of Urban Affairs.
43. India's first ever '**Khadi Haat**' has launched in New Delhi.
Note: Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) and New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) have launched the India's first-ever '**Khadi Haat**' in Connaught Place, New Delhi.
44. The **Information and Broadcasting Ministry** has planned to set up a 'Social Media Communication Hub' to help it keep a tab on trending news in districts and gather feedback on the Centre's flagship schemes.
45. The 2018 International Bird Festival will be held in the **Dudhwa National Park**.
Note: The purpose of the bird fest to give it a distinct international identity besides highlighting its traditional Tharu arts, culture, and heritage.
46. The **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** has launched "Stree Swabhiman" initiative.
Note: The objective of the initiative is to create a sustainable model for providing adolescent girls and women an access to affordable sanitary products by leveraging **Common Services Centres (CSCs)**.
47. Indian Navy has launched the third Scorpene class submarine -- **Karanj**.
Note: On 14th December 2017, INS Kalvari (first), diesel-electric attack submarine was commissioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On 12th January 2018, INS Khandari (second), was launched, currently undergoing sea trials.
48. '**VINBAX-2018**' is first military exercise between India and **Vietnam**.
Note: The first military exercise, India-Vietnam Bilateral Army Exercise (VINBAX-2018) has been conducted at **Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh**

States News

- The 171st **Araadhanai Music Festival (AMF)** has started in **Tamil Nadu**.
Note: The five-day festival is one of the Trinities of Carnatic music Saint Thyagaraja.
- The **Karnataka** state govt has received the approval for purchase of electric vehicles under Central government's FAME-India scheme.
Note: The state will purchase **40 electric buses, 100 four wheelers** and 500 three wheelers at maximum of **60% subsidy** under the scheme. The subsidy support is also provided for setting up electricity charging infrastructure across Bengaluru.
- The **Haryana** state govt. has announced to implement the **integrated solar based micro irrigation scheme (ISBMI)** in all districts of the State.
Note: This scheme is being implemented on pilot basis in commands of **14 different canal** outlets spread over **13 districts** of the State.
- The Telangana state govt has constituted the SC/ST Commission head by -- **Errolla Srinivas**.
Note: The commission is mandated to monitor matters related to the Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes (SCs/STs) and also inquire into complaints pertaining to members of these communities.
- The Union Cabinet has approved for establishment of new AIIMS in under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) -- **Himachal Pradesh**.
Note: The cost of the project is Rs.1351 crore and will be completed in a period of 48 months. The Institution will consist of a hospital with a capacity of 750 beds and trauma center facilities.

6. According to the Maharashtra Govt Resolution (GR) issued by the urban development, the state govt has announced a sport fine for open defecation -- **Rs. 500**.
Note: On 1 October, 2017, President Ram Nath Kovind had declared the entire urban Maharashtra as open defecation-free. The GR will be implemented under the provisions of the Solid Waste Management Act, 2016 with immediate effect.
7. The Maharashtra govt. has issued a notification for creating an administrative framework for the implementation of the National Food Security Act, 2013.
Note: The State Food Commission will have the powers to directly hear grievance or complaints. The commission will also have the powers to visit and inspect any stock and delivery point, fair price shops, school, Anganwadi, or local authority.
8. The **Haryana govt** has announced a power tariff subsidy of Rs. 2 per unit for micro and small enterprises, under Enterprises Promotion Policy – 2015.
Note: The relief will be given to the industries situated in C and D category blocks in terms of industrialization for three years from the date of release of power connection. Aim of policy is to facilitate state GDP growth rate in excess of 8% and generate employment for more than four lakh people and make Haryana a major investment destination.
9. The **Maharashtra** state govt has decided to form an international education board to prepare syllabus for non-English medium schools.
Note: In the first phase, **100 selected Marathi schools** will function according to the new syllabus.
10. The first draft of National Register of Citizens (NRC) has released for the **Assam** state.
Note: The first draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) for Assam has listed 19 million people out of the 32.9 million applicants as legal Indian citizens in a massive exercise aimed at identifying illegal immigrants in the state that borders Bangladesh.
11. The largest B2B travel event in the country 'Karnataka International Travel Expo' (KITE) will be held from **28th February**.
Note: The event will see close to 400 delegates from 25 countries take part. The objective of the event is to project Karnataka globally and attract tourist footfall, with emphasis on promoting the state's wild life, luxury and adventure destinations, historical monuments and UNESCO world heritage sites.
12. The 2018 International Kite Festival (Uttarayan) has launched at **Sabarmati River Front** in Ahmedabad, Gujarat
13. The Rajasthan Government has tied up with **HDFC Bank** to promote and nurture start-ups in the state.
Note: The Rajasthan Government and HDFC Bank have signed MoU to promote and nurture startups in the state. HDFC Bank will also assist startups in showcasing their offerings to the general public.
14. President **Ram Nath Kovind** has inaugurated a three-day International Dharma-Dhamma Conference at **Rajgir (Bihar)**.
Note: The objective of the conference to provide an opportunity to academics and policy makers from India and abroad to share ideas and build collaboration for better world.
15. The chief minister **Arvind Kejriwal** has launched the **Delhi Common Mobility Card** to make cashless and convenient commuting for the daily commuters of the **National capital**.
Note: Now, Delhi has become first Metro city in the country to have a common mobility card which can be used by commuters in Delhi metro and DTC buses.
16. The **Bihar** Govt. has banned electronic cigarettes in the state.
Note: E-cigarette is a battery run electronic device that tries to create the feeling of tobacco smoking. It works by heating a liquid to generate an aerosol that users inhale.
17. The **Gujarat** state has topped in **logistics index chart**, an indicator of the efficiency of logistical services necessary for promoting exports in particular, and economic growth in general.
Note: The report would help in identifying the right problem areas in the sector and prepare policy responses to deal with them. Gujarat is followed by Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra on the index.
18. **Haryana** state has become the **first Indian state** to launch High Risk Pregnancy (HRP) Portal.
Note: This portal not only helps in early identification of high-risk pregnant cases up to the grass-roots level but also ensures their timely referral to the civil hospitals for further management and delivery by specialists. This web application has been designed to track every high-risk pregnant woman till 42 days after delivery.
19. The National Rail Museum has announced, to start heritage train **Monorail** for visitors.
Note: The National Rail Museum announced to start this heritage train on every Thursday for visitors. The National Rail Museum (NRM) is a museum in Chanakyapuri, New Delhi which focuses on the rail heritage of India it opened on the 1st February 1977.
20. The **West Bengal** govt. has launched a **water ATM project to provide** bacteria-free drinking water in schools with the help of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Asian Development Bank, and the World Bank.
Note: If someone can prove the presence of harmful bacteria in any such water ATM, he will be given Rs 2 lakh. This was a novel project and the pilot has already begun in some areas of Kolkata (50 such water ATMs).
21. The **Punjab** govt has rolled out **e-Raktkosh web portal** in all the 45 government blood banks.
Note: The web portal provides the guidelines and streamlines the workflow of blood blanks and storage centres across the nation and interconnects all blood banks with a single network. In the next phase all 59

- private blood banks of the state will be linked with the e-Raktkosh application software.
22. The **Jammu and Kashmir** state cabinet has approved the opening of 17 new degree college in the state.
Note: These colleges shall be established in the uncovered areas of the State adding that the locations for these colleges are being worked out by the department.
 23. The **Punjab** state govt has launched the 'e-Raktkosh web portal' in all 45 government blood banks.
Note: The web portal provides the guidelines and streamlines the workflow of blood banks and storage centers across the state and interconnects all the blood banks with single network.
 24. The state govt. has approved a **Nanaji Deshmukh Krishi Sanjivani Yojna project** to promote climate-resilient agriculture -- **Rs 4,000-crore**.
Note: It will be implemented in **5,142 villages** across 15 districts. The purpose of the project is to improve soil quality, develop foodgrain varieties which can sustain climate variations and effect necessary changes in the crop pattern as per the availability of water in a particular region.
 25. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the Rajasthan's first Oil Refinery at **Pachpadra, Bikaner District**.
Note: The project is joint venture between **HPCL** and Rajasthan Government. The project is expected to generate 10,000 direct and 40,000 indirect employments.
 26. The **Punjab Govt.** has signed a MoU with the **Indian Oil Corporation (IOC)** to set up biogas and bio-CNG plants in the state.
Note: The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with IOC was signed by Punjab Bureau of Industrial Promotion (PBIP) and Punjab Energy Development Agency (PEDA). Around 42 plants will become operational in 2018.
 27. The **Odisha** govt has launched the '**Mukhya Mantri Kalakar Sahayata Yojana**' for the welfare of the artist in the state.
Note: Under MMKS Scheme, artists across the state will get a monthly assistance of Rs. 1200. Around 50,000 artists across Odisha will be benefited from this scheme.
 28. A full-fledged Airport facility with provision for Aircraft landing and taking off in Jammu and Kashmir -- **Kishtwar**.
Note: The airstrip will be for the joint use, both by the **civilian authorities** as well as the Indian Army.
 29. The **Maharashtra** state government has launched the **Nanaji Deshmukh Krishi Sanjivani Yojana** for promoting climate-resilient agriculture.
Note: Around **70% of the project** cost will be borne by World Bank while state will contribute **30% over six years**.
 30. The first state in India to completely implement **door-to-door garbage collection** in all areas under urban bodies___ **Madhya Pradesh**.
 - Note:** The measures like solid waste management at landfill sites and processing through Public Private Partnership mode are implemented in urban areas.
 31. The **Maharashtra** state government has approved **1% reservation** for orphans in government jobs under general category.
Note: The provision will help in the **rehabilitation of these kids** and help secure their future. The state cabinet has also approved the Maharashtra State Innovation and Startup policy, to attract investment of **5,000 crore** rupees.
 32. Govt. has inked USD 250 Million Loan Agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) to Improve Rural Connectivity in **Five** states.
Note: Five states are - Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and West Bengal. Under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) the agreement was inked between govt. & ADB.
 33. Government has inked **USD 100 million Loan Agreement** with World Bank for Project to **Boost Rural Economy of Tamil Nadu**.
Note: The loan is from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) and has a 5-year grace period and maturity of 19 years.
 34. India's first garbage fest 'Kachra Mahotsav 2018' has organized by the **Chhattisgarh** state.
Note: The objective of the festival is to increase awareness of use the waste generated in the city creatively and to showcase multiple techniques for reusing things that are labeled as garbage
 35. The **Arunachal Pradesh** state govt. has inaugurated the World War II Memorial Museum.
Note: The Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh Pema Khandu has inaugurated the World War II Memorial Museum in Jairampur in Changlang District. The war memorial has the collection of the remnants of world war 2, personal belongings of the soldiers and other persons involved.
 36. The **Thiruvananthapuram** city hosted the International Conference on dam safety.
Note: The two-day conference jointly inaugurated by Union Minister of State for Water Resources Arjun Ram Meghwal and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan.
 37. The **Manipur** state govt. has launched a health assurance scheme "Chief Minister-gi Hakshelgi Tengbang (CMHT)" for the poor and disabled people.
Note: The CMHT will provide cashless treatment to the poor at government hospitals, health centres and other empanelled selected private hospitals.
 38. India has signed a loan agreement with World Bank (WB) to improve access to water supply in Uttarakhand -- **USD 120 Million**.
Note: The program will focus on increasing coverage, quality, and reliability of water supply services in all peri-urban areas of the state.

39. The **Andhra Pradesh** state govt. has signed sister-state agreement with Canton of Zurich.

Note: The Andhra Pradesh government has signed a sister-state agreement with the Canton of Zurich in a bid to

strengthen the friendly ties and promote mutual understanding.

Important Day

1. National Youth Day has been celebrated on **12th January** in India on the birthday of social reformer, philosopher and thinker Swami Vivekananda.
Note: The Theme of the Festival is Sankalp Se Siddhi, to capitalize on the demographic dividend of young India, to capture the vibrancy and fresh perspective of youth and to pledge to accomplish the goal of New India.
2. The Army Day 2018 (70th edition) has been celebrated on **15th January** in India.
Note: The day is celebrated to pay homage, salute to the courageous and brave Indian soldiers who have been sacrificing their lives for protecting the country.
3. The **National Disaster Response Force** has been celebrating its 13th Raising Day on --**19th January**.
Note: The NDRF was raised on 19th January 2006, as a specialized force capable of responding to any type of disaster in the country and abroad. It is strategically deployed across the country as per the vulnerability profile.
4. The 2018 National Girl Child Day (NGCD) is celebrated in India -- **24th January**.
Note: The National Girl Child Day (NGCD) is celebrated with an aim to raise awareness about sex ratio levels and promote the empowerment of girls.
5. The National Voters' Day (NVD) is observed every year by India on -- **25th January**.
Note: The Election Commission of India (ECI) has celebrated the 8th National Voters' Day 2018 with theme 'Accessible Elections' across the country.
6. The International Custom Day has been observed across the world -- **26th January**.
Note: The slogan for International Custom Day 2018 is "A Secure Business Environment for Economic Development". The CCC has later renamed as World Custom Organization in 1994 which is an intergovernmental organization.
7. The International Holocaust Remembrance Day has been observed all over the world on -- **27th January**.
Note: The theme of International Holocaust Remembrance Day is "Holocaust Remembrance and Education: Our Shared Responsibility".
8. Anti-Leprosy Day being observed on -- **30th January**.
Note: The day, observed every year on the Martyrdom Day of Mahatma Gandhi, remembers his selfless efforts and care for the people affected by leprosy.

Honors & Award

1. India's Premier Container Port **Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT)** has won the "Samudra Manthan - Caring Organization of the Year" award.
Note: JNPT provides excellent facilities to their staff like medical insurance, residential township with school, transport service, canteens, rest rooms, recreation, sports activities and regular training programs on various key topics. The award instituted by Bhandarkar Shipping aims to fuel healthy competition in the maritime sector.
2. Indian architect **Aishwarya Tipnis** has been conferred France's top cultural award Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres.
Note: Aishwarya Tipnis has been conferred France's top cultural award for her outstanding commitment to preservation of French heritage in India in Kolkata.
3. **Actor Sudhir Dalvi** has been awarded the '**Janakavi P Sawlaram Award 2018**' at Thane, Maharashtra.
Note: The Janakavi P Sawlaram Award is instituted by Thane Municipal Corporation in association with the Janakavi P Sawlaram Kala Samiti.
4. The **Sangeet Natak Akademi's Fellowships** (Akademi Ratna) and **Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards** for 2016 given by President of India in **New Delhi**.
Note: This year the four Akademi Ratna (Fellowship) has been conferred on Arvind Parikh, Sunil Kothari, Ram Goapl Bajaj and R Vedavalli and 43 artists will receive the Akademi Awards.
5. The Indian Navy's first all-women crew of Indian Naval Sailing Vessel has crossed the most challenging point 'Cape Horn', situated in Southern Chile's Tierra del Fuego archipelago in their journey--**Tarini**.
Note: The crew of six women naval officers under Lieutenant Commander '**Vartika Joshi**' is sailing '**Tarini**' on their eight-month circumnavigation the globe.
6. First Indian to receive WHO's Ihsan Dogramaci Family Health Foundation Prize -- **Dr Vinod Paul (NITI Aayog member)**
Note: He was selected for his contributions towards improving the health and well-being of families, especially in developing countries. The award will be formally presented at World Health Assembly to be held in Geneva, Switzerland in May 2018.

7. The fifth edition of Yash Chopra Memorial Award 2018-- **Asha Bhosle**.
Note: The award will be presented to Asha Bhosle on **16th February**. **Yash Chopra memorial award** has been instituted by the TSR Foundation of T. Subbarami Reddy in memory of producer-director **Yash Chopra** (died in 2012).
8. The Parliamentary Group has decided to confer Outstanding Parliamentary Awards to Members of Parliament -- **five**.
Note: **Dr. Najma Heptulla** (Former Rajya Sabha MP) has been selected for this award for the year 2013 while the other awardees include **Hukumdev Narayan Yadav** (Lok Sabha MP) for 2014 and **Ghulam Nabi Azad** (Rajya Sabha MP) for 2015. **Dinesh Trivedi** (Lok Sabha MP) has been selected for 2016. **Bhartruhari Mahatab** (Lok Sabha MP) has been chosen for Outstanding Parliamentary Award for 2017.
9. **'Hindi Medium'** has won the best film award at the 63rd Jio Filmfare Awards 2018.
Note: 'Hindi Medium' bagged honors in the categories of Best Film and Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male) for Irrfan Khan's impeccable performance. Vidya Balan won her career's sixth Filmfare award for her passionate portrayal of a middle-aged homemaker who turns into a radio jockey in 'Tumhari Sulu' as she claimed the Black Lady for the Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female).
10. **Shah Rukh Khan** has received the World Economic Forum's 24th Crystal Award for his leadership in championing children's and women's rights in India.
Note: The Annual Crystal Awards ceremony celebrates the achievements of outstanding artists who have shown exemplary commitment to improving the state of the world.

Obituaries

1. Prominent Urdu poet **Anwar Jalalpur** translated Bhagwad 'Geeta into Urdu' has passed away.
Note: Jalalpur wrote 'Rahraw se Rahnuma tak', 'Urdu Shayri Mein Geetanjali' and 'Urdu Shayri mein Geeta'. He was the recipient of Uttar Pradesh's **Yash Bharti award**.
2. Carnatic vocalist and daughter of legendary classical singer **M S Subbulakshmi** passed away -- **Radha Vishwanathan**.
Note: She had performed in concerts along with her mother M S Subbulakshmi. In 1934, She was born at Gopichettyalayam in Tamil Nadu.
3. Senior Nationalist Congress Party leader passed away in Mumbai after a prolonged illness -- **Vasant Davkhare**.
Note: He was former deputy chairman of the Maharashtra Legislature Council. In 1987, he was elected mayor of the Thane Municipal Corporation.
4. Famous story writer **Milk Nath Singh** passed away due to heart attack.
Note: He was the national president of the famous story writer and the People's Author Association. Mr. Singh was honored with the highest literary honor of Uttar Pradesh, Bharat Bharati, Madhyalitharan Gupta Award, Shikhar Samman of Madhya Pradesh Government.
5. An American astronaut **John Young** passed away.
Note: He flew the first space shuttle mission and walked on the moon. He became the first human to fly in space six times.
6. Former Director-General and first Chief of international organization World Trade Organization (WTO) **Peter Sutherland** passed away in Dublin.
Note: He was born in Dublin in 1946 and served as Ireland's youngest Attorney General, then youngest European Union Commissioner during 1980s.
11. Bengali actor **Soumitra Chattopadhyay** conferred French honor at the 42nd International Kolkata Book Fair.
Note: He has acted in several of Satyajit Ray's iconic films including Apur Sansar, Abhijan, Charulata, Aranyer Din Ratri and Sonar Kella. The honour would be bestowed on the veteran actor by the French culture and communication minister Francoise Nyssen in Kolkata.
12. Music maestro **A R Rahman** has been named the official brand ambassador of Sikkim.
Note: AR Rahman's role as brand ambassador will be conducting campaigns for Sikkim to draw tourists and businesses.
13. The Chief Minister **Nitish Kumar** has received the 1st Mufti Mohammad Sayeed Award for Probity in Politics and Public Life at General Zorawar Singh Auditorium in Jammu.
Note: The award was constituted by the J&K's ruling PDP (Peoples Democratic Party) to commemorate its founder and two-time J&K CM late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed on his second death anniversary.
14. **Sterling K Brown** has won the 'Golden Globe 2018' for best actor in a drama television series.
Note: K Brown has become the first African-American to win the 'Golden Globe 2018' for best actor in a drama television series. He bagged the accolades for his role as Randall Pearson on NBC's breakout hit 'This is Us'.
15. **R S Puram Police Station is the best Police Station** in India in SMART Police Stations Initiative of Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
Note: R S Puram Police Station in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu has been adjudged as the Best Police Station in India in

- SMART Police Stations Initiative of Union Ministry of Home Affairs.
7. Former Union minister and sitting MLA from Sheohar **Raghunath Jha** passed away at a Delhi's Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.
Note: His career included stints with several different political parties, including the Socialist Party, Congress, Rashtriya Janata Dal, and Samajwadi Party.
 8. Veteran Tamil writer, journalist and theatre personality **Gnani Sankaran** passed away at his residence in Chennai.
Note: Gnani is often recalled by his friends as a firebrand journalist of Madras of the early 1980s. In 1981, One of his journalistic works that kicked up a major controversy was an interview of Jayendra Saraswathi that put the pontiff of the Kanchi Kamakoti Peetham in trouble for his remarks of conducting prayers to make M Karunanidhi sick.
 9. Veteran journalist **NK Trikha** passed away at **All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS)** due to illness.
Note: Mr. Trikha had worked at Hindi newspaper Navbharat Times for a long time and was also the editor of its Lucknow edition. He also served as a member of the Press Council of India (PCI) and two-time president of the National Union of Journalists (India).
 10. TV actress of Uttaran **Charu Rohatgi** passed away after a cardiac arrest.
Note: Charu was known for her roles in other TV shows namely Uttaran, Pratigya, Trideviyaan, and others. She was a popular face in the entertainment industry and is best known for her roles in Bollywood films like 15 Park Avenue (2005), Second Marriage Dot Com (2012) and 1920 London (2016) etc.
 11. Sarod maestro **Pandit Buddhadev Dasgupta** has passed away following cardiac arrest in South Kolkata.
 - Note:** He is the genres of Hindustani Classical Music. He is recipient of Padma Bhushan Award. He was also awarded Sangeet Mahasamman.
 12. Former Celtic All-Star and **Naismith Basketball Hall of Famer** has passed away -- **Joseph Henry White**
Note: Jo White won two titles with the Celtic before his induction into the Hall of Fame in 2015.
 13. Senior BJP MP from Maharashtra **Chintaman Wanaga** passed away.
Note: He was elected to the Lok Sabha thrice and once as the member of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly.
Wanaga was elected to the Lok Sabha from Palghar in Maharashtra.
 14. The noted Indian agricultural scientist **Dr. Gurcharan Singh Kalkat** has passed away.
Note: Padam Shri & Padam Bhushan awardee Dr. Gurcharan Singh Kalkat was known for his contribution during the Green Revolution era which led to a boom in the production of wheat and rice in the country.
 15. Chief Executive Councilor of Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) of Leh Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir passed away -- **Dr. Sonam Dawa Lonpo**.
Note: In 2015, he was elected to the chief executive councilor.
 16. The renowned science fiction American author passed away in Portland -- **Ursula K. Le Guin**.
Note: She explored feminist themes and her best-known works are the 1969 science fiction novel "Left Hand of Darkness".
 17. The legendary jazz musician and anti-apartheid activist **Hugh Masekela** has passed away.
Note: He was also known for his jazz compositions and for writing well-known anti-apartheid songs such as "Soweto Blues" and "Bring Him Back Home".

World News

1. **NASA** has launched two missions (GOLD Mission and ICON mission) to explore the little-understood area of **96 km** above Earth's surface.
Note: The **Global-scale Observations of the Limb and Disk (GOLD)** (about 35,398 km) above the planet's surface mission will be launched in January 2018. The **Ionospheric Connection Explorer (ICON)** low-Earth orbit (at 560 km above Earth) will be launched later this year. **GOLD and ICON** will team up to explore the ionosphere, a boundary area between **Earth and the space** where particles have been cooked into a sea of electrically-charged electrons and ions by the Sun's radiation.
2. The country is issuing long-term visas to lure highly skilled people from abroad to work in the country -- **China**.
Note: The multi-entry visas will be valid for between five and 10 years. Visa holders will be allowed to remain in the country for up to 180 days at a time and will be eligible to bring partners and children.
3. The union govt. has approved the agreement between India and Myanmar on -- **Land Border Crossing**.
Note: The Agreement will enable regulation and harmonization of already existing free movement rights for people ordinarily residing in the border areas of both countries.

4. The U.N. Security Council has welcomed new non-permanent members-- **Six**.
Note: They are Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kuwait, the Netherlands, Peru, and Poland.
Flags of the six new member countries were installed outside the council chambers in a ceremony arranged by Umarov. They voted on by the 193-member General assembly for two-year terms.
5. The **Kathmandu** city is hosting the Himalayan Hydro Expo 2018.
Note: The objective of Expo is to unleash massive hydro power potential of Nepal and bring all stakeholders under one roof.
6. The country **Iceland** has become the world's first country to enforce equal pay for women and men.
Note: The new legislation was supported by Iceland's centre-right government, as well as the opposition, in a parliament where nearly 50% of all members are women.
7. **Canada** has filed a comprehensive complaint with the **World Trade Organization** (WTO) accusing the **United States** of breaking international trade rules.
Note: The complaint challenges the ways that the US investigates products for subsidies and below-cost sales. The action comes amid disputes between the two countries over areas such as dairy, aircraft sales and lumber as well as efforts to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement.
8. The 'First Bahrain Baby Games to practice sports exercises, and promote the Olympic principles and values at a young age -- **Bahrain**.
Note: This event will feature five different sports (athletics, gymnastics, football, basketball, and weightlifting) and targets 2 to 4 years children. The athletics programme includes a medley relay (4 years), hurdles toddle (3 years) and 15m freestyle race (2 years).
9. The country **Sri Lanka** has revoked a 38-year ban on selling alcohol to women and employing them in places where the brews are produced and sold.
Note: The notification revoking the ban to restore gender equality and promote tourism. The ban had been in force since 1979, the early years of Sri Lanka embracing an open market economy.
10. World's largest solar thermal plant to be built in --**South Australia**
Note: The capacity of the plant will be 150-megawatt. The construction of power plant will begin in 2018 at an estimated cost of USD 509 million.
11. The county **Saudi Arabia** has allowed women to spectate a football match, part of an easing of strict rules on gender separation by the ultra-conservative Muslim country__
Note: Women fans filled into a stadium in the city of Jeddah. The country's first car showroom dedicated to female customers was also opened.
12. The country **Iceland** has introduced a new law to enforce the equal pay for both men and women.
Note: Iceland has become first country in the world by introducing a new law to enforce the equal pay for both men and women.
13. China is planning to build its second Naval Base in the country -- **Pakistan**.
Note: This will ensure the China's strategic position in Indian Ocean to counter the India.
14. The country has banned the English being taught in the Primary Schools across the country__ **Iran**.
Note: Iran has banned the English being taught in the Primary Schools across the country after its Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei said that teaching English will lead to Western Culture invasion and ultimately suppress the Iranian Culture among the students.
15. Hardware and Electronics Company Acer Inc. has unveiled the world's thinnest laptop -- **Swift 7**.
Note: Acer Inc. has unveiled the world's thinnest laptop 'Swift 7', has a thickness of 8.98mm. It will be available in the US from March 2018. The starting price will be USD1,699.
16. Israeli Prime Minister **Benjamin Netanyahu** has inaugurated the geo-political **conference-Raisina Dialogue** (3rd Edition) in **New Delhi**.
Note: The 3rd edition of the annual Raisina Dialogue 2018 was held at the Taj Diplomatic Enclave in New Delhi. The theme for the 2018 Conference is "Managing Disruptive Transitions: Ideas, Institutions and Idioms".
17. **China** has commissioned the indigenously developed Missile Frigate 'Rizhao'.
Note: The indigenously developed Missile Frigate "Rizhao" was commissioned by the People's Liberation Army Navy in a naval port in Dalian, China. The missile frigate 'Rizhao' is 140 metre-long and 16-metre wide and consists of advanced weapon system.
18. India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the **United Kingdom** to enable the return of illegal Indian migrants abroad and sharing of criminal records.
Note: India and United Kingdom (UK) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enable the return of illegal Indian migrants abroad and also sharing of criminal records. Indian agencies have found nearly 2000 Indians illegally staying in UK.
19. India has signed the agreements with **Shri Lanka** for collaboration in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector.
Note: India and Shri Lanka have signed the four agreements for collaboration in the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector. Now Shri Lanka has become the first country to be connected to India's National Knowledge Network (NKN) through a Gigabyte optical fiber network.
20. The country **China** has designed the world's biggest air purifier.
Note: China has designed the world's biggest air purifier at a height of over 100 meters to fight air pollution. The air purification system works through greenhouses

covering about half the size of a soccer field around the base of the tower.

21. The **International Solar Alliance Forum** has been hosted at the World Future Energy Summit 2018 in -- **Abu Dhabi, UAE**.
Note: Indian government plans to set up USD 350 million solar development fund for financing solar projects.
22. The 48th annual meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF-2018) was held in -- **Davos, Switzerland**.
Note: The theme of the 48th annual meeting of the WEF-2018 was Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World.

23. The country will host the ministerial meeting of International Energy Forum 2018__ **India**.
Note: India will host the Ministerial Meeting of International Energy Forum in New Delhi from 10 -12 April,2018.
24. India's rank in the 2018 **Environmental Performance Index (EPI)** --**177th**.
Note: The 10th EPI report ranks 180 countries on 24 performance indicators across 10 categories covering environmental health and ecosystem vitality.

Sports News

1. India's highest-ranked player in latest International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) rankings -- **G Sathiyam**.
2. New Zealand's left-handed batsman has become the first batsman to score three hundred in T20 Internationals -- **Colin Munro**.
Note: He achieved this mark by scoring 104 off 53 balls including 3 fours and 10 sixes in the final T20 match against West Indies at Mount Maunganui, New Zealand.
3. India's golfer **Shiv Kapur** has won the Royal Cup trophy at the Phoenix Gold Golf and Country Club in Pattaya.
Note: This win marks Kapur's fourth Asian Tour win and sixth international title as he won twice on European Challenge Tour.
4. According to the Cricket South Africa media release, the three-Test series between India & hosts South Africa has been named as **Freedom Series**.
Note: The Freedom Series was felt by both nations to be a more fitting name in recognition of shared history of South Africa and India who both won freedom through non-violence.
5. **Gilles Simon** has won the Tata Open Maharashtra Tennis trophy at Balewadi Sports Complex in Pune.
6. Former world silver medalist **Sarjubala Devi** has won the gold in 48 kg category in the National Women's Boxing Championships in Rohtak.
Note: She was also given the best boxer trophy.
7. Indian all-rounder **Yusuf Pathan** has been suspended after he inadvertently ingested a prohibited substance, commonly found in cough syrups.
Note: He inadvertently ingested a prohibited substance, commonly found in cough syrups. A specified substance 'Terbutaline' is prohibited both In and Out of Competition in the World Anti-Doping Agency's Prohibited List of Substances.
8. The **North Korea** has announced to send a delegation to the Winter Olympics to be held in South Korea next month.
Note: South Korea has unilaterally banned several North Korean officials from entering the country in response to Pyongyang's nuclear and missile tests.
9. India's first ever international medal in skiing (in the slalom race category) --**Aanchal Thakur**.
Note: She clinched bronze in the coveted Alpine Ejder 3200 Cup organised by the Federation Internationale de Ski at the Palandoken Ski Centre in Erzurum, Turkey.
10. China's national marathon champion and Olympian has been banned for eight years after failing a drugs test -- **Wang Jiali**.
Note: Wang won gold at the 2017 National Games, tested positive for the banned blood booster EPO during out-of-competition testing in August and her career now appears over. The CAA also fined Wang 40,000 yuan and banned her coach Lyu Qiang for life.
11. **Aditya Mehta** has won the Kolkata Open 2018 International Invitation Snooker Championship in Kolkata, West Bengal.
Note: He defeated Englishman Professional Player Alfie Burden.
12. **Gilles Simon** has won the inaugural Tata Open Maharashtra Tennis Trophy at Balewadi Sports Complex in Pune.
Note: He defeated Kevin Anderson.
13. The 'Chef De Mission' by Indian Olympic Association for the **23rd Winter Olympics Games 2018** to be held in Pyeongchang, **South Korea**.
14. The Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore has launched the **official anthem and mascot** of -- **Khelo India School Games**.
Note: Sports Ministry has already decided to select 1000 athletes every year under the Khelo India School Games for a scholarship of Rs 5 lakhs each for eight successive years. Earlier, the Union Govt. has approved Rs 1,756 crore for a period of three years, revamping of 'Khelo India'.
15. **Brazilian Football player** has been formally confirmed his retirement from football -- **Ronaldinho Gaucha**.
Note: Ronaldinho started his career with Gremio and spent five years with Barcelona (2003-2008). He hasn't played professionally since leaving Fluminense in 2015.
16. **Steve Smith** has been named as the '**Test Cricketer of the Year 2018**' at the ICC annual awards in Dubai.
Note: Steve Smith has been named as the 'Test Cricketer of the Year 2018' at the ICC annual awards in Dubai. Indian Captain Virat Kohli claimed the 'ICC World Cricketer of the Year 2018'. Indian leg-spinner

Yuzvendra Chahal has also been awarded ICC T20I Performance of the Year.

17. **Roger Federer** won the Australia Open 2018 Men's Singles title.

Note: In the final he defeated Croatia's Marin Cilic in five sets 6-2, 6-7, 6-3, 3-6, 6-1. It was Federer's **sixth Australian Open** title (earlier won in 2004, 2006, 2007, 2010 and 2017) and overall **20th Grand Slam singles titles**. With this, he joins elite group of Margaret Court, Serena Williams and Steffi Graf who have won 20 or more Grand Slam singles titles.

18. **Caroline Wozniacki** won the Australia Open 2018 Women's Singles title.

Note: In the final she defeated Simona Halep (Romania) by 7-6, 7-2, 3-6, 6-4. She is the first player from Denmark to win a Grand Slam singles title.

19. **Sharath Kamal** lifted National Men's singles **Table Tennis** title for the eighth time.

Note: He defeated Anthony Amalraj in the final played in Ranchi. **Suthirta Mukherjee (West Bengal) emerged the new women's champion, beating Manika Batra.**

20. **Soloman Deksisa** has won the **15th edition of Tata Mumbai Marathon** in men's category.

Note: Solomon Deksisa (Ethiopia) has won the Mumbai Marathon (15th edition) with a time of two hours, nine minutes and 33 seconds, prize money worth USD 4 lakhs 5,000.

21. **Indian** team has won the blind Cricket World Cup 2018.

Note: India beat host Pakistan by **two wickets** to win the Blind Cricket World Cup 2018 at Sharjah Cricket Stadium, the UAE. The 2018 Blind Cricket World Cup was the fifth Blind Cricket World Cup tournament and was held in Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates.

22. Indian shuttler **Siddharth Pratap Singh** has won the 2018 Swedish Open Junior International Series.

Note: He defeated Denmark's Mads Christophersen by 21-15, 21-11 in Uppsala in Sweden.

23. **West Indies** to host the 6th edition of ICC Women's World Twenty20 2018.

Note: The 2018 Women's World T20 (sixth edition) will be hosted by West Indies (Antigua and Barbuda, Guyana, and St Lucia) from 9th-24th November 2018.

24. **Tai Tzu-ying** has won the 2018 women's singles Indonesia Master badminton tournament in Jakarta.

Note: She defeated Saina Nehwal in the final by 9-21, 13-21.

25. **Rakhi Halder** created the National record in the 63kg women's category at the 33rd Women Senior National Weightlifting Championships.

Note: She lifted 128kgs in the clean and jerk for a total of 230 kgs to create a new national record, bettering Karnam Malleswari's feat (127kg) created in Athens in 1999.

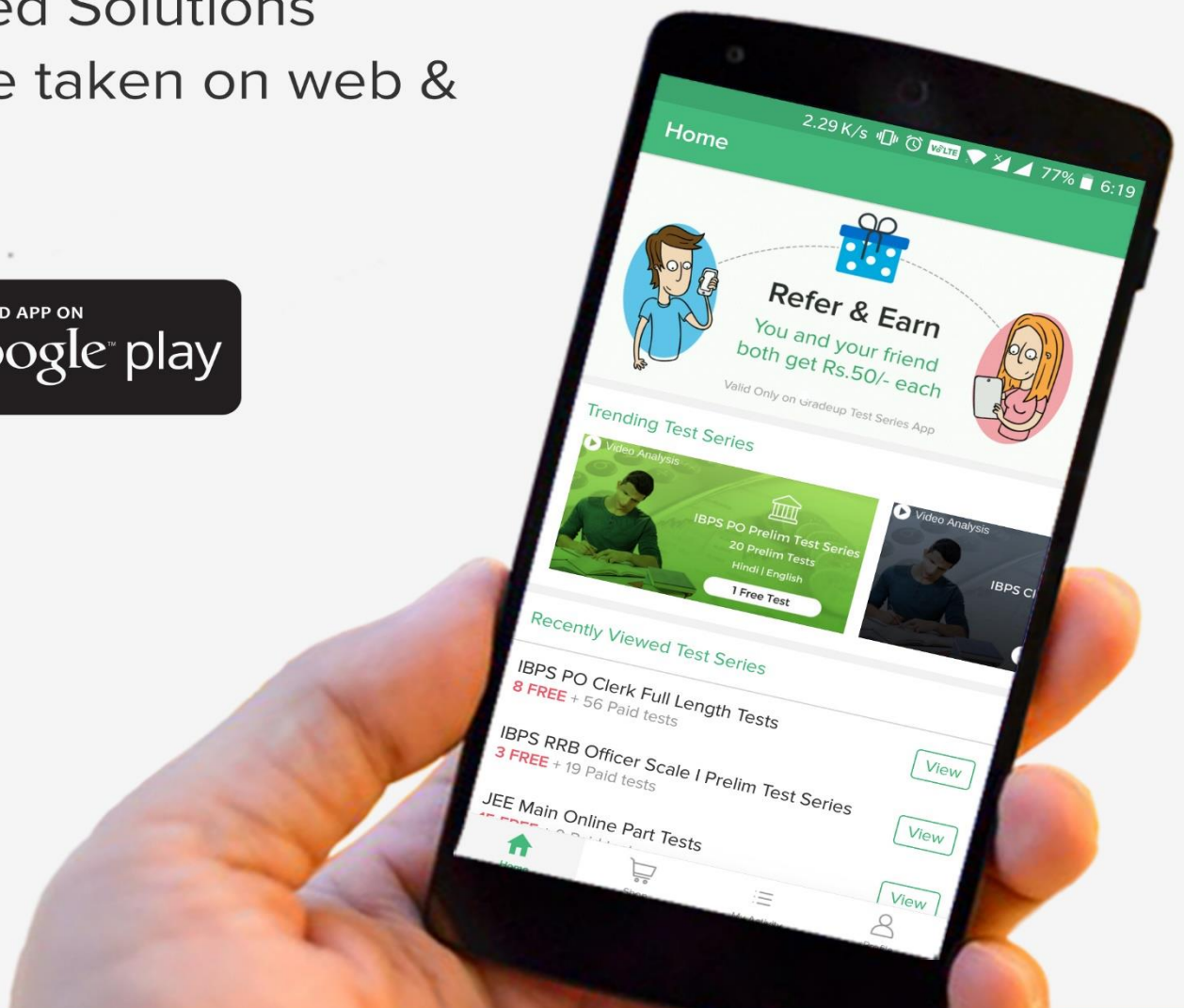
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