

1-2 January 2018

1) Which two countries of Gulf introduced value-added tax (VAT) from 1 January 2018 and thus became the first Gulf countries to



bring VAT system in practice?

Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)

Explanation: Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) introduced Value-Added Tax (VAT) from 1 January 2018. Both the countries asked all companies with earnings of \$100,000 or more a year to register in the VAT system.

– This is thus the first such VAT implementation for the Gulf region, which has long prided itself on its tax-free, cradle-to-grave welfare system. It is worth mentioning that none of the Gulf states levy any personal income tax and none have any plans to do so.

– Implementation of VAT are the latest in a series of measures introduced by Gulf oil producers over the past two years to boost revenues and cut spending as a persistent slump in world prices has led to ballooning budget deficits.

– The other four Gulf states – Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar – are also committed to introducing VAT but have delayed the move until early 2019.

2) Which state launched 24-hours free power supply for farmers from 1 January 2018 and claimed that it became the first-ever state to launch such initiative in India? – **Telangana**

Explanation: The Telangana government ushered in the New Year on 1 January 2018 by gifting the farmers 24-hour free power supply for agricultural purposes. It also claimed that it is the only state in the country to achieve this distinction in power sector to end the despair of farmers.

– The initiative would push the overall power demand to 11,000 MW by March 2018. The state government claimed that it had spent Rs. 12,610 crore in setting up new power lines, transformers and sub-stations, the state power utilities have made elaborate arrangements for power supply.

3) Which state became the second Open Defecation Free (ODF) state of Northeast India on 1 January 2018? – **Arunachal Pradesh**

Explanation: Arunachal Pradesh became the second state in North-East to achieve the Open Defecation Free (ODF) status on 1 January 2018. Upper Subansiri, Siang and Changlang of the state were declared ODF officially on this date. Sikkim was the first Northeastern state to achieve this status while Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Haryana are other three ODF states.

– It is worth mentioning that Arunachal Pradesh had cut short the national ODF target by one year and ten months ahead of the national target and set 31 December 2017, as the final target to achieve ODF status in the state.

– The project undertaken under Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) – SBM (G) saw the light of day only after the state government extended an incentive of Rs. 8,000 per toilet. This is in addition to the Centre's support of Rs. 12,000, raising the grant for constructing a toilet to Rs 20,000.

4) Who was named as the next Foreign Secretary by the Union Government on 1 January 2018?

– **Vijay Gokhale**



Explanation: Vijay Gokhale, a 1981-batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), was on 1 January 2018 named as the next Foreign Secretary by the Union Government. He will take over from Dr. S. Jaishankar when he demits office on 28 January 2018.

– Gokhale was Ambassador to China prior to moving back to the Ministry of External Affairs. He has been widely credited with conducting delicate but tough diplomatic negotiations in Beijing during the Doklam crisis.

– Above all, he is known for his fluency in the Chinese language, as well as his long experience in dealing with East Asia, and China in particular. He is currently Secretary (Economic Relations) in the Ministry of External Affairs.

5) Which team won its maiden Ranji Trophy title by defeating 7-time champion Delhi on 1 January 2018? – **Vidarbha**

Explanation: Vidarbha, who made it to the Ranji Trophy final for the first time, made history as it won its maiden title by defeating 7-time champion Delhi on 1 January 2018. In the final played at Holkar Stadium in Indore (Madhya Pradesh), Vidarbha achieved the

paltry winning target of 29 runs for the loss of one wicket.

– Opting to field, Vidarbha bowled out Delhi for 295 in the first innings with Rajneesh Gurbani picking up six wickets. In reply, Vidarbha notched up a mammoth 547 all out, as Akshay Wadkar struck his maiden century in first-class cricket. In their second innings, Delhi were all out for 280. Thus Vidarbha needed just 29 runs to win the title.

– Rajneesh Gurbani of Vidarbha, who took eight wickets in the match, including a hat-trick in the first innings, was adjudged Man of the Match.

– Ranji Trophy is the premier domestic Test tournament of India. Mumbai have been the most successful team having won the tournament 41 times, followed by Karnataka (8) and Delhi (7).

3 January 2018

1) The Rajya Sabha on 2 January 2018 made which unique record of sorts? – **It took up all the Zero Hour issues and special mentions listed in the agenda for that period**

Explanation: Rajya Sabha Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu on 2 January 2018 announced that the upper house of Parliament has made a record of sorts on the day as it took up all the Zero Hour issues and special mentions listed in the agenda for that period.

– For the first time since India attained Independence in 1947, all Zero Hour submissions, all Special Mentions were fully completed in the Upper House. In all, the House took up all the 10 listed and one additional Zero Hour submissions on the day.

2) The Union Government closed subscription of which popular savings bonds with effect from 2 January 2018?

– **8% Government Savings (taxable) Bonds 2003**

Explanation: The Union Finance Ministry on 1 January 2018 announced that it will close subscription of 8% government savings (taxable) bonds 2003, with effect from 2 January 2018.

– Thus subscription to this popular bond scheme closed w.e.f. 2 January 2018. This bond was started for subscription from 21 April 2003 and had a fixed tenure of six years, with no upper limit for investment. It was offered primarily to encourage retail investors to invest.

– The decision to discontinue the bond comes in the backdrop of declining interest rate in other saving instruments, especially the post office small saving schemes.

3) Lakhs of doctors and innumerable hospitals and nursing homes were planning to observe a 12-hour nationwide strike on 2 January 2018 on the call given by the Indian Medical Association (IMA). This strike call was given to protest against which bill? –

The National Medical Commission Bill

Explanation: Lakhs of doctors across the country planned to observe a 12-hour nationwide strike called by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) on 2 January 2018 to protest against the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill. However, the strike call was withdrawn after the Union Government sent the bill to the Parliamentary Standing Committee.

– The doctor fraternity is of the view that the NMC Bill promotes crosspathy (those who have studied alternate medicine can practice allopathy), eases procedures for private medical colleges and will be dominated by the government.

– The NMC Bill seeks to replace the Medical Council of India (MCI), the apex body for the medical fraternity since 1934, and form a new National Medical Council (NMC).

4) India's second largest rooftop solar plant was commissioned by GAIL at which place, as was announced on 1 January 2018? – **Pata (Uttar Pradesh)**

Explanation: State-owned gas utility GAIL has commissioned the country's second largest rooftop solar power plant. According to a statement released by GAIL on 1 January 2017, it has installed a 5.76 MWp (Mega Watt peak) solar plant at its petrochemical complex at Pata in Uttar Pradesh. The plant over the roofs of warehouses covers a total area of 65,000 square meters.

– Captive solar power initiative of GAIL will reduce carbon emissions by 6,300 tonnes per annum and help India achieve climate goals.

– Tata Power Solar had in December 2015 commissioned a 12 MW solar rooftop project in Amritsar, which produces more than 150 lakh units of power annually and offset over 19,000 tonne of carbon emissions every year.

5) What is the name of the new online portal for women empowerment that was launched by

Maneka Gandhi, the Minister of Women & Child Development on 2 January 2018? – ‘NARI’

Explanation: ‘NARI’ is the name of the new online portal launched on 2 January 2018 by Women & Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi. The portal primarily provides women citizens with easy access to information on government schemes and initiatives for women.

– The NARI portal summarizes over 350 government schemes and other important information for the benefit of women, with more being added everyday. It provides links to the ministries, departments and autonomous bodies offering these schemes as well as easy access to online applications and grievance redressal.

– NARI also provides information to women on issues affecting their lives. There are tips on good nutrition, suggestions for health check-ups, information on major diseases, tips for job search and interview, investment and savings advice, information on crimes and against women and reporting procedures, contacts of legal aid cells, simplified adoption procedures and much more.

4-6 January 2018



1) The Union Cabinet on 4 January 2018 approved the construction of which tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir that will be Asia’s longest bi-directional tunnel? – **Zojila Pass tunnel**

Explanation: The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved the construction of Asia’s longest bi-directional tunnel – the Zojila Pass tunnel, which will reduce the travel time on the Zojila pass patch between Srinagar and Leh to 15 minutes from the current 3.5 hours.

– The CCEA, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 4 January 2018, gave its approval to the construction, operation and maintenance of this 14.15 km long 2-lane bi-directional tunnel on Srinagar-Leh section that will



connect NH-1A at Km 95 and at Km 118.

– The construction of the tunnel will provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh and bring about all-round economic and socio-cultural integration of these regions.

– The construction period of the project is seven years which shall be reckoned from the date of commencement of construction. The civil construction cost of the project is Rs. 4,899.42 crore. The total capital cost of the project is Rs. 6,808.69 crore.

2) The Parliament on 2 January 2018 passed the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Amendment) Bill, 2017. What are the main objectives of this Bill? – Increase the authorized capital of NABARD by Rs. 30,000 crore and enable exit of RBI from it

Explanation: National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Amendment) Bill, 2017, the bill to increase authorised capital of National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) by six times to Rs. 30,000 crore and enable exit of Reserve Bank of India (RBI) was passed by Parliament on 2 January 2018.

– The bill was passed on this day by voice vote in the Rajya Sabha while it was passed by the Lok Sabha in August, 2017.

– At present the authorised capital of NABARD is Rs. 5,000 crore. With this bill RBI’s 0.4% equity in NABARD will be transferred to the centre and as a result, 100% equity will come to the government.

3) Which country became the first to implement a law that makes it illegal to women less than men? – **Iceland**

Explanation: on 1 January 2018 Iceland became the first country in the world to take the fight against the gender pay gap as in implemented a law that makes it

illegal to women less than men. Under this law the employers in Iceland now have to prove that they pay men and women in the same jobs equally. If they fail to do so, they risk being fined.

– The law applies to all companies and organizations with at least 25 full-time employees. Firms with more than 250 employees will have to get the certification by the end of this year, while smaller companies will follow in the next few years, according to their size.

– It is worth mentioning that discrimination based on gender is already illegal in many countries – but research shows the legislation is far from effective. Women are paid less than men in every country in the world, according to research by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

4) According to Central Statistics Office's (CSO's) first advance estimate for India's GDP growth rate in 2017-18, what will be the growth rate for Indian economy during 2017-18? – **6.5%**

Explanation: The first advance estimate data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) on 4 January 2018 disclosed that the Indian economy is expected to decelerate to 6.5% in 2017-18 from 7.1% in the previous year. This will be the slowest GDP growth rate in last 4 years.

– The CSO data showed that the agriculture sector is expected to grow at 2.1% in FY18, slower than 4.9% in the previous year, while manufacturing is likely to grow at 4.6%, compared with 7.9% a year ago. Electricity and trade, hotels sectors are the only sectors that will grow at a faster rate of 7.5% and 8.7% in FY18 than in FY17.

– The nominal GDP, or gross domestic product at market prices, is expected to grow at 9.5% against 11.75% assumed in the 2017-18 budget presented last year.



5) Who was appointed the new Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA) of India on 2 January 2018? – **Rajinder Khanna**

Explanation: Rajinder Khanna, a former chief of the country's external intelligence agency RAW, was appointed the Deputy National Security Adviser (NSA) by the Union Government on 2 January 2018. The post was lying vacant since Arvind Gupta, a former Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer, completed his

tenure in August last year. Gupta was appointed to the post in August 2014.

– Khanna headed the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) from December 2014 for a fixed two-year period. He is a 1978 batch Research and Analysis Wing Service (RAS) officer and has supervised several counter-terrorism operations and is considered an expert on Pakistan and Islamic terrorism.

– The National Security Council, headed by the Prime Minister, is the top body on all internal and external security-related matters. National Security Adviser Ajit Doval is its secretary.

7-8 January 2018

1) The North American blizzard of January 2018 that caused severe disruption along the East Coast of the United States, was unofficially called by which name? – **"Bomb Cyclone"**

Explanation: "Bomb Cyclone" is the unofficial name given to the powerful blizzard that struck eastern parts of North America during January 2018. It dumped snow and ice in places that rarely receive wintry precipitation, even in the winter, such as Florida and Georgia, and produced snowfall accumulations of over 2 feet (61 cm) in the Mid-Atlantic states, New England, and Atlantic Canada.



– The "Bomb Cyclone" originated from 2 January 2018 as a low pressure area at the East Coast of the United States. It rapidly turned into a deadly snowy blizzard that produced snowfall and other forms of frozen precipitation across much of the eastern US. Over 4 thousand flights were cancelled across the United States, with a majority of cancellations caused by the extensive winter storm.

– The storm received various unofficial names too, such as Winter Storm Grayson, Blizzard of 2018 and Storm Brody.

2) Which public sector bank completed 75 years on 6 January 2018? – UCO Bank

Explanation: UCO Bank, a leading public sector bank of India, completed 75 years of operations on 6 January 2018. All branches of UCO Bank celebrated the 75th Foundation Day of the bank on this day.

– The bank was founded by industrialist Ghanshyam Das Birla as United Commercial Bank on 6 January 1943 in Calcutta (present Kolkata). Birla conceived the idea of organising a commercial bank with Indian capital and management during the Quit India movement of 1942. The bank was started with Kolkata as its head office with an issued capital of Rs. 2 crores and a paid-up capital of Rs. 1 crore. The Government of India nationalized United Commercial Bank on 19 July 1969.

– An act of parliament changed the bank's name to UCO Bank in 1985, as a bank in Bangladesh existed with the name "United Commercial Bank", which caused confusion in the international banking arena. UCO Bank had assets worth \$39 billion during 2016 while its revenue stood at around \$2.9 billion.

3) The 2018 ASEAN-India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas conference was held at which place on 6 and 7 January 2018? – Singapore

Explanation: The ASEAN-India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) conference 2018 was held on 6 and 7 January 2018 in Singapore. Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari inaugurated the 2-day conference at the Sands Expo and Convention Centre at Marina Bay Sands in Singapore on 6 January 2018.

– The conference also marked the 25th anniversary of partnership between ASEAN and India. This annual conference is held primarily to mark the contribution of the Indian diaspora in the region.

4) What is the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in India in year 2016-17 as was disclosed in All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) for the year 2016-17 that was released on 6 January 2018? – 25.2%

Explanation: The Union Minister for Human Resource and Development (HRD), Prakash Javadekar released the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) for the year 2016-17 in New Delhi on 6 January 2018.

– According to the survey, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) for year 2016-17 stood at 25.2%. GER is the ratio of enrolment in higher education to population in the eligible age group (18-23) years. The GER in

2010-11 stood at 19.4%, the year in which the first AISHE was conducted. The GER recorded an increase of around 7% in year 2016-17 as compared to the previous year (2015-16).

– On the other hand overall enrolment increased from 27.5 million in 2010-11 to 35.7 million in 2016-17. The survey covers almost all the Higher Education institutions (HEIs) in the country including Universities, Colleges and Stand-Alone institutions.

5) The Union Cabinet approved setting up of an AIIMS (All India Institute of Medical Sciences) at which place in Himachal Pradesh on 4 January 2018? – Bilaspur

Explanation: The Union Cabinet on 4 January 2018 approved setting up of an AIIMS in Bilaspur in Himachal Pradesh with an outlay of Rs.1,350 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojna (PMSSY). The 750-bed AIIMS at Bilaspur will have a medical college with an intake capacity of 100 seats and a nursing college with 60 seats.

– PMSSY was announced in 2003. Its objectives are correcting regional imbalances in the availability of affordable/reliable tertiary healthcare services and augment facilities for quality medical education in the country. It establishes AIIMS in various regions of India apart from different government colleges. It is funded from different centrally sponsored schemes relating to creating infrastructure on health.

– Under this scheme, AIIMS have been established in Bhubaneswar (Odisha), Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), Raipur (Chhattisgarh), Jodhpur (Rajasthan), Rishikesh (Uttarakhand) and Patna (Bihar) while work of AIIMS Rae Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh) is in progress. Also, three AIIMS in Nagpur (Maharashtra), Kalyani (West Bengal) and Mangalagiri in Guntur (Andhra Pradesh) have been sanctioned in 2015, two AIIMS have been sanctioned at Bathinda (Punjab) and Gorakhpur (Uttar Pradesh) in 2016 and in Kamrup (Assam).



6) Which country won tennis' prestigious Hopman Cup for 2018 on 6 January 2018? – Switzerland

Explanation: Switzerland won the 30th edition of Hopman Cup by defeating Germany 2-1 in the final in Perth (Australia). The Swiss pair of Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic defeated German pair of Alexander Zverev and Angelique Kerber to win the Hopman Cup for Switzerland for the third time. In the men's singles Federer had defeated Zverev while Bencic lost to Kerber in women's singles. Earlier titles wins for Switzerland were in 1992 and 2001.

– Hopman Cup is an annual international eight-team indoor hardcourt tennis tournament held in Perth, Western Australia. The US has been the most successful country having won the tournament six times followed by Spain (4 times).

9 January 2018



1) India's fastest supercomputer till date 'Pratyush' was unveiled and established at which institute on 8 January 2018? – Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune

Explanation: India's fastest supercomputer "Pratyush" (meaning the Sun) was unveiled and dedicated to the nation at Pune based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) on 8 January 2018 by Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Science and Technology. It is India's first "multi-petaflops" supercomputer.

– 'Pratyush' is an array of computers that can deliver a peak power of 6.8 petaflops. One petaflop is a million billion floating point operations per second and is a reflection of the computing capacity of a system. However, this super computer's 2.8 petaflops facility will be installed at the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecast, Noida.

– 'Pratyush' would help the country with better forecasts in terms of monsoon, extreme events, tsunamis, cyclones, earthquakes, air quality, lightning, fishing, hot and cold waves, flood and drought among others.

– According to IITM, Pratyush is the fourth fastest supercomputer in the world dedicated for weather and climate research, and follows machines in Japan,

USA and the United Kingdom. It will also move an Indian supercomputer from the 300s to the 30s in the Top500 list, a respected international tracker of the world's fastest supercomputers.



2) The bilateral annual Haj 2018 agreement between India and Saudi Arabia was signed on 7 January 2018 in which Saudi government has agreed to India's decision to revive the option of sending Haj pilgrims through sea route also. The practice of ferrying Haj pilgrims by waterways was stopped in which year? – 1995

Explanation: The practice of ferrying Haj pilgrims between Mumbai and Jeddah by waterways was stopped from 1995. But Saudi government gave its green signal for India's decision to revive the option of sending Haj pilgrims through sea route also in the annual Haj 2018 agreement signed between the two countries on 7 January 2018. The agreement was signed by India's Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi and Haj and Umrah Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Dr. Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benten.

– Indian Government is of the view that sending pilgrims through ships will help cut down travel expenses significantly and will be a revolutionary, pro-poor, pilgrim-friendly decision.

– Another advantage with ships available these days is they are modern and well-equipped to ferry 4,000 to 5,000 persons at a time. They can cover the 2,300-odd nautical miles one-side distance between Mumbai and Jeddah within just 3-4 days. Earlier, the old ships used to take 12 to 15 days to cover this distance.



3) What was the name of the legendary NASA astronaut who passed away on 5 January 2018 and was the only agency astronaut to go into space as part of the Gemini, Apollo and space shuttle programs and was known for his moon walks? – John Young

Explanation: Legendary astronaut John Young, who walked on the Moon and later commanded the first space shuttle flight, passed away on 5 January 2018. He was the only agency astronaut to go into space as part of the Gemini, Apollo and space shuttle programs, and the first to fly into space six times.

– Counting his takeoff from the Moon in 1972 as commander of Apollo 16, his blastoff tally stood at seven, for decades a world record.



4) Who became first Indian-American and first Asian to win a Golden Globe award for best actor on 7 January 2018? – **Aziz Ansari**

Explanation: Aziz Ansari, the US-born son of immigrants from Chennai, became the first Indian-American and first Asian to win a Golden Globe award for best actor. He won the award for comedy series 'Master of None' in which he plays the role of 30-year-old actor Dev Shah.

– Born in Columbia, South Carolina to immigrant parents from Tamil Nadu, Ansari was studying at New York University Stern School of Business when he changed tracks to become a stand-up-comedian, performing in Big Apple clubs and weekly shows.

5) Which film won the Best Film award (in Drama category) at the 2018 Golden Globes award ceremony held on 7 January 2018? – **"Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri"**

Explanation: "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" – a film predicated on the aftermath of rape, won the Best Film award (in Drama category) at the 2018 Golden Globes award ceremony. Frances McDormand won the Best Actress award for this film while Best Actor award went to Gary Oldman for his performance in "Darkest Hour".

– Guillermo Del Toro won the Best Director award for the film "The Shape Of Water". On the other hand Sterling K Brown made history as the first African-American to win Best Actor award (for a television series) for his performance in TV series "Drama for This Is Us".

– Oprah Winfrey was awarded the Cecil B DeMille Lifetime Achievement award.

10 January 2018



1) North and South Korea kicked off their first formal talks in more than two years on 9 January 2018. This meeting, closely watched by world leaders, was held primarily to discuss which issue? –

How North Korean athletes can attend the Winter Olympics to be held in South Korea

Explanation: The talks between North and South Korea were held on 9 January 2018 in Seoul primarily to discuss North Korea's participation in the XXIII Winter Olympics and the Paralympics to be held in PyeongChang (South Korea) from 9 to 25 February 2018.

– In the talks North Korea agreed to send a delegation to the games. Another important outcome of this talk was that both the countries also agreed to ease military tensions.

– The talks were led by South Korea's Unification Minister Cho Myoung-gyon and North Korea's Chairman of the Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Fatherland Ri Son Gwon. The talks were held at the Panmunjom truce village, a small village located in the demilitarised zone separating the two Koreas. After the Korean war ended in a truce in 1953, Panmunjom was designated as the one place where officials from both sides could meet.

– Regardless of its primarily sporting agenda, the meeting was closely watched by world leaders eager for any sign of a reduction in tensions on the Korean peninsula amid rising fears over North Korea's development of nuclear weapons and defiance of United Nations Security Council resolutions.



2) Which railway station found its way into the Limca Book of Records 2018 for having an all-woman staff, as was disclosed on 9 January 2018? – Matunga

Explanation: The name of Matunga, railway station on the Central Railway (CR), has figured in the Limca Book of Records 2018 for having an all-woman staff. The achievement comes six months after Matunga became the first railway station in the country to be run by an all- woman staff.

– The station is being manned exclusively by women staffers since July 2017, a first on the Indian Railways. A team of 41 women staffers at the station includes personnel from the RPF, commercial and operating departments. These staffers work under the supervision of station manager Mamta Kulkarni.

3) Which private sector infrastructure entity signed a concession agreement for implementation of the mega Rs. 16,000-crore Navi Mumbai International Airport project on 8 January 2018? – GVK Power & Infrastructure Ltd.

Explanation: GVK Power & Infrastructure Ltd, the Hyderabad-based diversified infrastructure company, which also had the Bangalore International Airport Ltd under its fold, on 8 January 2018 signed a concession agreement for implementation of the Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) project. The initial concession period is 30 years from the appointed date and extendable for 10 years.

– The agreement was signed through a special purpose vehicle (SPV), Navi Mumbai International Airport Pvt. Ltd with Cidco, the nodal authority of the Maharashtra government for the implementation of the project.

– Through its subsidiary, Mumbai International Airport Pvt Ltd, GVKPIL holds 74 per cent equity shares in the proposed Navi Mumbai Airport Ltd with Cidco holding the balance 26 per cent. The Navi Mumbai International Airport will be the much-

needed second airport for the twin cities of Mumbai and Navi Mumbai.

– GVK subsidiary MIAL was declared successful bidder for Navi Mumbai International Airport in February 2017 and received the Letter of Award from Cidco on October 25, 2017.

4) Which state topped the newly commenced logistics index called Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) that lists logistics performance of Indian states and Union territories? – Gujarat

Explanation: Gujarat has topped the newly commenced Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) index, a composite indicator to assess international trade logistics across Indian states and union territories. Punjab and Andhra Pradesh took the second and third positions, respectively.

– The findings of LEADS were released by the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry during January 2018. The index has primarily concluded that the logistics performance of Indian states and Union territories is “sub-par” owing to a host of inefficiencies.

– LEADS is loosely based on the World Bank’s biannual Logistics Performance Index (LPI), on which India was ranked 35 among 160 countries in 2016.

– Logistics is the management of the flow of resources such as cargo, documents, information and funds through a range of activities and services between points of origin and destination.

5) Brigadier (retd.) Kapil Mohan, who passed away at the age of 88 years on 6 January 2018, was the man behind which famous Indian liquor brand? – Old Monk



Explanation: Brigadier (retd.) Kapil Mohan, former Chairman and MD of Mohan Meakin Ltd. and the man behind the rum Old Monk, passed away in Ghaziabad’s Mohan Nagar area on 6 January 2018.

– He had launched the ‘Old Monk’ rum in 1954 was for a long time the largest selling dark rum in the

world. It was, for many years, the biggest Indian Made Foreign Liquor brand as well. Other famous brands started by him include Solan No. 1 whiskey and Golden Eagle beer.

– Recipient of Padma Shri in 2010, Kapil Mohan led the much-needed diversification of the company after he took over the reins of the erstwhile Dyer Meakin Breweries.

11 January 2018

1) The UIDAI on 10 January 2018 announced introduction of Virtual ID and limited know-your-customer (KYC) for Aadhaar number holders with a view to Virtual ID and limited know-your-customer (KYC) for Aadhaar number holders. According to the announcement by UIDAI, the system based on virtual ID will be pressed into service from which date? – **1 June 2018**

Explanation: The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) announced introduction of Virtual ID and limited know-your-customer (KYC) for Aadhaar number holders. The virtual ID for an Aadhaar holder can be used in lieu of his/her Aadhaar number to avoid the need for sharing the Aadhaar number at the time of authentication. The move came just days after a newspaper report in 'The Tribune' claimed a major breach in the Aadhaar database through a sting operation.

– Virtual ID will be a temporary, revocable 16-digit random number mapped with the Aadhaar number. It will not be possible to derive the Aadhaar number from the virtual ID.



– UIDAI will be releasing necessary APIs (Application Programming Interface) by 1 March 2018 and all agencies have been directed to make the necessary changes for the use of virtual ID, UID token and limited KYC to start using the new system by 1 June 2018.

2) The Union Government from 10 January 2018 opened for subscription which new bond scheme that replaced the immensely popular 8% Savings Bonds Scheme? – **7.75% Savings (Taxable) Bonds, 2018**

Explanation: The subscription for 7.75% Savings (Taxable) Bonds, 2018 opened from 10 January 2018. These bonds will have a maturity of seven years and have been introduced to replace the popular 8% Savings Bonds Scheme (also known as RBI Bonds Scheme) that was earlier closed from 2 January 2018.

– Even though the bond will fetch a lower interest rate now, financial planners expect the new 7.75% Savings (Taxable) Bonds to get a good response from investors.

– There is no maximum limit for investment in 7.75% Savings (Taxable) Bonds and the bonds have been issued for a minimum amount of Rs. 1,000 (face value) and in multiples thereof. The scheme is open to investment by individuals (including Joint Holdings) and Hindu Undivided Families. NRIs are not eligible for making investments in these bonds.

– Like bank fixed deposits, the interest income earned from 7.75% Government Savings Bonds is added to one's income and taxed according to the respective slabs.



3) The Union Government divested how much of its stake in NMDC Limited through a 2-day offer for sale (OFS) on 9 and 10 January 2018? – **1.5%**

Explanation: The two-day offer for sale (OFS) of government's 1.5% stake in NMDC was conducted on 9 and 10 January 2018. While the OFS was meant for the institutional investors on 9 January, the retail investors were given chance to invest on 10 January.

– The 1.5% stake sale fetched Rs. 750 crore to the Union Government, the floor price for the OFS being Rs. 153.50 per share.

– The NMDC Limited (earlier known as National Mineral Development Corporation) is a state-controlled mineral producer of the Government of India. It is owned by the Government of India and is under administrative control of the Ministry of Steel.

– The government has already raised over Rs. 52,500 crore in current fiscal through stake sale in public sector units (PSUs), including listing of insurance PSUs and exchange traded fund. It has set an ambitious target of raising Rs. 72,500 crore for disinvestment in the current fiscal.

4) What is the name of the woman skier who created history by becoming the first Indian to register an international medal in skiing on 9 January 2018? – **Aanchal Thakur**

Explanation: 21-year old Aanchal Thakur from Manali (Himachal Pradesh) created history on 9 January 2018 as she became first-ever Indian to win a medal in an international skiing event.



– She won a bronze medal in the slalom race category at Alpine Eider 3200 Cup organised by Skiing's international governing body, Federation International de Ski (FIS) at the Palandoken Ski Centre, in Erzurum in Turkey.



5) Which state became the first state in India to launch High Risk Pregnancy (HRP) Portal, as was disclosed during January 2018? – **Haryana**

Explanation: Haryana achieved the distinction of becoming the first state in the country to launch High Risk Pregnancy (HRP) Portal. This was disclosed by Anil Vij, Haryana's Health Minister on 6 January 2018.

– The HRP 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. Haryana state government has implemented the High Risk Pregnancy Policy across

the state since November, 2017, for identifying 100 per cent name-based high-risk pregnancy cases, and ensuring their delivery by specialists at civil hospitals.

6) Union Government on 9 January 2018 disclosed that it has completed the first phase of the BharatNet project under which it has laid optical fibre in more than 1 lakh gram panchayats. What is the primary aim of the BharatNet project? – **To bring high speed broadband to all 2.5 lakh gram panchayats (GPs) through optical fibre**

Explanation: BharatNet project, earlier called the National Optical Fibre Network (NOGN), is an ambitious project that forms the backbone for the Digital India initiative. It aims to bring high speed broadband to all 2.5 lakh gram panchayats (GPs) through optical fibre.

– The project had obtained Cabinet approval in 2011 and the deadline was fixed for the end of 2013. It was later deferred to September 2015 by the UPA government. The NDA government re-examined the project status and set a target to complete the roll-out by the end of 2016. This was later delayed to December 2018. Now, the deadline is set for March 2019.

– The first phase of Bharat Net project has been completed and now the government is ready to roll-in the second phase.

7) Who is heading the 12-member Inter-Ministerial Committee appointed by the Union Home Ministry, which will take a call on the playing of the national anthem in cinema halls and public places? – **B.R. Sharma** (Additional Secretary)

Explanation: The 12-member Inter-Ministerial Committee led by Additional Secretary B.R. Sharma, was constituted during December 2017. It will make recommendations on the regulations for playing/singing of the national anthem and suggest changes in the Acts and orders relating to the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.

12 January 2018



1) The Supreme Court on 11 January 2018 set up a three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to supervise further probe into 186 anti-Sikh riot cases. Who is heading this SIT? – **Justice S.N. Dhingra**

Explanation: Justice S.N. Dhingra is heading the 3-member SIT constituted by the Supreme Court on 11 January 2018 to supervise further probe into anti-Sikh riot cases. Serving IPS officer Abhishek Dular and retired IG rank officer Rajdeep Singh would be part of the SIT.

– Dhingra was the judge when punishments were handed out in 1990s to the accused of the Trilokpuri massacre of 1984. Large-scale riots had broken out in the national capital in the aftermath of the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by two Sikh security guards on the morning of 31 October 1984. The violence had claimed 2,733 lives in Delhi alone.

– The SIT has been asked by a Bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra to submit its status report in two months. Earlier the apex court had held that the previous SIT had not carried out further probe into these 186 cases in which closure reports were filed.



2) Who is poised to become the first woman lawyer to be directly appointed to the Supreme Court after her name was recommended for appointment by the Supreme Court collegium on 11 January 2018? – **Indu Malhotra**

Explanation: Senior Lawyer Indu Malhotra is poised to create history after her name was recommended for appointment by the Supreme Court collegium on 11 January 2018. Once the government clears the recommendation, she would be the first woman lawyer to be directly appointed to the top court. She will be 7th woman to become Supreme Court judge.

– In 2007, Indu was only the second woman lawyer to be appointed as senior advocate by the Supreme Court, three decades after the first, Justice Leila Seth, was designated.

– Apart from Indu Malhotra, the Supreme Court collegium also recommended Uttarakhand Chief Justice KM Joseph for the post of Supreme Court judge. Joseph had set aside President's rule in the hill state in 2016.

3) SEBI on 10 January 2018 barred which international auditing firm from auditing any listed company in India for a period of two years for its alleged role in the Satyam scam? – **Price Waterhouse**

Explanation: Indian securities market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) barred Price Waterhouse and its network of firms from auditing any listed company in India for a period of two years for its alleged role in the Satyam Computer Services Limited (Satyam) scam on 10 January 2018. It also directed the auditing firm to disgorge Rs. 13.09 crore along with 12% interest per annum since January 2009.

– Price Waterhouse, Bangalore and two senior partners – S. Gopalakrishnan and Srinivas Talluri had certified Satyam's audit reports in 2000-2008.

– In 2010, SEBI had issued a show-cause notice to Price Waterhouse, among many other entities, after it emerged that the accounts of Satyam were falsified and inflated.

– The Rs. 7,136 crore Satyam scam was unearthed in 2009. It is worth mentioning that in January 2009 the then chairman of Satyam, B. Ramalinga Raju had written a letter accepting that the balance sheet of the company included inflated and non-existent cash and bank balances.



4) Who was appointed next Chairman of ISRO to replace A.S. Kiran Kumar, whose term ends on 14 January 2018?

– **K. Sivan**

Explanation: K. Sivan, a rocket scientist currently Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Trivandrum, was on 10 January 2018 appointed the next Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) for a three-year term. He replaces current ISRO Chairman AS Kiran Kumar, whose term ends on 14 January 2018.

– Sivan expertise had helped ISRO send 104 satellites in a single mission during February 2017. He was the key person who worked on the technicalities of how the satellites would be placed in orbit. He is a graduate of IIT (Bombay) and has also mastered the development of cryogenic engines for India.

5) What will be the name of the photocentric cryptocurrency to be launched by Kodak, the announcement of which led to incredible frenzy and incredible appreciation in company's share price? – **"KodakCoin"**

Explanation: "KodakCoin" is the proposed name of a photocentric cryptocurrency to be launched by the former camera and film heavyweight Eastman Kodak Co., as announced by the company on 10 January 2018.

– According to the company "Kodak Coin" will be a photocentric crypto currency to empower photographers and agencies to take greater control in image rights management.

– This announcement more than doubled company's share prices. It is worth mentioning that investors have been snapping up virtually any asset that is related to digital currencies after meteoric rise in Bitcoin's value.



6) In an ambitious move the Union Cabinet on 10 January 2018 allowed how much stake for foreign airlines in state-owned airline company Air India? – **49%**

Explanation: The Union Cabinet allowed foreign airlines to buy a stake of up to 49% in Air India with prior government approval ahead of the state-owned airline's proposed privatization. Existing rules allow foreign airlines to own as much as 49% in private Indian airlines, but not in Air India.

– The Government clarified that substantial ownership and effective control of Air India will remain with Indian nationals. Air India had total debt of about Rs. 48,877 crore at the end of March 2017 – Rs. 17,360 crore of aircraft loans and Rs. 31,517 crore of working capital loans.

– The cabinet also approved 100% FDI in single-brand retail without the requirement of prior government approval. India allows 100% FDI in single-brand retail, but investment beyond 49% requires prior government approval.

13-15 January 2018

1) Which state government during January 2018 came up with a unique way of preserving trees by allowing people to forge fraternal ties with trees? – **Sikkim**

Explanation: The Government of Sikkim came up with a unique way of preserving trees by encouraging people to forge a relationship of brotherhood or sisterhood with trees through a practice locally known as Mith/Mit or Mitini.



– As per the notification titled “Sikkim Forest Tree (Amity & Reverence) Rules 2017” issued during January 2018, “State government shall allow any person to associate with trees standing on his or her private land or on any public land by entering into a Mith/Mit or Mitini relationship.”

– The notification also states that a person can also adopt a tree “as if it was his or her own child in which case the tree shall be called an adopted tree.” A third way to forge a relationship with a tree is by “preserving a tree in remembrance of a departed relative in which case the tree shall be called a smriti tree.”

– The notification is in consonance with the age-old tradition of promoting amity between man and nature, particularly trees. Sikkim is one of the cleanest and greenest states of the country.

2) Which was the most important satellite that was carried on-board PSLV-C40 rocket in ISRO’s historic 100th satellite launch on 12 January 2018, a launch that altogether carried 31 satellites? – Cartosat-2

Explanation: The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on 12 January 2018 successfully launched a Cartosat-2 series weather observation satellite, along with 30 other spacecraft, using its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C40). While this was the 100th satellite launch by ISRO, it was the 42nd flight for PSLV.

– The 710-kg Cartosat-2 series remote sensing satellite was the main satellite to be carried in this launch that lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. Other 30 satellites included 2 Indian nano-satellites (Nanosat and Microsat) and 28 other small satellites of 6 other countries, including those from the US and the UK.

– The rocket first injected the Cartosat-2 series satellite for earth observation about 17 minutes after lift-off while other 30 satellites were released into orbit one by one in a space of about seven minutes.

– This launch came about four months after ISRO’s PSLV-C39 failed following a technical snag involving its heat shield.



3) In an unprecedented event, four senior sitting judges of the Supreme Court on 12 January 2018 met the media to complain that the administration of the apex court was not in order and criticised its distribution of cases to judges. Who are these four judges who jointly came out against Chief Justice of India Justice Dipak Misra? – **Justices Jasti Chelameswar, Ranjan Gogoi, Madan Lokur and Kurian Joseph**

Explanation: Exposing a rift with Chief Justice Dipak Misra, some of the Supreme Court’s most senior judges, four justices of the Supreme Court of India on 12 January 2018 in an unprecedented move publicly aired the alleged problems affecting India’s highest court. The 4 judges told a news conference the issues involving its administration were serious enough to prompt them to go public.

– These four judges are Justices Jasti Chelameswar, Ranjan Gogoi, Madan Lokur and Kurian Joseph. The news conference was held at Chelameswar’s official residence in New Delhi, who is the senior-most judge after the Chief Justice.

– The justices gave few details of the incidents they were referring to, but released a letter they had written to the Chief Justice. They disclosed that efforts to alert the Chief Justice that certain things were not in order and that remedial measures were needed had failed, prompting the news conference

4) IDFC Bank Ltd. will acquire which non-bank financial firm for about \$1.5 billion, as was announced on 13 January 2018? – **Capital First Ltd.**

Explanation: IDFC Bank Ltd, one of India’s two newest banks, will acquire non-bank financial firm Capital First Ltd in a share swap deal valued at about \$1.5 billion. This deal was announced on 13 January 2018.

– Capital First Ltd. is owned more than a third by private equity firm Warburg Pincus. Capital First’s founder and chairman V. Vaidyanathan will become chief executive of the combined entity. Under the deal shareholders in Capital First will receive 139 shares of the bank for every 10 shares held. The deal is conditional on central bank and other regulatory approvals.

5) The 4th International Dharma-Dhamma Conference was held at which place from 11 to 13 January 2018? – **Rajgir (Bihar)**

Explanation: The 4th edition of the International Dharma-Dhamma Conference was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind at Rajgir (Nalanda) in

Bihar on 11 January 2018. The theme of the 3-day conference was "State and Social Order in Dharma-Dhamma Traditions". It concluded on 13 January 2018.

– The conference was organized by Nalanda University, in collaboration with the Centre for Study of Religion and Society, India Foundation, Ministry of External Affairs and the Vietnam Buddhist University.

– Addressing the gathering, the President said that Buddhism promoted pluralism and diversity of thoughts. He said anyone who has been touched by Lord Budha has embraced the process of ceaseless and constant striving to become a better person.

16 January 2018

1) What is the new name of the iconic Teen Murti Chowk war memorial in Delhi that was renamed during the India visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on 14 January 2018? – **Teen Murti Haifa Chowk**



Explanation: As a symbolic gesture of friendship with Israel, India renamed the iconic Teen Murti Chowk war memorial as 'Teen Murti Haifa Chowk' on 14 January 2018 to mark the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. This memorial is situated near the Teen Murti Bhavan, the official residence of the first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.

– Haifa is the name of the Israeli port city that was freed from the hands of a joint Ottoman, German and Austro-Hungarian force by Indian soldiers on 23 September 1918.

– The Indian soldiers fighting for the Allied Powers, captured Haifa and cleared a crucial route for the Allies. A total of 44 Indian soldiers from the three princely states (Hyderabad, Jodhpur and Mysore) died during the liberation of Haifa.

2) The UIDAI on 15 January 2018 allowed face recognition as additional means of Aadhaar authentication to be used in combination with existing ways such as fingerprint or iris scan. This new recognition facility will be made available by which date? – **1 July 2018**

Explanation: The face recognition allowed by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) is going to help in inclusive authentication of those who are not able to biometrically authenticate due to their worn out fingerprints, old age or hard work conditions. The facility is being allowed only in a "fusion mode" that is along with other existing means of authentication, and will be available by 1 July 2018.

– As of now, two modes of biometric authentication, fingerprint authentication and iris authentication, are allowed under Aadhaar. The new method of face recognition will also be allowed "on need basis".

3) Which country broke India's monopoly in providing Internet access to Nepal by becoming country's second Internet service provider during January 2018? – **China**

Explanation: China on 12 January 2018 became Nepal's second Internet service provider and it thus broke India's monopoly in providing Internet access to Nepal. China Telecom Global (CTG) started providing Internet services in the country by teaming up with Nepal Telecom.

– The new terrestrial fibre cable launched in 2016 by CTG will now connect Nepal and China through the Jilong (Rasuwagadhi) border gateway. CTG has also expanded Internet services to Pakistan, Laos and Thailand.

– So far, Nepal had been linked to the global internet network through Indian telecom operators, using optical fibre connections in Biratnagar, Bhairahawa and Birgunj, among others.

4) Which company during January 2018 completed the acquisition of Tata Chemicals' urea fertilisers business for Rs. 2,682 crore and thus paving the way for first-ever foreign direct investment (FDI) in the highly regulated urea sector? – **Yara Fertilisers India**

Explanation: Yara Fertilisers India, a subsidiary of Norway-based Yara International ASA, on 12 January 2018 completed the first-ever foreign direct investment (FDI) in India's fertilizer sector as it acquired the urea fertilisers business of Tata Chemicals for Rs. 2,682 crore.

– The deal included transfer of all assets and liabilities (working capital) of the Babrala plant in Uttar Pradesh. With this acquisition, Yara's current turnover of \$40 million in India will increase to \$350 million.

– The Babrala plant, which was commissioned in 1994, is the most energy-efficient plant in India with energy efficiency on par with Yara's best plants across the globe.

5) What is India's rank in the Global Manufacturing Index (GMI) that was released by World Economic Forum (WEF) on 14 January 2018? – **30th**

Explanation: India was placed at 30th position in the Global Manufacturing Index (GMI) that was released by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF) on 14 January 2018. India was placed five places behind China (25th). In terms of the scale of production, India has been ranked ninth, while for complexity it is at 48th place.

– The report has categorised 100 countries in four major groups for its ranking which include, Leading (strong current base, high level of readiness for future); High Potential (limited current base, high potential for future); Legacy (strong current base, at risk for future); or Nascent (limited current base, low level of readiness for future).

– India has been placed in the Legacy group alongside Hungary, Mexico, Philippines, Russia, Thailand and Turkey, among others. Meanwhile, China is on the list of Leading countries.

17-18 January 2018



1) The third edition of "Raisina Dialogue" was inaugurated by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in New Delhi on 16 January 2018. What is the theme of this edition of the annual

geo-political conference? – **"Managing Disruptive Transitions: Ideas, Institutions and Idioms"**

Explanation: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu inaugurated the third edition of the geo-political conference, Raisina Dialogue, in New Delhi on 16 January 2018. The theme of the 3-day conference is "Managing Disruptive Transitions: Ideas, Institutions and Idioms".

– The inaugural session was attended by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj. The event is jointly organized by the Ministry of External Affairs and Observer Research Foundation (ORF). Important dignitaries taking part in the conference include former Afghanistan president Hamid Karzai, former prime minister of Canada Stephen Harper, former prime minister of Sweden Carl Bildt, Indian Army chief General Bipin Rawat, Indian Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba and Admiral Harry Harris, commander of US Pacific Command.

– The conference based on the lines of "Shangri-La Dialogue" of Singapore was first held in 2016.

2) The central government on 16 January 2018 scrapped the Haj subsidy and announced that the funds saved will instead be used for providing education to minorities. The government's decision to scrap the subsidy is in line with the 2012 order of the Supreme Court and which committee's recommendations? – **Afzal Amanullah Committee**

Explanation: The Union Government had in February 2017 formed 6-member committee headed by Afzal Amanullah, the former Consulate General of India in Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), to give a report on ways to improve India's Haj policy and also look into issue of subsidy to the pilgrimage in light of May 2012 Supreme Court order on gradually reducing and abolishing it by 2022. The committee had recommended numerous reforms in Haj policy as well as reduction in the subsidy for the annual pilgrimage.

– The Union Government on 16 January 2018 announced that there will be no subsidy for Haj from this year. The Haj subsidy refers to the discounted airfares given to Mecca-bound pilgrims who fly by government-owned Air India. It also included assistance for domestic travel within India to reach special airport terminals meant for Haj departure.

– Haj is the annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, the holiest city for Muslims in Saudi Arabia. It is mandatory religious duty for Muslims that must be

carried out at least once in their lifetime by all adult Muslims who are physically and financially capable of undertaking the journey and can support their family during their absence.



3) BSE Sensex closed above which mark for the first time on 17 January 2018? – **35,000 points**

Explanation: BSE Sensex closed above 35,000 milestone mark for the first time ever on 17 January 2018. On the other hand the 30-scrip Nifty hit the benchmark 10,800 points mark before closing at 10,788.

– The markets were boosted by the government's plan to cut extra borrowing for 2017-18 to Rs. 20,000 crore from Rs. 50,000 crore. Apart from a global market rally, optimism about acceleration in corporate earnings growth and economic growth has spurred markets to new highs this year.

4) Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu on 17 January 2018 inaugurated the iCREATE facility near which city? – **Ahmedabad**

Explanation: Prime Minister Modi and Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu on 17 January 2018 dedicated to the nation, the iCREATE facility located on the outskirts of Ahmedabad. This facility aims to develop an ecosystem in India to generate quality entrepreneurs.

– iCreate is an independent centre created with the objective of facilitating entrepreneurship through a blend of creativity, innovation, engineering, product design and leveraging emerging technologies to deal with major issues such as food security, water, connectivity, cybersecurity, IT and electronics, energy, bio-medical equipment and devices etc.



5) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 16 January 2018 launched the commencement of work for the Rs 431-billion petroleum refinery at which place in Rajasthan? – **Barmer**

Explanation: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 16 January 2018 kicked-off the commencement of work for the Rs. 431-billion petroleum refinery at Rajasthan's Barmer. The joint venture between state-run Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) and the government of Rajasthan will be the first refinery in the country to completely produce Bharat Stage VI (Euro 6) compliant fuel when it commences work by 2022.

– However, this is not the first time that the refinery plan is being floated by the government. It was way back in 2009, that state-run Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) had also proposed to set up a refinery there, but it shelved it later citing viability concerns. Later on 22 September 2013, the then UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi laid the foundation stone for the refinery by HPCL.

– It was in January 2004 that Barmer rose to prominence after Cairn Energy struck oil in the Mangala field – the largest onshore oil discovery in India in more than 20 years.

19 January 2018



1) According to a notification issued by the Union Road Transport Ministry on 17 January 2018 all taxis, buses and public transport vehicles will have to install location tracking device or GPS and an alert button mandatorily from which date? – **1 April 2018**

Explanation: All taxis, buses and public transport vehicles (barring three-wheelers and e-rickshaws), will have to install location tracking device or GPS and an alert button mandatorily from 1 April 2018. This notification deadline was issued by the Union Road Transport Ministry on 17 January.

– Though initially the ministry had proposed mandatory installation of CCTV cameras in buses

having more than 23 seats, the proposal was dropped due to privacy concerns. While the GPS system gives the location tracking of the vehicle to anyone tracking it, the alert button, if pressed, alerts both the transport department and police control rooms for taking any necessary action.



2) During January 2018 which state became the first in India to come out with a public cloud policy virtually mandating its departments to shift their data storage onto the cloud? – **Maharashtra**

Explanation: Maharashtra government on 17 January 2018 unveiled its public cloud policy and thus became the first state in India to do so. This policy will allow all government departments to have access to public cloud.

– According to the announcement made by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis at the Maharashtra Technology Summit, the state government has created a US\$ 2 billion opportunity for the cloud industry. State government is expected to empanel five to six top cloud service providers like Amazon or Microsoft for availing this facility.

3) Which banking entity on 18 January 2018 became the third Indian company to cross Rs. 5 trillion market capitalization? – **HDFC Bank**

Explanation: India's most-valued bank HDFC Bank Ltd on 18 January 2018 crossed Rs. 5 trillion market capitalisation for the first time, making it only the third Indian company to achieve this milestone.

– HDFC Bank's share price touched a fresh record high of Rs. 1,938.40 on 18 January on the BSE, up 2.5% from its previous close with a market cap of Rs. 5.02 trillion. With this HDFC Bank also became the first-ever banking entity to cross the Rs. 5 trillion market capitalization mark in India.

– Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) and Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) are the other two companies which crossed market capitalisation of Rs. 5 trillion. RIL remained the most-valued company with a market cap of Rs. 5.86 trillion, followed by TCS with a market cap of Rs. 5.46 trillion.

4) During January 2018 which corporate entity became India's eighth company to cross Rs. 3 trillion market capitalization? – **Hindustan Unilever Ltd.**

Explanation: India's largest packaged consumer products firm by sales, Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) on 16 January 2018 became the country's eighth company to cross Rs. 3 trillion market capitalisation. In intraday, the HUL stock touched a fresh record high of Rs. 1,388.45 on the BSE with the market capitalization hitting Rs. 3.01 trillion.

– Earlier, seven companies have crossed this landmark-Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS), HDFC Bank Ltd, ITC Ltd, Maruti Suzuki India Ltd, Housing Development Finance Co. Ltd and Oil & Natural Gas Corp. Ltd.



NCDEX
National Commodity &
Derivatives Exchange Ltd.

5) Who was appointed as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of NCDEX, the leading commodity bourse, on 18 January 2018? – **Vijay Kumar Venkataraman**

Explanation: Vijay Kumar Venkataraman was on 18 January 2018 appointed as the new Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of leading agri-commodity exchange NCDEX. His appointment for 3 years was announced by NCDEX Chairman Nabi Narayan Das. Kumar will replace Samir Shah, who was holding the post for over four years.

– Kumar is an agro-industry veteran who has worked for companies like National Bulk Handling Corporation, Cargill, Reliance Industries, Arthur Andersen, ITC Ltd, Britannia and Sharp Group. He had also worked at NCDEX as Chief Business Officer between June 2009 and September 2014.

20-23 January 2018

1) India's first sovereign wealth fund – the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) on 22 January 2018 announced its first-ever investment platform that will invest up to \$3 billion in ports, terminals, transportation and logistics businesses in India. This investment platform is being created with international ports operator? – **DP World Pvt. Ltd.**



Explanation: An investment platform to invest up to \$3 billion in ports, terminals, transportation and logistics businesses in India will be created by the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and Dubai-based ports operator DP World Pvt. Ltd. This was announced by the two entities on 22 January 2018.

– This is the first investment platform from NIIF and will see investment up to \$3 billion of equity to acquire assets and develop projects in these sectors.

NIIF is India's first sovereign wealth fund. On the other hand, with a portfolio of 78 operating marine and inland terminals, DP World, majority owned by the Dubai government, is the world's fourth biggest container port operator.

– The Indian government had created NIIF in 2015 to catalyse capital from international and domestic investors into energy, transportation, housing, water, waste management and other infrastructure and allied sectors in India.



2) Union Government has decided to declare year 2018 as the 'National Year of Millets'. This decision has been taken following a request by which state? –

Karnataka

Explanation: The decision to declare 2018 as the 'National Year of Millets' was taken following a request by Karnataka, which is the country's leader in the millet sector.

– Union Statistics and Programme Implementation Minister D.V. Sadananda Gowda on 20 January 2018 confirmed that the Union Agriculture Ministry had already completed the formalities regarding declaring 2018 as the 'national year of millets'.

– Karnataka Agriculture Minister Krishna Byre Gowda has been campaigning for declaring 2018 as national year of millets. The State government had spent Rs. 200 crore in the last four years publicising the health benefits of millets among consumers in a bid to trigger an increase in demand.

– According to experts, dedicating a year for millets will not only increase awareness about its health benefits, but also result in higher demand for these drought-resistant varieties, resulting in remunerative prices for poor and marginal farmers.

3) Which nine cities were chosen in the fourth round of the central government's flagship Smart Cities Mission, as was announced on 19 January 2018? –

Bareilly, Moradabad, Saharanpur, Erode, Bihar Sharif, Silvassa, Diu, Kavarati and Itanagar

Explanation: According to an announcement made by Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on 19 January 2018, 9 more cities have been chosen in the latest round (fourth round) of the central government's flagship Smart Cities Mission.

– The nine cities chosen in this round are – Bareilly, Moradabad and Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, Erode in Tamil Nadu, Bihar Sharif in Bihar, Silvassa in Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Diu in Daman and Diu, Kavarati in Lakshadweep and Itanagar in Arunachal Pradesh. These cities were selected from 15 cities that had submitted their proposals to the ministry. Shillong will be the 100th city provided it submits its proposal to the centre in next three months.

– The number of cities picked under the project now stands at 99. Under the scheme, each city will get Rs. 500 crore from the centre for implementing various projects. An equal amount, on matching basis, will have to be contributed by the state or urban local bodies.

4) Which entity is acquiring 51.1% government stake in Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) for Rs. 36,915 crore, a deal with which the Union Government surpass the disinvestment target of Rs 725 billion for 2017-18? – **ONGC**

Explanation: State-run Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) will acquire the 51.1% government stake in Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) at a cost of Rs. 36,915 billion. The deal is expected to be completed by the end of January 2018.

– The deal will also help the government to surpass the disinvestment target of Rs 725 billion for 2017-18. As of 11 January 2018, the total disinvestment proceeds for the current fiscal year stood at Rs 543.3 billion and this will be for the first time since 2009 that a government will be surpassing its disinvestment target.

– HPCL markets around 35.2 million tonnes (MT) of petroleum products. It also owns the biggest lube refinery and the second largest cross country product pipeline network of about 3500 km in India.

24-25 January 2018

1) Indian stock markets achieved which dual milestones on 23 January 2018? –

Nifty and Sensex breached the 11,000 and 36,000 marks for the first time in history

Explanation: Indian equity markets' bull-run continued on 23 January 2018 as the 50-index Nifty and the 30-scrip Sensex breached the 11,000 and 36,000 marks respectively for the first time in history on this day.

– Domestic sentiment was buoyed as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) remains bullish on India's growth potential and has retained its GDP forecast for the country at 6.7% in 2017 and 7.4% in 2018. The rally was also helped by Indian Prime Minister leading the Indian contingent at the annual World Economic Forum (WEF) at Davos.

2) Who took over as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India on 23 January 2018? – **Om Prakash Rawat**

Explanation: Om Prakash Rawat assumed charge as the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of the 3-member Election Commission of India (ECI) on 23 January 2018. His appointment for the post was announced on 21 January 2018. He replaced Achal Kumar Joti, who retired on 22 January 2018.

– Rawat was one of the two Election Commissioners in the 3-member body. Additionally, former finance secretary Ashok Lavasa was appointed as election commissioner, while Sunil Arora is the third member of the Commission.

– Rawat is a retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of Madhya Pradesh cadre of the 1977 batch. Before being appointed as election commissioner, Rawat served as secretary in the ministry of heavy industries and public enterprises.

3) What is the name of the former football star who took over as President of African country Liberia on 22 January 2018 and thus marking the country's first democratic transfer of power for more than 70 years? – **George Weah**

Explanation: George Weah, former decorated football star was sworn in as President of Liberia on 22 January 2018. He took over from Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

– Widely regarded as one of the greatest African players of all time, in 1995, he was named as a FIFA World Player of the Year and won the Ballon d'Or, becoming the first and to date only African player to win these awards. He played for various top European football clubs for 14 years and represented his country Liberia at the African Cup of Nations on two occasions

– 51-year old Weah won more than 60% of the votes and beat incumbent Vice-President, Joseph Boakai, in a runoff election on 26 December 2017. Liberia has been ravaged by civil war, the Ebola virus and corruption and hasn't had a democratic transfer of power since 1944.

– After Sirleaf took office in January 2006 as Liberia's first elected female President, she oversaw years of peace and stability despite festering problems and challenges. She was also the first-ever woman President of an African country and had been jointly awarded the Nobel Peace prize for 2011.

4) Who took oath as the Governor of Madhya Pradesh on 23 January 2018? – **Anandiben Patel**

Explanation: Senior BJP leader and former Chief Minister of Gujarat Anandiben Patel was sworn in as the Governor of Madhya Pradesh on 23 January 2018. Madhya Pradesh High Court Chief Justice Hemant Gupta administered the Oath of Office to her.

– It is worth mentioning that Ramnath Yadav had retired from the post of Governor of Madhya Pradesh in September 2016 and Gujarat Governor Om Prakash Kohli was holding additional charge of the State.

5) Which film was nominated for 13 Oscars in the nominations for 2018 that were announced on 23 January 2018? – **"The Shape of Water"**

Explanation: The nominations for the 90th Academy Awards were announced on 23 January 2018 in which Guillermo del Toro's fantasy romance 'The Shape of Water' led the field with the highest 13 nominations. The highest record for Oscars' nominations is 14 for three films – 'All About Eve' (1950), 'Titanic' (1997) and 'La La Land' (2016).

– World War Two drama "Dunkirk" follows with eight nominations, while "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri" received seven.

6) On 24 January 2018 which company became the second company to achieve Rs. 6 lakh crore market capitalization after Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL)? – **Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)**

Explanation: Tata Consultancy Services' market valuation surged past Rs. 6 lakh crore mark on 24 January 2018 and it thus became the second company to achieve the milestone after Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL).

– TCS also surpassed RIL to become the country's most valued firm in terms of market valuation. While TCS' market capitalization stood at Rs. 6,12,696.46 crore, RIL's figure stood at Rs. 6,11,096.56 crore.



1) What was the most important fact associated with the 69th Republic Day Parade held at New Delhi's Rajpath on 26 January 2018? – **For the first time as many as 10 Chief Guests were invited for this annual event**

Explanation: In an effort to expand its influence in the Southeast Asian region, India invited 10 ASEAN leaders as Chief Guests at the 69th Republic Day Parade that was held at the stately Rajpath on 26 January 2018. This was the highest number of Chief Guests for this national event held annually to showcase the country's military might and cultural diversity.

– Prime Minister Narendra Modi had invited the ASEAN leaders for the India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit and to attend the Republic Day celebrations as chief guests.

– Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi, Vietnam Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc, Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte, Thai Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha, Singaporean Premier Lee Hsien Loong, Brunei's Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, Indonesian President Joko Widodo, Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak, Prime Minister of Laos Thongloun Sisoulith and Cambodian Premier Hun Sen were the ten ASEAN leaders who attended the event.

(Photo Courtesy: Narendramodi.in)

2) Who became the first-ever airman of the Indian Air Force (IAF) to be awarded the Ashoka Chakra, the highest peacetime gallantry award of the country, on the 69th Republic Day on 26 January 2018? – **Corporal Jyoti Prakash Nirala**



Explanation: Corporal Jyoti Prakash Nirala, the martyred Indian Air Force Commando, became the first ever airman of the Indian Air Force (IAF) to be awarded the Ashoka Chakra, the highest peacetime gallantry award of India. He was posthumously awarded this honour on the occasion of the 69th Republic Day on 26 January 2018,

– Nirala had laid down his life after gunning down two terrorists in Chanderger village of Bandipora district in Jammu and Kashmir on 18 November 2017. He was part of a Garud Special Forces Unit of the Indian Air Force, a detachment of which was attached to a Rashtriya Rifles battalion under the aegis of 'Op Rakshak' in Jammu and Kashmir. All six terrorists were killed in the operation later.



3) Which state won the award for "Best Tableau" at the 69th Republic Day Parade held on 26 January 2018? – **Maharashtra**

Explanation: The tableau of Maharashtra titled "Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj coronation" was judged the "Best Tableau" at the 69th Republic Day Parade held on 26 January 2018.

– Assam’s tableau depicting traditional “Masks and sastras” bagged the second prize while third prize went to Chhattisgarh’s display of Ramgarh’s ancient amphitheatre and artistes performing dance based on Kalidasa’s ‘Meghadootam’.

– Among the tableaux by Union Ministries and departments, the first prize went to *Khelo India* of the Youth Affairs and Sports Ministry.

4) Which contingent won the best marching contingent among the three services at the 69th Republic Day Parade held on 26 January 2018? –

Punjab Regiment

Explanation: The Punjab Regiment bagged the award for the best marching contingent among the three services. Among para-military forces and other auxiliary forces, the marching contingent of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) was awarded the best marching contingent award.

– Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman gave away the awards at Cariappa Parade Ground in Delhi Cantonment on 28 January 2018.



5) Dr. Gurcharan Singh Kalkat, who passed away on 27 January 2018, was a pioneer associated with which field? – **Agriculture and Green Revolution**

Explanation: Dr. Gurcharan Singh Kalkat, who had played a pivotal role in India’s Green Revolution, passed away at the age of 92 years on 27 January 2018 at Chandigarh.

– Kalkat was the director of agriculture, Punjab and later he went on to become the agriculture commissioner of India. Under Kalkat’s tenure, India witnessed ‘Green Revolution’ and India became self-sufficient in food grain production. Kalkat was also the former vice-chancellor of Punjab Agricultural University in Ludhiana from 1988 to 2001.

– Kalkat was also the one who even ushered a soybean revolution and also introduced banana

cultivation for Punjab. He was also a recipient of the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awards.



6) Who won the women’s singles title of 2018 Australian Open on 27 January 2018 to win her maiden Grand Slam title? –

Caroline Wozniacki

Explanation: World No.1 Caroline Wozniacki (Denmark) claimed her first major title by winning the Australian Open with victory over Simona Halep (Romania) in a pulsating women’s singles final on 27 January 2018.

– This was the third Grand Slam final for Wozniacki, having been US Open runner-up twice (2009 and 2014). She defeated second seed Halep 7-6 (7-2), 3-6, 6-4. This was also Denmark’s first major tennis singles crown.

7) Tennis great Roger Federer won his sixth Australian Open as he defeated Marin Cilic in the men’s singles final on 28 January 2018. This was overall the.....tennis Grand Slam title for Federer – **20th**

Explanation: Roger Federer (Switzerland) won his sixth Australian Open and 20th Grand Slam title with a five-set victory over Croatian Marin Cilic in the men’s singles final on 28 January 2018. He defeated Cilic by 6-2, 6-7 (5-7), 6-3, 3-6 and 6-1 in an epic final.

– With this title win, 36-year old Federer became only the fourth player after Margaret Court, Serena Williams and Steffi Graf to win 20 or more major singles titles. He also tied the record for men’s Australian Open titles at six with Novak Djokovic and Roy Emerson, and moved four clear of Rafael Nadal (Rafael Nadal) in the all-time list for male Grand Slam

champions on 20. Pete Sampras (US) has 14 majors under his belt.

- The final was played under the Rod Laver Arena roof as the tournament's extreme heat policy was invoked.



8) Who was chosen for the Outstanding Parliamentarian Award for 2017, as was announced by the Indian Parliamentary Group for 2017 on 29 January 2018?

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Bhartruhari Mahtab

Explanation: Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader Bhartruhari Mahtab was chosen for the Outstanding Parliamentarian Award for 2017. This was announced by the Indian Parliamentary Group on 29 January 2018.

- Sabha Dinesh Trivedi would get the award for 2016 and Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad (Congress) for 2015. On the other hand former Rajya Sabha member Najma Heptulla will get the award for 2013 and Lok Sabha member Hukumdev Narayan Yadav for 2014. Both are from BJP. The names were shortlisted by a committee headed by Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan.

- The Outstanding Parliamentarian Award was constituted in 1992 by the then Lok Sabha Speaker Shivraj Patil to recognize the overall contribution of members of parliament.