



## 1-2 February 2018

### UNION BUDGET 2018

1) Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley presented the Union Budget for 2018-19 on 1 February 2018. What the fiscal deficit target for 2018-19 is, as outlined in the budget declaration? – **3.3% of GDP**

**Explanation:** In the Budget declaration, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley disclosed that the government has revised the fiscal consolidation glide path and set fiscal deficit target for 2018-19 now at 3.3% of GDP against earlier target of 3% of GDP.

– It was also disclosed that the government has breached the fiscal deficit target for 2017-18. While the budget estimate was 3.3%, the revised estimate is 3.5%.

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2) Which 3 public sector general insurance companies will be merged to form a single insurance company, as was announced in the Union Budget on 1 February 2018? –

**The Oriental Insurance Company Ltd., National Insurance Company Ltd. and United India Insurance Company Ltd.**

**Explanation:** Three public sector insurance companies – The Oriental Insurance Co. Ltd., National Insurance Co. Ltd., and United India Insurance Co. Ltd. – will be merged into a single insurance company and listed on the bourses, finance minister Arun Jaitley announced in the Union Budget on 1 February 2018.

– The merging of the three state-run insurers will lead to the creation of a mammoth insurance organization.

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3) What is the disinvestment target for 2018-19, as was announced in the Union Budget on 1 February 2018? – **Rs. 80,000 crore**

**Explanation:** The government in the Budget presented on 1 February 2018 announced a disinvestment target of Rs 80,000 crore for 2018-19 while suggesting that the figure for the current fiscal may cross the Rs 1 lakh crore mark.

– In his previous Budget speech in 2017, Jaitley had pegged the divestment target at Rs 72,500 crore. With total disinvestment proceeds of Rs 54,338 crore so far, the Rs 37,000 crore ONGC-HPL deal is all set to push the divestment proceeds in FY18 to a record Rs 1 lakh crore mark.

4) What is the name of the world’s largest government funded national health programme that was announced in the Union Budget on 1 February 2018? –

**National Health Protection Scheme (NHPS)**

**Explanation:** The Union Government announced the ambitious mega health scheme for the poor named ‘National Health Protection Scheme’ (NHPS) in the Union Budget of 2018-19 on 1 February 2018. NHPS the world’s largest government funded national health programme and will provide 10 crore families with medical coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalisation.

– NHPS is based on the cost of the existing Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), that provides Rs 30,000 cover for up to five members of a below the poverty line (BPL) family. The Centre provides 75% of the total premium while states pay the rest. Around 36 million of 59 million BPL families across 15 states are enrolled in the RSBY scheme.

5) What is the name given to the 4% cess announced in the Union Budget 2018-19 on 1 February 2018 that will replace the present 3% Education cess? – **‘Health and Education Cess’**

**Explanation:** The Union Government proposed to replace existing 3% education cess on personal income tax and corporation tax with a new 4% ‘Health and Education Cess’ to take care the

education and health needs of poor and rural families, as was announced on 1 February 2018.

– At present, a 3% cess, consisting of 2% cess for primary education and 1% cess for secondary and higher education, is levied on personal income tax and corporation tax.

6) Finance minister Arun Jaitley introduced the much talked about long term capital gains tax (LTCG) on sale of listed securities on gains of over Rs1 lakh. This tax was abolished in which year? – **2005-06**

**Explanation:** As part of its attempts to encourage long-term investment in equity shares, the Union Government in 2005-06 had abolished LTCG tax replacing it with securities transaction tax (STT).

– But the LTCG was reintroduced in the Union Budget of 2018-19 on 1 February 2018. While the Centre has brought back LTCG, it has, however, decided against abolishing or reducing the STT rates, which, many feel, is a case of double taxation.

7) What is the name of Indian Navy’s third Scorpene class submarine that was launched on 31 January 2018? – **Karanj**



**Explanation:** ‘Karanj’ is the name of Indian Navy’s third Scorpene class submarine that was launched by Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba’s wife Reena Lanba on 31 January 2018. The submarine has been

constructed at the Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) in Mumbai.

– A total of six submarines are to be built at the MDL in collaboration with French shipbuilding major Naval Group (formerly DCNS).

– Prime Minister Narendra Modi had commissioned INS Kalvari, the first of the six Scorpene-class submarine during December 2017. The second submarine, INS Khanderi, named after the Island fort of Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaj, was launched on 12 January 2018.

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**8) Indian taxi aggregator Ola launched its first overseas service in which country on 30 January 2018? – Australia**

**Explanation:** Softbank-backed Indian taxi aggregator Ola launched its service in Australia, its first overseas market, on 30 January 2018. The company began inviting private hire vehicle owners in the cities of Sydney, Melbourne and Perth to sign up on its service. Commencement of its commercial operations is still subject to necessary regulatory approvals.

– Ola company is looking to fulfill its global ambitions in line with the ride-hailing model peers and competitors such as Didi, Grab and Uber.

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**9) Which Japanese conglomerate is buying control of the iconic American corporate giant Xerox Corp. to create a \$18 billion company, as was announced on 31 January 2018? – Fujifilm Holdings Corp.**



**Explanation:** Tokyo-based Fujifilm Holdings Corp. will buy control of Xerox Corp. in a deal that creates an \$18 billion company and marks the end of the independence of the iconic American corporate giant. This deal was announced on 31 January 2018.

– Xerox, which has a market value of \$8.3 billion, will first merge with a joint venture the company operates with Fujifilm in Asia. Fujifilm will ultimately end up owning 50.1% of the combined entity, which expands the joint venture to encompass all of Xerox’s operations.

– The deal marks the end of independence for a US company whose roots trace back to the start of the 20th century. While Xerox became famous for its hardware, it has fallen on hard times as Canon Inc. and Asian competitors eroded its dominance while email and other forms of electronic communications took over.

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**10) Who was chosen to receive WHO’s prestigious IhsanDogramaci Family Health Foundation Prize, thus becoming the first Indian to receive this award? – Dr. Vinod Paul**

**Explanation:** Dr. Vinod Paul, the member of the NITI Aayog, has been chosen to receive WHO’s prestigious IhsanDogramaci Family Health Foundation Prize for his services in the field of family health. He was chosen unanimously from among shortlisted candidates from Algeria, China, Malaysia, Mexico, Russian Federation, and Uzbekistan. This was announced by the WHO on 27 January 2018.

– The award will be presented to Paul at the World Health Assembly in Geneva, Switzerland, in May 2018. According to a notification by the WHO Executive Board, Dr. Paul has made distinguished contributions towards improving the health and well-being of families, especially in developing countries.

– A well-known name in public health circles in India, Paul has played a key role in formulating national child health guidelines and programmes in the country.

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**11)** What is the name of India's High Performance Computer (HPC) system that was commissioned at the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting at Noida on 30 January 2018? – **'Mihir'**

**Explanation:** India on 30 January 2018 commissioned its High Performance Computer (HPC) system – named (meaning Sun) – at the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF) at Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

– Mihir is India's largest HPC facility in terms of peak capacity and performance and will propel India's ranking from the 368<sup>th</sup> position to the 30<sup>th</sup> in the list of top 500 HPC facilities in the world.

– It will improve India's capacity in weather forecasting and help it to come out with weather forecast down to the block level (for about 6500 blocks) across the country later this year. At present, such facility is available at district level.

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## 3-6 February 2018

1) India defeated Australia in the ICC U-19 World Cup final on 3 February 2018 to become the first team to win the U-19 World Cup for the fourth time. Which Indian player was declared man of the Tournament? – **Shubham Gill**

**Explanation:** Indian U-19 (boys) cricket team created history as it won the ICC U-19 World Cup 2018 by defeating Australia in the final and thus became the first-ever team to win this tournament four times. Indian vice-captain Shubham Gill was adjudged the man of the match.

– A brilliant century by Manjot Kalra, backed up by able bowling performances by Ishan Porel, Shiva Singh, Ankul Roy and Kamlesh Nagarkoti sealed the deal for the Indian side with an emphatic 8-wicket win in the final. Manjot Kalra was later declared man of the match.

– Australia had set a target of 217 runs for India as they were bowled out for 216 in 47.2 overs. India chased the target by losing 2 wickets with 67 balls to spare.

– ICC U-19 World Cup 2018 was held from 13 January to 3 February 2018 in New Zealand. It was the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the tournament. Ace former cricketer Rahul Dravid is the Head Coach of Indian team.

2) Who is heading the task force constituted by the Union Government to study use of artificial intelligence for defence purposes on 2 February 2018? – **N. Chandrasekaran**

**Explanation:** Tata Sons Chairman N. Chandrasekaran is heading the 17-member task force constituted by the Department of Defence Production on 2 February 2018 to study use of artificial intelligence for defence applications and production.

– The task force will study the whole gamut of issues surrounding strategic implications of artificial intelligence (AI) in national security perspective.

– Apart from Chandrasekaran, the 17-member task force comprises National Cyber Security Coordinator Gulshan Rai, representatives from the Indian Army, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force, Chairman and Managing director of Bharat Electronics Ltd, other representatives from Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Atomic Energy Commission and Defence Ministry.

3) Which regiment of the Indian Army celebrated 250 years of its formation on 4 February 2018? –

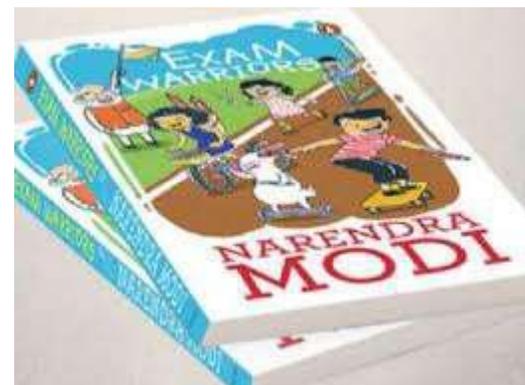


### **Maratha Light Infantry**

**Explanation:** Maratha Light Infantry celebrated 250 years of its formation on 4 February 2018. The first battalion of the regiment was raised as the 'Second Battalion Bombay Sepoys' on 4 February 1768.

– The date 4 February holds a historic significance for the regiment as on this day, in 1670, Maratha ruler Chhatrapati Shivaji conquered the famous Kondana Fort, which is now known as Sinhgad today in Maharashtra.

– Maratha Regiment is the first infantry regiment of the Army to be awarded the title of 'Light Infantry' during the First Afghan War in 1841. It is the only regiment which has contributed two battalions of the special forces to the Indian Army.



4) What is the name of the book written by Prime Minister that focuses on strategies for students appearing in exams and advises them to stay calm and focused during the examination period? – **“Exam Warriors”**

**Explanation:** “Exam Warriors” is the name of the book written by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi that was released on 4 February 2018. The book offers ‘25 mantras’ to the students going to appear in various exams and tells that students need not see exams as a life-and-death situation.

– Published by Penguin Random House, the 193-page Prime Minister’s book advises students to stay calm and focused during the examination period.

The *mantras* highlight the need to treat exams like festivals, the importance of technology and the quality of sleep required to beat the stress.

– This book is written in a fun, interactive manner with colourful illustration, activities, yoga exercises and also contains a letter from the prime minister to the teachers and parents.

5) What is India’s rank in the Global Democracy Index 2018 compiled by the **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)**? – **42nd**

**Explanation:** India has slipped to 42<sup>nd</sup> place on the annual Global Democracy Index (GDI) that was released during January 2018. The annual listing compiled by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) has downgraded India by 10 places as India moved down from 32<sup>nd</sup> place last year.

– India remains classified among ‘flawed democracies’ amid “rise of conservative religious ideologies” and increase in vigilantism and violence against minorities as well as other dissenting voices.

– The index ranks 165 independent states and two territories on the basis of five categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation and political culture. Norway has again topped the list, followed by Iceland and Sweden. New

Zealand is at fourth and Denmark at fifth place, while others in top ten include Ireland, Canada, Australia, Finland and Switzerland.

– EIU is the research and analysis division of the UK- based media behemoth The Economist Group.

## 7 February 2018



1) Kolkata’s iconic “Rabindra Setu” (Howrah Bridge) completed how many years during February 2018? – **75**

**Explanation:** “Rabindra Setu” (popularly known as Howrah Bridge), the iconic cantilever bridge in Kolkata, completed 75 years of its opening on 3 February 2018. The bridge is over Hooghly River and connects the two cities of Howrah and Kolkata (Calcutta).

– Howrah Bridge was commissioned on 3 February 1943 as it replaced an old pontoon bridge at the same location, which was set up in 1874. On 14 June 1965 it was renamed Rabindra Setu after the great Bengali poet Rabindranath Tagore.

– Out of total steel required for the historic bridge, only 3,000 tonnes were supplied from England. The remaining 23,000 tonnes were supplied by India’s Tata Steel and even the erection work was reassigned to a local engineering firm of Howrah – the Braithwaite, Burn and Jessop Construction Co.

2) Maldivian President Abdulla Yameen declared a 15-day state of emergency in the island country on 5 February 2018 while Chief Justice of Supreme Court Abdulla Saeed was arrested in the

early hours of 6 February 2018. What is the main cause for emergency declaration of President Yameen? – **The Supreme Court ruling that overturned terrorism convictions against nine of his opponents**

**Explanation:** The Supreme Court of the Maldives had on 1 February 2018 overturned terrorism charges against nine opponents of President Abdulla Yameen and had said that these charges were illegal. The apex court had also annulled the 13-year jail sentence of country’s exiled former president Mohamed Nasheed.

– But President Yameen didn’t enforce Supreme Court’s order and called it an infringement of national security and public interest. On 5 February 2018 the government imposed 15-day emergency that gave security forces sweeping powers to make arrests and curtailed the authority of the judiciary.

– Soon after the emergency declaration, soldiers forced their way into the Supreme Court building. Chief Justice Abdulla Saeed and Judge Ali Hameed were arrested in the early hours of 6 February. Former President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, an estranged half-brother of President Yameen and who has sided with the opposition, was also arrested.

– However, the Supreme Court caved in to the pressure and revoked its order of 1 February and tried to resolve the confrontation with the President.

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**3) What are the most important aspects associated with the All India Tiger Census 2018 that was kicked-off during February 2018? – This tiger census is employing the most modern technology ever used and is relying on digital methods of data collection**

**Explanation:** All India Tiger Census 2018, which is largest survey of wildlife anywhere in the world, was kicked-off during February 2018. This Census is using more technology, including a mobile app, with more intensive ground coverage and a higher focus on the northeast to determine the country’s tigers. The Census is being undertaken by the National Tiger Conservation Authority and Wildlife Institute of India.

– The ground staff involved in the count will be using a mobile app, MSTripes, for the first time. On the other hand more units of high-resolution digital cameras are being employed. The last census, in 2014, had estimated India’s tiger population at 2,226, up from 1,706 in 2010.

– However, the basic census methodology – double sampling based on ground-based surveys for tiger signs and actual images captured on camera-traps, along with statistical extrapolation – remains unchanged. It was first used in 2006 after the previous “pugmark” surveys were found woefully inaccurate.

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**4) What is the name of the campaign started by search engine giant Google in India from 5 February 2018 to create about Internet safety? – #SecurityCheckKiya**

**Explanation:** #SecurityCheckKiya (Hindi for “Did you do a Security Check?”) is the name given to the awareness campaign started by Google India that primarily aims to create security awareness among young and first-time internet users. The campaign was started from 5 February 2018, on the eve of the Safer Internet Day.

– The campaign outlines basic steps users can take to protect themselves from account hijacks, safeguard Android devices from malware, and secure personal data in the event of a device loss.

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# 8 February 2018



1) What is the name of the world’s most powerful rocket that was launched into space by the private rocket company SpaceX on 6 February 2018 and which carried a Tesla car as a mock payload with it? – **Falcon Heavy**

**Explanation:** Falcon Heavy is a reusable super heavy-lift launch vehicle (rocket) designed and manufactured by billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk’s private rocket company SpaceX. The 23-story-tall jumbo rocket, carrying a cherry red Tesla Roadster automobile into space as a mock payload, was launched into space on 6 February 2018 from the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral (Florida).

– The flight capitalized SpaceX’s pioneering cost-cutting reusable rocket technology in which the two side boosters flew themselves back to Earth for safe simultaneous touchdowns on twin landing pads. The launch was conducted from the same site used by NASA’s towering Saturn 5 rockets to carry Apollo missions to the moon more than 40 years ago.

2) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 7 February 2018 held the policy repo rate at 6%. Five of the six members of the RBI’s Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted in favour of keeping the benchmark interest rate unchanged. Which member recommended a 25 basis points (bps) rate increase? – **M.D. Patra**

**Explanation:** The lone member of the 6-member MPC who recommended a rate increase (of 25

basis points) was RBI Executive Director M.D. Patra while remaining 5 members voted in favour of keeping the benchmark interest rate unchanged. This was third consecutive meeting in which status quo was maintained as was as policy repo rate is concerned.

– Other 5 members of RBI’s MPC are Governor Urjit Patel (who heads the MPC), Deputy Governor R. Gandhi (both along with RBI Executive Director M.D. Patra are internal members), Chetan Ghate, Pami Dua and Ravindra Dholakia (these three are external members).

– On the other hand the MPC raised the estimate for fourth-quarter inflation and flagged concerns about the future outlook for price gains. Inflation is now estimated at 5.1% in fourth quarter (Jan-Mar 2018) while the RBI had in December 2017 projected inflation to range between 4.3-4.7% for second half of the current financial year.

– The MPC has a mandate to ensure inflation remains in a band between 2% and 6%.

3) Which city is seemingly poised to become first major city to run out of drinking water, with the city authorities imposing strict water usage policy during February 2018? – **Cape Town (South Africa)**

**Explanation:** South Africa’s most populous city Cape Town is poised to become the world’s first major city to run out of drinking water. The shortage is the result of a three-year drought that emptied the city’s dams.

– Experts initially calculated “Day Zero,” (the date upon which there is insufficient water in the city) to be around 16 April 2018. It has since been pushed back to mid-May. Cape Town’s more than 4 million residents have been told to cut their daily limits from 87 litres to 50 litres per person.



4) Which Indian player on 7 February 2018 became the first-ever female cricketer to take 200 ODI wickets? – **Jhulan Goswami**

**Explanation:** India's veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami on 7 February 2019 added another feather to

her illustrious cap by becoming the first female cricketer to take 200 ODI wickets. She achieved the feat during the second ODI between India and South Africa that was played in Kimberley in South Africa.

– The 35-year-old Indian, playing her 166<sup>th</sup> ODI, dismissed opener Laura Wolvaardt for her 200<sup>th</sup> scalp. It is worth mentioning that the first male cricketer to pick 200 ODI wickets, was also an Indian – the great Kapil Dev.

5) Which South Korean automobile company made its debut in India by unveiling its concept vehicle at the Auto Expo 2018 on 6 February 2018? – **Kia Motors**



**Explanation:** Kia Motors, the world's eighth largest and South Korea's second largest automaker made its debut in India by unveiling its SP Concept vehicle at the Auto Expo 2018. SP Concept is an SUV designed and developed for the Indian market. It will be Kia's first product to go on sale in India.

– The South Korean company will start retail sales in the country by the second half of 2019. It has invested USD 1 billion in its plant in Andhra Pradesh. It is worth mentioning that Korea's largest automobile company Hyundai Motors has been in India for almost 2 decades now.

## 9-10 February 2018



1) 2018 Winter Olympics started with a grand opening ceremony on 9 February 2018 in which South Korean city? – **Pyeong Chang**

**Explanation:** The 2018 Winter Olympics (officially known as the XXIII Olympic Winter Games) were started from 9 February 2018 in South Korean city of PyeongChang. The Games were inaugurated with a grand opening ceremony held at the PyeongChang Olympic Stadium. The Games will conclude on 25 February 2018.

– Nearly 3000 athletes from 92 countries are participating in these Games that will witness 102 events from 7 sports. The motto of these Games is Passion. Connected

– Some important developments associated with these Games are – the joint participation of North and South Korea, the participation of Russian athletes in the wake of doping scandals and the extreme cold caused due to icy Siberian winds blowing through the PyeongChang county.

– Russia as a nation is not present after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) instigated a ban in the wake of the McLaren report into state-sponsored doping, including at the 2014

Winter Olympics in Sochi. Instead, 168 Russian athletes who were able to prove their clean credentials were invited by the IOC to compete as individuals.

– PyeongChang was awarded the Games in July 2011.

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**2)** Which state topped the NITI Aayog's national health index report titled '**Healthy States, Progressive India**' that was released on 9 February 2018? – **Kerala**

**Explanation:** Kerala continues to top the health index among large states in terms of overall health performance while Uttar Pradesh stays at the bottom. This was disclosed in the report titled '**Healthy States, Progressive India**' released by the NITI Aayog on 9 February 2018.

– Kerala was followed by Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. Apart from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar and Odisha were among those that performed poorly on the index.

– According to the report, "in the reference year (2015-16), among the larger states, the index score for overall performances ranged widely between 33.69 in Uttar Pradesh to 76.55 in Kerala".

– In terms of annual incremental performance, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh are the top three states. These three states showed the maximum gains in indicators such as Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR), Under-five Mortality Rate (U5MR), full immunization coverage, and institutional deliveries.

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**3)** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 7 February 2018 disclosed that it will link the base rate for loans with the marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR). What is the effective date for this linking? – **1 April 2018**

**Explanation:** The linking of base rate for loans with the marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) will come into effect from 1 April 2018. This is expected to improve monetary policy

transmission and is also likely to narrow the gap between the base rate and MCLR.

– The MCLR is more sensitive to monetary policy transmission and is closely linked to the actual deposit rates. MCLR is calculated on the basis of incremental cost of funds, making it a more reliable benchmark rate as compared to the base rate, usually calculated by taking into account average cost of funds.

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**4)** What is India's rank in the 6<sup>th</sup> edition of International Intellectual Property (IIP) Index that was released by the US Chambers of Commerce on 8 February 2018? – **44<sup>th</sup>** (Out of 50 countries)

**Explanation:** India has increased substantially its score in the latest International Intellectual Property (IIP) index from 25% (8.75 out of 35) in the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the Index (2017) to 30% (12.03 out of 40) in the 6<sup>th</sup> edition that was released by the US Chambers of Commerce on 8 February 2018. But despite this improvement, India continues to remain towards the bottom of the ladder. It now ranks 44 out of 50 countries. Last year, India ranked 43<sup>rd</sup> out of 45 countries in the index.

– IIP is an annual report prepared by the Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) of the US Chambers of Commerce. The report analyses the intellectual property (IP) climate in 50 world economies based on 40 unique indicators that benchmark activity critical to innovation development surrounding patent, trademark, copyright, and trade secrets protection.

– The US tops the latest list with 37.98 points, followed by United Kingdom (37.97) and Sweden (37.03).



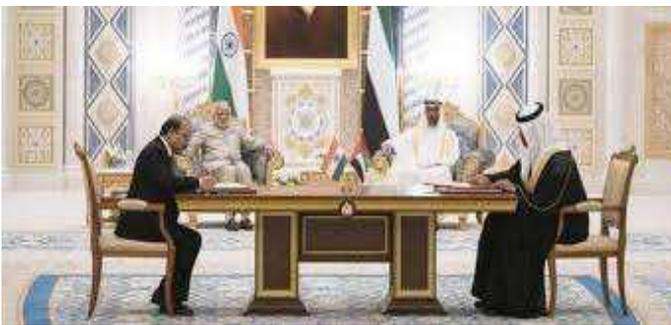
**5)** Who was appointed as the first-ever independent female director of the International Cricket Council (ICC), as was announced by the ICC on 9 February 2018? – **Indra Nooyi**

**Explanation:** Indra Nooyi, the India-born PepsiCo Chairman and CEO, was on 9 February 2018 appointed as ICC's first independent female director.

– The introduction of an Independent Director, who must be female, was approved by the ICC Full Council in June 2017 as part of wide ranging constitutional change aimed at improving the global governance of the sport.

– Nooyi will have tenure of two-years although she may be re-appointed for two further terms with a maximum six-year consecutive period of service.

## 11-12 February 2018



**1)** ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) and its partners on 11 February 2018 signed an agreement to acquire a 10% stake in a large offshore oilfield in Abu Dhabi for USD 600 million. What is the significance of this deal? **–This is the first time any Indian company has set foot in oil rich UAE**

**Explanation:** OVL, the overseas arm of state-owned Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), Indian Oil Corp (IOC) and a unit of Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) on 11 February 2018 signed a historic agreement for acquiring 10% stake in Abu Dhabi National Oil Co's (ADNOC) 40-year Lower Zakum Concession, Offshore Abu Dhabi.

– This is the first time that Indian oil companies have taken part in an Abu Dhabi oil and gas concession. The concession, which has a term of 40 years with an effective date of 9 March 2018, was signed by ONGC Group Chairman Shashi Shanker and ADNOC Group Chief Executive Sultan

Ahmed Al Jaber in presence of Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

**2)** Among Indian cities which is the only city to feature in the list of top 15 wealthiest cities globally that was disclosed in a report by New World Wealth? – **Mumbai**

**Explanation:** India's financial capital Mumbai, with a total wealth of USD 950 billion, has been named among the top 15 wealthiest cities listing by New World Wealth. India is the 12<sup>th</sup> wealthiest city, while New York topped the list with a total wealth of USD 3 trillion. Total wealth, refers to the private wealth held by all the individuals living in each city. It includes all their assets (property, cash, equities, business interests) less any liabilities.

– According to the report, Mumbai is home to 28 billionaires, individuals with USD 1 billion or more in net assets. It is also home to the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), the 12th largest stock exchange in the world. Major industries in the city include financial services, real estate and media.

– London ranked second in the list with USD 2.7 trillion, followed by Tokyo (USD 2.5 trillion), and San Francisco Bay area (USD 2.3 trillion). Others in the list include Beijing (USD 2.2 trillion), Shanghai (USD 2 trillion), Los Angeles (USD 1.4 trillion), Hong Kong (USD 1.3 trillion), Sydney (USD 1 trillion), Singapore (USD 1 trillion) and Chicago (USD 988 billion).

– Mumbai is followed by Toronto with a total wealth of USD 944 billion, Frankfurt (14th, USD 912 billion) and Paris (15th, USD 860 billion) in top 15 cities.

**3)** Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on 10 February 2018 conferred with which highest honour by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas? – **“Grand Collar of the State of Palestine”**

**Explanation:** President Mahmoud Abbas bestowed the “Grand Collar of the State of Palestine” on Indian President Narendra Modi

after the conclusion of their bilateral meeting in Ramallah on 10 February 2018.

– He was bestowed with this honour in recognition of his contributions to promoting relations between India and Palestine.

– The Grand Collar is Highest order given to foreign dignitaries – Kings, Heads of State/Government and persons of similar rank. This award has in the past been awarded to King Salman of Saudi Arabia, King Hamad of Bahrain, President Xi Jinping of China, among others.



4) Asma Jahangir, who passed away on 11 February 2018, was a noted personality of Pakistan associated with which field? – **Human rights activism**

**Explanation:** Asma Jahangir was one of the leading human rights and pro-democracy activist of Pakistan. She championed women’s rights throughout her career. She worked closely with her sister Hina Jilani on many of her endeavours.

– She was trained as a lawyer and worked in Pakistan’s Supreme Court from age 30. She later emerged as a vocal critic of the military establishment. She was imprisoned in 1983 and put under house arrest in 2007 for opposing military leader’s removal of Supreme Court chief justice.

– Asma was also a co-founder of the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) and of the first free legal aid centre in Pakistan. She was winner of several awards including the UNESCO/Bilbao prize for the promotion of a culture of human rights and the French Legion of Honour. She was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005.



5) Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 11 February 2018 officially launched a project for the construction of the first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi. Which religious institution will build this temple? – **Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Sanstha (BAPS)**

**Explanation:** Bochasanwasi Akshar Purushottam Sanstha (BAPS), the worldwide religious and civic organization within the Swaminarayan branch of Hinduism, will construct a grand Swaminarayan Temple in Abu Dhabi, which will be the first Hindu temple in Abu Dhabi. The proposed temple will be on the pattern of the existing Akshardham Swaminarayan temples in Delhi and Gandhinagar.

– On 11 February 2018 the Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the BAPS Swaminarayan temple via video conferencing from the Dubai Opera House, where he addressed the members of the Indian community.

## 13-14 February 2018



1) What is India’s forest and tree cover in percentage as disclosed in the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2017 that was released on 12 February 2018? – **24.39%**

**Explanation:** India's forest and tree cover has increased by 8,021 sq. km, up 1% since 2015, to 802,088 sq. km, which is about 24.39% of the total geographical area (GA) of the country. Of the total increase of 8,021 sq. km in forest and tree cover, forest cover grew by 6,778 sq. km and tree cover by 1,243 sq. km.

– According to the report, India's total forest cover is 708,273 sq. km (about 21.54% of India's total GA) and tree cover is 93,815 sq. km (about 2.85% of the total GA). The increase in total forest cover also includes an increase of 181 sq. km in mangrove cover, taking the total mangrove area in the country to 4,921 sq. km.

– In 2015, India's forest cover was 701,673 sq. km. The ISFR comes every two years and the 2017 report is the 15th such report. ISFR 2017 is also more comprehensive as it is based on information from 633 districts of the country compared to 589 in 2015.



**2) Who was elected as the new president of the Sahitya Akademi on 12 February 2018? – Prof. Chandrashekar Kambar**

**Explanation:** Noted Kannada litterateur Chandrashekar Kambar has been elected as the new president of the Sahitya Akademi in the election held for the post on 12 February 2018. In the elections Kambar secured 56 votes, while his nearest contender and Odia writer Prathiba Ray got 29 votes. Marathi writer Balachandra Nemade, who was also a 'symbolic' contestant, secured four votes.

– Prof. Kambar is the third Kannada writer to head the country's premier literary institution,

after Vinayak Krishna Gokak (1983) and U.R. Ananthamurthy (1993).

This was the second time election was held in the history of Sahitya Akademi, after Ananthamurthy's election to the post. Kambar will replace Vishwanath Prasad Tiwari.

**3) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 12 February 2018 tightened norms for bad loan resolution by setting timelines for resolving large Non Performing Assets (NPAs), failing which banks will have to mandatorily refer them for insolvency proceedings. What is the prescribed time-line for such loans? – 180 days**

**Explanation:** According to the notification issued by the RBI on 12 February 2018, banks must implement a resolution plan within 180 days (starting 1 March 2018) where the exposure is Rs. 2,000 crore and above, failing which the NPA account has to be referred to the insolvency and bankruptcy code within 15 days. This guideline was issued to set timeline for resolving large NPAs.

– The large accounts are mainly those where banks have initiated resolution and are classified as restructured standard assets. Indian banks are sitting on a stressed assets pool of over Rs.10 trillion.

**4) What is the name of the India-born engineer who was part of the team that bagged the scientific and engineering award at the Oscars 2018 Scientific and Technical Awards on 11 February 2018? – Vikas Sathaye**

**Explanation:** An engineer raised in Mumbai, Vikas Sathaye, was part of the 4-member team that bagged the scientific and engineering award at the Oscars 2018 Scientific and Technical Awards that was held on 11 February 2018.

– Sathaye's team was honoured at the Beverly Hills ceremony "for the concept, design, engineering and implementation of the Shotover K1 Camera System".

– Sathaye, born in Pune in 1967, grew up in Mumbai. After school, Sathaye completed a diploma in instrumentation from VPM’s polytechnic, Thane, followed by a BE in electronics from VIT Pune, and an M. Tech in instrumentation from IISc, Bangalore. He taught at Pune’s Cummins College of Engineering for Women for seven years, during which he was sent to Italy for a project with Fiat for three months.

15-16 February 2018



**1) Which public sector bank on 14 February 2018 disclosed that it has found fraudulent transactions totalling over \$1.77 billion (Rs. 11,500 crore) in one of its branches in Mumbai? – Punjab National Bank (PNB)**

**Explanation:** Indian banking sector was rocked as country’s second largest public sector bank Punjab National Bank (PNB) on 14 February 2018 disclosed that it has detected fraudulent transactions amounting to more than \$1.77 billion (Rs. 11,500 crore) involving billionaire jeweller Nirav Modi, his wife, brother and partners.

– The bank informed the stock exchanges that the fraud was detected in one of its branches in Mumbai (Kalaghoda branch) and that it has referred the matter to law enforcement agencies. PNB’s deputy manager Gokulnath Shetty and another official Manoj Kharat were charged in the case, who had fraudulently issued Letters of Undertakings (LoUs) to 3 diamond firms (Diamonds R Us, Solar

Exports and Stellar Diamonds) for raising buyers’ credit.

**2) Who was elected as South Africa’s new president by ruling party legislators on 15 February 2018 after the resignation of Jacob Zuma a day earlier? – Cyril Ramaphosa**



**Explanation:** Cyril Ramaphosa, a senior leader of the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and a deputy of outgoing President Jacob Zuma was elected as the new President of South Africa on 15 February 2018. He was the only candidate nominated for election in the parliament after two opposition parties said they would not participate.

– Ramaphosa is South Africa’s fifth President since majority rule started after the end of apartheid in 1994.

– Earlier on 14 February 2018 President Jacob Zuma resigned from the post in a nationally televised address. He resigned after the ANC instructed him to step down or face a parliamentary motion of no confidence that he would almost certainly lose. He left the post after years of scandals that damaged the stature of the ruling ANC party.

**3) China welcomed the Chinese New Year on 16 February 2018 with start of 15-day celebrations.**

This New Year is observed as the year of which animal? – **Dog**

**Explanation:** The Chinese New Year 2018 that started from 16 February 2018 is being observed as the “Year of the Dog”. The Chinese Zodiac is made up of 12 animals, which change on a rotating cycle. The dog is the symbol of loyalty and honesty and people who are born on this year are said to be faithful and trustworthy. Last year was the year of the fire rooster – known for being trustworthy, punctual and responsible (especially at work).

– Chinese New Year is celebrated in China and countries that have a significant Chinese population, including Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Singapore, Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Mauritius, Australia, and the Philippines.

– Chinese New Year, also known as the “Spring Festival” or the Lunar New Year, is one of the most celebrated events across the globe. Every year, Chinese New Year starts on the new moon occurring between 21 January and 20 February. It is an opportunity to honour deities as well as ancestors. It is believed that they originated during the Shang Dynasty when people held ceremonies in honour of gods and ancestors at the beginning of the year.

4) Which state government on 13 February 2018 announced that it would not participate in the National Health Protection Scheme, the ambitious healthcare programme that was announced in this year’s Union Budget? – **West Bengal**

**Explanation:** West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on 13 February 2018 announced that it would not provide financial support to the National Health Protection Scheme, touted as the world’s biggest government-funded healthcare programme.

– Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had announced the National Health Protection Scheme, which seeks to provide health cover of Rs. 5 lakh to 10

crore households, in the Union Budget 2018. The expenditure for the mega healthcare programme will be borne jointly by the centre and the states. However, the West Bengal government decided not to contribute as it feels that it already has its own health insurance scheme that is faring well.

5) What is the name of the first woman from Pakistan’s tiny minority Hindu community who was nominated for the upcoming Senate elections by country’s main opposition party Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) on 12 February 2018? – **Krishna Kumari**

**Explanation:** Krishna Kumari is poised to become the first woman from Pakistan’s tiny minority Hindu community to be elected to country’s upper house (the Senate) after she was nominated by the Pakistan People’s Party (PPP) for the upcoming Senate elections to be held on 3 March 2018.

– If she wins, Krishna Kumari will be the first female Hindu lawmaker in Pakistan since 1947 when Pakistan gained independence from Britain. Pakistani parties usually nominate wealthy or influential people for the Senate.

– Kumari has worked as a social worker and also for a Pakistani charity seeking to create awareness among people about the importance of education and the struggle to achieve basic human rights.

## 17 February 2018



1) The Supreme Court on reduced the allocation of Cauvery water from Karnataka to Tamil Nadu to

177.25 tmc. Karnataka was supplying how much Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu till now? – **192 tmc**

**Explanation:** A Special Bench of the Supreme Court, led by Chief Justice Dipak Misra, in its order of 16 February 2018 reduced 14.75 tmc (one thousand million cubic feet) from the 192 tmc Cauvery water supplied by Karnataka from its Billigundlu site to Mettur dam in Tamil Nadu. Karnataka needs to supply only 177.25 tmc Cauvery water to Tamil Nadu now.

– Although largely upholding the water-sharing arrangements made by the Cauvery Water Dispute Tribunal (CWDT) in its award on 5 February 2007, the court said Karnataka is entitled to marginal relief. The apex court was of the view that the CWDT in its order did not take into account Tamil Nadu’s stock of an “empirical” 20 TMC of ground water.

– Further, the court observed that Bengaluru has attained the “global status” and its drinking water requirement has increased multi-fold. It said the need for drinking water is at the top of the hierarchy.

**2) What will be the new base-year for calculation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and Consumer Price Index (CPI) as was disclosed by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on 15 February 2018? – Year 2017-18 for GDP and IIP and Year 2018 for CPI**

**Explanation:** Unveiling the plans of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) for 2018-19 the Union Minister, MoSPI, D.V. Sadananda Gowda on 15 February disclosed that the new base year for GDP and IIP will be 2017-18 and for CPI, it will be 2018. He elaborated that base-year revision of these macro-economic indicators will begin soon.

– The current base year followed for these indices is 2011-12. It will take about two years for the revision to take effect and the new series will be available from 2020-21.

– However, economists expressed concern over the choice of 2017-18, as it was not a normal year due to effects of demonetization and the implementation of the goods and services tax.

**3) Iranian President Hassan Rouhani addressed the gathering and offered Friday prayers at which historic mosque on 16 February 2018, which is first-of-its-kind of event in India associated with an Iranian premier? – Makkah Masjid (Hyderabad)**

**Explanation:** Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani, who is on a state visit of India, offered Friday prayers at the historic Makkah Masjid in Hyderabad on 16 February 2018. He also addressed the gathering at this mosque. This is first-of-its-kind event in India associated with any Iranian President. Makkah Masjid is located near the historic Charminar in the Muslim-majority old city of Hyderabad.

– An important fact associated with Rouhani’s India visit is that he landed in Hyderabad instead of capital New Delhi as the first stage of his state visit.

– Hyderabad has historic cultural links with Iran. The city, founded by Quli Qutub Shah, was designed on the lines of Iranian city Isfahan. Mir Momin Astrabadi, who had migrated from Iran, had prepared the design of Charminar and Hyderabad.

**4) In a major departure from rules, India is allowing its businesses to invest in Indian rupees in Iran, as was disclosed in the media reports on 16 February 2018. This facility has been made available for which two countries till now? – Nepal and Bhutan**

**Explanation:** So far permission to invest in rupees has only been given to Indian businessmen

investing in Nepal and Bhutan. But now an exception for Iran has been made because it has had restrictions imposed on it, barring it from dealing in dollars and euros, over its nuclear programme.

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## 18-20 February 2018



**1) Which station of Rajasthan has become India's only non-suburban railway station to be entirely run by women, as was disclosed on 19 February 2018? – Gandhinagar (Jaipur)**

**Explanation:** In a first, Jaipur's Gandhinagar railway station has become the country's only non-suburban railway station and overall second to be entirely run by women. Though it had been under process for quite some time, a ceremony associated with this distinction was held on 19 February 2018.

– Situated along the important Jaipur-Delhi rail route, about 50 trains pass through Gandhinagar (Jaipur) station daily, out of which about 25 halt at the station.

– Neelam Jatav, along with Geeta Devi, Saroj Kumari Dhakad and Angel Stella, have been posted as Assistant Station Masters. The Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel posted at the station too are all women. RPF in-charge Kavita now leads a team of seven women constables.

– Overall, this is India's second railway station with an all-women crew, with the first being Matunga

Railway station in Mumbai's suburban rail network.

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**2) On 18 February 2018 which political party became the first major political party of India to shift its office outside Lutyens' Bungalow Zone, following a Supreme Court directive that party offices should be relocated from there? – BJP**

**Explanation:** Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) inaugurated its new party headquarters in Delhi's Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg on 18 February 2018 and thus became the first major political party of India to shift its office outside Lutyens' Bungalow Zone. The party had been functioning from its Ashoka Road office till now. This spank new office complex was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

– The move to open new party headquarters out of Lutyens' Bungalow Zone is in line with a Supreme Court directive that party offices should be relocated from there.

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**3) The inaugural flight of Bhubaneswar-based airline Air Odisha under the Centre's Ude Desh ke Aam Nagrik (UDAN) scheme was launched on 17 February 2018. This inaugural flight connects which two places in Gujarat? – Ahmedabad and Mundra**

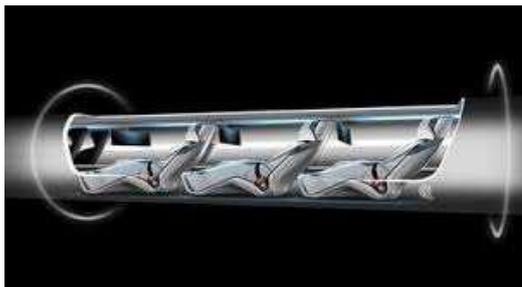
**Explanation:** Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on 17 February 2018 launched the inaugural flight of Bhubaneswar-based airline Air Odisha in Ahmedabad. The flight has been launched under the Centre's Ude Desh ke Aam Nagrik (UDAN) scheme. It connects Mundra with Gujarat's Ahmedabad.

– Air Odisha started its services as a non-scheduled operator in November 2012. The airline was granted the flying permit by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to launch flights under UDAN earlier in February 2018.

4) Tennis great Roger Federer on 16 February 2018 returned to world No. 1 spot for the first time since 2012 to become the oldest top-ranked player in history. Who was the oldest player to become No. 1 in men's tennis till now? – **Andre Agassi (USA)**

**Explanation:** Roger Federer (Switzerland) defeated Robin Haase 4-6, 6-1, 6-1 in a tough encounter at the Rotterdam Open quarter-finals on 16 February 2018 to replace Andre Agassi as the oldest man to sit at the top of the ATP rankings.

– Agassi sat atop of the ATP leaderboard at 33 years old in 2003 but Federer, 36, has now smashed that record.



5) Which commercial entity has proposed to build a super-fast hyperloop transportation system in India that would connect Pune with the new airport in Mumbai in 25 minutes, as was disclosed on 19 February 2018? – **Virgin Hyperloop One**

**Explanation:** British tycoon Richard Branson-backed Virgin Hyperloop One is proposing to build a super-fast transportation system in India that would connect the city of Pune with the planned new airport in Mumbai in 25 minutes, saving about three hours. This was announced on 19 February 2018.

– Virgin Group signed a preliminary agreement on 18 February 2018 in Mumbai for a broad

hyperloop framework. A demonstration track will be built in two to three years from the signing of the final agreement, while the second phase will aim to complete construction of the full Pune-Mumbai route in five to seven years.

– The Pune-Mumbai hyperloop project could result in \$55 billion in socio-economic benefits over 30 years of operation, according to an initial study by Virgin Hyperloop One.

## 21-22 February 2018

1) Stung by the Rs. 11,400 crore fraud in Punjab National Bank (PNB), the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 21 February 2018 constituted an expert committee to look into the entire gamut of issues relating bad loans. Who is heading this expert committee? – **Y.H. Malegam**

**Explanation:** Y.H. Malegam, a former member of the Central Board of Directors of RBI, is heading the newly constituted expert committee that will look into the entire gamut of issues relating to classification of bad loans, rising incidents of frauds and effectiveness of audits.



– The committee will look into the reasons for high divergence observed in asset classification and provisioning by banks vis-à-vis the RBI's supervisory assessment, and the steps needed to prevent it, factors leading to an increasing incidence of frauds in banks and the measures (including IT interventions) needed to curb and prevent it. It will also enquire the role and effectiveness of various types of audits conducted

in banks in mitigating the incidence of such divergence and frauds.

– The other members of the committee are: Bharat Doshi, Member, Central Board of RBI, S Raman, former Chairman and MD, Canara Bank and former Whole-Time Member, SEBI and Nandkumar Saravade, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Reserve Bank Information Technology Pvt Ltd (ReBIT). A K Misra, Executive Director, RBI, will be the Member-Secretary of the committee.



2) What is the name of the new political party launched by noted actor Kamal Haasan at a massive function held in Madurai on 21 February 2018? – **‘Makkal Neethi Meyam’ (MNM)**

**Explanation:** Superstar Kamal Haasan announced the name of his new political party at a massive function in Tamil Nadu’s political capital Madurai on 21 February 2018. The name of his party is ‘Makkal Neethi Meyam’ (MNM) which means Centre for People’s Justice. He also unveiled his party’s flag featuring six united hands – three each in white and red – with a white star in the middle.

– Earlier the actor also visited the House of former President APJ Abdul Kalam in Rameswaram and sought blessings of the former President’s elder brother, Mohammed Meeran Lebbai Maraikayer.

– Kamal Haasan had started dropping hints of taking the political plunge as early as September 2017.

3) The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 20 February 2018 issued which major KYC guideline for payments banks? – **It directed payments banks to get their KYC information verified by third parties**

**Explanation:** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 20 February 2018 directed payments banks to get their customers’ information verified by third parties. This direction is a blow to Bharti Airtel Ltd. which runs a payments bank with customer data verified by its own telecom business.

– The third party has to be regulated, supervised, monitored and should have steps in place for compliance with customer due diligence and record-keeping requirements.

– The move comes after Airtel was penalized by UIDAI for allegedly opening payments bank accounts without the explicit consent of users.

4) According to a report of the Census Directorate released during February 2018, there are how many languages or dialects in India that are considered to be endangered and are believed to be heading towards extinction? – **42**

**Explanation:** There are 42 languages which are spoken by fewer than 10,000 people. These are considered endangered and may be heading towards extinction. This was disclosed in a report of the Census Directorate that was released during February 2018.

– The languages or dialects which are considered endangered, include 11 from Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Great Andamanese, Jarawa, Lamongse, Luro, Muot, Onge, Pu, Sanenyo, Sentilese, Shompen and Takahanyilang), seven from Manipur (Aimol, Aka, Koiren, Lamgang, Langrong, Purum and Tarao) and four from Himachal Pradesh (Baghati, Handuri, Pangvali and Sirmaudi).

– The other languages in the endangered category are Manda, Parji and Pengo (Odisha), Koraga and Kuruba (Karnataka), Gadaba and Naiki (AP), Kota and Toda (Tamil Nadu), Mra and Na (Arunachal Pradesh), Tai Nora and Tai Rong

(Assam), Bangani (Uttarakhand), Birhor (Jharkhand), Nihali (Maharashtra), Ruga (Meghalaya) and Toto (West Bengal).

– On the other hand, there are 22 scheduled languages and 100 non-scheduled languages in the country, which are spoken by a large number of people – one lakh or more.

5) Which country has been designated as the host country of the World Environment Day for 2018, as was announced by UN Environment on 19 February 2018? – **India**

**Explanation:** The United Nations Under-Secretary General and head of UN Environment, Erik Solheim on 19 February 2018 announced that India will be the host for the World Environment Day 2018, that will be observed on 5 June 2018.

– Solheim called India an emerging leader as it has one of the highest recycling rates in the world. In the case of the case of polyethylene terephthalate or PET India’s recycling rate stands around 80% while 10 percent is reused by people at home.

– The theme for this year is ‘Beat Plastic Pollution’. It urges governments, industry, communities and individuals to come together and explore sustainable alternatives and urgently reduce the production and excessive use of single-use plastic that is polluting our oceans, damaging marine life and threatening human health.

## 23-24 February 2018

1)

he Ministry of Human Resource Development approved the constitution of the Empowered Expert Committee (EEC) for selecting 20 institutes of higher education that will be developed into ‘World Class Institutes’. Who was selected as the head of



this EEC? – **N.**

**Gopalaswami**

**Explanation:** Former chief election commissioner N. Gopalaswami will head the Empowered Expert Committee constituted for selecting 20 institutes of higher education that will be developed into ‘World Class Institutes’. This was announced by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) on 20 February 2018.

– The HRD ministry had in 2017 invited institutes to apply to be upgraded into “world-class universities.” It had received 100 applications, including from seven IITs, Delhi University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Jadhavpur University, Goa University and Mangalore University.

– Universities from the public and private sector will be selected for the programme in the next few months. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has promised Rs. 10,000 crore over the next 10 years and autonomy to these institutes.

– While Gopalaswami will be the chairperson, Tarun Khanna of Harvard Business School, Houston university chancellor Dr. Renu Khator and Dr. Pritam Singh, a former director of MDI Gurugram and IIM Lucknow, will be the others on the panel.



2) Who created history by becoming the first-ever Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo, a feat she achieved on 19 February 2018? – **Avani Chaturvedi**

**Explanation:** Avani Chaturvedi became the first-ever Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo as she flew a 30-minute solo sortie in a MiG-21 at the Jamnagar airbase on the afternoon of 19 February 2018. She is among the first three women fighter pilots being trained by the Indian Air Force (IAF).

– Avani, who was commissioned into the fighter stream after basic training in June 2016, still has over a year to go before she can be deployed for combat missions with her 23 “Panthers” Squadron. She will have to learn tactical flying and manoeuvres after consolidating her general handling of MiG-21s in multiple solo sorties. Then will follow the air-to-air and air-to-ground combat training.



3) The Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) on 22 February 2018 recommended what interest rate for 2017-18? – **8.55%**

**Explanation:** The nest egg for over 6 crore people has shrunk further with the retirement fund body lowering rates by 0.1%. The Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation’s (EPFO) apex decision making body Central Board of Trustees

(CBT) recommended an interest rate of 8.55% for 2017-18.

– As per the practice, the board’s decision will now be vetted by the ministry after evaluating whether the EPFO would be able to provide the rate approved by trustees through its own income or not. Once ratified, the interest income will get credited into the account of EPFO members.

4) Which private sector banking entity is acquiring a 26% stake in Mumbai-based investment bank Equirus Capital Pvt. Ltd., as was disclosed on 22 February 2018? – **Federal Bank**

**Explanation:** Kochi-based private lender Federal Bank Ltd on 22 February 2018 disclosed in a stock exchange filing that it would acquire a 26% stake in Mumbai-based investment bank Equirus Capital Pvt. Ltd.

– Founded in 2007, Equirus Capital is a closely held unlisted investment banking firm that has completed more than 135 transactions across mergers and acquisitions (M&A), private equity, initial public offerings (IPOs), qualified institutional placements (QIPs) and structured finance, raising over \$3.2 billion in the process.

– The acquisition would aid Federal Bank in offering a host of products including wealth management services to high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) and the non-resident Indians (NRIs).

5) What is India’s rank in the Corruption Perception Index 2017, the annual corruption index, which was released by Transparency International (TI) on 22 February 2018? – **81 among of 180 countries**

**Explanation:** India’s ranking in the annual corruption index (Corruption Perception Index 2017) slid to 81 among a group of 180 countries. The 2017 index was released by Berlin-based non-government organisation Transparency International (TI) on 22 February 2018.

– In 2016, India was in the 79<sup>th</sup> place among 176 countries. India's ranking in the index had plummeted in 2013 and 2014 in the wake of the spectrum and coal scams. The ranking has improved since then, but seems to be showing signs of weakening.

– New Zealand and Singapore scored the highest scores with 89 and 84 out of 100, respectively. Somalia was found to be the most corrupt country in the world. A majority of the world's countries scored below 50 on the index with the global average score coming at around 43. India's score of 40 in 2017 puts it below the global average.



**6) Global research firm Gartner on 22 February 2018 reported which important trend in worldwide sale of smartphones for year 2017? – It reported the first year-on-year quarterly decline since Gartner started tracking the global smartphone market in 2004**

**Explanation:** Global sales of smartphones to end users stood at 408 million in the December quarter of 2017, a decline of 5.6% from 432 million a year ago, research firm Gartner disclosed on 22 February 2018. Sales fell because consumers held on to their handsets longer, and also turned to feature phones.

– Interestingly, this is the first year-on-year decline since Gartner started tracking the global smartphone market in 2004.

– Samsung, which sold 74.02 million smartphones in the December quarter against 76.78 million a year ago, retained its number one position with 18.2% market share worldwide. It was followed by Apple (17.9% market-share), Huawei (10.8%), Xiaomi (6.9%) and Oppo (6.3%).

## 25-28 February 2018



**1) The 2018 Winter Olympics held at PyeongChang (South Korea) concluded with a grand closing ceremony held on 25 February 2018. Which country topped the medals tally? – Norway**

**Explanation:** With 14 gold medals, 14 silver medals and 11 bronze medals, Norway topped the medals tally of 2018 Winter Olympics that concluded on 25 February 2018. Germany finished at second place with 14 gold medals, 10 silver medals and 7 bronze medals. With 11 gold medals, 8 silver medals and 10 bronze medals, Canada finished at third place in the medals tally.

– The 2018 Winter Olympics (officially known as the XXIII Olympic Winter Games) were held at PyeongChang (South Korea) from 9 February to 25 February 2018. The opening and closing ceremonies were held at PyeongChang Olympic Stadium. Next Winter Olympics of 2022 will be held at Beijing (China).



**2) Noted former bureaucrat T.S.R. Subramanian, who passed away on 26 February 2018, had played an important role in which issue associated with the bureaucracy? – Political Interference in Bureaucracy**

**Explanation:** Former cabinet secretary T.S.R. Subramanian passed away at the age of 79 on 26 February 2018. He was a 1961-batch IAS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre and his efforts led to the landmark Supreme Court judgment protecting bureaucrats from political interference.

– Subramanian was Cabinet Secretary from 1 August 1996 to 31 March 1998. As Cabinet Secretary, he worked with three Prime Ministers – Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Inder Kumar Gujral and H D Deve Gowda.

– He was part of a group of former bureaucrats that filed a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) in the Supreme Court seeking a mechanism to insulate the bureaucracy from political interference.

– On his PIL, the apex court in 2013 had asked the Centre to put in place a fixed-tenure policy to insulate bureaucrats from frequent transfers mainly through political interference. It also directed the Centre and the States to set up a Civil Services Board to decide on transfers of officers of all India services – Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Forest Service (IFoS).

– He was also a prominent face on television debates. He spoke vociferously on matters related to the bureaucracy.

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**3)** What is the name of the gymnast who created history on 24 February 2018 by becoming the first Indian gymnast to clinch an individual medal at the Gymnastics World Cup? –**Aruna Budda Reddy**

**Explanation:** 22-year Aruna Budda Reddy created history on 24 February 2018 by becoming the first Indian gymnast to clinch an individual medal at the Gymnastics World Cup in Melbourne.

Reddy scored 13.649 to win a bronze medal in the women’s vault.

– She finished behind gold medallist Tjasa Kyssele of Slovenia and Australia’s Emily Whitehead, who bagged silver.

– Aruna won her first national medal in 2005 that encouraged her to take up the sport. Her international journey began with Commonwealth Games participation in 2014 where she finished at the 14<sup>th</sup> spot at the qualification round of the Vault apparatus.

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**4)** What is the name of India’s under-development Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) that was successfully test-flown by the DRDO on 25 February 2018? –**Rustom-2**

**Explanation:** Rustom-2 belongs to a family of India’s UAVs under development, besides Rustom-1 and Rustom-H. It is a Medium Altitude Long Endurance drone (MALE). It can fly up to an altitude of 22,000 feet and has an endurance of over 20 hours. It is capable of carrying payloads for electronic and signal intelligence missions.

– Rustom-2 was successfully test-flown by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) at its Aeronautical Test Range at Chitradurga in Karnataka on 25 February 2018.

– Currently, India’s three services employ hundreds of Israeli drones and have projected a requirement of hundreds of more UAVs, including armed variants, in the near future.

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**5)** Which state won Vijay Hazare Trophy for 2017-18 on 27 February 2018? –**Karnataka**

**Explanation:** Karnataka won the Vijay Hazare Trophy for 2018 by defeating Saurashtra by 41 runs on 27 February 2018. Needing to win 254 runs to win, Saurashtra team was all-out for 212 runs. The in-form Mayank Agarwal hit a brilliant 90 runs for Karnataka.

– This is the third Vijay Hazare Trophy for Karnataka. It had won the 2013-14 and 2014-15

editions by defeating Railways and Punjab respectively. This is also Karnataka's first domestic trophy of the season after having lost out on the Ranji Trophy and Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

– The Vijay Hazare Trophy, also known as the Ranji One Day Trophy, was started in 2002-03 as a limited-overs cricket domestic competition involving state teams from the Ranji Trophy plates. It is named after the famous Indian cricketer Vijay Hazare.

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EDGE ACADEMY