

Brain Tree

Current Events



1 January, 2018- 15 January 17, 2018

1. - The **N**ational **R**egister of **C**itizens (**NRC**) is being compiled following a Supreme Court directive to identify illegal immigrants in Assam.

Backgrounder

In **1951, the first census of India was conducted**. The original NRC was a register prepared after the 1951 census. The 1951 NRC was compiled **exclusively for Assam** because the Assamese nationalist leaders feared that partition may cause a demographic change in Assam.

Later, during the Bangladesh liberation movement millions of Bangladeshi's fled to Assam and West Bengal. After the 1971 India-Pakistan war, in India the government at both the Centre and the State made several efforts to send the illegal migrants back to the newly formed country, but were not successful.

The NRC is being compiled following a Supreme Court directive to identify illegal immigrants in Assam. The eligibility of Indian Citizenship is being ascertained on the basis of the NRC compiled in 1951 and electoral rolls up to 1971. And incase if born after 1971, documents pertaining to ones ancestors can be submitted.

2. The Government has stopped the free conversion of PIO cards to OIC cards. However, the conversion would continue on payment of fees.

Backgrounder

Non-Resident Indians (NRI), Person of Indian Origin (PIO) and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) are the three major categories in which the people who are from India, but go and live abroad can be categorized.

NRIs are Indian Citizens who live outside India for more than 183 days in a financial year, while PIOs and OICs are people of Indian origin who have given up their Indian citizenship. PIO used to be a 15 year visa for

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non-Indian citizens, while OICs are non-Indian citizens who have a lifetime visa to live and work in India with fewer restrictions.

Simultaneous existence of PIO and OIC cards led to confusion among the people of Indian Origin living abroad. Thus, the two have been merged, but PIO card holders must get them converted to OIC cards.

3. India and Pakistan exchanged a list of Nuclear Installations

Backgrounder

Under the **Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations and Facilities**, also referred to as the **Non-Nuclear Aggression Agreement**, which was signed in **1988(w.e.f 1991)**, two countries inform each other of nuclear installations and facilities to be covered under the pact on the first of January of every calendar year.

4. On **January 3**, 2018 the Earth was closest to the sun in a phenomenon called '**Perihelion**'. (On **July 6**, the earth will be at '**Aphelion**', i.e. it will be at the farthest point from the sun.

Backgrounder

The Perihelion of any orbit of a celestial body about the Sun is the point where the body comes nearest to the Sun. It is the opposite of aphelion, which is the point in the orbit where the celestial body is farthest from the Sun.

5. Mr Vinay Sahasrabuddhe was appointed as President of the **Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR)**.

Backgrounder

ICCR is an autonomous organization of the government of India, tasked with strengthening India's external cultural relations through exchanges with other countries and their people. The Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) was **founded in 1950 by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad**, independent India's first Education Minister. Its objectives are to actively participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes pertaining to India's external cultural relations; to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries; to promote cultural exchanges with other countries and people; and to develop relations with nations.

5. NASA-inspired technique has boosted wheat production - Australian scientists have developed the world's first '**speed breeding**' technique that can boost the production of the **crop by up to three times**. The technique uses LED lights optimised to aid photosynthesis in intensive regimes of up to 22 hours per day.
6. Astronauts at the ISS have developed a new method of microbial analysis that can show results as accurately as on Earth.

Backgrounder

Astronauts aboard the International Space Station (ISS) have for the first time identified microbes in space without having to take samples back to Earth for tests. The ability to identify microbes in space could aid in the ability to diagnose and treat astronaut ailments in real time, as well as assisting in the identification of DNA-based life on other planets. It could also benefit other experiments aboard the orbiting laboratory.

7. The Union Cabinet has approved setting up of an AIIMS in Bilaspur in Himachal Pradesh under the **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojna (PMSSY)**.

Backgrounder

PMSSY was announced in 2003 with objectives of **correcting regional imbalances in the availability of affordable/ reliable tertiary healthcare services and also to augment facilities for quality medical education in the country**.

The scheme has two components: **Setting up of new AIIMS and upgradation of government medical colleges**.

Under this scheme, AIIMS have been established in Bhubaneswar, Bhopal, Raipur, Jodhpur, Rishikesh, Patna and Rae Bareilly. Also, three AIIMS in Nagpur (Maharashtra), Kalyani (West Bengal) and Mangalagiri in Guntur (Andhra Pradesh) have been sanctioned in 2015 and two AIIMS have been sanctioned at Bathinda and Gorakhpur in 2016.

8. WHO okays **Bharat Bio typhoid shot - Typbar Typhoid Conjugate Vaccine (TCV)** is the **first typhoid vaccine clinically proven** to be administered to children from 6 months of age to adults, and confers long-term protection against typhoid fever.

Backgrounder

Typhoid fever is caused by food and water contaminated by **Salmonella Typhi (S. Typhi) bacteria**. The symptoms of the disease include fever, headache, nausea, loss of appetite, constipation and sometimes diarrhea.

Typhoid fever is treated with antibiotics that kill the Salmonella bacteria

9. Iceland becomes first country to legalise equal pay.
10. The Global Entrepreneurship summit (GES) was recently held in Hyderabad. It was hosted by NITI Aayog in partnership with US government. Theme - "Women first, Prosperity for all". The event was inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the presence of Ivanka Trump, who is the special advisor to the President of the United States.
11. The FSSAI has issued regulations making it mandatory for food companies selling organic produce to get certified with a label. This label can be secured with one of the two authorities - The National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP) or the Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS-India). Companies could also get a voluntary logo from the FSSAI that marked the produce as 'Organic'.

Backgrounder

The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is responsible for implementing the Food Safety and Standards Act 2006.

What is an organic product? - Fruits, Vegetables, fiber and animal products sourced or grown in an environment free of chemical pesticides, fertilizers, genetically modified organisms and induced hormones.

FSSAI has introduced '**Jaivik Bharat**' logo to identify foods as organic.



12. 'Gaming addiction' gets the 'mental disorder' tag in the International classification of Diseases.

Backgrounder

The International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is the international "standard diagnostic tool for epidemiology, health management and clinical purposes". Its full official name is International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems. The ICD is maintained by the World Health Organization (WHO)

13. The annual **ASEAN India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas** is being celebrated at **Singapore**. The conference, which will be attended by top leaders and businessmen from Singapore and India, will discuss the contribution of the Indian diaspora community in Southeast Asia.

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Backgrounder

The aim of the event is to highlight the “ancient human, maritime, cultural, commercial and religious links between India and Southeast Asia” and to promote greater economic, cultural and diplomatic cooperation between the two regions.

The theme is : “Ancient Route, New Journey: Diaspora in the Dynamic Asean-India Partnership.”

Backgrounder

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated every year on **January 9** to mark the contribution of overseas Indian community in the development of India. January 9 was chosen as the day to celebrate this occasion since it was on this day **in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi, returned to India from South Africa**, led Freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever.

Established in 2003, by the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, PBD is sponsored by the Ministry of External Affairs of the Government of India and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), the Confederation of Indian Industries and the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region.

These conventions provide a platform to the overseas Indian community to engage with the government and Indian communities in India for mutually beneficial activities. These conventions are also very useful in networking among the overseas Indian community residing in various parts of the world and enable them to share their experiences in various fields.

14. The **Central Water Commission** has received **Central Board of Irrigation and Power (CBIP)** Special Recognition Award 2018 for Excellence in Health & Safety of Large Dams. The award has been given in recognition of the contribution made by the Central Water Commission (CWC) for promoting the health and safety of large dams in India through the World Bank aided **Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)**.

Backgrounder

DRIP - The **Ministry of Water Resources (MoWR)**, Government of India, with assistance from the World Bank, is implementing it. The objectives of DRIP are: (i) to improve the safety and performance of

selected existing dams and associated appurtenances in a sustainable manner, and (ii) to strengthen the dam safety institutional setup in participating states as well as at central level.

15. Asia's biggest arts and literary fest at the Kerala Arts Fest in Thrissur was inaugurated.
16. The three-day annual Flamingo Festival is being held at Pulicat lake. Flamingo festival promotes tourism.

Backgrounder

Pulicat lake is the second largest brackish water lake or lagoon in India, after Chilka Lake. It is on the border of **Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu** (over 96% of it is in Andhra Pradesh). The lake encompasses the **Pulicat Lake Bird Sanctuary**. The barrier island of Sriharikota separates the lake from the Bay of Bengal . Two rivers which feed the lagoon are the Arani river at the southern tip and the Kalangi River from the northwest, in addition to some smaller streams. The Buckingham Canal, a navigation channel, is part of the lagoon on its western side.

17. Recent data put out by the Union Health Ministry's Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) has indicated that food poisoning is one of the commonest outbreaks reported in 2017. This is apart from acute diarrhoeal disease (ADD).

Backgrounder

The **Integrated Disease Surveillance Program (IDSP)** is a disease surveillance scheme under the **Ministry of Health and Family Affairs** in India, **assisted by the World Bank**. The scheme aims to strengthen disease surveillance for infectious diseases to detect and respond to outbreaks quickly. The Project was undertaken to meet the World Health Organization Guidelines for South East Asian countries on disease surveillance to track the outbreak of diseases and its potential trans boundary threats.

18. **Mankidia**, one of the 13 **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG)** in Odisha, has been denied habitat rights inside the **Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR)** under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006, as the State Forest Department has objected on grounds that tribals could be attacked by wild animals, especially tigers.
India's second **Film and Television Institute of India (FTII)** will be set up by the Union Government as a part of tapping the potential of the Northeastern region.

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The first **F**ilm and **T**elevision **I**nstitute of **I**ndia (**FTII**) is in Pune. FTII is an autonomous institute operating under the Information and Broadcasting Ministry.

19. Government completes the first phase of the Bharat Net project by connecting over 1 lakh Gram Panchayats across the country with high speed optical fibre network. Bharat Net network built under Phase 1 envisages delivery of high-speed broadband services in over 2.5 lakh villages benefitting more than 200 million rural Indians.

Backgrounder

Bharat Net (Earlier called National Optical Fiber Network forms the backbone of **Digital India programme**. It aims to provide broadband connectivity to households under village panchayats and to government institutions at district level.

The project is being funded through **Universal Service Obligation Fund (USFO)**. **The Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) was established** in 2002 Under the **Department of Telecommunication (DoT)** Funds come from the **Universal Service Levy** of 5% charged on all telecom operators on their Adjusted Gross Revenue The funds are deposited into the Consolidated Fund of India, and require prior parliamentary approval to be dispatched.

20. India unveils **Pratyush**, its fastest **supercomputer** yet. The Pratyush HPC will improve weather forecasting and extended range forecasting; predict cyclones and Tsunami's accurately, with **more lead time; and help those dependant on agriculture, hydrology and power sectors**.
21. The Central Government, as a part of its mission to clean the Ganga by 2020, has raised a territorial army battalion comprising of ex-service men of the Army. The battalion will be raised in Allahabad, as a **Composite Ecological Task Force (CETF)**.

Backgrounder

The Territorial Army, also known as 'Terriers', is considered the second line of national defence after the regular Army. The Territorial Army is part of a Regular Army and its present role is to relieve the Regular Army from static duties and assist civil administration in dealing with natural calamities and maintenance of essential services in situations where life of the communities is affected or the security of the country is threatened and to provide units for Regulars Army as and when required. Territorial

Army comes under the **Defence Ministry**.

22. The Centre has informed the Supreme Court that there is 'no viable alternative to hanging'. SC has favoured a re-look at the practice of hanging to death as "the Constitution of India is an organic and compassionate document which recognises the sanctity of flexibility of law as situations change with the flux of time". The court noted that a condemned convict should **die in peace and not in pain**. Also, execution is not only "barbaric, inhuman and cruel", but also against the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).



Till the last breath

Hanging is the most commonly used method of execution in countries that retain death penalty. How countries carry out executions:

Hanging: 58 countries including India, Bangladesh, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Malaysia, Pakistan, South Korea, Sri Lanka and the U.S.

Lethal Injection: China, Guatemala, Maldives, Taiwan, Thailand, the U.S., Vietnam

Stoning: Iran, Mauritania, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, U.A.E, Yemen

Beheading: Saudi Arabia

Backgrounder

The petitioner has also referred to Article 21 (Right to Life) of the Constitution and said it also included the right of a condemned prisoner to have a dignified mode of execution so that death becomes less painful.

Section 354 (5) mandates death by hanging, of the Code of Criminal

Procedure.

The **Law Commission in its 187th Report** had noted that there was a significant increase in the number of countries where hanging has been abolished and substituted by electrocution, shooting or lethal injection as the method of execution. It had categorically opined that hanging is undoubtedly accompanied by intense physical torture and pain.

23. A one-day **National Conference on Welfare of Laboratory Animals** was recently organised by **Committee for the Purpose of Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals(CPCSEA)**, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, with the theme of "Implementation of **3R's (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement)** while using animals in academic research and regulatory testing in India. The conference laid emphasis on the issue of **ethical use of animals in academics and regulatory testing in India**. The discussions were focussed on evaluating the possibilities of exemption of animal experiments in academics and regulatory testing.

Backgrounder

CPCSEA is a statutory Committee, which is established under Section 15(1) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1960. All establishments engaged in research and education involving animals, are required to comply with the various guidelines, norms and stipulations set out by CPCSEA. The functions of CPCSEA :

- Registration of establishments conducting animal experimentation or breeding of animals for this purpose.
- Selection and appointment of nominees in the Institutional Animal Ethics Committees of registered establishments.
- Approval of Animal House Facilities on the basis of reports of inspections conducted by CPCSEA.
- Permission for conducting experiments involving use of animals.
- Recommendation for import of animals for use in experiments.
- Action against establishments in case of violation of any legal norm/stipulation.

24. The UK has banned products containing microbeads

Backgrounder

Micro beads are tiny pieces of plastic found in many beauty products, such as exfoliating scrubs, toothpastes and more. Evidence has shown that microbeads can find their way from your bathroom to the sea. Trillions of tiny pieces of plastic are accumulating in the world's oceans, lakes and estuaries, harming marine life and entering the food chain.

25. Scientists in India have discovered **rock art**, in the **Burzahama region in Kashmir** India that appears to depict a **supernova** and the surrounding stars, buried inside the wall of an ancient dwelling place. Thought to date from 3,600 BC, the carving would be the **oldest-known depiction of such a cosmic event**.
26. The folk painting of Madhubani will soon be seen decorating the walls of various government buildings in Bihar.

Backgrounder

Madhubani, which means '**forest of honey**', is a style of **folk painting** mentioned in some of the ancient Indian texts such as the Ramayana. It is also known as Mithila, for its origin is said to be the Mithila region in

Bihar.

Traditionally, the Madhubani paintings are created using fingers and twigs. Various styles include Bharni, Katchni, Tantrik, Godna, and Kohbar.

Madhubani is now found on apparel, paper, canvas, and other products. Designs inspired by Hindu deities such as Krishna, Rama, Lakshmi, Shiva, Durga, Saraswati. Other subjects include peacocks, fish and human connection with nature.

27. In the wake of reports of an alleged breach of the Aadhaar database, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has rolled out a new two-tier security process that will come into effect from June 1.

Backgrounder

The UIDAI has introduced the concept of a virtual ID which an Aadhaar holder can use in lieu of his/her Aadhaar number at the time of authentication, besides sharing of 'limited KYC' with certain agencies, the cardholders real Aadhar ID will be masked from service agencies

28. Charlie-435, state-of-the-art patrol vessel of the Indian Coast Guard was commissioned at Karaikal in the Union Territory of Puducherry recently. The patrol vessel is equipped with modern navigation and communication systems.

29. India has missed the 2017 deadline for elimination of Kala Azar.

Backgrounder

Kala-azar, also known as Visceral leishmaniasis, or black fever, or Dumdum fever, is the most severe form of leishmaniasis. It is endemic to the Indian subcontinent. Without proper diagnosis and treatment, it can be highly fatal.

30. China has sent twin satellites into space on a single carrier rocket, as part of efforts to enable its BeiDou.

Backgrounder

The BeiDou Navigation Satellite System is a Chinese satellite navigation system.

The other Global Navigation Satellite Systems are :

GPS - United States of America.

GLONASS or Global Navigation Sputnik System - Russia.
Galileo - the European Union.
Quasi-Zenith Satellite System (QZSS) - Japan.
IRNSS or NAVIC - India.

31. India's environment ministry has ruled out the possibility of conservation breeding of the **Chiru goat**(also known as **Tibetan Antelope**), a 'near threatened' species whose underfur is used for making the famous Shahtoosh shawls.
32. Senior Advocate **Indu Malhotra** became the **first woman lawyer to be directly elevated from the Bar to the Supreme Court as a judge**. Her name was recently cleared unanimously by the Supreme Court Collegium. Malhotra will be the **seventh woman judge since Independence** to make it to the Supreme Court.
33. The Election Commission (EC) has set up a 14-member committee to suggest changes to Section 126 of the **Representation of the People Act**, which prohibits poll campaign in the last 48 hours leading to voting, in the wake of media expansion. The committee, chaired by Deputy Election Commissioner Umesh Sinha, will submit its report within three months.

Backgrounder

Model Code of Conduct(MCC) are the guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India for conduct of political parties and candidates during elections mainly with respect to speeches, polling day, polling booths, election manifestos, processions and general conduct.

The Model Code of Conduct comes into force immediately on announcement of the election schedule by the commission. The Code remains in force till the end of the electoral process. However, these rules lack statutory backing, they contain what is known as "rules of electoral morality".

34. The Indian Naval Ships 'Nirbhik' and 'Nirghat' have been decommissioned at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai, after a glorious 30 and 28 years respectively in the service of the nation.
35. The **World Economic Forum (WEF)** has released its Global Manufacturing Index. This is WEF's first 'Readiness for the future of production report'. The report has been developed in collaboration with A T Kearney and calls for new and innovative approaches to public-private collaboration are needed to accelerate transformation. India is at the 30th position, five places below China, but higher than the other

BRICS members Brazil(41), Russia (35)and South Africa(45). Also above its neighbours Sri Lanka (66), Pakistan (74) and Bangladesh (80)

- 36.** The **Government of Sikkim** has come 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**. With this, Sikkim is keen to not just preserve its forest cover but also forge amity between people and trees. **Sikkim Forest Tree (Amity & Reverence) Rules 2017**
- 37.** **Zygaenid**, species of moth, was newly discovered in the Talle Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh.