

# Brain Tree

## Current Events



### 01 February to 15 February - 2018

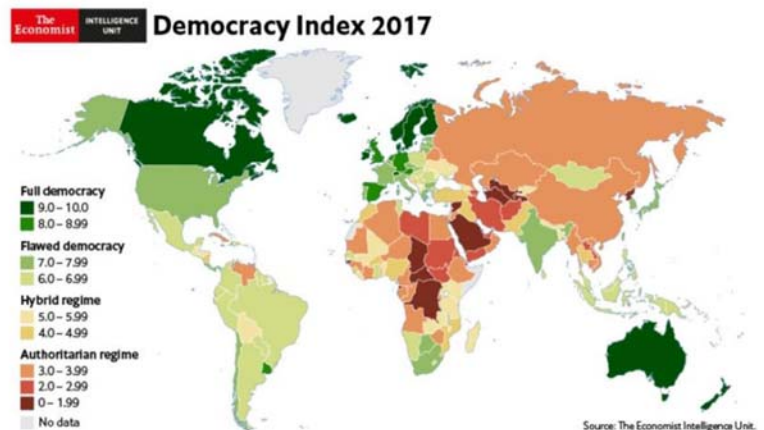
1. The four-day 'Sammakka – Saralamma Jatara' at Medaram in Telangana was held. It is considered the **biggest** tribal festival across **South Asia** and is attended by one crore people on an average.

It is held by forest dwelling Koya tribe of Telangana and surrounding States, is the biggest Tribal festival in Asia which is attended by one crore people on an average. The event is held bi-annually.

Medaram is a remote place in the Eturnagaram Wildlife Sanctuary, a part of Dandakaranya, the largest surviving forest belt in the Deccan.

2. The Economist Intelligence Unit has released 2017 Democracy Index report. The report shows that democracy is in decline across the world.

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. The list has been divided into four broad categories — full democracy, flawed democracy, hybrid regime and authoritarian regime.



India's rank fell 10 places from 32 to 42. The report classified India as a flawed democracy and attributed the dip in India's rankings to lack of freedom of speech and free media. The report notes that the rise of conservative religious ideologies has mainly affected India.

3. Large parts of the globe experienced a rare 'Super Blue Blood Moon' on January 31st, 2018

It happens when a total lunar eclipse, a blood Moon and a super moon coincide. A 'Super Moon' occurs when the Moon is closest to the Earth. A 'Blue Moon' occurs when a full moon happens twice in one calendar month, A 'Blood Moon' - This red glow is produced by the same effect that gives us red sunsets. Sunlight is skimming through the Earth's atmosphere on its way to the Moon and it gets refracted or bent. The blue light is then filtered out, leaving the red light visible

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4. In a recent pilot project, the ministry of electronics and IT successfully tested a technology called LiFi (Light Fidelity)

Li-Fi, or light fidelity, invented by German physicist and professor Harald Haas, is a wireless technology that makes use of visible light in place of radio waves to transmit data at terabits per second speeds—more than 100 times the speed of Wi-Fi. Unlike Wi-Fi, which uses radio waves, Li-Fi runs on visible light.

**Advantages:**

1. Li-Fi could make a huge impact on the internet of things too, with data transferred at much higher levels with even more devices able to connect to one another.
2. Due to its shorter range, Li-Fi is more secure than Wi-Fi.
3. Consume less power.

**Limitations**

1. As visual light can't pass through opaque objects and needs line of sight for communication. In order to enjoy full connectivity, more capable LED bulbs will need to be placed at various places.
2. Li-Fi requires the lightbulb is on at all times to provide connectivity, meaning that the lights will need to be on during the day.
3. High installation costs

5. The Government has announced two major initiatives in health sector, as part of Ayushman Bharat programme. These two health sector initiatives under will build a New India 2022 and ensure enhanced productivity, well being and avert wage loss and impoverishment. These Schemes will also generate lakhs of jobs, particularly for women.

- 1) **Health and Wellness Centre:** 1.5 lakh such centers will be set up which will provide comprehensive health care, including for non-communicable diseases and maternal and child health services. These centers will also provide free essential drugs and diagnostic services. Contribution of private sector through CSR and philanthropic institutions in adopting these centers is also envisaged.
- 2) **National Health Protection Scheme:** will cover over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) providing coverage upto 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.
- 3) **The Ayushman Bharat programme** will be the world's largest government funded health care programme.

6. The government has proposed to establish Ekalavya Residential School in each block of the country where tribal people constitute a majority of the population.

Ekalavya Model Residential School Scheme was started in 1998 and first school was started in the year 2000 in Maharashtra. EMRSs have been functioning as institutions of excellence for tribal students.

7. India has been admitted to the Ashgabat Agreement

Officially known as Agreement on the Establishment of an International Transport and Transit Corridor. The Ashgabat Agreement aims to develop a shortest trade route between Central Asian countries and Iranian and Omani ports. Oman, Iran, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are the founding members. Kazakhstan joined this arrangement subsequently. In October 2016, Pakistan also formally joined the Ashgabat Agreement.

8. The government's plan to build a tunnel through the Sela Pass

A tunnel through the Sela Pass, located at an elevation of 13,700 ft, will ensure faster movement of troops in Tawang, a strategically- located town in Arunachal Pradesh bordering China.

9. Rapid reporting system for the Scheme for Adolescent Girls launched. The RRS is a web based on line monitoring for the Scheme for Adolescent Girls under Integrated Child Development Services Scheme. This system will facilitate the monitoring of the scheme and taking corrective measures by ensuring faster flow of information, accurate targeting of the beneficiaries and reduction of leakages.

10. World Wetlands Day is celebrated every year on 2 February.

The Ramsar Convention is an international treaty for the conservation and wise use of wetlands signed on 2 February 1971. Officially known as 'the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat'.

**Montreux Record** under the Convention is a register of wetland sites on the List of Wetlands of International Importance where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference. Established in 1990

11. 'Pelican Bird Festival-2018' was recently organized at Kolleru lake. It was jointly organised by the Andhra Pradesh Tourism Authority (APTA) and Krishna district administration.

Kolleru lake is one of the largest fresh water lakes in the country. It is located between Krishna and Godavari delta. It was declared as a wildlife sanctuary in 1999. It is a Ramsar site and is also listed as an Important Bird Area.

Pelicanery — a location where the Grey Pelicans, a large magnificent bird, nest and breed.

The Grey Pelican also called the Spot Billed Pelican is listed in Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act and in the Red Data Book. It is also considered a "globally threatened species" under the "vulnerable" category.

12. "Exam Warriors" is the book authored by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for students facing exams. It aims to get through to students across the country on the threshold of examinations, and hopes to help them thread the needle with ease.

13. "Green Good Deeds" campaign: The campaign has been launched by the Environment Ministry to sensitise the people and students, in particular, about climate change and global warming. The objective of the campaign is to restore and return the clean and green environment to the next generation.

14. Researchers find tens of thousands of previously undetected Mayan houses, buildings, defence works and pyramids in the dense jungle of Guatemala's Peten region using LDAR (Light Detection And Ranging).

LDAR is a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the Earth.

15. The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has discovered pottery pieces, and tools made of stones and bones believed to be of the pre-Christian era from a mound in Jalalpur village of Cuttack district, Odisha. Discoveries of ancient artefacts indicated that a rural settlement might have thrived in that period. These settlements could have had cultural and trade ties with other settlements in the Prachi Valley that had come up around the Prachi river, which gradually disappeared.

The Prachi river, a tributary of Mahanadi, originates about 10 km away from Bhubaneswar. The river flows through Puri, Khurda, Cuttack and Jagatsinghpur districts and it is this region that is called the Prachi Valley.

Prachi Valley civilisation is believed to be earlier than that of Harappa and Mohenjo-Daro flourished on the banks of Prachi river. Prachi Valley civilisation has contributed a lot towards amalgamation, assimilation and proliferation of different religious faiths and cults.

16. The 5th South Asia Region Public Procurement Conference was held at New Delhi. The theme: "Public Procurement and Service Delivery". The Government of India (GOI), through the Public Procurement Division (PPD) of the Ministry of Finance and All India Management Association (AIMA) hosted the Conference.

The objective of the Conference is to enable the Heads of Public Procurement and other key stakeholders in the eight South Asian countries to meet and learn from one another and from experts in the field of public procurement. The knowledge thus acquired would help various South Asian Governments to consider enhancements and innovations in their public procurement systems, enabling efficient utilization of public resources, ensuring quality and timeliness in delivery of services.

The Conference is held under the auspices of the South Asia Region Public Procurement Network (SARPPN), which is sponsored and facilitated by the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and Islamic Development Bank.

The First Conference was held in Kathmandu in 2010, the second in Islamabad in 2014, the third in Dhaka 2015 and the fourth in Sri Lanka 2017

17. Indigenously developed Agni-I ballistic missile was recently flight tested as part of a user trial by the Army from a test range off the Odisha coast.

Agni-1 is an indigenously developed surface-to-surface, single-stage nuclear capable missile. It was developed by the Advanced Systems Laboratory (ASL) in collaboration with the **Defence Research Development Laboratory (DRDL)** and the **Research Centre Imarat (RCI)**. The missile was integrated by the **Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL)**, Hyderabad.

Agni-I can carry payloads up to 1,000 kg and is capable of hitting a target beyond 700 km.

18. 88th Mahamastakabhisheka of the monolithic statue of Lord Bahubali has begun at Shravanabelagola, Karnataka.

Bahubali is also called Gommateshwara. The Gommateshwara statue was built by the Ganga dynasty minister and commander Chavundaraya; it is a 57-foot monolith situated above a hill in Shravanabelagola in the Hassan district, Karnataka state, India. It was built in around 981 A.D. and is one of the largest free-standing statues in the world.

The Mastakabhisheka is held once in 12 years. One of the biggest festivals for the Jain community, it honours Lord Bahubali, a revered Jain icon. According to Jain texts, Bahubali attained liberation from the cycle of births and deaths (moksha) at Mount Kailash and is revered as a liberated soul (Siddha) by the Jains.

19. The Union cabinet has approved a proposal for ratification of the Minamata Convention, a global treaty to protect human health and the environment from adverse effects of mercury. After joining the Convention, it will now be easier for India to get technological or financial assistance to address issues related to mercury.

The Minamata Convention is named after the Japanese city of Minamata, which experienced a severe, decades-long incidence of mercury poisoning after industrial wastewater from a chemical factory was discharged into Minamata Bay. The wastewater contained methylmercury, which bioaccumulated in fish and shellfish in the bay. Local people who consumed seafood from Minamata Bay became very sick, and many died or were left severely disabled.

20. India has successfully test-fired its indigenously developed nuclear capable Prithvi-II missile as part of a user trial by the Army from a test range in Odisha.

Single-stage liquid-fueled Prithvi-II is the first missile to have been developed by the DRDO under the **Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP)**. Prithvi-II is nuclear-capable surface-to-surface. With a strike range of 350 km, with a payload carrying capacity of 500-1000kg. The state-of-the-art missile uses advanced inertial guidance system with manoeuvring trajectory to hit its target.

21. Based on recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP), the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for increase in the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of "Milling Copra"

The **Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP)** is an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India. It came into existence in January 1965. Currently, the Commission comprises a Chairman, Member Secretary, one Member (Official) and two Members (Non-Official). The non-official members are representatives of the farming community and usually have an active association with the farming community.

It can only recommend the MSP, however, the **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs**

(CCEA) of the Union government takes a final decision on the level of MSPs and other recommendations made by CACP.

22. China has confirmed restarting of the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through the Nathu La pass.

Mansarovar Lake is located at an altitude of 14,950 ft (4,558 m) is said to be the highest freshwater lake in the world. It is located in the Tibet Autonomous Region, China, 940 kilometres from Lhasa. To the west of it is Lake Rakshastal and to the north is Mount Kailash.

Nathu La is also one of the four officially agreed BPM (Border Personnel Meeting) points between the Indian Army and People's Liberation Army of China, the others being **Chushul in Ladakh, Nathu La in Sikkim, Bum La Pass in Tawang district of Arunachal Pradesh, and Lipulekh Pass in Uttarakhand.**

23. A committee formed by the Karnataka government has recommended a separate flag for the state.

Karnataka will be the **second** state in the country to have its own flag after **Jammu and Kashmir**, which is allowed the same under Article 370 of the Constitution.

In S.R. Bommai v/s Union of India (Supreme Court 1994) case, the Supreme Court has declared that federalism is a basic feature of the Constitution and States are supreme in their sphere. Hence, there is no prohibition in the Constitution for the State to have its own flag. However, the national flag code specifically authorises use of other flags subject to the regulation by the court.

24. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has imposed a fine of Rs. 136 crore on search engine major Google for unfair business practices in the Indian market for online search.

CCI is a body responsible for enforcing The Competition Act, 2002 throughout India and to prevent activities that have an adverse effect on competition in India. It was established on 14 October 2003. It became fully functional in May 2009. CCI consists of a Chairperson and 6 Members appointed by the Central Government. Functions of the CCI

- to eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition,
- To promote and sustain competition,
- To protect the interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India.
- to give opinion on competition issues on a reference received from a statutory authority established under any law and to undertake competition advocacy,
- To create public awareness and impart training on competition issues

25. A 13-member advisory committee, headed by Vinay Sheel Oberoi, has been constituted to monitor and expedite capital acquisition projects for the modernisation of the armed forces. The panel will suggest measures to improve the capital acquisition process and will

undertake an independent review and check the status of ongoing critical projects worth more than 500 crore.

26. In a bid to conserve the dwindling rhododendron species of Tawang, a rhododendron park is being established in Tawang, Arunachal Pradesh. Over 30 species of rhododendron will be planted and conserved in the park. It will also have a modern nursery, an information centre, resting sheds, and a parking facility, among other things.
27. The government has all concerned authorities to take appropriate actions on the complaints that have been received through the 'SHe-Box'.

SHe-box is an online complaint management system for registering complaints related to sexual harassment at workplace. It was launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

The complaint management system has been developed to ensure the effective implementation of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (the SH Act), 2013.

This portal is an initiative to provide a platform to women working or visiting any office of Central Government (Central Ministries, Departments, Public Sector Undertakings, Autonomous Bodies and Institutions etc.) to file complaints related to sexual harassment at workplace under the Act.

28. NITI Aayog has released a comprehensive Health Index report titled, "**Healthy States, Progressive India**". The report has been developed by NITI Aayog, with technical assistance from the World Bank, and in consultation with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). The report ranks states and Union territories innovatively on their year-on-year incremental change in health outcomes, as well as, their overall performance with respect to each other. It is the first attempt to establish an annual systematic tool to measure and understand the heterogeneity and complexity of the nation's performance in Health.
29. In a bid to tackle the countrywide public health threat of intestinal worm infections in children and related morbidity, all states and Union territories conducted the National Deworming Day on February 10th, as mandated by the Union ministry of health and family welfare.

The National Deworming Day is a single fixed-day approach to treating intestinal worm infections in all children aged 1- 19 years, and is held on 10 February and 10 August each year. It will mobilize health personnel, state governments and other stakeholders to prioritize investment in control of **Soil Transmitted Helminth (STH)** infections one of the most common infections.

All the children are provided deworming tablet in schools and anganwadis. Besides the deworming tablet, various health promotion activities related to Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) are organised in schools and anganwadis.

30. The National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) announced new stent prices, capping trade margin at 8% and requiring price of catheters, etc. to be mentioned separately during billing.

NPPA is an organization of the Government of India which was established, inter alia, to fix/ revise the prices of controlled bulk drugs and formulations and to enforce prices and availability of the medicines in the country, under the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995. The organization is also entrusted with the task of recovering amounts overcharged by manufacturers for the controlled drugs from the consumers. It also monitors the prices of decontrolled drugs in order to keep them at reasonable levels.

31. India posted a marginal 0.21% rise in the area under forest between 2015 and 2017, according to the biennial India State of Forest Report (SFR) 2017. The document says that 21.53% of the geographic area of the country is forests.

Getting India to have at least 33% of its area under forest has been a long standing goal of the government since 1988. State of forest report is published by the Forest Survey of India (FSI) on a biennial basis since 1987. The Forest Survey of India, founded in 1967 and headquartered at Dehradun in Uttarakhand, is a Government of India, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change organization for conducting forest surveys, studies and research to periodically monitor the changing situation of land and forest resources.

**Green cover**  
India has about 7,08,273 square kilometres of forest, which is 21.53% of the geographic area of the country, according to the India State of Forest Report 2015

Category	Percentage
Very dense	2.99
Open forest	9.18
Non forest	77.05
Moderately dense	9.38
Scrub	1.4

**Forests as % of geographical area**

State	Percentage
Uttarakhand	71
Manipur	78.01
Sikkim	82.31

32. India has secured access to the key Port of Duqm in Oman for military use and logistical support.

The Port of Duqm is situated on the southeastern seaboard of Oman, overlooking the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. It is strategically located, in close proximity to the Chabahar port in Iran. With the Assumption Island being developed in Seychelles and Agalega in Mauritius, Duqm fits into India's proactive maritime security roadmap.