

Brain Tree

Current Events



16 February to 28 February'2018

1. The government has decided against formulating an electric vehicle policy. The government's ambitious plan was to shift to electric vehicles by 2030.

The NITI Aayog report stated that adoption of electric and shared vehicles could help India save \$60 billion in diesel and petrol, along with cutting down as much as 1 gigatonne of carbon emission by 2030.

Faster **A**doption and **M**anufacturing of (Hybrid &) **E**lectric Vehicles in **I**ndia (**FAME-India**) scheme is aimed at incentivising all vehicle segments, including two-wheelers, three wheeler auto, passenger four-wheeler vehicle, light commercial vehicles and buses. The scheme covers hybrid and electric technologies like a strong hybrid, plug-in hybrid and battery electric vehicles. FAME is a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan.

2. Centre for **D**evelopment for **A**dvanced **C**omputing (**C-DAC**), Pune, has developed a softwares named "**Jatan**" and "**Darshak**" that will revolutionise museum experience. "Jatan" will help "online" visitors get a 3-Dimensional(3D) view of hundreds of artefacts displayed in at least 10 museums."Darshak" is a mobile application, which allows real-time museum visitors to gain insights into all the details about artefacts by scanning the QR code placed near the artefact.

C-DAC is the premier R&D organisation of the Ministry of Electroics and Information Technology(MeitY) for carrying out R&D in IT, Electronics and associated areas. It was setup in 1988.

3. The government of India successfully concluded a facilitation workshop under **O**pen **A**creage **L**icensing **P**rogramme (**OALP**) in Ahmedabad recently.

The OALP, a part of the government's **H**ydrocarbon **E**xploration and **L**icensing **P**olicy (**HELP**), gives exploration companies the option to select the exploration blocks on their own, without having to wait for the formal bid round from the Government. The company then submits an application to the government, which puts that block up for bid. The new policy will open up 2.8 million km² of sedimentary basins for exploration and eventual production.

HELP opens up India' entire sedimentary basin for investment from domestic

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and foreign players under a simplified, transparent and investor -friendly fiscal and administrative regime.

4. Umang app was named winner of the Best M-Government Service Award for the Accessible Government category. The application provides users a unified platform that combines government departments and services, facilitating transactions for citizens.
5. Paschim Lehar', a tri-service maritime exercise, was held off India's western coast.

The objective of the exercise is to build interoperability. This exercise includes a large number of ships, submarines and aircraft from the Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy. Units from Eastern Naval Command, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and the Coast Guard also participate to build interoperability.

6. Cauvery Verdict: The SC directed Karnataka government to release 177.25TMC of water to Tamil Nadu. 14.75TMC less than what was allotted by the tribunal in 2007. The SC noted the increasing demand for drinking water by Bengaluru and also for water for many industrial activities.
7. Researchers have discovered a new class of antibiotics, named malacidins, which can be extracted from soil bacteria that are notoriously difficult to culture in labs and study. malacidins may be able to attack and kill many types of super bugs.

A superbug, also called multiresistant, is a bacterium that carries several resistance genes. These are resistant to multiple antibiotics and are able to survive even after exposure to one or more antibiotics.

8. **Botanical Survey of India (BSI) and Natural History Museum (NHM)**, UK has signed a Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation in the field of genetic/taxonomic studies, research and training, conservation in India, including species and habitat conservation assessments. Objectives
 - i. Undertaking intensive floristic surveys and collecting accurate and detailed information on the occurrence, distribution, ecology and economic utility of plants in the country.
 - ii. Collecting, identifying and distributing materials that may be of use to educational and research institutions.

iii. Acting as the custodian of authentic collections in well planned herbaria and documenting plant resources in the form of local, district, state and national flora.

9. 2018 **World Sustainable Development Summit** was held in New Delhi. The (**WSDS**), earlier known as the **Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS)**, **The Energy and Resources Institute** is (**TERI's**) flagship event which has been conceptualized as a single platform to accelerate action towards sustainable development. Theme for 2018 - 'Partnerships for a Resilient Planet'.

The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) is a leading think tank dedicated to conducting research for sustainable development of India and the Global South. TERI was established in 1974 as an information centre on energy issues.

10. India and Iran have signed a significant pact which gives New Delhi operational control of a part of the strategically located Chabahar port on the Gulf of Oman for 18 months.

Iran's Chabahar port is located on the Gulf of Oman and is the only oceanic port of the country. The port gives access to the energy-rich Persian Gulf nations' southern coast and, India can bypass Pakistan with the Chabahar port becoming functional. Chabahar port will boost India's access to Iran, the key gateway to the International North-South Transport Corridor that has sea, rail and road routes between India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia.

It will also help India in countering Chinese presence in the Arabian Sea which China is trying to ensure by helping Pakistan develop the Gwadar port.

11. The **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** recently organized the programme "Watan Ko Jano".

"Watan Ko Jano" is sponsored jointly by Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India (Kashmir Cell) and State Rehabilitation Council Social Welfare Department. The programme aims to give exposure to the youth and children of Jammu and Kashmir about the cultural and socio-economic development taking place in other parts of the country.

12. India is hosting the 8th Edition of Theatre Olympics. The Theatre Olympics was established in 1993 in Delphi, Greece, as the first international theatre festival. The Theatre Olympics, being held in India for the first time, is being organised by National School of Drama, under the aegis of Ministry of Culture.

13. President Ram Nath Kovind has approved the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Bill making Kambala a legal rural sport in Karnataka.

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Kambla in its traditional form is non-competitive with buffalo pairs made to race one after another in paddy fields, which is considered a thanksgiving to the Gods for protecting the animals from diseases.

animal rights activists claim that the buffaloes run in the race due to fear of being beaten, which the organizers dismiss

14. The **World Congress on Information Technology (WCIT)** 2018 is being held in Hyderabad, India with the theme 'Future Enterprises'. The event is organised by the World Information Technology and Services Alliance.

WCIT is the largest and the most reputable international event among worldwide IT leaders. It brings together high-level officials from different countries, heads of multinational organizations, universities and scientific research centers, non-governmental organizations' representatives and many more. The event includes discussions of legal, political and economic trends affecting IT business processes, presentations of innovative solutions, B2B meetings etc.

15. The **Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC)**, a mega infrastructure project with an estimated investment of \$100 billion, has attracted interest from companies based out of Canada, the U.S., Singapore and Taiwan.

The project would include six mega investment regions of 200 square kilometres each and will run through six states Delhi, Western Uttar Pradesh, Southern Haryana, Eastern Rajasthan, Eastern Gujarat, and Western Maharashtra.

The project aims to develop an environmentally sustainable, long lasting and technological advanced infrastructure utilizing cutting age Japanese technologies and to create world class manufacturing and investment destinations in this region.

16. Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved Silkyara Bend-Barkot Tunnel in Uttarkhand as part of 'Chardham Mahamarg Pariyojana'.

This tunnel will provide all weather connectivity to Yamunotri, one of the dham on Chardham Yatra, encouraging regional socio-economic development, trade and tourism within the country.

Char Dham - Gangotri, Yamunotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath.

17. The Union Cabinet has approved the setting up of a tribunal to settle a row between Odisha and Chhattisgarh on sharing the waters of the river Mahanadi. This is in keeping with the recent Supreme Court order directing the Centre to

set up a tribunal in response to a plea by the Odisha government to stop the Chhattisgarh government from constructing several weirs on the river.

According to the provisions of the **Inter-State River Water Disputes (ISRWD)**, 1956. The Chief Justice of India would nominate the chairperson and members for the tribunal from among the judges of the apex court or high courts. The Tribunal is required to submit its report and decision within a period of 3 years which can be extended to a further period not exceeding 2 years due to unavoidable reasons.

18. The Union Government has issued order setting up the 'Niti Forum for North-East to identify various constraints on the way of accelerated, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the North East Region of the country and to recommend suitable interventions for addressing identified constraints. It will also review the development status in the NER. The forum will be co-chaired by the Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog and Minister of State (I/C), Ministry of Development of Northeastern Region (DoNER).
19. The government recently interacted with the stakeholders including Farmer Producer Organisations and farmers, to gather input on their concerns and suggestions thereof on the modalities of Operation Greens.

Operation Green (OG) wants to replicate the success story of Operation Flood, in fruits and vegetables, starting with three basic vegetables—tomatoes, onions and potatoes (TOP). The main objective of OG is to reduce price volatility in these commodities, and thereby helping farmers augment incomes on a sustainable basis, as also provide these basic vegetables to consumers at affordable prices.

20. In a bid to engage more farmers on the **electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM)** platform, the government has unveiled mobile payment facility BHIM, and other features in regional languages as well.
21. N Gopalaswami committee has been constituted to select 20 institutes of higher education in India that will be developed into "world-class" institutes. In a few months, 10 each (from public and private category) institutions will be accorded the eminence status with a mandate, and supported, to achieve the world-class status over a period of 10 years.
22. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the methodology for auction of coal mines or blocks for commercial coal mining. As per the new methodology, there will be no end use restriction or price restriction for the coal that is mined from these blocks. The blocks will be awarded through a forward

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auction. The amount accrued through the bids will be in addition to the royalty that the States get. All the revenue from the sale of these blocks will go into coffers of the States where they are located.

- 23.** Mass nesting of olive ridleys begins in Rushikulya rookery coast in Ganjam district of Odisha.

Also known as the Pacific ridley sea turtle, Olive turtles are a medium-sized species of sea turtle found in warm and tropical waters, primarily in the Pacific and Indian Oceans. The olive ridley is classified as Vulnerable according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), and is listed in Appendix I of CITES.

- 24.** The first sale of electoral bonds will start from March 1 for a period of 10 days at four main branches of State Bank of India in Chennai, Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi. The bonds will be issued in multiples of 1,000, 10,000, 1 lakh, 10 lakh and 1 crore and will be available at specified branches of State Bank of India. They can be bought by the donor with a KYC-compliant account. Donors can donate the bonds to their party of choice which can then be cashed in via the party's verified account within 15 days.
- 25.** The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an expert committee under the chairmanship of Y H Malegam to look into the entire gamut of issues relating to classification of bad loans, rising incidents of frauds and effectiveness of audits.
- 26.** The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet has approved 'one district, one product' scheme to promote products indigenous to every district.

It is based on a Japanese business development concept, which gained prominence in 1979. It is aimed at promoting a competitive and staple product from a specific area to push sales and improve the standard of living of the local population. Over time, it has been replicated in other Asian countries as well.

- 27.** The annual corruption index of Transparency International for the year 2017 has been released. India has been ranked 81st.

The index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption. The index uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.

India maintained its score at 40 on a 100-point scale where anything below 30 is considered seriously corrupt, its ranking changed from 79th last year partly because Vanuatu, one of the countries added to the rankings this year, was rated higher and partly because others improved.

The report characterised India as “among the worst regional offenders” in the Asia Pacific region on grounds of journalists, activists, opposition leaders and even staff of law enforcement or watchdog agencies being threatened or even murdered. In this, it was clubbed with the Philippines and Maldives.

NZRANKED 'CLEANEST'

TOP 5*

Rank	Country	2017 score	2016 score
1	N Zealand	89	90
2	Denmark	88	90
3	Finland	85	89
3	Norway	85	85
3	Switzerland	85	86

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175	Sudan	16	14
175	Yemen	16	14
177	Afghanistan	15	15
178	Syria	14	13
179	S Sudan	12	11
180	Somalia	9	10

INDIA & NEIGHBOURS

26	Bhutan	67	65
77	China	41	40
81	India	40	40
91	Sri Lanka	38	36
117	Pakistan	32	32
122	Nepal	31	29
130	Myanmar	30	28
143	Bangladesh	28	26

*Others ranked higher than 10:
Singapore, Sweden (both 6), Canada,
Luxembourg, Netherlands, UK (all 8)

- 28.** Indian scientists have developed a super critical carbon di oxide Brayton test loop facility that would help generate clean energy from future power plants including solar thermal. This next generation technology loop was developed indigenously by Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

The facility is part of the Indo-US consortium — Solar Energy Research Institute for India and the United States (SERIUS).

The term “supercritical” describes the state of carbon dioxide above its critical temperature of 31°C and critical pressure of 73 atmospheres making it twice as dense as steam.

Advantages of this process is that efficiency of energy conversion could be significantly increased by as much as 50% or more. Further, Smaller turbines and power blocks can make the power plant cheaper. Moreover, they have the potential to replace steam based nuclear and thermal power plants, thus reducing the carbon foot print significantly.

- 29.** Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India recently ceremonially broke ground on the Afghan section for the multi-billion dollar gas pipeline known as The Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India Natural Gas Pipeline (TAPI) Project.

Developed by the Asian Development Bank, the TAPI pipeline will have a

capacity to carry 90 million standard cubic metres a day (mscmd) gas for a 30-year period and be operational in 2018.

- 30.** India has invited Saudi participation in Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) Programme.

To ensure energy security, the Government of India had decided to set up 5 million metric tons (MMT) of strategic crude oil storages at three locations namely, Visakhapatnam, Mangalore and Padur (near Udupi).

In the 2017-18 budget, it was announced that two more such caverns will be set up Chandikhole in Jajpur district of Odisha and Bikaner in Rajasthan as part of the second phase.

The construction of the Strategic Crude Oil Storage facilities is being managed by Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL), a Special Purpose Vehicle, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB) under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.

- 31.** The Ministry of Culture is organising the the Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav at Gwalior under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat matrix.

- 32.** DRDO has successfully completed the test flight of its Rustom 2 drone at the Aeronautical Test Range.

Rustom 2 is part of the Rustom line of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) that includes Rustom-I, Rustom-H and Rustom-C.

The objective of this drone is to carry out surveillance for the armed forces with an endurance of 24 hours. The drone was developed for use by all three services of the Indian armed forces, primarily for intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) operations. Rustom 2 can fly missions on manual as well as autonomous modes.

- 33.** UIDAI has introduced a blue coloured 'Baal Aadhaar' card for children below the age of 5 years. Blue coloured Aadhaar data does not include biometric information like fingerprints and iris scan. Once the child crosses the age of five, biometrics should be updated.