



Brain Tree

Current Events

1st March – 15th March, 2018

1. The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal of the Department of Commerce to give focused attention to 12 identified Champion Services Sectors for promoting their development, and realizing their potential. The Sectors are Information Technology & Information Technology enabled Services (IT & ITeS), Tourism and Hospitality Services, Medical Value Travel, Transport and Logistics Services, Accounting and Finance Services, Audio Visual Services, Legal Services, Communication Services, Construction and Related Engineering Services, Environmental Services, Financial Services and Education Services.
2. The first **Mega Food Park** in the state of **Maharashtra**, **M/s Satara Mega Food Park Pvt. Ltd.** has been inaugurated at Village Degaon, District Satara. This is the 10th Mega Food Park being operationalized in the country and the 8th operationalized during the tenure of present government.

The objective of the Mega Food Park Scheme is to give a major boost to the food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage at each stage of the supply chain with particular focus on perishables, **Ministry of Food Processing Industries** is implementing Mega Food Park Scheme in the country. It is implemented by a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV).

MFPS is expected to create high quality processing infrastructure, reduction in wastage, capacity building of producers and processors and creation of an efficient supply chain along with significant direct and indirect employment generation.

3. **INDIAsize**, a National Sizing Survey to be conducted by the **National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT)**, New Delhi, under the Ministry of Textiles, Govt of India, is a scientific exercise where anthropometric data will be collected from a sample population in the age group 15 to 65 years to create a database of measurements that will result in a standardized size chart which is representative of the Indian population and can be adopted by the apparel industry.
4. The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for establishment of **National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA)**.

Training Tomorrow's Administrators

1 / 11

TODAY

National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) is a body proposed in Companies Act 2013 for the establishment and enforcement of accounting and auditing standards and oversight of the work of auditors.

ould be an overarching watchdog for the auditing profession and once set up, the current powers of the ICAI to act against erring chartered accountants will be vested with the new regulator.

5. Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) Partnership has found that only 13% of tiger conservation areas meet global standards.

Officially launched in 2013, CA|TS is an important part of Tx2, the global goal to double wild tiger numbers by the year 2022. It was developed by WWF and partners, the Global Tiger Forum (GTF). Of the 13 tiger range countries Nepal, India, Bangladesh and Russia have registered and rolled out CA|TS, whilst discussion is ongoing with Bhutan, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia and China.

6. The Kerala State Commission for the Protection of Child Rights has registered a suo motu case in connection with the Kuthiyottam ritual.

The Kuthiyottam ritual is usually performed every year during the Pongala festival at the Attukal Bhagavathy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.

Nearly 1,000 young boys undertake a seven-day penance before Pongala day. These boys are said to represent the wounded soldiers of the goddess. The boys have to observe strict discipline and stay inside the temple for seven days. The rigours include sleeping on the floor, strict diet restrictions, and bathing three times a day. They also have to prostrate 1,008 times before the deity. The ritual also reportedly involves piercing the child's side with a small hook and knotting a thread through it to symbolise their bond with the Goddess.

7. "Bomb Cyclone" slams North-East United States

The term is used by meteorologists to indicate a mid-latitude cyclone that intensifies rapidly. A bomb cyclone happens when atmospheric pressure in the middle of the storm drops at least 24 millibars over 24 hours, quickly increasing in intensity. The lower the pressure, the stronger the storm.

Hurricanes, cyclones and typhoons are all tropical storms. They are all the same thing but are given different names depending on where they appear. When they reach populated areas they usually bring very strong wind and rain which can cause a lot of damage. Hurricanes are tropical storms that form over the North Atlantic Ocean and Northeast Pacific. Cyclones are formed over the

South Pacific and Indian Ocean. Typhoons are formed over the Northwest Pacific Ocean.

8. Scientists have unveiled a revised classification for diabetes. There are five distinct types of diabetes that can occur in adulthood, rather than the two currently recognised. They are named Cluster 1, Cluster 2, Cluster 3, Cluster 4, Cluster 5

Diabetes, often referred to by doctors as diabetes mellitus, describes a group of metabolic diseases in which the person has high blood glucose (blood sugar), either because insulin production is inadequate, or because the body's cells do not respond properly to insulin, or both.

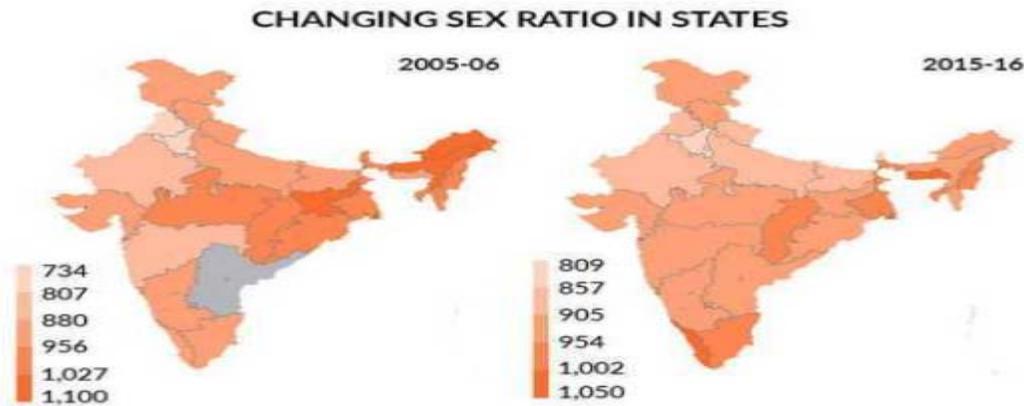
9. The 'Global Status Report 2017: Towards a zero-emission, efficient, and resilient buildings and construction sector,' published by the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, has listed the **Energy Management Centre (EMC)**, an autonomous institution under the Kerala government campus, as one of the recent achievements in the deployment of key technologies for energy-efficiency in buildings.

Built with assistance from the Global Environment Fund, the EMC campus is the only LEED Gold certified building in the government sector in Kerala.

EMC is the only one from India to figure in the list, along with five other projects worldwide. The other five projects recognised by the UNEP include the Sierra Crest development in Fontana, California, the Association of Nubian Vaults in Sub-Saharan Africa, a construction and demolition waste recycling project in Paris, the Palm Tree eco-development project in Hanoi, Vietnam, and the Higashi-Matsushima Smart ecotown in northern Japan.

10. India, Bangladesh and Russia have signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the construction of the Rooppur nuclear power plant in Bangladesh.
11. Scientists have announced the discovery of a previously unknown "supercolony" of more than 1,500,000 Adélie Penguins in the Danger Islands, a chain of remote, rocky islands off of the Antarctic Peninsula's northern tip.
12. The Karnataka government recently inaugurated the world's largest solar park, Shakti Sthala. It is located in Tumkur district, about 180km from Bengaluru. The park ties in with the centre's scheme to generate 100 gigawatts (GW) of solar power by 2020. It has a capacity of 2,000 MW.

13. The government has launched “Namaste Shalom”, a magazine devoted to India-Israel relations. The magazine aims to strengthen India-Israel relations and provide a platform for exchanging views between Indians and Jews the world over.
14. A recent report from the NITI Aayog said sex ratio at birth (SRB) nationwide had dropped from 906 in 2012-2014 to 900 in 2013-2015. In all, 17 of 21 large Indian States saw a drop in the SRB. There are concerns that skewed sex ratios lead to more violence against both men and women, as well as human-trafficking.
15. Researchers have developed silver copper telluride (AgCuTe), a novel compound



that exhibits poor thermal conductivity in the 25-425 degree C range but shows good electrical conductivity. The compound shows promise as a thermoelectric material for converting waste heat into electricity.

Potential applications of the thermoelectric technology are in automobile industry, chemical, thermal and steel power plants where large quantities of heat are wasted.

16. Andhra Pradesh government has asked the Centre to expedite resolution to accord the state special category status.

Andhra Pradesh has been demanding a **Special Category State (SCS)** status from Centre ever since it was decided to carve out Telangana along with capital city Hyderabad. Following the bifurcation of A.P., Andhra lost a large volume of its revenue due to Hyderabad remaining the capital of Telangana.

Special Category Status:

Constitution does not include any provision for categorisation of any State in India as a Special Category Status (SCS) State. But, recognising that some regions in the country were historically disadvantaged in contrast to others, Central plan assistance to SCS States has been granted in the past by the erstwhile Planning Commission body, **National Development Council (NDC)**. The

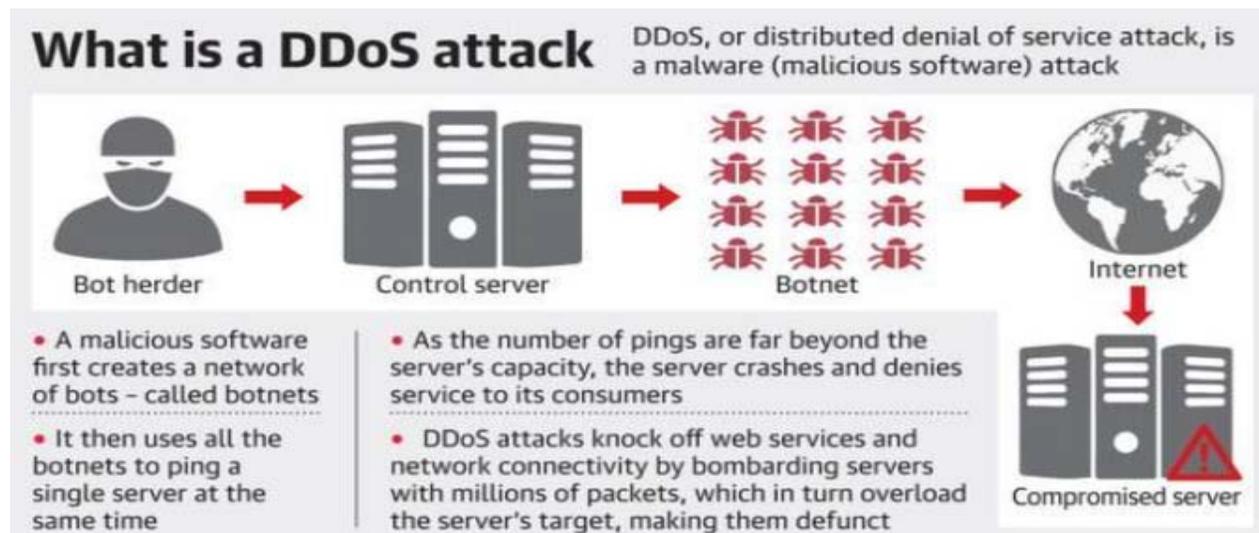
NDC granted this status based features of the States such as hilly and difficult terrain, low population density or the presence of sizeable tribal population, strategic location along international borders, economic and infrastructural backwardness and non-viable nature of State finances.

Following the constitution of the NITI Aayog (after the dissolution of the Planning Commission) and the recommendations of the **Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC)**, Central plan assistance to SCS States has been subsumed in an increased devolution of the divisible pool to all States (from 32% in the 13th FC recommendations to 42%) and no longer appear in plan expenditure.

17. Haryana government has announced that a Cooperative Election Authority would be set up in the State for supervising the election process in cooperative bodies.

The Constitution 97th Amendment Act 2011 relating to the co-operatives is aimed to encourage economic activities of cooperatives which in turn help progress of rural India. It is expected to not only ensure autonomous and democratic functioning of cooperatives, but also the accountability of the management to the members and other stakeholders.

18. India's first helitaxi launched in Bengaluru.
19. Saposhi is a new malware detected by cybersecurity agencies. It is capable of taking over electronic devices and turning them into 'bots', which can then be used for any purpose, including a Distributed Denial of Service attack which, with enough firepower, can cripple entire industries.



20. The Union environment ministry has asked the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** to stop imports of genetically modified (GM) soybean for food or feed without the approval of the regulator GECA.

GM soybean is one of the most widely planted genetically modified plants in the world today. The GM soybean, otherwise called as the Roundup Ready (RR) soybean, was developed by the biotech giant Monsanto and made it commercially available to farmers in 1996.

GM Soybean was developed by introducing a copy of a gene from the *Agrobacterium* sp. strain CP4. Conventional soybean has a similar gene in its DNA but is sensitive to glyphosate, the active ingredient of the herbicide Roundup. With the insertion of the CP4 version of the gene, the GM soybean was able to develop resistance to the Roundup herbicide.

Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee(GEAC):

GEAC is the apex body constituted in the Ministry of Environment and Forests, under the Environment Protection Act, 1986. The GEAC is responsible for approval of proposals relating to release of genetically engineered organisms and products into the environment including experimental field trials (Biosafety Research Level trial-I and II known as BRL-I and BRL-II).

21. The Central Government has sanctioned a sum of Rs. 1000 crore for the phase two of the Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT) India programme.

The initiative, 'IMPRINT India', is a pan-IIT and IISc joint collaboration to develop a blueprint for research of immediate relevance to society requiring innovation, direct scientific research into identified areas, ensure higher funding support for research into these areas and measure outcomes of the research efforts with reference to the impact on the standard of living in rural/urban areas.

22. India has got the go-ahead to join the **European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)**. Shareholders of EBRD have given their consent in this regard. India will become EBRD's 69th member.

The EBRD is an international financial institution that supports projects in over 30 countries, from eastern Europe to central Asia and the southern and eastern Mediterranean. Investing primarily in private sector clients whose needs cannot be fully met by the market, the EBRD promotes entrepreneurship and fosters transition towards open and democratic market economies. The EBRD is owned

by 65 countries and two intergovernmental institutions: the European Union and the European Investment Bank (EIB).

23. Rare mineral discovered in plants for first time. the mineral vaterite, a form (polymorph) of calcium carbonate(CaCO_3) , is a dominant component of the protective silvery-white crust that forms on the leaves of a number of alpine plants.

Naturally occurring vaterite is rarely found on Earth. This is the first time that the rare and unstable mineral has been found in such a large quantity and the first time it has been found to be associated with plants. Vaterite is not very stable in the Earth's humid atmosphere as it often reverts to more common forms of calcium carbonate, such as calcite.

Vaterite has special properties that make it a potentially superior carrier for medications due to its high loading capacity, high uptake by cells and its solubility properties that enable it to deliver a sustained and targeted release of therapeutic medicines to patients.

24. International Women's Day was celebrated on March 8 across the world. It is an annual marker that aims to bring attention to women's accomplishments and obstacles. The theme for 2018 is '**Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives**'. The theme aims to encourage women to raise voice for their rights and promote growing global movement to support gender parity.
25. The government has launched the #YesIBleed menstrual hygiene campaign. "#Yes I Bleed" aims to create a holistic approach to the issue of menstruation, which is an experience that transcends culture, class, and caste. The campaign has been initiated formally across all multi-media platforms, including Facebook and YouTube to spread awareness about the issue.
26. The government has launched 'Suvidha', the 100% Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin, under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).

The affordable sanitary napkin will be available for Rs. 2.50 per pad at over 3200 Janaushadhi Kendras across India. It would ensure 'Swachhta, Swasthya and Suvidha' for the underprivileged Women of India. This is a step taken by the Department of Pharmaceuticals.

27. Swachh Shakti 2018 was celebrated in Lucknow with 15000 women Swachh Bharat champions resolving to usher in clean India on International Women's Day. The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, in association with the Government of Uttar Pradesh had organized the event

Training Tomorrow's Administrators

7 / 11

TODAY

- 28.** NITI Aayog has launched the **Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)**, on the occasion of International Women’s Day. The initiative is aimed at building an ecosystem for women across India to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations, scale-up innovative initiatives and chalk-out sustainable, long-term strategies for their businesses.
- 29.** The government has expanded the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme from 161 districts to all the 640 districts in India.

Initial focus of BBBP had been on the districts which were either below national average or were the worse in their own states in terms of absolute values of CSR. However, looking at the magnitude and criticality of the problem and its spread across the country, it was felt that no district can be left out of BBBP ambit to make a real dent on overall child sex ratio.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao:

It was launched in January, 2015. The Scheme is targeted at improving the Child Sex Ratio through multi sectoral interventions including prevention of gender biased sex selection and promoting girls’ education and her holistic empowerment. It is a tri-ministerial effort of Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource Development.

- 30.** The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has launched Udyam Sakhi, a portal for women entrepreneurs of India.
- 31.** An international team of physicists have successfully created a “giant atom” and filled it with ordinary atoms, creating a new state of matter termed “Rydberg polarons”. These atoms are held together by a weak bond and is created at very cold temperatures.

It uses ideas from two different fields: Bose Einstein Condensation and Rydberg atoms

A BEC (Bose Einstein Condensate) is a liquid-like state of matter that occurs at very low temperatures. A BEC can be perturbed to create excitations which are akin to ripples on a lake. Here, researchers have used a BEC of strontium atoms.

A ‘Rydberg atom’ is an atom in which an electron has been kicked out to a very large orbit.

- 32.** The government has launched the National E-Mobility Programme. The Programme aims to provide an impetus to the entire e-mobility ecosystem including vehicle manufacturers, charging infrastructure companies, fleet operators, service providers, etc. The Programme will be implemented by Energy

Training Tomorrow’s Administrators

Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) which will aggregate demand by procuring electric vehicles in bulk to get economies of scale.

- 33.** Balkrishna Doshi is the newest winner of the Pritzker Architecture Prize, known as the Nobel for architects.
- 34.** For the first time, scientists have found Earth's fourth most abundant mineral—calcium silicate perovskite—at Earth's surface. It was found less than one kilometer beneath Earth's crust, at South Africa's famous Cullinan Mine

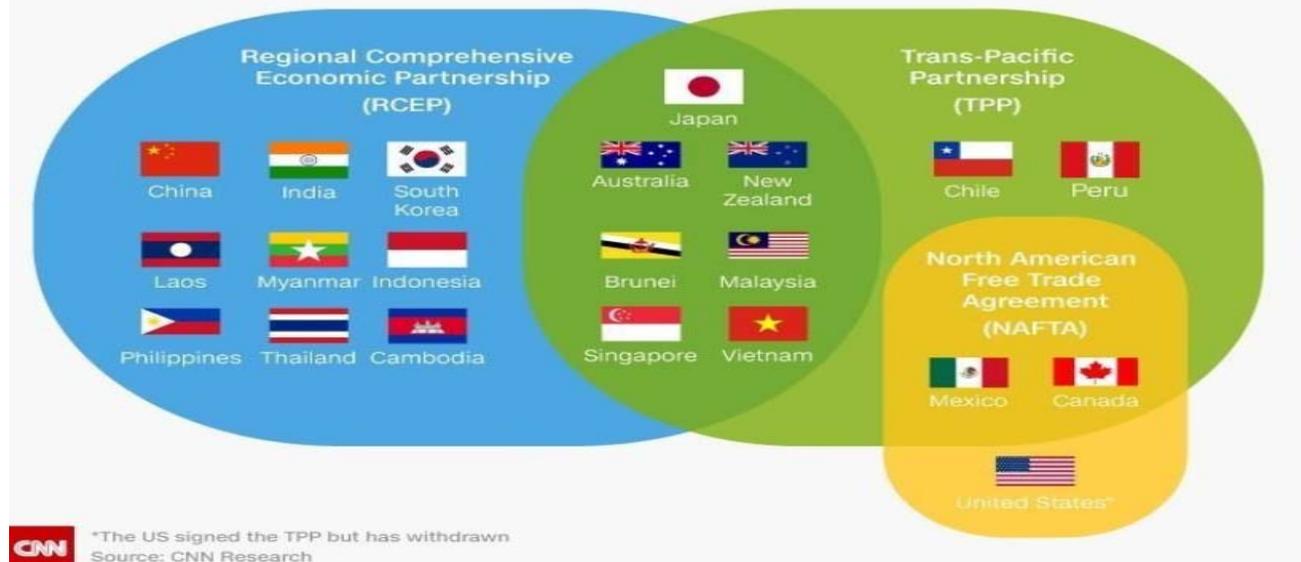
Usually, the mineral is found deep inside Earth's mantle, at 700 kilometers. The only possible way of preserving this mineral at the Earth's surface is when it's trapped in an unyielding container like a diamond.

Silicate perovskite may form up to 93% of the lower mantle, and the magnesium iron form is considered to be the most abundant mineral in Planet Earth, making up 38% of its volume. Under the very high pressures of the lowermost mantle, below about 2,700 km, the silicate perovskites are replaced by post-perovskite.

- 35.** Passive Euthanasia has been legalized by Supreme Court. The court has laid down a set of guidelines for "living will", where, an adult in his conscious mind, is permitted to refuse medical treatment or voluntarily decide not to take medical treatment to embrace death in a natural way.

Passive Euthanasia: When doctors don't provide, or remove patients from, life sustaining treatment. It includes acts such as disconnecting life-support machines, feeding tubes, not carrying out life-saving operations, not providing life-extending drugs... In such a case non-treatment is not seen as cause of death and patient is understood to have died because of underlying condition.

Who's involved?



36. Ministers from 11 countries gathered in Santiago, the capital of Chile, to sign the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership, or CPTPP.
37. The Union home ministry has sanctioned the launch of the **National Academy of Coastal Policing (NACP)** from a campus of Gujarat's Fisheries Research Centre located in coastal Okha in the newly created Devbhoomi Dwarka district. It will be the country's first national academy to train police forces in effectively safeguarding the Indian shoreline. The first-of-its-kind institution of the country will be created and run by a multi-agency team of paramilitary and defence forces.
38. A reciprocal logistics support deal has been signed between the respective armed forces of India and France. The deal will facilitate the French and Indian armed forces to receive logistical support, supplies and services from each other during authorised port visits, joint exercises, joint training, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts. The deal is similar to the logistical support pact with the US.
39. There were reports that Earth will be hit by a massive magnetic storm on March 18. However, **National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)** have found that there was no basis for recent reports.

A geomagnetic storm is a temporary disturbance of the Earth's magnetosphere caused by a solar wind shock wave and/or cloud of magnetic field that interacts with the Earth's magnetic field. Effects from the geomagnetic storm can range from the appearance of auroras, the northern and southern lights, to disruptions in communications systems due to high radiation.

- 40.** The Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation have issued a notification constituting the Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal to resolve conflict is between the states of Chhattisgarh and Odisha. The Tribunal will have its headquarters at Delhi.
- 41.** Scientists have found the first ever samples of naturally occurring ice-VII on Earth. The samples were found in a diamond.

Commonly used is called as ice-I. When water freezes, the oxygen atoms move into a hexagonal arrangement. Compressing ice can change the shape of the crystals, turning ice-I into ice-II (rhombus), ice-III (tetragonal), and so on.

Ice-VII, with its cubic crystals, is unique. It remains stable even as pressure increases dramatically. It's 1.5 times more dense than ice-I. There's (almost) nowhere on Earth for ice-VII to form, because it requires both low temperatures (freezing temperature is not necessary) and high pressure exceeding 30,000 atmospheres (3 gigapascals). The only place to reach that pressure is deep in the Earth's mantle, but it's too hot for ice to form there.

Diamonds often pick up molecules during their formation deep in the Earth. This can affect the quality or color of the diamond, but sometimes the inclusion is just water. One interesting property of diamonds is the internal structures don't relax when they leave the high-pressure mantle. So, the water inside a diamond remains compressed, even though it's technically in a liquid state

- 42.** New Zealand has joined the United Nations-led CleanSeas campaign to rid oceans of plastic. More than 40 other countries have already signed up.

The Clean Seas campaign was launched by the UN Environment in February 2017. The campaign aims to engage governments, the general public, civil society and the private sector in the fight against marine plastic by reducing the use of non-recoverable and single-use plastics.

Scientists estimate that there are over 150 million tones of plastics in the ocean today. If nothing changes then plastic in oceans will weigh more than all the fish that live in them by 2050.