

Brain Tree

Current Events



15 March, 2018 - 31 March, 2018

1. The India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) project gets Environmental clearance from **Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF)**, to set up the lab in Bodi West hills.

India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO)

It is a multi-institutional effort aimed at building a world-class underground laboratory with a rock cover of approx.1200 m for non-accelerator based high energy and nuclear physics research in India. The initial goal of INO is to study neutrinos.

It is a mega-science project under the XII five-year plan of Government of India with an investment of about 1350 crores, jointly funded by the **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** and the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**.

An underground laboratory and associated surface facilities will be Constructed at Pottipuram in Bodi West hills of Theni District of Tamil Nadu.

Iron Calorimeter (ICAL) detector will be Constructed for studying neutrinos.

National Centre for High Energy Physics will be set up at Madurai,

Neutrinos first proposed by Swiss scientist Wolfgang Pauli in 1930, are the second most widely occurring particle in the universe, only second to photons. Neutrinos are notoriously difficult to detect in a laboratory because of their extremely weak interaction with matter. The background from cosmic rays and natural radioactivity make it almost impossible to detect them on the surface of the Earth. This is the reason most neutrino observatories are located deep inside the Earth's surface. The overburden provided by the Earth matter is transparent to neutrinos while most background from cosmic rays is substantially reduced depending on the depth at which the detector is located.

2. The government has presented the Certificates of Appreciation to 34 Ministries/departments for implementation of e-office programme

E-Office is one of the Mission Mode Projects under Digital India Programme. It enables core operations of the Government at all levels to be performed in a virtual 'paper-less' environment. The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DAR&PG) is the nodal Department for implementation of e-Office project. **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** is the technical partner in this project.

3. The Union Health Ministry has announced the launch of LaQshya, an initiative to improve the quality of care in the labour rooms, operation theatres and other mother and child areas in public health facilities across the country.
4. World Happiness Report for the year 2018 has been released. The report is a measure of happiness published by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network.

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- The main focus of this year's report is on migration within and between countries.
 - Top ten in order of overall happiness - Finland, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, and Australia.
 - India ranked 133rd, down from a rank of 122 last year, which was a drop from 118 the preceding year. Pakistan - 75th position, (up five spots from last year) Nepal - 101, Bhutan - 97, Bangladesh - 115, Sri Lanka - 116, China - 86th spot.
5. World Economic Forum (WEF) has released the energy transition index as part of the report titled Fostering Effective Energy Transition. The index ranks 114 countries on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability.
- It was topped by Sweden, followed by Norway(2nd) Switzerland (3rd).
 - India has been ranked at 78th. Brazil stood at the 38th place, Russia at 70th and China at 76th place.
6. Antibiotic resistance: A study has found that, Escherichia coli, a pathogen seen in over 90% of Egyptian vultures that migrate to northwest India to spend the winter, tend to show significant difference in resistance to antibiotics within a single season. This is due to the environment that the vultures were exposed to — carcasses, garbage, and domestic animals.

Escherichia coli (E. coli) is a bacteria that is an important aspect of human intestinal tract health. Most E.coli are harmless bacteria and assist in everyday health. However the pathogenic E.coli cause illnesses such as diarrhea. Sometimes may affect things outside the intestinal functions. the E. coli that causes diarrhea is transferred through food, water, or contact with animals/people who already have E.coli. The infection usually occurs if you

swallow miniscule amounts of human or animal faeces (this amount is often invisible to the naked eye). These tiny traces of faeces usually comes from contaminated food such as, raw produce, raw milk, soft cheese, unpasteurized apple cider, or even dealing with a dirty diaper or when one does not thoroughly washes ones hands when preparing food.

antibiotic resistance

Antibiotics are medicine used to treat infections caused by bacteria. Antibiotic Resistance refers to resistance developed by bacteria against antibiotics or the ability of bacteria to mutate or change so as to resist the effects of antibiotics. The more we use them, and the more we abuse them, the less effective they become.

CAUSES OF ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

Antibiotic resistance happens when bacteria change and become resistant to the antibiotics used to treat the infections they cause.

- Over-prescribing of antibiotics
- Patients not finishing their treatment
- Over-use of antibiotics in livestock and fish farming
- Poor infection control in hospitals and clinics
- Lack of hygiene and poor sanitation
- Lack of new antibiotics being developed

www.who.int/drugresistance
#AntibioticResistance

World Health Organization

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7. The YSR Congress has proposed a no-confidence motion against the NDA government on the issue of granting special category status to Andhra Pradesh

A no-confidence motion is a parliamentary motion which is moved in the Lok Sabha against the entire council of ministers, stating that they are no longer deemed fit to hold positions of responsibility due to their inadequacy in some respect or their failure to carry out their obligations. No prior reason needs to be stated for its adoption in the Lok Sabha.

Rule 198 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha lays down the procedure for moving a Motion of No-Confidence in the Council of Ministers. **There is no mention of a no-confidence motion in the constitution.**

At least 50 MPs would need to stand up and support the move. If there are 50 MPs in favour, the motion is admitted and the speaker allots a date for discussion on the motion. The prime minister or ministers reply to the charges made. The mover has the right to reply. After the debate, the speaker puts question to the house and ascertains the decision of the house by voice vote or a division.

The government is expected to resign if it loses a trust vote.

8. Preparing itself to deal with a potential asteroid impact, NASA has drawn up plans to build a huge nuclear spacecraft, named Hammer spacecraft, that is capable of shunting or blowing up dangerous space rocks and safeguarding life on Earth. Hammer, short for Hypervelocity Asteroid Mitigation Mission for Emergency Response, is an eight tonne spaceship which could deflect a giant space rock, if it happens to hit Earth.
9. The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES), a UN-registered agency will collaborate with Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) to strengthen its quality, prediction ability and response capacity for lightening, heat wave, flood, draught and Tsunami.

RIMES are an inter-governmental body registered under the United Nations. It is owned and managed by 45 collaborating countries in Asia Pacific and Africa Region. The programme unit of the agency is located in Thailand. RIMES evolved from the efforts of countries in Africa and Asia, in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, to establish a regional early warning system within a multi-hazard framework for the generation and communication of early warning information, and capacity building for preparedness and response to trans-boundary hazards.

At present, India is chairing RIMES.

10. Maharashtra Bans Plastic: The ban would cover the production, use, storage, sale, distribution, import and transportation of plastic. The ban covers disposable plastic cups, plates, spoons and flex, but excludes garbage bin liners and PET bottles.
- **Exemptions:** Plastic used to cover medicines, forest and horticulture products, solid waste, tree saplings and the use of plastic in special economic zones for export purposes would be exempt from the ban. Similarly, plastic covers and wrappers used for manufactured and processed products would also be exempt.

- **Penalty:** both manufacturers and users will be penalized. The punishment is a fine ranging from Rs 5,000 to Rs 25,000 and a jail term of three months.
- Implementation will be the responsibility of local bodies and the state pollution control board (MPCB)

11. Commemorative coins in denominations of 10 and 1000 have been released on Lord Jagannath's Nabakalebar festival.

The Nabakalebara is an ancient ritual associated with most of the Jagannath Temples when the Idols of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra and Sudarshan are replaced by a new set of Idols, celebrated at the Jagannath Temple in Puri, Orissa.

A year with an extra Ashadha masa/month as per Hindu Calendar is considered auspicious for conducting the ceremony. This usually occurs every twelve to nineteen years. The most recent ceremony was in 2015, following the 1996 ceremony.

12. The Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship(FINE) was recently inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind. It is being organised by Rashtrapati Bhavan in association with the Department of Science and Technology and the National Innovation Foundation-India.

FINE is a celebration of country's Innovation potential, particularly those ideas which stem from grassroots level including the citizen at the last mile and also a reflection of power of children's creativity. It is an initiative to recognise, respect, showcase, reward innovations and to foster a supportive ecosystem for innovators.

13. India is taking tentative steps towards restarting research into Cold fusion, some 25 years after it was shut down at the **Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC)**.

Cold fusion — or its successor technologies such as **Low Energy Nuclear Reaction (LENR)** — remains a dead-end and a false hope for many scientists across the world. Cold fusion seeks to produce nuclear energy without harmful radiation, complex equipment and the application of very high temperatures and pressures.

14. Jackfruit to be Kerala's state fruit. The state had also recently declared pearl spot, popularly known as 'karimeen', as its official fish.

15. A floating laboratory has been introduced to save the Loktak lake. Researchers in a custom motorboat monitor levels of pollution in the 300 sq km water body.

Loktak Lake is the largest freshwater lake in Northeast India, and is famous for the phumdis (heterogeneous mass of vegetation, soil, and organic matter at various stages of decomposition) floating over it. It has first of its kind loktak floating elementary school. Located on this phumdi, Keibul Lamjao National Park is the only floating national park in the world. The park is the last natural refuge of the endangered Sangai (state animal).

16. Hindu New Year was welcomed in different parts of the country.

- Andhra Pradesh and Telangana: Ugadi.
- Karnataka: Yugadi /Ugadi.
- Maharashtra: Gudi Padwa.

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- Sindhis: Cheti Chand.
- Manipuris: Sajibu Cheiraoba.
- Hindus of Bali and Indonesia also celebrate their new year on the same day as Nephi.

17. 105th Indian Science Congress was recently held in Manipur. Theme: “Reaching the Unreached Through Science & Technology”. 7th Women Science Congress was also held as a part of the main event. The first Women Science Congress was held in 2012. 106th edition of the Indian Science Congress will be held next year in January in Bhopal. The theme: “Future India: Science & Technology”

Indian Science Congress Association

ISCA is a premier scientific organisation started in the year 1914 in Kolkata. It has a membership of more than 30,000 scientists. It owes its origin to the foresight and initiative of two British chemists, namely, Professor J. L. Simonsen and Professor P. S. MacMahon. It occurred to them that scientific research in India might be stimulated if an annual meeting of research workers somewhat on the lines of the British Association for the Advancement of Science could be arranged.

18. NITI Aayog has released comprehensive roadmaps and detailed timelines for its initiative ‘Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E)’.

SATH-E has been envisaged as a programme which aims to transform elementary and secondary school education across the selected states. SATH-E roadmap refers to a time-bound, goal-driven exercise that will reach its logical culmination by the end of the academic year 2020. to facilitate qualitative and quantitative transformation of learning outcomes.

Marrying technology with need-based, data-driven assessment and a ‘giving it what it takes’ approach – be it innovation, incubation, external third party funding and **Public Private Philanthropic Partnership (PPPP)** experimentation.

The SATH-E initiative is based on formal agreements with the States and will be funded through a cost-sharing mechanism between NITI Aayog and the participating states. The **Boston Consulting Group (BCG)** and **Piramal Foundation for Education Leadership (PFEL)** were chosen as knowledge partners for the project facilitating review, data collection and implementation.

19. The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has developed an android based mobile application called Tribal Diaries.
- It has been developed for internal monitoring and for connecting with officers/officials concerned with implementation of schemes / programmes for tribal development.
 - The application is for accredited users. This application provides an opportunity for visual feedback in terms of photographs, videos, uploading reports of official tours / inspections and sharing of best practices etc.
20. The Karnataka government has decided to declare Lingayats as a religious minority and include the Veerashaivas who follow Basavanna as a group within the community. The state

government will, now, recommend to the Centre that the community be granted religious minority status.

Karnataka State Minorities Commission had formed a seven-member committee, headed by retired high court Judge HN Nagamohan Das on the issue. The Nagamohan committee has recommended minority status for only the Lingayats and has kept Veershaivas out.

Lingayats are followers of 12th-century social reformer Basavanna and his vachana (verses) philosophy. Their beliefs, practices and faith are different. Veerashaivas worship Lord Shiva, the one mentioned in Hindu mythology. However, the Shiva that Basavanna referred to in his vachanas (verses) is not the Hindu god Shiva but the ishtalinga (formless God), which people of the community wear around their neck.

Veerashaivas are a sub-sect of Lingayats and ardent followers of Lord Shiva. They preceded Basavanna, the founder of Lingayatism. Veerashaivism has its roots in the Vedas and Agamas, and Veerashaivas do not worship any god other than Shiva; they can be found spread across Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

Basavanna was a 12th-century social reformer. Basavanna and his contemporary Sharanas launched a very strong spiritual, social and religious rebellion against Brahminical hegemony. Basavanna declared that “work is worship”. He gave women equal status in his movement through the vachanas (verses). In order to take the social movement closer to the people, Basavanna and all the other Sharanas voiced their concerns in simple Kannada vachanas so that even lay people could comprehend them.

21. The Indo-French joint naval exercise, “Varuna-18”, was conducted in the Arabian Sea off the Goa coast.
22. International Day of Forests is observed on March 21st every year. 2018 Theme: Forests and Sustainable Cities.
23. March 22, World Water Day is celebrated. 2018 marks the 25th anniversary of World Water Day. Theme: ‘Nature for Water’ and exploring nature-based solutions (NBS) to the water challenges that we are currently facing.
24. March 24, World Tuberculosis Day. commemorates the date in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced his discovery of Mycobacterium tuberculosis, the bacteria that causes TB. The theme of World TB Day 2018 – “Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free world”.

Tuberculosis (TB) is caused by bacteria, Mycobacterium tuberculosis, that most often affect the lungs. Tuberculosis is curable and preventable. TB spreads through air.

Ending the TB epidemic by 2030 is among the health targets of the Sustainable Development Goals

25. Earth Hour was observed on March 24 from 8:30 to 9:30 p.m.

Earth Hour is an annual event organized by the World Wildlife Fund that promotes conservation and sustainable energy. During this time, civilians are encouraged to switch off their lights for one hour to help reduce the effect of global warming and raise awareness for climate change and wildlife conservation.

On the occasion of Earth Hour, the World Wide Fund India has made a strong pitch for “Give Up to Give Back”, an initiative to inspire organisations, institutions and individuals to make the choice to curb some habits, practices and lifestyles that burden our lives and the environment.

26. The University Grants Commission has granted autonomy to sixty Higher Educational Institutions which have maintained high academic standards.
- These universities will remain within the ambit of UGC but will have the freedom to start new courses, off campus centers, skill development courses, research parks and any other new academic programs.
 - They will also have the freedom to hire foreign faculty, enroll foreign students, give incentive based emoluments to the faculty, enter into academic collaborations and run open distance learning programmes.
 - The eight autonomous collages, granted autonomy, will be free to set their own syllabus, hold examinations, carry out evaluation as well as declare results. In this case, only the degree will be awarded by the respective university.
27. India has joined Europe’s mega global arrangement of sharing data from Earth observation satellites, called Copernicus. Under this arrangement, the European Commission intends to provide India with free, full and open access to the data from the Copernicus Sentinel family of satellites using high bandwidth connections. Reciprocally the DoS will provide the Copernicus programme and its participating states with a free, full and open access to the data from ISRO’s earth observation satellites, including historical data sets.

Copernicus programme

It is the most ambitious Earth observation programme to date. It will provide accurate, timely and easily accessible information to improve the management of the environment, understand and mitigate the effects of climate change and ensure civil security. Copernicus is the new name for the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security programme, previously known as GMES.

This initiative is headed by the **European Commission (EC)** in partnership with the **European Space Agency (ESA)**.

28. The Union Cabinet has approved the launch of a new Centrally Sponsored **Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM)** having central sector component under Ayushman Bharat Mission anchored in the MoHFW. It will subsume the on-going centrally sponsored schemes -**Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)** and the **Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS)**.
- **Target:** The target beneficiaries of the proposed scheme will be more than 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on SECC data. Benefits of the scheme are portable across the country and a beneficiary covered under the scheme will be allowed to take cashless benefits from any public/private empaneled hospitals across the country.
 - **Role of state governments:** State Governments will be allowed to expand AB-NHPM both horizontally and vertically. States will be free to choose the modalities for

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implementation. They can implement through insurance company or directly through Trust/ Society or a mixed model.

- **Benefits of the scheme:** it will lead to increased access to quality health and medication. In addition, the unmet needs of the population which remained hidden due to lack of financial resources will be catered to. Also will lead to timely treatments, improvements in health outcomes, patient satisfaction, improvement in productivity and efficiency, job creation thus leading to improvement in quality of life.

29. The **African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)** has been signed by 44 African countries at a summit of the African Union in Kigali, Rwanda. If successful, it will be the biggest trade agreement since the formation of the World Trade Organization in 1995. Nigeria, Africa's largest economy and most populous country, and a host of others did not sign the agreement.
30. Foundation Stone for Redevelopment And Upgradation of Okhla Bird Sanctuary was recently laid. Okhla Bird Sanctuary belongs to the State of Uttar Pradesh. It has an area of 400 ha, out of which 120 ha falls within the National Capital Region of Delhi. It is one of the 467 Important Bird Areas (IBA) of the country and is home to a large number of resident, as well as migratory birds like grey-headed fish eagle, Baikal teal, Baer's pochard and Sarus crane.
31. First Indian Sign Language Dictionary of 3000 words has been launched. The dictionary has been developed by **Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre (ISLR&TC)** under **Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD)**, M/o Social Justice & Empowerment.
32. Supersonic cruise missile BrahMos was recently successfully flight-tested for the first time with an indigenous seeker. So far, the seeker, a critical technology in missiles, had come from Russia. The seeker technology determines the accuracy of a missile.
33. World's longest sandstone cave discovered in Meghalaya. At 24,583m the cave in Meghalaya is 6,000m longer than the current listed sandstone cave in the world, Cueva El Samán, (18,200m) in Venezuela.
34. Ministry of Culture is organizing the Madhavpur Mela in Madhavpur Ghed, District Porbandar in Gujarat under the banner of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat.
35. The Government of India has decided to nominate Professor J S Rajput, former Director NCERT, as India's representative to the Executive Board (EXB) of UNESCO. Professor J S Rajput is an eminent educationist with rich experience in various fields including UNESCO.
36. 'Sarmat', Russia's most advanced nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile, was flight-tested recently. The chief innovation of the Sarmat is its ability to carry a large number of guided warheads. The missile is believed to be able to fly 16,000 miles and is capable of flying over the South Pole to strike the U.S. NATO has named this missile as 'Satan 2'.