

Brain Tree

Current Events



1st to 15th April - 2018

1. GMR and ITC Ltd are currently bidding to adopt the Taj Mahal under the 'Adopt a Heritage' project.

The 'Adopt a Heritage Scheme' of Ministry of Tourism was launched on World Tourism Day, 27th September, 2017. It is a key initiative of Ministry of Tourism in close collaboration with Ministry of Culture and Archeological Survey of India (ASI), to develop the heritage sites / monuments and making them tourist-friendly to enhance the tourism potential and their cultural importance in a planned and phased manner. Successful bidders shall be called as Monument Mitras. They would have to look after the operations and maintenance, including amenities to tourists. This will form a part of their CSR activities.

2. A 'Kalamkari art museum' has been opened at Pedana in Andhra Pradesh. The museum traces the history of the art and displays the process of extraction of natural colours from various sources.

Kalamkari is an ancient style of hand painting done on cotton or silk fabric with a tamarind pen, using natural dyes. The word Kalamkari is derived from a Persian word where 'kalam' means pen and 'kari' refers to craftsmanship. There are two identifiable styles of Kalamkari art in India – Srikalahasti style and Machilipatnam style.

Machilipatnam style - motifs are essentially printed with hand-carved traditional blocks with intricate detailing painted by hand

Srikalahasti style of painting draws inspiration from the Hindu mythology describing scenes from the epics and folklore. This style holds a strong religious connect because of its origin in the temples.

3. Chinese Scientists were initially planning to push the Tiangong-1 satellite to Point Nemo, before they lost complete control over the space lab.

Point Nemo, or “ocean point of inaccessibility,” is a region in the South Pacific that is the loneliest place on the planet. It is used as a graveyard for controlled re-entries and a place where space junk can be dropped safely. It is named after the submarine captain in Jules Verne’s classic science fiction novel 20,000 Leagues Under The Sea. It is about 2,688 kilometers from the nearest land – Pitcairn Islands.



4. The exiled government of Tibet has launched a year-long “Thank you India” campaign to mark the 60th year of the arrival of the spiritual leader Dalai Lama to India.
5. The **Central Vigilance Commission (CVC)** is planning to use Aadhaar to track the wealth of bureaucrats. This will help the CVC check if the financial deals carried out by the bureaucrat are within his or her means.
6. Six monuments/historical sites in the North Eastern states have been identified tentatively for listing under World Heritage Site.
 - i. Apatani Cultural Landscape, Arunachal Pradesh.
 - ii. Iconic Saree Weaving Clusters of India.
 - iii. Moidams – the Mound – Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty, Assam.
 - iv. Namdapha National Park, Arunachal Pradesh.
 - v. River Island of Majuli in midstream of Brahmaputra River in Assam.
 - vi. Thembang Fortified Village, Arunachal Pradesh.
7. The **Advanced Supersonic Parachute Inflation Research Experiment (ASPIRE)** was successfully launched aboard a sounding rocket from NASA’s Wallops Flight Facility in the US. This special parachute will be used by NASA on its MARS rover mission 2020, to slow the aircraft down as it enters the Martian atmosphere.

8. New Delhi becomes first city to roll-out Euro VI fuel for both Petrol and Diesel, two years ahead of the rest of the country.

The major difference in standards between the existing BS-IV and the new BS-VI auto fuel norms is the presence of sulphur. The newly introduced fuel is estimated to reduce the amount of sulphur released by 80 per cent, from 50 parts per million to 10 ppm. As per the analysts, the emission of NO_x (nitrogen oxides) from diesel cars is also expected to reduce by nearly 70 per cent and 25 per cent from cars with petrol engines.

9. The Election Commission has told the Supreme Court that it supports the proposal to allow one candidate to contest from only one constituency in an election.

The Supreme Court had in December 2017 issued notices seeking replies from the Election Commission and the Centre on the issue of Section 33(7) of the RPA. At the time, the Supreme Court had said the practice of one candidate contesting multiple seats was a drain on the exchequer since it necessitated by polls.

Section 33(7) of the Representation of People's Act permits a candidate to contest any election (Parliamentary, State Assembly, Biennial Council, or bye-elections) from up to two constituencies. The provision was introduced in 1996 prior to which there was no bar on the number of constituencies from which a candidate could contest.

10. The third edition of The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) India Rankings have been announced. First in 2016.

The **National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)** outlines a methodology to rank institutions across the country. The parameters for ranking broadly cover "Teaching, Learning and Resources," "Research and Professional Practices," "Graduation Outcomes," "Outreach and Inclusivity," and "Perception".

- The Indian Institute of Science in Bengaluru and Delhi's Miranda House are India's best university and college this year.
- **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)** Madras was declared the best engineering college.
- **Indian Institute of Management (IIM)** Ahmedabad occupied the top position among management institutions this year also.

- 11.** The government has filed a petition seeking review of the Supreme Court order diluting the provisions of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, which protects marginalized communities against discrimination and atrocities.

On March 20, the Supreme Court banned automatic arrests and registration of criminal cases under the SC/ST Act, triggering widespread criticism and outcry from the dalit community. Dalit organisations and some political parties fear the dilution of the provisions of the Act might lead to increase in violence against Dalits.

Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was enacted on September 9, 1989. The rules for the Act were notified on March 31, 1995. The prime objective of the SC/ST Act is to deliver justice to marginalize through proactive efforts, giving them a life of dignity, self-esteem and a life without fear, violence or suppression from the dominant castes. The SC/ST Act lists 22 offences relating to various patterns or behaviors inflicting criminal offences and breaking the self-respect and esteem of the scheduled castes and tribes community. This includes denial of economic, democratic and social rights, discrimination, exploitation and abuse of the legal process.

- 12.** NASA's Hubble Space Telescope has discovered the farthest individual star ever seen — an enormous blue stellar body nicknamed Icarus located over halfway across the universe. The scientists took advantage of a phenomenon called "gravitational lensing" to spot the star. It involves the bending of light by massive galaxy clusters in the line of sight, which magnifies more distant celestial objects. This makes dim, faraway objects that otherwise would be undetectable, like an individual star, visible.
- 13.** The government is planning to add more benches to the National Company Law Tribunal, amid rising number of insolvency cases. Currently, there are 11 NCLT benches in different parts of the country, including two in the national capital.

National Company Law Tribunal is a quasi-judicial body that will govern the companies in India. It was established under the Companies Act, 2013 and is a successor body of the Company Law Board. NCLT has the same powers as assigned to the erstwhile Company Law Board (which are mostly related to dealing with oppression and mismanagement), Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR)(revival of sick companies) and powers related to winding up of companies (which was available only with the High Courts)

14. The Union Cabinet has given its approval to the Protection of Human Rights (Amendments) Bill, 2018. The amendment will make **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)** and **State Human Rights Commission (SHRC)** more compliant with the Paris Principle concerning autonomy. Salient Features of the Bill:
- It proposes to include “National Commission for Protection of Child Rights” as deemed Member of the Commission.
 - It proposes to add a woman Member in the composition of the Commission.
 - It proposes to enlarge the scope of eligibility and scope of selection of Chairperson for both NHRC and SHRC, along with term of office of both.
15. India has voiced opposition to the “weaponization” of outer space in the recently held **United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC)** session. India called for collective efforts to strengthen safety and security of the space-based assets.

United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) is a deliberative body and a subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly which is mandated to consider and make recommendations on various disarmament related issues. The Disarmament Commission was re-established at the first Special Session of the General Assembly devoted to Disarmament in 1978 to succeed an earlier Disarmament Commission, which ceased to convene after 1965.

16. Ministry of road, transport and highway (MORTH) in their affidavit submitted recently before the **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** in matter of Char Dham widening road in Uttarakhand stated that in all the total 53 projects/stretchers of Char Dham, none is above 100 km which is why no environmental clearance was obtained.

Background: A petition was filed which said that the entire project of 900 km was misleadingly fragmented into segments which are actually continuous stretches of five national highways to avoid environmental clearance. It stated that the criteria of Cumulative Impact Assessment and carrying capacity study must be followed for Himalayan terrain while considering any infrastructural projects. Stretches upto 100 km are exempted from environmental clearance under Environmental Clearance Notification.

17. 'Internet Security Threat Report' has been released by Symantec. Countries are ranked based on their vulnerability to eight parameters – malware, spam, phishing, bots, network attacks, web attacks, ransomware and cryptominers.
- The US was most vulnerable to attacks at 26.61% followed by China at 10.95%
 - India is the third-most vulnerable country in terms of cyber threat risks including malware, spam, ransomware and one of the most recent and difficult-to-detect ones – crypto miners. India continues to be second-most impacted by spam and bots and third-most impacted by network attacks and fourth-most impacted by ransomware
18. The annual targets set under POSHAN Abhiyan beginning 2017-18
- i. Prevent and reduce stunting in children (0-6years) by 6% at the rate of 2% per annum.
 - ii. Prevent and reduce under-nutrition (underweight prevalence) in children (0-6 years) by 6% at the rate of 2% per annum.
 - iii. Reduce the prevalence of anemia among young Children (6-59 months) by 9% at the rate of 3% per annum.
 - iv. Reduce the prevalence of anemia among Women and Adolescent Girls in the age group of 15-49 years by 9% at the rate of 3% per annum.
 - v. Reduce Low Birth Weight (LBW) by 6% at the rate of 2% per annum.

POSHAN Abhiyaan was launched on International Women's day (March 8) in 2018 to boost nutrition among children and women. The Abhiyaan targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight. The targets are to be achieved by 2022.

19. India is hosting the 16th **International Energy Forum (IEF)** Ministerial Meeting in New Delhi.

International Energy Forum (IEF) is an inter-governmental arrangement set up in 1991. It is based in Riyadh. It serves as a neutral facilitator of informal, open, informed and continuing global energy dialogue among its members comprising of energy producing and energy consuming states, including transit countries. Its membership accounts for 90% of global supply and demand for oil and gas. India has been the Permanent Member of the Executive Board since its set-up in 2002.

The biennial IEF Ministerial Meetings are the world's largest gathering of Energy Ministers who engage in informal dialogues, at both the political and technical levels, with the aim to improve policy and investment decisions, through increased knowledge and experience sharing.

20. UTTAM APP for Coal Quality Monitoring. Unlocking Transparency by Third Party Assessment of Mined Coal. The app was developed by The Ministry of Coal and Coal India Limited (CIL). App ensures accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in coal ecosystem. It provides a platform for monitoring of sampling and coal dispatches
21. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked banks to stop providing service to any entity dealing with virtual currencies, with immediate effect. It has also asked regulated entities that are already providing such services to exit the relationship within three months.

Why has this step been initiated?

Heavy use in grey and black markets. They also have the potential use for Illicit Trade and Criminal Activities such as terror funding. They also have the Potential for Tax Evasion. Risks in the form of volatility in valuation, lack of liquidity, security

22. The Reserve Bank has deferred the implementation of the Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS) by one year as many banks are not prepared to migrate to the new accounting system. The earlier deadline for banks to switch to the Ind AS was from April 1 2018.
23. **Chakravat:** Chakravat' meaning 'cyclone'. It is a multi-agency humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) exercise to review the response mechanism in the event of a cyclonic storm. Participation: the three Services, the Coast Guard, State administration, State Disaster Management Authority, National Disaster Response Force, Fisheries Department, Coastal Police, and members of the fishing community.
24. The Union government has banned imports of the hormone oxytocin to stop its misuse in the livestock industry, where activists say it causes hormonal imbalances and shortens the lives of mulch animals. The government has also asked customs officials to step up vigilance against those likely to try and smuggle oxytocin into India.

A panel of top drug experts had recommended an import ban in February. It

also recommended that sale be limited to registered government hospitals and clinics, a bar code system used on all forms of the drug to ensure tracking and prevent abuse.

Oxytocin has also been dubbed the hug hormone, cuddle chemical, moral molecule, and the bliss hormone due to its effects on behavior, including its role in love and in female reproductive biological functions in reproduction.

Oxytocin is a hormone that is made in the brain, in the hypothalamus. It is transported to, and secreted by, the pituitary gland, which is located at the base of the brain. It acts both as a hormone and as a brain neurotransmitter.

The release of oxytocin by the pituitary gland acts to regulate two female reproductive functions: Childbirth and Breast-feeding.

25. Walmiki and Malhar, two new languages discovered. The languages are categorised 'endangered' as the number of people speaking is small. These languages are spoken in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. Only a few people living in the forest and hilly areas speak these languages.

Walmiki is spoken in Koraput of Odisha and on the bordering districts of Andhra Pradesh. Walmiki is an isolate language i.e. it does not belong to a family of languages. The name of the language is also interesting and indicative because the speech community claims descent from the great Indian saint-poet Valmiki.

Malhar is spoken in a remote and isolated hamlet which is almost 165 km from Bhubaneswar. The community consists of about 75 speakers including children. It belongs to the North Dravidian subgroup of the Dravidian family of languages and has close affinities with the other North Dravidian languages like Malto and Kurux spoken in West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar.

26. The Eighth Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific is was held in Indore. The event saw the participation of around 40 mayors of cities around the world and mayors of more than 100 cities across India. It was co-organized by the Ministry of Housing and Affairs, Government of India, the Ministry of the Environment of the Government of Japan (MOEJ), and the United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD). **Theme:** "Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air through 3R and Resource Efficiency – A 21st Century Vision for Asia-Pacific Communities".

3Rs – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

Forum members hold discussions on policies, provided support for the implementation of 3R projects in member countries, shared useful information, and are building networks for the further promotion of 3R initiatives.

Japan hosted the inaugural Regional 3R Forum in Tokyo in 2009, and has cosponsored subsequent Forums together with the governments of host countries and the **United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD)**.

- 27.** The sugar tax has come into force in the UK placing a levy on soft drink manufacturers. The money from the tax will go to the Department for Education. The move aims to help tackle childhood obesity. Sugar-sweetened soft drinks are now the single biggest source of dietary sugar for children and teenagers. A similar scheme has been tried in a handful of Scandinavian countries as well as France and Hungary. Mexico and Norway have shown positive outcomes.
- 28.** The Supreme Court has held that a person's right to choose a religion and marry is an intrinsic part of one's meaningful existence. Neither the State nor "patriarchal supremacy" can interfere in this decision.
- 29.** Central Water Commission (CWC) recently appreciated the Telangana government for the speedy execution of work on the Kaleshwaram irrigation project.

Kaleshwaram project is an off-shoot of the original Pranahitha-Chevella Lift Irrigation Scheme taken up by the erstwhile Andhra Pradesh government. In 2014, the Telangana government redesigned the project on the grounds that the original plan had too many environmental obstacles and very low water storage provision — only about 16.5 tmc ft. After conducting a highly advanced Light Detection and Ranging (LiDAR) survey, the government separated the original component serving the Adilabad area as the Pranahitha project and renamed the rest as Kaleshwaram. According to engineers, KLIP has many unique features, including the longest tunnel to carry water in Asia, running up to 81 km, between the Yellampally barrage and the Mallannasagar reservoir. The project would also utilise the highest capacity pumps, up to 139 MW, in the country to lift water.

30. World's first micro factory to help tackle e-waste hazard has been launched by an Indian-origin scientist in Australia.

Micro factory is one or a series of small machines and devices that uses patented technology to perform one or more functions in the reforming of waste products into new and usable resources. The e-waste micro factory that reforms discarded computers, mobile phones and printers has a number of small modules for this process and fits into a small site.

e-waste micro factory has the potential to reduce the rapidly growing problem of vast amounts of electronic waste causing environmental harm and going into landfill. It can also turn many types of consumer waste such as glass, plastic and timber into commercial materials and products.

31. The 2018 Happy Cities Summit was held in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh. Centered on the foundational principles of happy cities: 'Citizen-centric governance', 'Livable Communities', 'Clean & Healthy Environment', and 'Vibrant Economies'. Objective of the summit is to evolve a framework for thinking about and measuring 'city happiness' as well as a declaration and set of principles for guiding policy and action in the development of 'happy cities', especially relevant for cities in the developing world.
32. FSSAI has launched a unique initiative, 'Project Dhoop', to address rising incidence of Vitamin 'D' Deficiencies (VDD), particularly amongst the young people. It is being carried out in association with NCERT, NDMC and North MCD Schools. Project Dhoop urges schools to shift their morning assembly to noon time, mainly between 11am and 1pm to ensure maximum absorption of Vitamin D in students through natural sunlight.
33. A rare dance panel of Nayak period and an inscribed pillar of Chola period have been found on an abandoned brick mound at Pathalapettai near Kiliyur in Tiruchi. Silappathikaram has references to such ritualistic performances by rural folks. Silappathikaram is one of the Five Great Epics of Tamil Literature according to later Tamil literary tradition. A poet-prince from Kodungallur near Kochi, referred to by the pseudonym Ilango Adigal, is credited with this work. It entails the Kannagi episode.
34. Airtel to deploy Massive MIMO technology at IPL match venues.

Multiple-Input Multiple-Output (MIMO) is a wireless technology that uses multiple transmitters and receivers to transfer more data at the same time.

MIMO technology uses a natural radio-wave phenomenon called multipath. With multipath, transmitted information bounces off walls, ceilings, and other objects, reaching the receiving antenna multiple times at different angles and slightly different times. In the past, multipath caused interference and slowed down wireless signals. With multipath, MIMO technology uses multiple, smart transmitters and receivers with an added spatial dimension, increasing performance and range

35. Haryana government has decided to launch '**Gram Swaraj Abhiyan**', an outreach campaign, in the state on the birth anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar on April 14, which will continue till May 5. The campaign, undertaken under the name of "Sabka Sath, Sabka Gaon, Sabka Vikas", is to promote social harmony, spread awareness about pro-poor initiatives of government, reach out to poor households to enroll them as also to obtain their feedback on various welfare programmes. Seven flagship pro-poor programmes are being covered, in 21,058 identified villages. The programmes covered are Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Saubhagya, Ujala scheme, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and Mission Indradhanush.
36. To equip the children with the information regarding the possible modes of protection/complaints, the **National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT)** has published the information regarding Child line (1098) 24×7 Helpline for children and POCSO e-box on the back side of the front cover of all course books from Class 6 to Class 12.

Why? According to a study, about 53% of children surveyed, reported having faced one or the other form of sexual abuse in their lifetime. In most cases, the offender is a family member/near relative or an acquaintance. The child victim in such cases generally does not report these offences. Sexual abuse scars the psyche of the affected child for entire life. A child who is sexually abused has to face very serious consequences such as cognitive impairment, violent and risk behavior including depression and anxiety. Feeling shame and guilt with poor interpersonal relationship & self esteem are other consequences of sexually abused children.