

# Brain Tree

## Current Events

1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2018



1. Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensemble of Mumbai becomes India's 37th UNESCO world heritage site

A World Heritage site is classified as a natural or man-made area or a structure that is of international importance, and a space which requires special protection. These sites are officially recognised by the UN and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation, also known as UNESCO. UNESCO believes that the sites classified as World Heritage are important for humanity, and they hold cultural and physical significance.

In 1982, the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) announced, 18 April as the “World Heritage Day”, approved by the General Assembly of UNESCO in 1983, with the aim of enhancing awareness of the importance of the cultural heritage of humankind, and redouble efforts to protect and conserve the human heritage.

2. The Odisha government has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for effective management of disasters.

RIMES were established on 30 April 2009 to provide user-relevant early warning services to its Member States and others. It is a UN registered international and inter-governmental institution. It is owned and managed by its 48 members and collaborating states for building capacities in the generation and application of user-relevant early warning information.

3. U.S. President Donald Trump is planning to create a “space force” or a sixth branch of the American armed forces.
4. 1st July 2018 was celebrated as ‘GST day’, to commemorate the first year of the unprecedented reform of Indian taxation.
5. Anjolie Ela Menon has received the National Kalidas Samman for visual arts from the Madhya Pradesh government. The award was conferred in recognition of her insightful and sensitive portrayal of the identity and spirit of women through her meaningful paintings in a variety of media.

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6. According to an amended rule notified by the Registrar-General of India (RGI), the data collected during the 2021 Census will be stored electronically

The decennial Census of India has been conducted 15 times, As of 2011. While it has been conducted every 10 years, beginning in 1872, the first complete census was taken in the year 1881. Post 1949, it has been conducted by the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India under the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India. All the census since 1951 are conducted under 1948 Census of India Act.

7. Election Commission of India has launched a dedicated portal for the ECI's 'Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation' (SVEEP).

SVEEP is a programme of multi interventions through different modes and media designed to educate citizens, electors and voters about the electoral process in order to increase their awareness and participation in the electoral processes.

SVEEP is designed according to the socio-economic, cultural and demographic profile of the state as well as the history of electoral participation in previous rounds of elections and learning thereof.

Now it includes enhanced interaction with the citizens through social media, online contests and voters' festivals; awareness about new initiatives of linking EPIC with AADHAAR and National Voters' Service Portal and a regularised yearly plan of activities.

8. Kozhikode and Malappuram districts have been declared free of Nipah virus by the Kerala government.

9. The Supreme Court has granted the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) an extension of time till April 30, 2022, to build an Away From Reactor (AFR) facility to store spent nuclear fuel from the Kudankulam power plant. In 2013, the court granted five years to NPCIL, till July 2018, to build the storage unit.

Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant is situated in Koodankulam in the Tirunelveli district of the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu. It is the single largest nuclear power station in India. The reactors are pressurised water reactor of Russian design. KKNPP is scheduled to have six VVER-1000 reactors with an installed capacity of 6,000 MW of electricity.

10. Meghalaya Celebrates Behdienkhlam Festival. Behdienkhlam is a major festival of the people in the Jaintia Hills. It is celebrated to invoke the gods for a bumper

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harvest and drive away plague. During the festival, decorated and colourful raths are immersed in 'Wah Ainar,' a muddy pool.

11. The Delhi government has launched a "happiness curriculum" in state-run schools.
  - The curriculum will be taught to around eight lakh students from nursery up to Class 8 of all Delhi government schools from the new academic session.
  - The curriculum involves a "happiness period" of 45 minutes and five minutes of meditation before each class. It will include meditation, moral values and mental exercises.
12. The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) has launched its, in-house developed, single-umbrella e-marketing system named Khadi Institution Management and Information System (KIMIS). The system can be accessed from anywhere in the country for the sale and purchase of Khadi and Village Industries products.

The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is a statutory body established by an Act of Parliament (Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956). In April 1957, it took over the work of former All India Khadi and Village Industries Board.

It is an apex organization under the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, with regard to khadi and village industries within India, which seeks to – "plan, promote, facilitate, organise and assist in the establishment and development of khadi and village industries in the rural areas in coordination with other agencies engaged in rural development wherever necessary."

The Commission has three main objectives which guide its functioning.

- The Social Objective – Providing employment in rural areas.
- The Economic Objective – Providing saleable articles.
- The Wider Objective – Creating self-reliance amongst people and building up a strong rural community spirit.

13. In a major breakthrough on repatriation laced Bru persons from Mizoram since 1997, an agreement has been signed by Government of India, Governments of Mizoram and Tripura and Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF). The central government will provide financial assistance for rehabilitation of Bru community members in Mizoram and address their issues of security,

education, livelihood, etc. in consultation with the governments of Mizoram and Tripura.

14. **Cvigil:** It is a mobile app launched by the Election Commission of India to enable citizens to report on violation of election code of conduct. It will be operational only where elections are announced.
15. The Supreme Court recently held that the Lt Governor of Delhi has no independent power to take decisions and is bound by the elected government's advice. The ruling also lays down for the first time clear guidelines for the LG's conduct, and delineates the powers of the two branches of the executive in Delhi, which does not have the status of a full state yet elects its own MLAs and government.

### **Supreme Court's observations**

Role of Lieutenant-Governor(LG):

- The LG is bound by the aid and advice of the Council of Ministers. In case of difference of opinion, the LG should straightaway refer the dispute to the President for a final decision.
- The LG should act as a "facilitator" for good governance in the national capital and not as an "obstructionist".
- The LGs cannot exercise his discretion in "each and every matter" of daily governance. His discretionary powers are in fact limited to only matters in the State List — public order, police and land — over which the legislative power of the Delhi Legislative Assembly stand excluded under Article 239AA.
- The NCT government needs only to inform the L-G of its "well-deliberated" decisions. The government need not obtain his "concurrence" on every issue of day-to-day governance.
- The elected government could make policies on laws enacted by its own Assembly. The executive power of the NCT government was co-extensive with its legislative powers.

The Supreme Court followed the 1987 Balakrishnan report to conclude that Delhi is not a State. Balakrishnan report had envisaged that Delhi could not have a situation in which the national capital had "two governments run by different political parties. Such conflicts may, at times, prejudice the national interest." Delhi as the national capital belongs to the nation as a whole. if Delhi becomes a full-fledged State,

there would be a constitutional division of sovereign, legislative and executive powers between the Union and the State of Delhi. Parliament would have limited legislative access and that too only in special and emergency situations. The Union would be unable to discharge its “special responsibilities in relation to the national capital as well as to the nation itself”.

16. Cabinet approves DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill, 2018. The new bill aims to expand the application of DNA-based forensic technologies to support and strengthen the justice delivery system of the country.

#### **Highlights of the Bill**

- As per the Bill, national and regional DNA data banks will be set up for maintaining a national database for identification of victims, suspects in cases, undertrials, missing persons and unidentified human remains.
- Those leaking the DNA profile information to people or entities who are not entitled to have it, will be punished with a jail term of up to three years and a fine of up to Rs. 1 lakh. Similar, punishment has also been provided for those who seek the information on DNA profiles illegally.
- All DNA data, including DNA profiles, DNA samples and records, will only be used for identification of the person and not for “any other purpose”.
- The bill’s provisions will enable the cross-matching between persons who have been reported missing on the one hand and unidentified dead bodies found in various parts of the country on the other, and also for establishing the identity of victims in mass disasters.

17. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the increase in the Minimum Support Prices (MSPs) for all kharif crops for 2018-19 Season.

MSP is the minimum price set by the Government at which farmers can expect to sell their produce for the season. When market prices fall below the announced MSPs, procurement agencies step in to procure the crop and ‘support’ the prices. The Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs announces MSP for various crops at the beginning of each sowing season based on the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP). The CACP takes into account demand and supply, the cost of production and price trends in the market among other things when fixing MSPs.

18. Cabinet approves extension of Scheme of Recapitalization of Regional Rural Banks upto 2019-20. This will enable the RRBs to maintain the minimum

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prescribed Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of 9%. A strong capital structure and minimum required level of CRAR will ensure financial stability of RRBs which will enable them to play a greater role in financial inclusion and meeting the credit requirements of rural areas.

RRBs are jointly owned by Government of India, the concerned State Government and Sponsor Banks with the issued capital shared in the proportion of 50%, 15% and 35% respectively. RRBs were set up with the objective to provide credit and other facilities, especially to the small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, artisans and small entrepreneurs in rural areas for development of agriculture, trade, commerce, industry and other productive activities.

19. The Central government has filed a counter affidavit in the Supreme Court expressing its inability to give Special Category Status (SCS) to Andhra Pradesh and said all commitments under the A.P. Reorganisation Act (APRA), 2014 had been addressed.
20. The Law Commission of India has submitted a report to the government recommending “cashless” gambling in sports as a means to increase revenue and deal a blow to unlawful gambling. recommendations:
  - The revenue from gambling should be taxable under laws like Income Tax Act, the Goods and Services Tax Act.
  - Transactions between gamblers and operators should be linked to their Aadhaar and PAN cards so that the government could keep an eye on them.
  - There is a need for classification of ‘proper gambling’ and ‘small gambling.’ Proper gambling would be for the rich who play for high stakes, while small gambling would be for the low-income groups.
  - The government should introduce a cap on the number of gambling transactions for each individual, that is, monthly, half-yearly and annual.
  - Restrictions on amount should be prescribed while using electronic money facilities like credit cards, debit cards, and net-banking
  - Regulations need to protect vulnerable groups, minors and those below poverty line, those who draw their sustenance from social welfare measures, government subsidies and Jan Dhan account holders from exploitation through gambling.

- Foreign Exchange Management and Foreign Direct Investment laws and policies should be amended to encourage investment in the casino/online gaming industry. This would propel tourism and employment
- 21.** ICAT has completed the first BS-VI certification for a heavy-duty engine model for M/s Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicle Limited.

Bharat Stage — emission standards are norms instituted by the government to regulate the output of air pollutants from internal combustion engine equipment, including motor vehicles. India has been following the European (Euro) emission norms, though with a time-lag of five years.

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%, from 50 parts per million to 10 ppm. As per the analysts, the emission of NOx (nitrogen oxides) from diesel cars is also expected to reduce by nearly 70% and 25% from cars with petrol engines.

- 22.** ISRO recently conducted the first ‘pad abort’ test critical for a future human space mission. The Pad Abort Test demonstrated the safe recovery of the crew module in case of any exigency at the launch pad.
- 23.** ‘Sambal’ scheme: It is a power bill waiver scheme and subsidised power scheme for labourers and poor families launched by the Madhya Pradesh Government. Under the scheme, the Below Poverty Line (BPL) families would be provided electricity at a cost of 200 rupees per month. The objective of this scheme to make sure that all the households have power facility in the state.
- 24.** UNESCO has entered into an agreement with Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB) to establish a ‘Gaming Digital Learning Hub’ in Vishakhapatnam. The Design University for Gaming will help UNSECO to develop edutech gaming in state, with the target of providing 50,000 jobs in 10 years.
- 25.** NITI Aayog has proposed creation of National Health Stack (NHS), a centralized health record for all citizens of the country, in order to streamline the health information and facilitate effective management of the information.
- 26.** The Uttarakhand high court has declared the entire animal kingdom, including birds and aquatic animals, as a legal entity having rights of a “living person”. The move aims to ensure “greater welfare” of animals.

- 27.** The National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom), India's premier software lobby, has opened a Center of Excellence (CoE) for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence in Bangalore.

The CoE initiative is a nationwide programme on innovation, focusing on solutions in smart manufacturing, automotive, healthcare, agriculture, energy, IoT, banking and financial services, retail, telecom, and host of emerging technologies. The center aims to "support SMBs, by fast-tracking their product development, provide market access to enterprises and assist them by co-creating programs along with other industry partners and start-ups to solve complex and real-world business problems."

- 28.** India has agreed to form a joint venture with Sri Lanka to operate the country's loss-making Mattala Rajapaksa International Airport in Hambantota.
- 29.** The 2018 World Sanskrit Conference (WSC) is being hosted by the Department of Asian Studies at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. It is 17th such conference.
- 30.** Fish samples in Chennai tested positive for 'formalin'. This is the first time samples of fish in Tamil Nadu have tested positive for formalin.

Formalin is a toxic, colourless solution that is derived by dissolving formaldehyde gas in water. It is a cancer-inducing chemical used to preserve fish is used as a disinfectant. It is used in the manufacture of pesticides, fertilisers, glue, paper and paint, among other products. Formalin causes irritation in the eyes, throat, skin and stomach. In the long run continued exposure causes harm to the kidneys, liver and can even cause cancers. Formaldehyde is a highly reactive, flammable gas, which means it can become a fire hazard when exposed to flame or heat. Formaldehyde solutions can be flammable when there are high concentrations of formaldehyde or methanol.

- 31.** NASA has announced it would give funds to Made In Space's project- RAMA (Reconstituting Asteroids into Mechanical Automata), for finding ways to turn asteroids into giant, autonomous spacecrafts, which could fly to outposts in space.
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