

Brain Tree

Current Events



15 August, 2018 - 31 August, 2018

1. The latest amendment to the Companies (Accounts) Rules, 2014, now makes it mandatory for private companies to disclose compliance under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace Act in their Annual Report.

The **Sexual Harassment of Woman at Workplace (prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act 2013** seeks to protect all women, irrespective of their age or employment status, against sexual harassment at workplace both in Public and private sector, organized or unorganized sector.

Further, every employer is required to constitute an Internal Complaints Committee at each office or branch with 10 or more employees.

District Officer is required to constitute a Local Complaints Committee at each district, and if required even at the block level. The Committee is required to complete the inquiry within a time period of 90 days. On completion of the inquiry, the report will be sent to the employer or the District Officer, as the case may be, they are mandated to take action on the report within 60 days. The Complaints Committees have the powers of civil courts for gathering evidence. The Complaints Committees are required to provide for conciliation before initiating an inquiry, if requested by the complainant.

2. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has released **Ease of Living Index**. Pune has ranked first followed by Navi Mumbai, Greater Mumbai, Tirupati, Chandigarh, Thane, Raipur, Indore, Vijaywada and Bhopal as the top 10 cities in that order. Rampur (Uttar Pradesh), Kohima and Patna figure at the bottom of the rankings.

The **Ease of Living Index** has been developed to allow city managers to get a grip on the city's baseline and compare its performance across key indicators. The index covers 111 cities that are smart city contenders, capital cities, and cities with population of 1 million plus. The index captures the quality of life based on the data collected from the urban local bodies on four parameters, which were further broken down into 15 categories.

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The four parameters to set the baseline include - institutional (governance), social (identity, education, health, security), economic (economy, employment) and physical factors (waste water and solid waste management, pollution, housing/ inclusiveness, mixed land use, power and water supply, transport, public open spaces). Institutional and social parameters carry 25 points each, physical factors have a weightage of 45 points and economic factors five points totaling to a 100 mark scale on which cities were evaluated.

3. First project under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme the 'North East Circuit: Imphal & Khongjom' in Manipur has been inaugurated. The project covers two sites - Kangla Fort and Khongjom.

Kangla Fort is one of the most important historic and archaeological site of Manipur located in the heart of the Imphal city. It served as the seat of Manipur's power till 1891.

Khongjom is home to the war memorial complex to honour those who sacrificed their life in the Anglo-Manipuri war of 1891.

Swadesh Darshan Scheme

Tourism Ministry had launched 'Swadesh Darshan' scheme with an objective to develop theme-based tourist circuits in the country. These tourist circuits will be developed on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner. It is a 100% centrally funded for the project.

A National Steering Committee (NSC) will be constituted with Minister in charge of M/O Tourism as Chairman, to steer the mission objectives and vision of the scheme. A Mission Directorate headed by the Member Secretary, NSC as a nodal officer will help in identification of projects in consultation with the States/ UTs governments and other stake holders.

4. The High Court of has appointed itself as the legal guardian of "cows" in the State. The court did this by invoking the '**parens patriae**' doctrine. Further, it has also issued some directions to the state government in this regard.

Parens patriae in Latin means 'parent of the country' and is a doctrine that grants the court inherent power and authority to act as guardian for those who are unable to take care for themselves.

5. "**Pitch to MOVE**" - NITI Aayog, in collaboration with Invest India and Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), has launched a mobility pitch

competition that aims to provide budding entrepreneurs of India a unique opportunity to pitch their business ideas to a distinguished jury.

6. Scientists have developed a transparent heat-resistant gel, called **Aerogel**, using beer waste. The transparent gel is highly resistant to heat. The gel is cheaper to produce because it comes from beer waste. Aerogels are at least 90% gas by weight, but their defining feature is air. Their thin films are made up of crisscrossing patterns of solid material that trap air inside billions of tiny pores, similar to the bubbles in bubble wrap. It is that trapping capacity that makes them such good insulators.
7. U.S. President Donald Trump is planning to create a **“Space Force”** or a sixth branch of the American armed forces. Officials plan to create a Space Operations Force – an “elite group of war fighters specializing in the domain of space”, in the style of existing special operations forces. They also plan to create a United States Space Command and a Space Development Agency, and appoint an assistant secretary of defense for space.

The US Government points to threats from US adversaries that are possible from outer space such as, in 2007, China destroyed one of its own satellites, in a test of a weapon that could be used to target others. Further, Russia has also tested a missile that could be used to track and destroy satellites.

Outer Space Treaty of 1967

All major space powers, including the U.S., Russia, and China, have signed the Outer Space Treaty of 1967. The pact says that nothing in space can be claimed as a single country’s territory, and it bars countries from stationing nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction anywhere in outer space, including in orbit around Earth. The treaty gets stricter when it comes to “celestial bodies” such as the moon and Mars. Parties can’t build military bases, conduct military maneuvers, or test weapons of any kind on another world.

However, the treaty does not explicitly forbid intercontinental ballistic missiles, which enter and exit space on their way toward their targets. The treaty also doesn’t specify whether conventional weapons can be used in open space or on space stations.

8. ISRO has initiated pre-project Research and Development activities focusing on critical technologies for Human Space Flight Program. It plans to build a crew vehicle that can accommodate 2 or 3 astronauts, and make use of its GLSV Mk-III launcher. This research will be vital for the **Gaganyaan** mission, India's First

Manned space flight Programme. Till now only three countries, - the United States, Russia and China, have been able to achieve this feat.

9. The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** has launched **RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil)** initiative to enable collection and conversion of used cooking oil to bio-diesel. Under this initiative, 64 companies at 101 locations have been identified to enable collection of used cooking oil.

The initiative has been launched nearly a month after the food safety regulator notified standards for used cooking oil. According to FSSAI regulations, the maximum permissible limits for Total Polar Compounds (TPC) have been set at 25%, beyond which the cooking oil is unsafe for consumption.

Total Polar Compounds (TPC): In many countries, TPC is used to measure the quality of oil. The level of TPC increases every time oil is re-heated. Some of the studies show that TPC accumulation in oil without food is slower than that in oil with food.

Currently, used cooking oil is either not discarded or disposed of in such a manner that it chokes drains and sewerage systems. Apart from setting quality standards, the new regulation addresses the way this oil is discarded.

10. **Global Liveability Index 2018** has been released by The **Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)**. The liveability index quantifies the challenges that might be presented to an individual's lifestyle in 140 cities worldwide, and assesses which locations provide the best living conditions. Vienna tops the list followed by Melbourne, Osaka. The city of Damascus is at the bottom of the ranking, Pakistan's financial capital Karachi and Bangladesh's capital Dhaka are among the world's least liveable cities. Indian Cities Ranked – New Delhi(112), Mumbai (117)
11. National Payments Corporation of India(NPCI) launches UPI 2.0: The upgraded Unified Payment Interface has new features that make it attractive and safer for users. These new features will allow users to link their overdraft account to UPI, creation of one-time mandates and pre-authorisation of transactions for payment at later date and checking the invoice sent by merchant prior to making payment.
12. 11th World Hindi Conference(WHS) was held at Mauritius. Theme: "Vaishvik Hindi Aur Bharatiy Sanskriti".

The main objective of the WHS is to promote Hindi as an international language and further its cause for recognition at the United Nations as an Official

Language.

The event, held once in three years, is dedicated to Hindi language. It sees participation from Hindi scholars, writers and laureates from different parts of the world who contribute to the language. The first World Hindi Conference was held in 1975 in Nagpur, India.

13. International **C**onference on **R**ecent **A**dvanes in **F**ood **P**rocessing **T**echnology (iCRAFPT) 2018 was recently held at Indian Institute of Food Processing Technology, Thanjavur in Tamilnadu. Theme: Doubling farmers' income through food processing.
14. Leaders from Russia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan have finally signed a legal convention on ways to manage Caspian sea and its surrounding areas. The **Caspian Sea Agreement** will officially classify Caspian Sea as a sea.

The Caspian Sea is a geopolitically important location for its location and resources. It has historically been a key trade and transit corridor between eastern and western powers. However, since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan which have emerged as independent states and competitors in the region and so the disputes about boundaries in the Caspian have limited all the surrounding countries' ability to exploit its resources.

The primary issue has been whether to legally classify the Caspian as a sea or a lake. The former would require the division of the Caspian to extend from the shoreline of each littoral state to the body of water's midway point, while the latter would divide the Caspian equally.

Convention signed at the recent summit legally classifies the Caspian Sea as a sea, giving each country control over 15 nautical miles of water from its shoreline for mineral exploration and 25 natural miles of shoreline for fishing.

15. Government of Telangana has launched for the first time **D**isaster **R**esponse **F**orce (**DRF**) vehicles in the Hyderabad city. The vehicles will be parked at 24 locations with Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) DRF staff and will be able to reach emergency spots quickly.
16. Indigenously developed Helicopter launched Anti-Tank Guided Missile '**HELINA**' was successfully flight tested from Army Helicopter recently. The Missile is guided by an Infrared Imaging Seeker (IIR) operating in the Lock on Before Launch mode. It is one of the most advanced Anti-Tank Weapons in the world.

17. Scientists have found frozen water deposits in the darkest and coldest parts of the Moon's polar regions using data from the Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft, which was launched by India 10 years ago.

Scientists used data from NASA's **Moon Mineralogy Mapper (M3)** instrument to identify three specific signatures that definitively prove there is water ice at the surface of the Moon. It collected data that not only picked up the reflective properties we would expect from ice, but was able to directly measure the distinctive way its molecules absorb infrared light, so it can differentiate between liquid water or vapour and solid ice.

18. World's largest **3D-printed reef** installed in Maldives to help save corals. The artificial reef, assembled with hundreds of ceramic and concrete modules, was submerged at Summer Island's '**Blue Lagoon**' a sandy part of the lagoon, where the resort hopes to create a new coral reef ecosystem.
19. The **Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In)** has prepared a report on cyber attacks in the country.

The report notes that the cyber attacks from China made up 35% of the total number of cyber attacks on official Indian websites, followed by US (17%), Russia (15%), Pakistan (9%), Canada (7%) and Germany (5%). Further it also notes that there is also the possibility of "malicious actors from Pakistan using German and Canadian cyberspace for intruding into Indian cyberspace and carrying out malicious activities".

CERT-In is nodal agency to deal with cyber security threats. CERT-In operates under the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**

20. International Buddhist Conclave 2018 was recently held in Aurangabad. Maharashtra Tourism Development Corporation in association with Ministry of Tourism recently organized the event. Theme: 'Buddha Path – The Living Heritage'.
21. The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India had recently organized an orientation workshop for various stakeholders participating in the Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month) being celebrated in the month of September. The workshop focused on sensitizing the Ministries, States/UTs and District level functionaries and partners on various aspects of Rashtriya Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month).

Poshan Maah (National Nutrition Month): The primary objective of the celebration of Poshan Maah is to take the messages of POSHAN to the grass

root level. It is led by the Ministry of Woman and Child Development and the NITI Aayog. The programme focuses on 8 themes – Antenatal Care, Optimal Breastfeeding (Early & Exclusive), Complementary Feeding, Anemia, Growth Monitoring, Girls-education, diet, right age of Marriage, Hygiene & Sanitation, Food Fortification.

22. World Bank has launched world-first blockchain bond. Australia's Commonwealth Bank (CommBank) is the sole arranger of the issuance by the World Bank.
23. NASA will shortly launch the Ice, Cloud and Land Elevation Satellite-2 (ICESat-2) mission to measure “in unprecedented detail” changes in the heights of Earth's polar ice to understand what is causing ice sheets to melt fast. IT will make use of the **Advanced Topographic Laser Altimeter System (ATLAS)** to measure the following objectives:
- Measure melting ice sheets and investigate how it affects sea level rise.
 - Measure and investigate changes in the mass of ice sheets and glaciers.
 - Estimate and study sea ice thickness.
 - Measure the height of vegetation in forests and other ecosystems worldwide.
24. The 2018 SCO Peace Mission Exercise was held in Russia. The exercise involves tactical level operations in an international counter insurgency or counter-terrorism environment under the SCO Charter. Soldiers from China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Pakistan participated in the drill.

The **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)** is a political, economic, and military organisation founded in 2001 in Shanghai by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. India and Pakistan joined SCO as full members in June 2017.

The SCO's main goals are: strengthening mutual trust and neighbourliness among the member states; promoting their effective cooperation in politics, trade, the economy, research, technology and culture, as well as in education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, and other areas; making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region; and moving towards the establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.

25. Aeolus Satellite was successfully launched by the European Space Agency(ESA). The Aeolus satellite carries just one large instrument – a Doppler wind lidar

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called Aladin that will probe the lowermost 30 km of the atmosphere to measure the winds sweeping around our planet. This will help improve weather forecasting.

Named after Aeolus, who in Greek mythology was appointed 'keeper of the winds' by the Gods.

26. Government announces Regulations for Drones.

Highlights:

The government categorizes **Remotely Piloted Aircraft System (RPAS)** into five categories by weight, - nano, micro, small, medium and large.

All RPAS except nano and those owned by NTRO, ARC and Central Intelligence Agencies are to be registered and issued with **Unique Identification Number (UIN)**.

The mandatory equipment required for operation of RPAS except nano category are (a) GNSS (GPS), (b) Return-To-Home (RTH), (c) Anti-collision light, (d) ID-Plate, (e) Flight controller with flight data logging capability, and (f) RF ID and SIM/ No-Permission No Take off (NPNT).

Regulation calls for "No Drone Zones" around sensitive locations.

27. The Centre has signed MOU with Uttarakhand, UP, HP, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi for Construction of Lakhwar Multipurpose Project on Yamuna Near Dehradun. Project Will Generate 300 MW of Power Create 33,780 Hectare Irrigation Potential and 78.83 MCM Water Availability. Centre will Fund 90% of Irrigation Component, the Six States to the Fund Remaining 10% and Share Water Proportionately.

28. Satya S Tripathi, an Indian development economist and lawyer, has been appointed assistant secretary general of the United Nations and will head the New York office of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is an agency of United Nations and coordinates its environmental activities, assisting developing countries in implementing environmentally sound policies and practices.

It was founded by Maurice Strong, its first director, as a result of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference) in June 1972 and has its headquarters in the Gigiri neighborhood of Nairobi, Kenya.

UNEP has overall responsibility for environmental problems among United

Nations agencies but talks on addressing global warming are overseen by the Bonn-based Secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Its activities cover a wide range of issues regarding the atmosphere, marine and terrestrial ecosystems, environmental governance and green economy.

- 29.** Physicists observe decay of Higgs boson tiny bits called “bottom quarks”. The predicted decay was observed at the Large Hadron Collider (LHC).

The Higgs boson is an elementary particle in the Standard Model of particle physics, produced by the quantum excitation of the Higgs field, one of the fields in particle physics theory. It is named after physicist Peter Higgs, who in 1964, along with six other scientists, proposed the mechanism, which suggested the existence of such a particle. Its existence was confirmed by the ATLAS and CMS collaborations based on collisions in the LHC at CERN.

Large Hadron Collider (LHC) is the world’s largest and most powerful particle accelerator situated in a tunnel beneath the France Switzerland border near Geneva. it was built by European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN). The LHC consists of a 27-kilometre ring of superconducting magnets with a number of accelerating structures to boost the energy of the particles along the way.

- 30.** NASA’s Spitzer Space Telescope, the youngest member of the “Great Observatory” programme, has completed 15 years in space.

NASA’s Spitzer Space Telescope was launched in 2003 to study the universe in the infrared. It is the last mission of the NASA Great Observatories program, which saw four specialized telescopes (including the Hubble Space Telescope) launched between 1990 and 2003.

Spitzer’s highly sensitive instruments allow scientists to peer into cosmic regions that are hidden from optical telescopes, including dusty stellar nurseries, the centers of galaxies, and newly forming planetary systems. Its infrared eyes allow astronomers see cooler objects in space, like failed stars (brown dwarfs), extrasolar planets, giant molecular clouds, and organic molecules that may hold the secret to life on other planets.