

AWARDS & HONOURS

Frances McDormand won the best actress prize at the 90th **Academy Awards** for her performance as a grieving mother in 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri'.

India won the 2018 **Best Exhibitor Award** (BEA) at ITB – Berlin. More than 100 countries participated in the ITB-Berlin meet with their respective Tourism Ministers.

The Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation bagged the award for **best implementation of E-office** - one of the mission-mode Projects under the Digital India programme.

Noted actor Amol Palekar was honoured with the '**Godavari Gaurav**' award. The 73-year-old actor is known for his performance in films like "Gol Maal" , "Choti Si Baat", "Chitchor" among others.

The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the research body of the health ministry, was awarded the **International Kochon Prize 2017** for its contribution to the national programme in Tuberculosis research.

Actor-politician Shatrughan Sinha was honoured with a **lifetime achievement award** for his contribution to the fields of arts and politics at a ceremony in the UK's Parliament complex. The annual 'Political and Public Life Awards' presented by Britain's Asian Voice weekly newspaper, now in its 12th year, recognises individuals who have made a significant impact on public life or made a difference in their local communities.

Gita Mittal, the Delhi High Court Acting Chief Justice, became the first woman from the field of law and justice to be conferred the '**Nari Shakti Puraskar**', India's highest civilian honour for women.

Indian architect Balkrishna Doshi was awarded this year's **Pritzker Prize** for being able to interpret architecture and transform it into buildings that respect Eastern culture. The Pritzker Prize is regarded as architecture's equivalent to the Nobel Prize.

BUSINESS & CORPORATE

ICICI Bank launched instant overdraft 'InstaOD' facility for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) in a completely online and paperless manner.

Tech giant **Microsoft** inked its first renewable energy deal in India for powering its new facility in Bengaluru.

BILLS / ACTS / COMMITTEES / SCHEMES / POLICIES

- The Haryana government announced setting up of a committee to find a solution to polluted water flowing in Yamuna river affecting four districts of the state. The committee, led by State Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister Om Parkash Dhankhar, will discuss the issue with the Delhi government and the Centre.
- The Executive Committee which is the Apex body for all Nutrition related activities under the POSHAN Abhiyaan, held its first meeting to decide on the roadmap for the Mission. The Committee is headed by Rakesh Srivastava, Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- The first-ever Indo-French Knowledge Summit was held in New Delhi, with the purpose of designing a roadmap of Franco-India cooperation for the next five years, in collaboration with companies.
- The Union Government constituted a 3-member Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal to adjudicate the dispute between Odisha and Chhattisgarh over sharing the river's water.
- India extended \$ 1.4 billion line of credit to support 27 solar power projects in 15 countries at the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance (ISA-2018)- one of the world's largest investment plans in solar energy!
- On the occasion of International Women's Day, the Maharashtra government started Ashmita Yojana under which sanitary napkins at subsidised rates will be provided to rural girls and women across the state.
- The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) launched a Udyam Sakhi portal for women entrepreneurs of India on the occasion of 2018 International Women's Day.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the pan-India expansion of flagship programme-Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao from Jhunjhunu district of Rajasthan to mark the International Women's Day. It is an initiative to save and educate the girl child.
- The Finance Ministry set up a steering committee led by Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg to look into issues relating to the financial technology sector.
- The Odisha government launched the free sanitary napkin scheme 'Khushi' for girl students from Class 6 to 12 in all the government and government-aided schools in the state. The scheme will be implemented by the health and family welfare department of the state at a cost of Rs 70 crore per year.
- The Odisha government launched a programme 'Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas' (Our Village, our development) to reach out to the people in rural areas and involve themselves in the developmental activities.
- Punjab Government inked a Memorandum of Understanding with e-Governance Foundation (e-Gov) of Nandan Nilekani regarding the managing of electronic governance of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) throughout Punjab.
- In a landmark development India for the first time signed a tripartite agreement with foreign partners -- Russia & Bangladesh -- for civil nuclear cooperation.

- The Union Cabinet approved the proposal for establishment of National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA). The decision aims at establishment of NFRA as an independent regulator for the auditing profession which is one of the key changes brought in by the Companies Act, 2013.
- India announced to provide \$5 million dollar assistance to Jordan in the form of vaccines and medicines in 2018. Apart from this, India and Jordan inked 12 agreements in areas including Defence, Health and Cultural Exchange Programme.

ECONOMY & FINANCE

- The World Bank projected India's GDP growth at 7.3% for financial year 2018-19, and accelerate further to 7.5%, in 2019-20. The World Bank's biannual publication, India Development Update: India's Growth Story, expects the economy to clock a growth rate of 6.7% in the current fiscal ending March 31.
- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) agreed to India becoming the Bank's 69th member, setting the stage for an increase in joint investment with Indian companies in the EBRD's regions. The headquarters of EBRD is in London, England.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

Armen Vardani Sarkissian was elected as the new president of Republic of Armenia. This was the first time in Armenia's history when the president was elected by the National Assembly instead of popular vote.

Bidya Devi Bhandari was re-elected as President of Nepal for a second term in office. She became Nepal's first woman President in 2015.

Biplab Kumar Deb, a member of the royal family and the state president of BJP in Tripura, was sworn in as the 10th chief minister of Tripura.

Telangana armed struggle fighter and veteran Communist leader **Ch Kamamma** died at the age of 90. She joined the post Independence armed struggle to fight the rule of erstwhile Nizams of Hyderabad and their army of Razakars as part of Telangana Liberation Struggle by Communist Party of India at the age of 15.

Conrad Sangma, the President of National People's Party (NPP), was sworn-in as the 12th Chief Minister of Meghalaya.

Noted disability rights activist **Javed Abidi** passed away at the age of 53. Abidi was the Director of the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) and also the Global Chair of Disabled People International (DPI). He was involved in several consultations with the government on policies for creating a barrier free environment for all, including the disabled.

Narendra Jha, a noted film and television actor, passed away in Nashik, Maharashtra at the age of 55.

Senior Congress leader and former Maharashtra minister **Patangrao Kadam** died at the age of 74.

Litterateur **Prafulla Das** passed away at the age of 91. He was a recipient of the prestigious "Sarala Award" for his achievement in the literary field. Mr. Das had written a number of books on the history of India's freedom struggle and the role of Odisha.

Prakriti became the first woman officer to be inducted as the first direct-entry combat officer in Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

Pyarelal Wadali, the younger of the legendary Sufi set Wadali Brothers, died at the age of 75. The renowned singer won the hearts of music lovers not only in India but around the world.

Ranjan Roy, the chief of the Times News Network (TNN) and a member of The Times of India's national editorial board, passed away in New Delhi at the age of 57.

Justice **S Ratnavel Pandian**, former Judge of the Supreme Court, passed away at the age of 89. In the apex court, he was part of a Bench that decided the famous Indra Sawhney case, in which the constitutionality of reservations to Backward Classes was upheld in 1992. In 2016, he was presented the Justice VR Krishna Iyer award, for commendable service in the field of law and human rights.

Indian-origin steel tycoon **Sanjeev Gupta** was appointed by Britain's Prince Charles as an official ambassador for the Industrial Cadets programme designed to nurture manufacturing skills.

Shammi, the veteran Bollywood and television actress, passed away in Mumbai at the age of 89.

Sitanshu Kar, an officer of 1983 batch of Indian Information Service, was announced to be the new head of the Press Information Bureau (PIB) after superannuation of Frank Noronha on April 30.

Stephen Hawking, the legendary theoretical physicist and author of "A Brief History of Time," died at the age of 76. Hawking was one of the most notable and well-known scientists of the past century, responsible for numerous advances in the fields of cosmology and physics. The physicist had won the Albert Einstein Award, the Wolf Prize, the Copley Medal, and the Fundamental Physics Prize. His life story was the subject of the 2014 film 'The Theory of Everything'.

Suresh Prabhu, the Union Minister of Commerce and Industries, was given additional charge of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, after the resignation of Ashok Gajapathi Raju of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP).

Vivek R Wadekar, a 1991-batch Indian Revenue Service officer, was appointed as the new Special Director in the Enforcement Directorate (ED) by the Union government for a period of five years.

SPORTS

Indian shooter **Akhil Sheoran** won gold medal in men's 50m Rifle 3-Position at ISSF Shooting World Cup at Guadalajara in Mexico.

World champions **Australia** lifted the coveted 27th edition of the Sultan Azlan Shah cup 2018 in Ipoh, Malaysia. With this, Australia has now won the prestigious tournament for the 10th time.

The **Board of Control for Cricket in India** (BCCI) announced its association with Paytm as the Official Umpire Partner of the VIVO Indian Premier League for the next five years. Paytm is also the Title Sponsor of India Cricket.

India B won the 45th edition of the Deodhar Trophy 2018 by defeating Karnataka in final match.

The **Indian** Snooker team lifted the first edition of IBSF Snooker Team World Cup title and won the prize money of \$15,000.

India's 2011 World Cup-winning skipper, **Mahendra Singh Dhoni**, became a brand ambassador of gaming platform Dream11.

India's shooter **Manu Bhaker** from Haryana won the gold medal in 10 metre Air Pistol Women event at the 2018 ISSF World Cup in Mexico.

Minerva Punjab FC won the I-League football tournament (2017-18) after defeating Churchill Brothers in the finals.

Navjot Kaur scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman wrestler to win a gold in the Senior Asian Championships as she clinched the yellow metal in the 65kg freestyle category in Bishkek.

Afghanistan leg-spinner **Rashid Khan** became the youngest captain in the history of international cricket at nineteen years. The World's No.1 ODI and Twenty20 International bowler, led Afghanistan against Scotland in the first match of the 2018 ICC World Cup qualifiers.

Indian shooter **Shahzar Rizvi** clinched gold with a world record score of 242.3 in 10m air pistol men's final in the 2018 ISSF World Cup in Mexico.

Indian wrestler **Vinesh Phogat** settled for Silver Medal in the 50kg Freestyle competition at the Asian Wrestling Championship in Kyrgyzstan.

Vinod Kumar Omprakash clinched bronze in men's 70kg freestyle at the 2018 Asian Wrestling Championships at Kyrgyzstan.

Viswanathan Anand, the five-time world champion, won the 11th Tal Memorial Chess tournament 2018 in Moscow.

MISCELLANEOUS

World

- The World Consumer Rights Day was observed on March 15 to promote basic rights of all consumers, with the theme 'Making Digital Marketplaces Fairer'.
- March 14 (3/14) was celebrated as Pi Day because the date resembles the ratio of a circle's circumference to its diameter — 3.14159265359 or 3.14, and because 3.14 is also Albert Einstein's birthday.
- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the World Hindi Secretariat building in Port Louis, the capital of Mauritius.
- The World ATM Congress was held at Feria de Madrid in Spain. World ATM Congress is the world's largest international air traffic management (ATM) exhibition and conference attracting thousands of delegates each year.
- The International Women's Day (IWD) was celebrated on March 8 to highlight the achievements of women. The 2018 theme was "Time Is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives".
- The Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI), an island country located near the equator in the Pacific Ocean with a population of about 50,000, is poised to become the first sovereign nation to issue a cryptocurrency that will be legal tender. The new currency is called "Sovereign" with the symbol "SOV".
- The World Wildlife Day (WWD) was observed on March 3 with the theme 'Big Cats: Predators under Threat'.
- The mega annual cultural festival 'India by the Nile' was held in Cairo, Egypt with main focus on classical culture.
- March 1 was celebrated as Zero Discrimination Day by the UN, an annual worldwide event that promotes diversity and recognizes that everyone counts.

India

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron inaugurated Uttar Pradesh's biggest solar power (75 MW) plant in Mirzapur district's Chhanvey block.
- India's tallest national flag was unfurled in Belagavi (also known as Belgaum) in Karnataka.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a campaign to eradicate tuberculosis (TB) from India by 2025, five years ahead of a globally-set deadline.
- India's first national academy to train police forces in effectively safeguarding the Indian shoreline was set up in Devbhumi Dwarka district of Gujarat.
- India offered a 100 million dollar Line of Credit, LoC, to Mauritius for defence procurement to help its security capacity.

- "I-METROS", an association of all Indian Metro Rail companies was launched by P K Sinha, Cabinet Secretary, Government of India. The platform will be a forum for exchange of ideas, pooling of knowledge and sharing of experience, best practices, innovations etc. among the Indian Metro Rail companies to nurture excellence in performance.
- In a first for both countries, the director generals of the Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) declared an 8.3 km stretch of the Indo-Bangladesh border as a 'crime-free zone'.
- The first Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief exercise 'Samvedna' of the Indian Air Force in association with South Asian Region nations started off the coast of Kerala. It was conducted for six days.
- The biennial event on Civil Aviation and Aerospace 'Wings India 2018' held in Hyderabad with the theme "India-Global Aviation Hub".
- A start-up incubator was launched by the Telangana government on the occasion of International Women's Day to exclusively promote entrepreneurship among women. The facility, named We-Hub, is the country's first state-led incubator exclusively for women entrepreneurs.
- The founding conference of the India-initiated International Solar Alliance (ISA) was held in New Delhi. The ISA, launched at the UN Conference of Parties (CoP) climate summit in Paris on November 30, 2015, by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and then French President Francois Hollande, is conceived as a coalition of solar resource-rich countries to address their special energy needs and provide a platform to collaborate on dealing with the identified gaps through a common, agreed approach.
- Showing a marked shift from using expensive non-renewable energy sources, Diu became the first Union Territory in India to run 100 percent on solar power generated energy.
- NITI Aayog launched the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), on the occasion of International Women's Day, to substantially increase the number of women entrepreneurs.
- India's first helicopter-taxi service was successfully launched in Bengaluru, Karnataka, drastically reducing travel time for commuters.
- The week-long 29th edition of the International Yoga Festival was held in Rishikesh, Uttarakhand.
- India's military is placed fourth on a global index that ranked 133 countries on the basis of their global military prowess, trailing behind only the US, Russia and China in that order. India's western neighbour Pakistan ranks 13 on the Global Firepower (GFP) list 2017.
- The Andaman Nicobar naval command organized the multinational mega event "Milan 2018" with theme 'Friendship Across the Seas' at Port Blair in Andaman & Nicobar islands.
- The 2018 Shigmotsav festival was held in Goa. It is the biggest festival for the Hindus in Goa.
- The Karnataka government launched the world's largest solar park 'Shakti Sthalaon' in Tumakuru district, about 180km from Bengaluru. The solar park has a capacity of 2,000 MW.
- The Tamil Nadu Government set up a 24-hour helpline that would provide information on education and offer guidance to students.

- The Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy concluded a large scale operational exercise in the Arabian Sea. The three week long exercise termed Exercise 'Paschim Leher' (XPL), tested the operational readiness of the Western Naval Command and the execution of its operational plans.
- India's Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) successfully tested its indigenously designed and developed third-generation anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) Nag in desert conditions.
- The 42nd Civil Accounts Day was celebrated by Indian Civil Accounts Service on March 1 in New Delhi to mark the 42nd anniversary of the beginning of the ICAS on this day in 1976.
- The All India Radio (AIR) and National Book Trust (NBT) signed an MoU to preserve and promote cultural heritage and folk songs sung on various occasions across the country.

AWARDS & HONOURS

Canadian mathematician Robert Langlands won the prestigious **Abel Prize** for developing a programme connecting representation theory to number theory. Named after the 19th century Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel, the prize was established by the Norwegian government in 2002 and first awarded a year later, to honour outstanding scientific work in the field of mathematics, a discipline not included among the Nobel prizes.

Actor Jackie Shroff's short film "Shunyata" won an award at **Best of India Short Film Festival** in Los Angeles, US. The 22-minute fiction film directed by Chintan Sarada was selected to be in top six from amongst thousands of entries.

The South Asian Cinema Foundation, a London-based organisation, received the **Frederick Pincott Award** for 2017 for promoting Hindi cinema in Britain for the last 18 years.

Karan Thapar was honoured with the 2017 **G.K. Reddy Memorial National Award for journalism** for his contribution in the field of journalism.

Indian filmmaker Nila Madhab Panda's Halkaa, which had its world premiere at the 21st Festival International du Film Pour Enfants de Montréal Film (FIFEM), bagged the **Grand Prix de Montreal** at the gala. Halkaa was selected among seven international children's films from different countries in the official competition of the festival.

Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) received the **'Most Informative Pavilion' Award** in Pride of India Expo organized as part of the 105th Indian Science Congress held at Imphal.

BUSINESS & CORPORATE

India's largest lender **SBI** and India Mortgage Guarantee Corporation (IMGC) signed a pact to offer mortgage guarantee scheme for prospective non-salaried and self-employed home loan customers. The offering will help increase home loan eligibility up to 15 per cent within the regulatory norms.

BILLS / ACTS / COMMITTEES / SCHEMES / POLICIES

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) gave its nod to form an Integrated Scheme on School Education by subsuming Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan and Teacher Education from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2020. It also allocated Rs. 75,000 crore for the same, a 20 per cent increase over the existing allocations.
- The Union Cabinet approved signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) for cooperation on the response to Oil and Chemical Pollution in the South Asian Seas Region. The MoU intends to promote closer cooperation between India and other maritime nations comprising the South Asian seas region namely Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka for protection and preservation of marine environment in the region.
- Giving a further fillip to the Government's mission of bringing electricity to every household and to empower the rural youth, Ministry of Power partnered with the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship to train the manpower in six states - Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh- for speedy implementation of its SAUBHAGYA scheme. SAUBHAGYA (Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojna) aims to achieve universal household electrification in all parts of the country in a time bound manner. Around 4 crore households are expected to get electricity connections under the scheme.
- The Ministry of External Affairs launched an initiative titled 'Videsh Aaya Pradesh ke Dwaar' in Hyderabad. The initiative is part of the enhanced public diplomacy outreach to take the objectives of the foreign policy to the common people. The initiative involves MEA's engagement with the regional media based in different cities across India who have carved their own space and have a unique and wide readership profile.
- The Union Cabinet approved the North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS), 2017 with financial outlay of Rs.3000 crores up to March, 2020. Government will provide necessary allocations for remaining period of scheme after assessment before March 2020.
- The Union Cabinet approved the launch of Ayushman Bharat -National Health Protection Mission in New Delhi. The scheme has the benefit cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year. The target beneficiaries under the scheme will be over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families.
- India and the European Union signed an agreement that will enable them to share earth observation data from each other's satellite.
- NITI Aayog released comprehensive roadmaps and detailed timelines for its initiative 'Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E)' project. These roadmaps, which operate between 2018 to 2020, lay out detailed interventions which will be taken by the three participating States- Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha – aiming to become 'Role Model States' in school education. These roadmaps present the first-of-its-kind, customized, action-oriented programmes, outlining interventions at the individual, district and State level.

ECONOMY & FINANCE

- The Asian Development Bank and the Government of India signed a \$80 million loan to help modernize technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions and improve the skills ecosystem in the state of Himachal Pradesh to boost employability of the state's youth.
- As per data released by Union ministry of Social Justice, a total number of 4,13,670 beggars are residing in India, including 2,21,673 males and 1,91,997 females. West Bengal topped the list followed by Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. Lakshadweep ranked the lowest.
- The Government of India decided to declare 2018 as 'National Year of Millets.' This is in alignment with the Centre's thrust on promoting cultivation of millets like ragi and jowar on a mission mode to achieve nutritional security.
- The government constituted a task force for redrafting the 50-year old income tax law in sync with the economic needs of the country. The six-member task force will have Arbind Modi, CBDT Member (Legislation) as the Convener and other members.
- The Estimates Committee headed by Dr Murlidhar Joshi recommended effective measures to modernise and upgrade the country's security systems at par with the developed countries.
- India was ranked at 78th, lower than its emerging market peers like Brazil and China, among 114 countries on the World Economic Forum's Energy Transition Index that was topped by Sweden. The report titled "Fostering Effective Energy Transition", ranks countries on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability.
- Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$120 million loan agreement for completion of works for double-tracking and electrification of railways tracks along high-density corridors to improve operational efficiency of Indian railways.

PEOPLE IN NEWS

Egyptian President **Abdel Fattah al-Sisi** was reelected for a second term with a sweeping majority, garnering nearly 92 per cent of vote share.

Aleksandra Liashkova from Belarus was crowned Miss Supermodel Worldwide 2018 at a grand finale in Gurugram.

Atul M. Gotsurve, an Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of 2004 batch, was appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Chandra Bhushan Kumar, a 1995 batch IAS officer, was appointed as the new Deputy Election Commissioner of India.

Indu Bhushan - the Director General of East Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Manila, Philippines - was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Centre's ambitious Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission (ABNHPM). The Union cabinet had recently approved the launch of the Ayushman Bharat mission. The scheme has the benefits cover of Rs 5 lakh per family per year. The target beneficiaries of the proposed scheme will be more than 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable section.

The Government of India nominated 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.

The Supreme Court appointed Justice **Jawad Rahim**, judicial member of National Green Tribunal (NGT), as the acting chairperson of the green panel.

Eminent Hindi poet and Jnanpith awardee **Kedarnath Singh** passed away at age 84.

Krishnaswamy Vijay Raghavan, one of the most distinguished biologists of the country, was appointed as the new Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India.

Les Payne, a fearless Pulitzer Prize-winning reporter from US, passed away at the age of 76. He combined a passion for racial equality in the newsroom with a flair for deep, and often dangerous investigative journalism.

Well known Malayalam writer **M Sukumaran** passed away at age 76. Sukumaran was the recipient of the Kendra Sahitya Akademi and Kerala Sahitya awards in 2006 and 1976.

Peruvian regional governor **Martin Vizcarra** was sworn in as the country's new president, after his predecessor Pedro Pablo Kuczynski abruptly resigned.

Raj Kumar Dorendra Singh, the former Chief Minister of Manipur, passed away at the age of 83. He had been chief minister of the state four times between 1974 and 1993.

Ravi Kota, a 1993 batch IAS officer, was appointed Joint Secretary of 15th Finance Commission under the Department of Economic Affairs.

Sangeeta Bahadur, an IFS officer of 1987 batch, was appointed as the new Ambassador of India to the Republic of Belarus.

Satya Pal Malik, the Governor of Bihar, was given additional charge as the Governor of Odisha after Dr. SC Jamir completed his five-year tenure.

Veteran director **Shekhar Kapur** was appointed chairman of the central panel of the 65th National Film Awards. The central panel comprises a chairperson and 10 other members, including five regional chairpersons who head the respective regional panels.

Vineet Joshi, a 1992-batch IAS officer and former CBSE chairperson and secretary, was appointed as the new Director-General of the National Testing Agency (NTA) for a period of 5 years. NTA has been initiated by the government to conduct entrance examinations for higher educational institutions organised by the CBSE, AICTE and other bodies.

Myanmar's parliament elected **Win Myint**, a loyalist of Aung San Suu Kyi, as the new President, while the latter retained her executive authority over the government.

SPORTS

Anish Bhanwala from India clinched gold medal in men's 25m Rapid Fire Pistol event at the ISSF Junior Shooting World Cup in Sydney, Australia.

Baskaran Adhiban from India clinched the title in the 33rd Reykjavik Open Chess Tournament 2018.

Indian para-athlete **Deepa Malik** won a gold medal in the F-53/54 category javelin event at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix in Dubai, thus securing the No. 1 rank in Asia in F53 Javelin category.

Indian shooter **Elavenil Valarivan** shattered the world record and bagged the gold medal in 10m women's air rifle event at the ISSF Junior World Cup in Sydney.

Hockey Punjab won the 8th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship title.

Juan Martin del Potro from Argentina won the Indian Wells Masters Tennis tournament 2018 by defeating Roger Federer in the finals.

KL Rahul was named as the 'Cricketer of the Year' in the 6th edition of Wisden India Almanack.

India's **Manu Bhaker** clinched Gold in the Women's 10-metre Air Pistol Individual and Team events at the ISSF Junior World Cup in Sydney, Australia.

Indian shooter **Muskan** clinched gold medal in women's 25m pistol event at the ISSF Junior World Cup in Sydney, Australia.

Ace shuttler **P V Sindhu** was named the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent for the opening ceremony of the 2018 Commonwealth Games (CWG), scheduled to be held in Gold Coast, Australia on April 4.

Pankaj Advani won the 2018 Asian Billiards Championships.

Purva Barve from India clinched the Women's Singles (Under-19) title at the Israel Junior Badminton tournament 2018.

Sebastian Vettel of Germany, a racing driver currently driving in Formula One for Scuderia Ferrari, won the 2018 Formula One Australian Grand Prix tournament.

Vidarbha cricket team, the champions of 2018 Ranji Trophy, lifted their first Irani Trophy cricket tournament.

MISCELLANEOUS

World

- The International Day of Forests was observed on March 21 with the theme "Forests and Sustainable Cities".
- The World Theatre Day was celebrated all over the world on 27th March.
- From 20:30 (8:30 pm) to 21:30 (9:30 pm) local time on March 24, towns and cities around the world celebrated Earth Hour by switching off their power. Earth Hour is a worldwide movement organised by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). The event is held annually, encouraging individuals, communities, and businesses to turn off non-essential electric lights for one whole hour, from 8:30 pm to 9:30 pm on a specific day towards the end of March, as a symbol of commitment to the planet. It was started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007.
- The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and Transatlantic Slave Trade was observed on March 25 with the theme "Remember Slavery: Triumphs and Struggles for Freedom and Equality".
- The World Tuberculosis Day was observed on March 24 with the theme "Wanted: Leaders for a TB-Free World".
- The first G20 meeting of 2018, of finance ministers and central bank governors was held in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- Despite economic volatility in Europe due to uncertainty around Brexit as well as increased political volatility in the region overall, many of its cities still offer the world's highest quality of living, according to Mercer's 20th annual Quality of Living survey. Vienna topped the ranking for the 9th year running, followed by Zurich. Honolulu ranked first for city sanitation, an important factor in cities' attractiveness.
- The World Water Day was observed on 22 March to raise awareness about the importance of water, with the theme 'Nature for Water'.
- The World Poetry Day was celebrated on March 21 across the world.
- The International Day of Happiness was observed on March 20 with the theme "Share Happiness".
- The International Air Transport Association (IATA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the National Aviation University to enhance human resource availability in India's aviation industry. The IATA is a trade association of the world's airlines and is headquartered in Montreal, Canada.

India

- The Madhya Pradesh government raised the retirement age of state government employees to 62 years from the current 60 years.

- The first mega food park of Rajasthan was inaugurated by Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal at Roopangarh village near Ajmer.
- ISRO successfully launched GSAT-6A telecommunication satellite using the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F08) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota.
- India's first Insect Museum was inaugurated at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University in Coimbatore.
- The Department of Posts under Ministry of Communications launched 'Cool EMS Service' between India and Japan – a one-way service from Japan to India which allows customers in India to import Japanese food items for personal use which is allowed under Indian regulations.
- As per a disclosure by the Union Minister of Tribal Affairs Jastwantsinh Bhabhor, Madhya Pradesh has the highest number of fully covered tribal habitations with the safe drinking water in the country followed by Odisha and Jharkhand.
- Surat district of Gujarat has become India's first district to have 100% solar powered Primary Health Centers (PHCs) to combat the issue of global warming.
- The Airport Authority of India recently signed a MoU with Assam government under its Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) initiative for sustainable development of human settlements at villages in Kamrup district.
- ISRO tied up with Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) for the production of space-grade lithium-ion cells.
- The world's longest sandstone cave named Krem Puri was discovered in Meghalaya.
- Chandigarh became North India's first city to install digital automatic speed gun cameras for traffic management.
- "First Indian Sign Language Dictionary of 3000 words" was launched by Thaawarchand Gehlot, Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment. The dictionary has been developed by Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre (ISLR&TC). The basic aim of developing the ISL Dictionary is to remove communications barriers between the deaf and hearing communities as it is focused on providing more information in Indian sign language.
- The Andhra Pradesh government launched a multi-utility vehicle "NAIPUNYA RATHAM (or World on Wheels)", which aims to bring technology to the remote corners.
- The Punjab Government observed the martyrdom day of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh, Shaheed Sukhdev and Shaheed Rajguru as 'Youth Empowerment Day' on March 23, 2018.
- The Kerala Government declared Jackfruit as its official fruit with the aim to promote the 'Kerala Jackfruit' as a brand in markets across the country and abroad, showcasing its organic and nutritious qualities.
- Bihar celebrated its 106th foundation day on March 22, 2018.

- The Government of India approved the setting up of a Plastic Park in Deoghar District. The project would be set up at a cost of Rs. 120 crores in an area of 150 acres and a range of polymer products including woven sacks, moulded furniture, water tanks, bottles, pipes mosquito nets, etc would be manufactured.
- The 106th edition of the Indian Science Congress will be held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh from 3rd to 7th January, 2019.
- The first phase of Indo-French joint naval exercise 'Varuna 2018' was in the Arabian Sea off the Goa coast.
- A 3-day International Yoga Fest was organized by the Ministry of AYUSH in New Delhi.
- The first-ever India-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction was held in New Delhi.
- The Odisha government is set to collaborate with the Thailand-based Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for strengthening its early warning services and enhancing preparedness for management of hazards in the State.
- Andhra Pradesh became the first Indian state to conduct a household survey exclusively to estimate the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) at the state and district levels.
- India's first cloned Assamese buffalo male calf 'Sach-Gaurav' was born in Haryana.