



# livelihoods

*today and tomorrow*

**August 2018**

## **Monthly Livelihoods Update**

*“A month that was !”*

**Agriculture**

**Rural Development**

**Education/Skills/Employment**

**Economy**

**Schemes/Policies/Initiatives**

**Updates from Weeklies**

# Index

**1.Agriculture**

**2.Rural Development**

**3.Education/Skills/Employment**

**4.Economy**

**5.Schemes/Policies/Initiatives**

**6.Partnerships**

**7.Miscellaneous**

**8.Update from weeklies**

# Summary of Daily Livelihoods Update

## Agriculture

- According to the OECD-ICRIER report is stating that India's agro-food sector is a critical juncture, facing multiple challenges. And, it suggested to the government to launch new bold policy initiatives and accelerative existing reforms to achieve higher agriculture growth and ensure better income to farmers.
- Karnataka Budget: Chief Minister announced a farm loan waiver up to Rs. 2 lakhs of farmers who have defaulted and Rs. 25,000 for those who have running accounts.
- Saddled with huge stock, the government plans to offload 7-8 million tonnes of fresh wheat in the open market at Rs 1,890 per quintal rate for meeting the demand from flour millers and other bulk consumers.
- The total sown area as on 6th July, 2018, as per reports received from States, stands at 333.76 lakh hectares as compared to 388.89 lakh hectares at this time last year. It is reported that....:
  - Rice has been sown/transplanted in 67.25 lakh ha,
  - Pulses in 33.60 lakh ha,
  - Coarse cereals in 57.35 lakh ha,
  - Oil seeds in 63.59 lakh ha,
  - Sugarcane in 50.44 lakh ha,
  - Cotton in 54.60 lakh ha.
- According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) study report noted that Indian domestic market regulations and trade policies have played a big role in depressing farmers' incomes.
- The stock of foodgrains in the Central Pool as on 01.07.2018 was 650.53 lakh tons against the minimum buffer norms of 411.20 lakh tons for July-September quarter which includes 50 lakh tons of strategic reserve. This is adequate to meet the requirement under NFSA, Other Welfare Schemes (OWS) and Additional allocation (natural calamity, festival, etc).
- In India, the government's decision to hike minimum support prices (MSPs) has raised the prospect of higher food inflation. FAO said that rising tensions in international trade relations have affected most food markets. In cereals, for example, wheat and maize prices fell despite a worsening production outlook. But rice prices increased due to a tight supply situation.
- NITI Aayog vice-chairman made a case for promoting Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) in states, saying it would help in doubling farmers' income by 2022. Under ZBNF, neither fertilizer nor pesticide is used and only 10 per cent of water is to be used for irrigation as compared to traditional farming technique. Farmers use only local seeds and produce their own seeds. It can promote ZBNF under the two farm sector schemes-Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana and Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana.
- According to the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Agriculture in India suffers negative total revenues, implying that assets going out of the sector are more than those flowing in. Farming, therefore, has steadily become an unprofitable occupation. The states, India is only one of three

countries (of the 26 tracked) where this has happened. And, it blames an obsession with keeping food prices low, to avoid inflation, as the main reason for this.

- Data from agriculture ministry shows, total rainfall shortfall since June 1 has widened to 8% after being 5% lower than average at the end of June. As a result, planting of rice, the season's main crop, is already 15% lower while the area under pulses is 19% lower than the acreage this time last year.
- According to Global Climate Risk Index, India is ranked 6th in the list of countries most vulnerable to climate change, and it is evident from the frequent occurrence of extreme weather events like floods, cyclones and droughts. Climate change affects the monsoon rains that drive agriculture in India.
- Karnataka state government announces support prices for mango farmers and it has decided to support price for Mango of Rs.2.50 per kg.
- The Vice President of India has called for promoting zero-budget natural in agriculture to make farming viable, sustainable and profitable. He was interacted with Governor of Himachal Pradesh and other Agricultural Experts.
- Agriculture in India suffers negative total revenues, implying that assets going out of the sector are more than those flowing in. In India, farming is unprofitable for nearly 2 decades. According to a study by the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), a grouping of 36 countries and research firm ICRIER.
- India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) said, the current problem faced by farmers is essentially an agricultural distress and not a generalised rural distress, and farmers' distress is essentially emanating from shrinking agricultural margins.
- Paddy farming in large scale has taken up in Rajouri district in Jammu and Kashmir by directly benefitting from the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY).
- The group of minister (GoM) on sugar cess headed by Assam finance minister, however, endorsed reduction in tax rate on ethanol to 12% from 18%. They, tasked by the Goods and Services Tax Council rejected the idea of imposing cess on sugar to help clear dues to sugarcane farmers, on the back of declining sugarcane arrears.
- Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Incumbent said, Farmers should not depend only on agriculture but also look at other options like dairying or animal husbandry in order to increase their income.
- A team of scientists at ICAR assesses that, rice farming is the largest single use of land on earth, for producing food. Rice is also the basic food crop and a part of the national economy in India. Farmers often use chemical fertilizers to increase the production capacity. But frequent use of chemical fertilizers changes soil bacteria community structure and disturbs the ecosystem.
- Agricultural tractors are extensively used in farming and agriculture to improve agricultural productivity by performing ploughing, hauling and harvesting. Global agricultural tractors market witnessing decline in sales after booming market in 2013. Major market players are now focusing towards to enter untapped markets and to provide farmers with more economical agriculture tractors.
- Eminent agriculture economist V S Vyas said, sustainability of farmer producer organisations (FPOs) is the key to push the development agenda of agriculture in India especially for small and marginal farmers.

- The growth of India's agriculture sector has also boosted the agricultural machinery market in India. According to Research, the Indian agricultural machinery market is projected to grow at a CAGR of around 6.6% to reach INR 769.2 billion by FY 2022.
- Six states that together contribute nearly half of India's rice production have received monsoon rains considerably less than normal till date in the current kharif crop season.
- Vice President of India said 'Agriculture' should be on top agenda of Government in New India Conclave being organized by Y4D Foundation.
- Union Agriculture Minister said, India has earned more than Rs 18,000 crore foreign exchange per year from export of basmati rice, especially from the variety 1121 developed by the country's top agri-institute ICAR.
- Union Minister of Agriculture Holds Review Meeting in Guwahati on Development of Agri-Horticulture sector of Assam. After review meeting he said, Fish and Milk Production Increases in Assam.
- According to the Global Agricultural Robots Market projected to grow at CAGR of +20% from 2016 to 2022. Agricultural robots are attracting attention among farmers because they need to produce food effectively and ensure sustainability. The robot is deployed to speed up the agricultural process with minimal human intervention.
- Fertilizer major IFFCO Ltd has partnered with Singapore-based technology firm iMandi Pte Ltd to launch an e-commerce app 'IFFCO iMandi'. This e-commerce app to help 5.5 crore farmers buy, sell agri produce and get loans.
- Union Railway Minister said, Railways is drawing up a plan to make milk available at railway stations across the country to promote its consumption.
- Haryana Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister said that farmers of Haryana will get a benefit of about Rs 6,000 to Rs 18,000 per acre after Central Government approved a steep rise in the minimum support price of crops, giving farmers the promised 50 per cent return on input costs.
- The government increased Fair and Remunerative Price (FRP) of Sugarcane by Rs 20 per quintal to Rs 275 for the next marketing year beginning October.
- Pulses Imports to India may fall to the lowest in almost two decades after centre raised import taxes (as high as 50% on some pulses) and restricted overseas purchases to bolster domestic prices. This would be a boost to the farmers in rain fed region who are the main growers of pulses.
- India occupies the top spot in milk production in the world and contributes 19% to world milk production. Milk production has grown by 23.69% in 2014-18 as compared to UPA's 2010-14.
- Whey milk powder import duty has been increased from 30% to 40%.
- The officers of agriculture department, the Government of Tripura have informed it that paddy transplanting is very important in Tripura for paddy farmers because the density of population of the State has increased to 350 per sq.km.in 2011.
- According to the Agriculture Ministry's data, farmers benefited from the crop insurance scheme by all 17 insurance companies – five public and 12 private –empanelled under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) registered a margin of Rs 15,029 crore as they paid out claims of a mere Rs 2,767 crore as against the Rs 17,796 crore collected as premium.

- Union Government is aiming to reorient the agriculture sector by focusing on an income-centeredness in addition to pure production centeredness approach. The Department has, therefore, been implementing various schemes to meet this objective viz. Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme, Neem Coated Urea, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY), National Agriculture Market Scheme (e-NAM), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Interest Subvention Scheme etc.
- Union Government has set a target of doubling of farmers' income by the year 2022. The Government has constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee under the Chairmanship of Chief Executive Officer, National Rainfed Area Authority, Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare to examine issues relating to doubling of farmers' income and recommend a strategy to achieve doubling of farmers' income in real terms by the year 2022.
- The Bihar government hiked subsidy on diesel by Rs 10 a litre to Rs 50 that will be given to farmers for irrigation purpose in view of the drought-like situation prevailing in the state. Delayed onset of monsoon in Bihar has led to a 48 per cent rainfall deficit so far, officials said.
- State Principal Secretary (Agriculture) of Telangana government said would soon come out with a policy to promote food processing and value addition to farm produce, covering agriculture and allied areas, aimed at providing a better price to farmers.
- Minister of Environment Forest and Climate Change has said in Rajya Sabha that 'A scientific study' commissioned by the government to assess the impact of climate change has projected reduction in crop yields for irrigated maize, wheat and rain-fed rice.
- The Centre has informed in the Parliament that the number of suicides by farmers and agricultural labourers during 2016 has come down approximately by 9.77 per cent.
- The Punjab government releases Rs.760 cr to clear pending arrears power subsidy for farmers, besides others payments towards agriculture and allied activities. All the pending VAT/GST bills have also been cleared with release of these funds.
- Truckers' strike: 90% of food produce at stake.
- At present, the Union Government is not considering any loan waiver Scheme for farmers, as such, waivers may impact the credit culture of a State by incentivizing the defaulters, even if they are in a position to repay the loan, and thus, create/amplify the moral hazard by discouraging those borrowers who have been regular in repaying their loans.
- The Government has set a target of doubling of farmers' income by the year 2022.
- India offered Uganda a \$200 million credit line to fund energy and agriculture projects.
- Delhi CM announces solar energy scheme aimed at raising farmers' income by 3-5 times.
- In India, about 15% of the land under tobacco cultivation has been shifted to other crops in the last three years under the government crop diversification programme (CDP). Tobacco is grown in the area of about 4.5 lakh hectares over 15 states and according to the agriculture ministry, over 67000 hectares have been shifted to pulses and vegetables. Tobacco accounts for less than 0.3% of India's arable land.
- Water storage level of 91 major reservoirs of the country goes up by nine percent which is 41% of total storage capacity of these reservoirs.

- East African nations, India signed a slew of MoU's on cooperation in defence, agriculture and green energy sector.
- The Vice President of India was addressing IT/ITES Industry Awards, organized by HYSEA in Hyderabad and he has said that the Information Technology must also focus on Agri-Business and Agri-Markets to improve the farmer's income because they are un-remunerative.
- Union Minister of State of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has said in Lok Sabha, India's milk production is estimated to have increased by 6.6 per cent to 176.35 million tonnes during the last financial year.
- The Government removed restrictions on urea import for industrial, non-agriculture grade.
- The industry official told a massive milk glut in India could hit international prices for dry milk powder after government subsidies aimed at supporting local farmers look set to spur a nine-fold surge in exports.
- The Vice President of India addressed the National Consultation on Leveraging Agriculture for Nutrition organised by MS Swaminathan Research Foundation, in Chennai. While speaking he said that government, civil society, scientists and researchers must share knowledge and expertise with farmers to make agriculture sustainable and nutrition-rich.
- The Prime Minister urged the industrialists to invest heavily in agriculture sector to improve the lot of farmers.
- Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare participated in the launching of Meghalaya Milk Mission in Shillong. For this project, the Minister has announced Rs 215 crore for Meghalaya Milk Mission through NCDC.
- Union minister urges farmers to engage in organic farming. He has visited an organic farm at Lawsohtun in Meghalaya and assured all possible help to the farmers.
- The Agriculture Ministry has suggested several measures including setting up of a system for forecasting demand, green logistics corridor for perishables, and use of e-commerce, to boost shipments of agri commodities to USD 60 billion by 2022.
- In India during 2017-18 the production of raw cashew nuts has increased to all time high at 8.17 lakh metric tonne and registered growth of 4% compared to previous production of 7.79 lakh metric tonne and 21% increase compared to 2015-16 production of 6.70 lakh metric tonne.
- The Indian Meteorological Department data shows, with the four-month rainy season almost half over, the rainfall deficiency in the eastern part of India, especially in Bihar and Jharkhand, has crossed the 40 per cent mark, while a quarter of the country has received "deficient" rainfall.
- A government spokesperson said, at least 30 people have lost their lives due to heavy rain in different parts of the in Uttar Pradesh state. Such as Agra, Mainpuri, Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Kasganj, Meerut, Bareilly and some other places.
- According to the Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences and said India to give flash flood warning to Asian nations. That means India will have to develop a customized model that can issue the advance warning of floods in Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and Thailand.
- Women SHGs into fertilizers business with the support of Telangana SERP and launched the first phase in eight shops in the state.

- 63,000 people affected by the floods in the five districts of Assam state. India Metrological Department (IMD) forecast more rainfall in coming five days in the state.
- According to the World Bank (WB) latest report, climate change will affect half of the population living standards by 2050 in the country. It would be cost 2.8% in Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Around 75% of people depends on agriculture and allied activities, falling yields because of climate changes lead to decline in living standards of the people.
- According to the latest study, our national capital city Delhi placed in 3rd in the list of the cities reporting more premature deaths due to air pollution:
  - In 2016, due to the air pollution around 15,000 people died in Delhi.
  - In the list of most deaths due to air pollution, Shanghai 1st place with 17,600 premature deaths due to air pollution and Beijing city is in 2nd place.
  - Air pollution is emerging main threat and there is need for strong air quality management system.
  - Environment Ministry is preparing National Premier Action Plan (NPAP) to address air pollution problem in Delhi.

## Rural Development

- Union Transport Minister has said, under Sagarmala project, Centre will provide 500 crore rupees to Shipping Corporation of India to lease out cruises to promote cruise tourism. Union Transport Minister and Union Minister of State for Tourism today interacted with associates of travel and trade fraternity concerned with cruise and other related matters.
- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard) today said it plans to disburse Rs. 10,000 crore as financial assistance to Punjab for 2018-19. Stating this, NABARD Chief General Manager said NABARD had disbursed Rs 8,000 crore to Punjab for the agriculture and rural development in 2017-18.
- Government deploys 800 Deputy Secretaries, Under-Secretaries, and Director-level officers, drawn from Ministries as diverse as Defence and Urban Affairs have been assigned about 75 villages to visit, as part of the Extended Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (EGSA) from June 1 to August 15. In total, 49,178 villages and most with a majority SC/ST population are being targeted.
- Assam Chief Minister emphasized on productive use of funds released to the women Self Help Groups (SHGs) for the uplift of their economic condition.
- Union Minister for Coal, Railways and Corporate Affairs said Centre plans to introduce solar cooking facilities for every rural household in next 4-5 years.
- PM Modi interacted with those associated with women Self Help Groups across India via video conferencing over NaMo app on Thursday. PM Modi said the interaction was aimed at highlighting how women Self Help Groups are bringing in a positive change at the grassroots level.
- The Sub-Group of Chief Ministers on Agriculture and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is set to hold its first meeting to chalk out policies towards meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's stated goal of "doubling farmers' income by 2022".
- UIDAI chairman said more than Rs 90,000 crore are estimated as reported savings or gains by the

departments of petroleum and natural gas, food and public distribution, rural development and others.

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi said when he was interacting with women. In India, crores of women are part of SHGs. In this regard, financial independence was necessary to make a woman assertive and empowered. They are empowered “bulwark against societal evils”. Along with their diligence, persistence, and collective effort was an inspiration.
- According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), an arm of the United Nations report, If 40% of India’s electricity comes from renewables by 2030 (from 7.5% in February 2018), the country could add about 3 million new jobs.

- Development financial institution NABARD has doubled its financial assistance to Odisha in the last two years. The total financial resource support to the state has doubled to Rs 171.95 billion in 2017-18 under both institutional credit support and infrastructure development from Rs 83.68 billion clocked during 2015-16.

- Union Finance Minister and Minister of Corporate Affairs said at NABARD event, India may be fifth largest economy by next year with its growth rates.

- Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister said that preparations were underway to link MGNREGA with agriculture work to increase income of farmers. Under MGNREGA beautification of ponds, plantation and cow shelter construction can be done.

- Vice President of India addressed Women empowerment is not only a national goal but also a global agenda in International Conference on ‘Empowering Women: Fostering Entrepreneurship, Innovation and Sustainability’.

- State Energy Minister of Bihar said a survey would soon be conducted for generating solar energy in flood-prone areas of Bihar and assessing future possibilities. He said our future depends on green energy.

- According to a study of a UN-led initiative, India is among the nine most populous countries where people are at risk from lack of access to cooling as global warming continues to threaten health and climate.

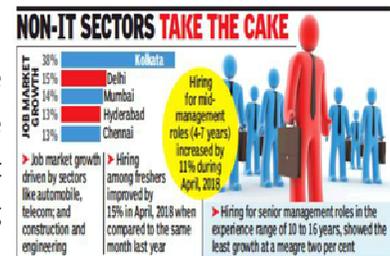
- The Prime Minister interacted with citizens from villages across the country which has been electrified since 2014. The interaction covered the beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana - 'Saubhagya' scheme, through video bridge. He was expressing delight in interacting with the villagers from the recently electrified 18000 villages in India.

- The Government is promoting development of solar energy in the country by providing various fiscal and promotional incentives. A target of installing 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by the year 2022 has been set.

- The Ministry has notified in May 2017 the following schemes under Section 7 of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016. Aadhaar Linkages with Notified Schemes such are includes...

→ Pre-Matric Scholarship for ST students and Post-Matric Scholarship for ST students

→ National Fellowship and Scholarship for Higher Education of ST students and National Overseas Scholarships for ST candidates



→ Scheme of Grant in aid to Voluntary Organizations working for the welfare of STs,

→Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGS), Vocational Training in Tribal Areas and Institutional Support for Development and Marketing of Tribal Product.

- Principal Secretary of rural development, Uttar Pradesh government, has issued orders to all districts magistrates to ensure compulsory verification of various development works carried out under the Chief Minister Samagra Gramya Unnayan Yojana (CMSGY).
- Vice President of India addressing the Guru Puja, Samkalp, a Project by Jan Kalyan Shiksha Samiti in the meeting, he said benefits of government schemes should reach the poorest of the poor.
- Union Government has reduced the minimum annual deposit requirement for accounts under Sukanya Samridhi Yojana (SSY) to Rs. 250 from Rs. 1,000 earlier. The move will enable more people to take advantage of the girl child savings scheme.
- Under Swachh Bharat Mission more than 88% works have been completed in Assam. Altogether 13,992 villages have been declared open defecation free so far in the state covering 244 Blocks.
- Hundreds of tribal villages of northern Tripura district of Dhalai got LED bulbs under Pradhana Manthri Ujala Yojana (PMUY).
- Irrigation and Public Health Minister of Himachal Pradesh said it is aiming to tap rainwater and use it optimally in agriculture and its allied activities. For this, a water conservation project with an estimated cost of Rs 4,751.24 crore has been prepared.
- Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas has said that under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), a deposit free LPG connection is given in the name of an adult woman member of an eligible BPL family including families having differently abled/divyang persons identifies through Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC).
- NITI Aayog, India's premier policy 'think tank' and The Rockefeller Foundation signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) to advance the common goal of promoting research and innovation to guide policy-level thinking for rural electrification. This will be achieved through the exchange of knowledge and expertise, collaborative research, and by advancing rural electricity access models with the public and private sector stakeholders.
- MGNREGA is a demand driven wage employment programme and fund release to States/UTs is a continuous process and Central Government is making funds available keeping in view the demand for work. During the current FY 2018-19 (as on 20.07.2018), an amount of Rs. 34,290.14 crore has been released to States/UTs.
- The Government has adopted the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) Scheme for direct transfer of benefit into the bank/post office accounts of beneficiaries of schemes under National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) being disbursed of Old Age, Disability and Widows Pensions.
- Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY) aims at the overall development of selected SC majority villages. The performance of the scheme is being monitored in terms of achievement of the targets listed out in the Village Development Plan (VDP) prepared for each village.
- Founder of New Delhi-based Development Alternatives stated, Social Impact Organization 'Development Alternatives' Builds Rural Mini-Malls in India to Create Jobs for Women.

- Chief Minister of Bihar asserted that poor families left out in socio-economic caste census (SECC) should be given benefit of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojan (PMAY) and clarified that necessary the state government would bear the cent percent financial burden for it.
- Prime Minister of India launched various projects worth 60,000 crore rupees at the ground-breaking ceremony in Uttar Pradesh capital Lucknow. The ceremony was held to implement 81 of over 1,000 MoUs signed at the Uttar Pradesh Investors' Summit organised earlier this year.
- President of India launched the Sanchar Kranti Yojna in Chhattisgarh. Under this scheme Government of Chhattisgarh will distribute 4G smart phones along with SIM cards and free data to 50 lakh beneficiaries both in rural and urban areas. The smart phones are pre-loaded with an interesting app named Goth, which means conversation in Chhattisgarhi language. Through this app information about various welfare schemes of the Government will be shared with beneficiaries. Information about agriculture, skill development, employment, and education will also be given through the app.
- Government of India launched a “Swachh Bharat Summer Internship - 100 hours of Swachhta” programme for the students of Universities and Higher Education Institutions. The students are to devote approximately 100 hours conducting Swachhta- related activities in villages selected by them and approved by their parent institution.
- Under the Mid Day Meal Scheme (MDMS), an elaborate monitoring mechanism is in place to ensure quality food.
- The government has adopted a multi-pronged strategy for the overall development of tribal people living across the country, which includes support for education, health, sanitation, water supply, skill development, livelihood etc.
- The Government of India has approved a new scheme namely Mahila Shakti Kendra for implementation during 2017-18 upto 2019-20 to empower rural women through community participation.
- Minister of State for Women and Child Development said in Lok Sabha. Under Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme Rs. 5439.14 Lakhs released for the empowerment of rural women for the FY 2017-18.
- The Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2018 announced by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation on July 13<sup>th</sup>, 2018, was launched by three States this week.

### **Education/Skills/Employment:**

- In Puduchery, The Vice President of India has said that sports should be made as a compulsory subject in Schools and Colleges and extra marks should be given in Examinations and there should also be a quota for employment for Sport Persons.
- The Department of School Education and Literacy has formulated the Samagra Shiksha Scheme to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education throughout the country with effect from the year 2018-19.
- Ministry of Tribal Affairs approves setting up of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) in States/ UTs from allocated grants. As per Union Budget 2018-19, by the year 2022, every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons, will have an EMRS.
- The Union Minister for Human Resource Development said, National Achievement Survey (NAS) has been

conducted to increase focus on learning outcomes in quality of elementary education.

- The Government has been promoting self defence training to girls under the erstwhile centrally sponsored scheme of Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA). A total of 170426 schools receive approval for self defence training for girl students (Classes IX to XII) during last 3 years.
- The Government of India has launched Samagra Shiksha - An Integrated Scheme to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education.
- Ministry of Tribal Affairs released Rs. 448362 lakh for Pre and Post Matric Scholarship for ST students from 2015-16 to 2017-18.
- Lok Sabha passes bill allowing detention for class 5 and 8 kids.
  - This amendment Bill of 2017 passed today the RTE Act which had no detention policy.
  - Detention of children (those who fail) is expected to increase the learning outcomes. The move is partially aligned with the recommendations of TS Subramanian Committee .
  - Under RTE Act, Madhya Pradesh government admitted 68 HIV affected children into private schools. This is a result of landmark decision by SC which asked all states to include HIV positive kids in disadvantaged category regardless of financial background and give them RTE benefits. MP is the first state to implement the order.
- The government is considering the introduction of a rights-based legislation for skill training in India, in line with those in Germany and South Korea under flagship programme, Skill India Mission. The next step in skill development would be to back it with an act that entitles millions of youth entering the workforce a right to be skilled, a senior government official told.
- Chairman and Managing Director of Bharat Dynamics Limited (BDL) said a PSU under the Union Ministry of Defence, that has two units in Telangana and one in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh, is focussing on corporate social responsibility in the two Telugu States.
- According to research conducted by the National Institute of Skill Development (NISD), nearly 300 million youth are currently underemployed or unemployed, and presently only 2% of the country's total workforce has undergone skills training.
- Minister of Technical Education and Training and Skill Development, West Bengal inaugurated the project aims to train 1125 youth in the next three years in association with DDUGKY and Utkarsh Bangla Ambuja Cements Ltd. He said, we have a target to introduce 6 lakhs skilled manpower this year.
- Union Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister along with Uttarakhand Chief Minister reviewed the status of various skill initiatives in the state and suggested measures to identify areas of improvement. Framework of Skill Ecosystem in Uttarakhand will be prepared in the next two months. Under this scheme, the state government with the help of Centre will train 40 lakh people aging between 15-59 to generate skills and employability.
- The Union Government is implementing a flagship scheme known as Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) on pan-India basis which enables prospective youth to take up Short Term Training (STT) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) through accredited and affiliated training centers.
- National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) conducted force labour survey, the estimated female Worker

Population Ratio (%) on usual status basis in the country during 2009-10 and 2011-12 are 26.6% and 23.7% respectively.

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation said despite increasing global protectionism, India's export will continue to register healthy growth rates and is expected to touch USD 350 billion in the current fiscal. The Minister has spoken at the 2nd Services Excellence Awards and Summit – 2018 organized by ASSOCHAM.
- According to traders and industry associations, the six-day-old indefinite trucks strike by transporters across the country has pushed up the prices of vegetables and fruits and started impacting factory operations at some places.
- Employment generation and improving employability is the priority of the Government. The government has taken various steps for generating employment in the country and provided schemes like PMEGP, MGNREGs, DDU-GKY, and DAY-NULM.

## Economy

- Fresh fruit importer IG international has tied up with Camet Trading, Peru's leading fresh and processed fruit trader, to import fresh Peruvian avocados to India.
- The Indian rupee tumbled for the second straight session to hit a fresh closing low of 68.95.
- The Reserve Bank of India will issue new Rs. 100 notes, which would be smaller in size than the present ones. "The new denomination has motif of Rani ki Vavon the reverse, depicting the country's cultural heritage," the RBI said.
- The GST Council has pruned the 28 per cent slab by cutting tax rates on 191 goods over the last one year, leaving just 35 items, including AC, digital camera, video recorders, dishwashing machine and automobiles, in the highest tax bracket.
- Prime Minister of India says India is emerging as a global manufacturing and start-up hub.
- Ministry of Commerce said, with increasing economic ties with India, the UAE has committed USD 75 billion towards infrastructure NSE 0.84% development in the country.
- Wholesale Inflation hits over 4 Year high of 5.77% in June:
  - Vegetable Prices grew by 8.12% in June
  - Primary articles that account for 1/5<sup>th</sup> of WPI grew by 5.3%
  - Fuel and Power Inflation grew at 16.18% in June
- Finance minister said the government is planning to simplify company laws and reduce legal hassles. This is expected to improve ease of doing business in the country.
- Secretary of Department of Industrial Policy and Reform Promotion stated, Andhra Pradesh has topped the ease of doing business rankings, while Telengana is in second and Haryana is in third position. Top ten lists are Jharkhand, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan and West Bengal. DIPP in collaboration with the World Bank conducts an annual reform exercise for all States/UTs under the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP).
- GSTN (GST Network) has been able to detect large number of tax defaulters with the help of data analytics

developed by Infosys. This would reduce human discretion and improve tax administration in the country.

- Minister of State (I/C) for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) stated in Lok Sabha, Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), aimed at generating employment in rural and urban areas of the country and has helped women entrepreneurs set up 30,437 projects during 2016-17 and 2017-18 with financial assistance of over Rs. 85,305 lakh.
- According to the Tea Board Commissioned recent study:
  - Tea per capita consumption in India is low. It is around 700 grams.
  - India is second largest tea producer with an average 12,00 million kg production per year. 64% of total population drinks tea.
  - Rural India is buying more packet tea especially in southern and western markets.
- One year of Goods Services Tax (GST):
  - Government is simplifying tax filing process in next six months.
  - GST revenue expected around 13 lakh crore in current financial year (FY 2018 - 19).
  - Decent increase in GST collections in the financial year.
- Jharkhand Chief Minister (CM) announced in 'Karigar Panchayat' meeting about the opening of the first "Khadi Mall" in the country. CM told that, within 15 days "Khadi Mall" will be opened in Heavy Engineering Corporation (HEC) in Ranchi, Jharkhand state.
- Indian government slashed import duties on 3,142 items from China and five other nations from Asia Pacific as part of Asia Pacific Trade Agreement (APTA) to liberalise trade among Asia Pacific nations. This new import duties will effect from 1 July 2018.
- According to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) latest Financial Stability Report (FSR), bad loans across listed banks crossed over Rs. 10 lakh crore as on 31 March 2018, and it may be increased. In this context, government facilitated banks to setup Asset Management Company (AMC) for resolution loans above Rs. 500 crore. AMC is an independent body which aims to prevent bad loans.
- On Monday thousands of shopkeepers and traders affiliated to Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) organized protests across the country against Flipkart - Walmart \$ 16 - billion deal. They told that, the Flipkart - Walmart deal will hit the small and medium size offline retailers and traders in the market.

## **Schemes/Policies/Initiatives**

- NITI Aayog, in collaboration with various ministries and industry partners, is organising 'MOVE: Global Mobility Summit' in New Delhi on 7th and 8<sup>th</sup> September, 2018.
- The SDF is planning a regional development bank to raise capital from the market and lend to projects in the region. The bank would for the first time make India a lead country in a multilateral financial institution.
- According to Union Civil Aviation Minister:
  - India is the fastest growing aviation market in the world.
  - Investment of 10 lakh crore rupees will be made to expand air service in the country. Aviation industry has gained 20 percent profit in past one year.

- Government will establish air cargo hub across the country in near future which will benefit the farmers most.
- KVIC launched its, in-house developed, single-umbrella e-marketing system named KIMIS. The system can be accessed from anywhere in the country for the sale and purchase of Khadi and Village Industries products.
- Election Commission of India launches Mobile App “cVIGIL” to enable citizens to report on violation of election code of conduct.
- According to BorjeEkholm, CEO at Ericsson, India will be market that leads into 5G.
- MP govt launches outstanding power bill waiver and subsidised power scheme ‘Sambal’ for labourers and poor families.
- Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh launched the Rs 800 crores project for ‘Improvement of Himachal Pradesh Forest Ecosystems Management and Livelihoods’. It is to be implemented in 6 districts of Kullu, Lahaul and Spiti, Mandi, Bilaspur, Shimla and Kinnaur.
- Karnataka has come up with an unique scheme 'Compete with China' to boost production of mass produced industrial goods in the lines of those flooding the Indian market from China and this will be promoted with the help of successful entrepreneurs of the state.
- Atal Innovation Mission has launched the Incubation Centre Monitoring and Evaluation Platform in July 2018 where data related to incubation performance is submitted by incubators every month. Over 550 startups mentored for incubation and funding support.
- According to the Public Affairs Index (PAI) 2018 released by the think tank Public Affairs Centre (PAC), Telangana among top 5 for best governance in the country. The other states in the top-5 list includes Kerala (first) Tamil Nadu (second), Karnataka (fourth) and Gujarat (fifth). AP was ranked ninth.
- NITI Ayog is working on a proposal to replace LPG subsidy with Cooking Subsidy to extend the benefit to people using piped natural gas and bio-fuels for cooking. It is a progressive step as it would increase the choice for people in choosing from a variety of clean fuels.
- To generate accurate records in time bound manner, Karnataka government plans to conduct land and property survey using drones with the help of Survey of India.
- Public Distribution System (PDS) is being implemented under the NFSA, 2013 in all States/UTs. The Act provides for coverage upto in rural area 75% and upto in urban area 50% for receiving foodgrains (rice, wheat & coarsegrains) at highly subsidized rates i.e. Rs. 3/2/1 per kg respectively. At present total 23.4 crore ration cards are covered under NFSA comprising 21.2 crore PHH ration cards and 2.2 crore AAY ration cards.
- The Government of India is implementing “Allocation of foodgrains under Welfare Institutions and Hostels Scheme” with effect from 01.09.2017. This scheme was launched after the merger of two schemes i.e. Welfare Institutions Scheme and SC/ST/OBC Hostels Scheme. Allocation of foodgrains under the scheme is made to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations to meet the requirements of Welfare Institutions viz.
- Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme is a personal campaign of the Government of India that aims to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls. Under BBBP a total Fund of Rupees 282 Crores spent in the last 3 years.
- The Union health ministry has launched a formal process to empanel public and private hospitals to achieve universal health coverage under the Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM) which

aims to provide coverage of Rs 5 lakh per family annually and benefit more than 10 crore poor families.

- The Union Government provides optimum services to elderly under AYUSH system of medicines. As Health is a State subject, opening of special clinic for elder persons in villages comes under the purview of the respective State/UT Government.
- The Central Government has identified 256 districts as High Priority Districts (HPDs) including aspirational districts identified by NITI Aayog under the National Health Mission (NHM).
- The central government has set up 13 members committee upgrade the norms for computation of economic data at district and state level in the context of plans to revise base year for Gross Domestic Product (GDP) calculation.
- Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MS & JE) organized “a National Workshop on Skill Development for Persons with Disabilities. DEPwD launched National Action Plan for Skill Development of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) with the support of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- According to the latest study, our national capital city Delhi placed in 3rd in the list of the cities reporting more premature deaths due to air pollution:
  - In 2016, due to the air pollution around 15,000 people died in Delhi.
  - In the list of most deaths due to air pollution, Shanghai 1st place with 17,600 premature deaths due to air pollution and Beijing city is in 2nd place.
  - Air pollution is emerging main threat and there is need for strong air quality management system.
  - Environment Ministry is preparing National Premier Action Plan ( NPAP) to address air pollution problem in Delhi.
- Indian Railways is installing plastic bottle crushing machines in all 16 zones and 70 divisions at 2000 railway stations across the country. This initiative is a part in fighting against plastic waste. The crushing machines are installed at the exit points of the platforms in the railway stations.
- Ministry of Road Transport & Highways announced that, under the project of Bharatmala, government is planning to construct 2,500 km road by spending Rs. 44, 000/- crore in Andhra Pradesh.
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## Partnerships

- MoUs/Documents signed between India and the Republic of Korea during the State Visit of President of Korea to India:
  - Early Harvest Package of the Upgraded Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA). Key areas for trade liberalization (including Shrimp, Molluscs and Processed Fish).
  - Trade Remedies (anti-dumping, subsidy, countervailing and safeguard measures )

- Future Strategy Group (cutting edge technologies for commercialization to reap benefits of the 4th Industrial revolution).
- Cultural Exchange Programme for the period 2018 – 2022 (providing for institutionalized cooperation in fields of Music and Dance, Theatre, Art Exhibitions, Archives, Anthropology, Mass Media Programmes and Museum Exhibits).
- Cooperation in the field of scientific and technological research between CSIR and NST
- Cooperation between RDSO and KRRRI
- Cooperation in the field of biotechnology and bio-economics.
- Cooperation in the field of ICT and Telecommunications.
- Cooperation in the field of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises between India and RoK.
- MoU between Government of Gujarat and Korea Trade Promotion Agency (KOTRA) to strengthen trade, industrial relations.
- MoU regarding Queen Suriratna Memorial Project.
- Microsoft has signed a MoU with the Rajasthan Government to provide free digital learning and capacity building training to 9,500 college students in one year.
- The Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of the public-sector units of the Ministry of Power and the Government of India, has signed memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Haryana state distribution companies (DISCOMs) to install 1 million smart meters across the state.
- According to Punjab Industry and Commerce said India's Punjab government recently signed MoUs worth ₹455.34 crore with nine prominent industries associated with technical textile, composite hosiery, fabric knitting, fabrics, spinning and readymade garments at the Punjab Apparel and Textile Conclave in Ludhiana.
- India and Ghana discussed development cooperation and people-to-people ties among other issues and signed two agreements. "Two sides discussed enhancing cooperation in development cooperation, capacity building, trade and investment and people-to-people relationship".
- Power Grid Corporation of India signed a MoU with Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation (UPPCL) for energy efficiency and agricultural demand side management programme.
- Enhancing the scope and volume of the bilateral trade, agriculture business to top agenda with Uzbekistan will be the focus as external affairs minister Sushma Swaraj and commerce and industry Suresh Prabhu will visit the country early next month.
- Bank of Baroda (BOB) signs with 10 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to improve access to finance from early growth stage during the Micro Entrepreneurs Conclave, 2018 commemorate is 11<sup>th</sup> Foundation day.
- India and Rwanda signed eight agreements between Indian Prime Minister and Rwandan President. The two countries signed agreements in the fields of Defence, Trade, Agriculture, Leather and allied products and Dairy. India also extended two Lines of Credit of 100 million US dollars each - one for development of industrial parks and Kigali Special Economic Zone, and the other for three agricultural projects in Rwanda.
- Union Government (Ministry of Road Transport & Highways) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with United Kingdom (Transport for London (TFL)) for seeking help in improving overall public transport

system in the country.

- Hyundai has signed a MoU with Automotive Skills Development Council (ASDC) to conduct training and create employment opportunities for the unskilled workforce above the age of 18 with an educational qualification of 8th grade and above. With this agreement, Hyundai will conduct training programs at six dealerships associated with Hyundai's Technical Training Academy (HTTA) across India.
- Odisha government signs MOU with Sight Savers organization to promote socio economic development of Persons with Disability (PWD).
- Walmart India had signed a MoU with the Uttar Pradesh government to open 15 wholesale stores. Walmart India said it expects to create at least 30,000 local jobs by setting up 15 stores in the state.
- Budget hotel chain Oyo Hotels has signed MoUs with State Bank of India and Bank of Baroda to extend support to budget hotels and creating jobs across levels.
- Hyundai Motor India has signed a MoU with Automotive Skills Development Council (ASDC) to “conduct training and create jobs for unskilled manpower above 18 years of age and having qualification of 8th grade and above.” Under this MoU, the training programme will be conducted at six Hyundai dealerships associated with Hyundai's Technical Training Academy (HTTA) across India.

## Miscellaneous

- Govt warns WhatsApp over spread of messages triggering violence in the wake of recent instances of lynching of innocent people.
- The renewable energy sector created 47,000 new jobs in India in 2017, employing 432,000 people, according to a recent report by the inter-governmental International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).
- While addressing the Vice-Chancellors of all the 17 universities in the State. The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh announced that, the present three tier system of education—primary, secondary and higher—would be replaced with two-tier system. “The intermediate would be clubbed with the secondary education in this respect.”
- Director of Extension Education, GADVASU said diversification of livestock sector is moving at a very fast pace. He added that goat farming is gaining momentum in Punjab state as rural youth, especially women are taking lead by getting training from the varsity.
- NITI Ayog says women entrepreneurs must for India to grow consistently at the rate of 9 to 10%. Presently, women contribute about 22% of India's GDP while the global average lies around 45%. Importance of women in India's growth story is often emphasized by Ms Christina Lagarde of IMF.
- India took over as the head of Asia Pacific Region of World Customs Organisation. This shows India's experience in promoting security and facilitation of cross border trade
- The Netherlands will set up a flower market yard in Gurgaon under a MoU signed with the Haryana government, a state minister said. The flower market yard would be established at Sector 52A of the city, the minister said.
- Government approved capital Infusion of Rs 11336 crore for 5 public sector banks including Punjab National Bank

- Face book says it will remove inaccurate or misleading content which are likely to spark violence. It is expected to come out with a new policy and measures.
- Andhra Pradesh plans to develop the waterways into commercial shipping and navigation systems for the movement of large cargo and passenger vessels. This is intended to be a spill over effect of the ongoing river linking projects with some additional investments in infrastructure building.
- World witnessed longest 'Lunar eclipse' of the century. The eclipse lasted for one hour 43 minutes, and was visible in Europe, West Asia, Africa, Australia, most of Asia and South America. In India, it was visible in different parts amid cloudy night.
- India currently ranks 131 out of 188 countries on the HDI, lowest amongst BRICS nations in the most recent 2016 rankings.
- Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism said in Lok Sabha, Rs. 426.02 Crores sanctioned for Tribal and Rural Circuit under Swadesh Darshan Scheme.
- Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas has said that as on 01.07.2018, there are 20,585 LPG distributorships in country.
- Supreme Court endorses temple entry for women in Sabarimala case. Some of the observations made by the constitutional Bench are:
  - "Why should menstruation be a reason for keeping women out?"
  - "In a public place of worship, a woman can enter, where a man can go."
  - "A woman is a creation of God, if you don't believe in God, Then of nature. Why should this (menstruation) be a reason for exclusion for employment or worship or anything?"
- They also stressed upon Article 25 (1) which mandates Freedom of conscience and right to profess, practise and propagate religion..."
- India slipped from 88th place to 73rd place in terms it's citizens and companies money deposits in Swiss banks.
- According to Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) hits five years low of 3% in last financial year ( 2017 - 18) with \$ 44.85 billion.
- In Heads of Missions Conference, President of India told that, facilitating India's growth in the time tectonic shift in the realm of geopolitical and geoeconomics in the world.
- After visiting refugee camp in Myanmar, International Committee of Red Cross ( ICRC) President told that, Myanmar government may not ready to receive Rohingyas repatriation for hundreds of thousands of Rohingya community people.
- The 'Metro Man' of India Sreedharan told that, our country need modern, safe and fast rail system instead of bullet trains of elite people. He also said that, around 20,000 people lost their lives on railway tracks per year and Indian Railway system is 20 years behind those of advanced countries.
- On Monday, Cauvery Water Management Authority (CWMA) directed Karnataka government to release water to Tamil Nadu and other states. On other side, Karnataka government filed an appeal against the CWMA and Cauvery Water Regulation Committee (CWRC).
- According to the latest US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Policy, a person whose visa petition for

transfer or extension denied, those H - 1B holders are to be considered “ Unlawfully in the US”. This move makes things worse to Indian techies.

- Today, Prime Minister lays foundation stone for Rs. 23,000 crore Purvanchal expressway in Uttar Pradesh. This 354 long expressway connects Lucknow and Ghazipur and reduces travel time. Already 93% of the land purchased by spending Rs. 6,500 crore for the project.
- Maharashtra state government has announced that, there is no restriction on taking food articles from outside multiplexes and consuming those food articles in the multiplexes. Government warned to take strict action on multiplexes’ owners who prohibit people from bringing food articles from outside into multiplexes.
- Coal India Ltd announced that, 119 ongoing projects will contribute around 322 million tonnes (mt) in the current financial year 2018 - 19.
- Swedish Home Furnishing IKEA Retail India announced that, it is planning to open 1st Indian store in Hyderabad on 09 August 2018 and provide 1000 direct jobs and 1500 indirect jobs. It also told that, in those jobs, it provides 50% of the jobs for women.
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## Updates from Weeklies

- MSPs for Kharif Season:** A month after sowing for the kharif season began, the government finally announced the Minimum Support Prices (MSP) for 2018-19 season. The MSP for the most significant kharif crop, paddy, has been increased by Rs 200 to Rs 1,750 per quintal, an increase of 13%. Ragi has seen the most significant percentage increase in its MSP, increasing by 52% to Rs 2,897 per quintal. Cotton, too, has seen a huge increase, rising from Rs 4,020 to Rs 5,150. *Arhar*, on the other hand, has only seen an increase of 4% to Rs 5,675 per quintal. Similarly, *urad* has only seen an increase of 3% with the new MSP being set at Rs 5,600 per quintal. However, it remains key how the increase in MSP is implemented as the government's procurement mechanism has been known to be weak and only 6% of all farmers actually get the MSP. (Visit <https://thewire.in/agriculture/after-prolonged-delay-msps-for-kharif-season-announced-with-substantial-increases> for further reading).
- Grain Boom:** India's rice and corn production figures are set to hit record highs in the current year, while wheat production is likely to slide. According to a recent report by USDA India is set for a record 2017-18 (October/September year) rice production of 110 million tonnes and a record corn production of 27 million tonnes. The report forecast a dip in wheat production in the 2018-19 (April/March) marketing year at 95 million tonnes, following a record harvest of 98.5 million tonnes in the previous year, on account of a fall in the area under cultivation. According to the report, despite sufficient domestic supplies, 2018-19 wheat imports are likely to touch 1.5 million tonnes to "augment quality wheat requirement". The country would continue to be the largest rice exporter in the world, with 2018 calendar year rice exports estimated at a record 13 million tonnes. (Visit <https://www.frontline.in/other/data-card/article24328524.ece> for further reading).
- Dalit Women Rights:** On June 21, the AIDMAM, a Dalit women's collective attached to the NCDHR, presented a report *Voices against Caste Impunity: Narratives of Dalit Women in India* at the UNHCR in Geneva against caste-based violence. For the first time, a Dalit women's group had a table at a side event at the UNHRC to highlight before the international community the impunity caste violence enjoys in India. By participating in the U.N., Dalit women made a strong call to international human rights organisations to break the silence on caste-related issues and sought support and solidarity from allies towards building a global campaign to end caste-based violence and discrimination. They hoped the event would provide Dalit women with new footholds to actively engage in and build pressure within the U.N. system. (Visit <https://www.frontline.in/the-nation/human-rights/article24319248.ece?homepage=true> for further reading).
- Manual Scavengers:** The Delhi Government has decided to prepare a list of Manual Scavengers in the city thereby dismissing municipal corporations' claims which were made in 2017 that the caste-based profession is no longer practiced in the city. In a move to rehabilitate safai karamcharis and Manual scavengers the government would be hiring 200 sewer cleaning machines, each of which would apparently provide jobs to four persons and thus create 800 jobs. SBI, NSDFC, DSFDC would provide 95% of the cost as loan to each of the machine owners. [Visit <https://thewire.in/labour/delhi-govt-to-count-manual-scavengers-provide-loans-to-buy-sewer-cleaning-machines> for further reading).
- EPFO:** Retirement fund body EPFO on June 27 decided to give its members an option to withdraw 75% of their funds after one month of unemployment and keep their PF account with the body. (Visit <https://thewire.in/labour/employment-provident-funds-organisation-unemployment> for further reading).
- Amazon delivery in Leh:** Situated at a staggering 3,500 meters above sea level, Leh is now the highest spot in

the world where Amazon offers fast delivery services. In October 2017, Amazon tied-up with a local delivery company, Incredible Himalaya, to hand deliver packages. It's been only nine months since Amazon started offering speedy deliveries, and the number of sales has multiplied twelve times. (Visit [www.businessinsider.in](http://www.businessinsider.in) for further reading).

- **India's uranium risk:** INDIA'S groundwater is heavily laced with uranium. Scientists of Duke University, USA, studied 324 wells in Rajasthan and Gujarat and found that one-third of them had uranium in quantities much higher than WHO's standard of 30 microgramme per litre. Analysing previous studies they found that groundwater in 61 districts across the country is highly contaminated with uranium. Much of the high-uranium groundwater tested had high salinity, fluoride and nitrate, which makes them unsafe for drinking. Despite this, uranium has not been listed as a contaminant by the Bureau of Indian Standards' Drinking Water Specifications. Drinking water laced with uranium can cause chronic kidney diseases and deformity of bones. (Visit [www.downtoearth.org.in](http://www.downtoearth.org.in) 1000 words column in current issue for further reading).
- **Environment Issues:** Total cases on environment and development tracked from January 1, 2018 to June 4, 2018 are 113 cases under Supreme Court, 90 under High Court and 93 under National Green Tribunal. (Visit [www.downtoearth.org.in](http://www.downtoearth.org.in) 1000 words column in current issue for further reading).
- **Maharashtra's Plastic Ban:** The Maharashtra government's ban on plastic may be well-intentioned but has been launched without adequate protocols, proper education of the public or assured availability of alternatives. (Visit <https://www.frontline.in/environment/article24321396.ece?homepage=true> for further reading).
- **Nation-Wide Yatra Planned to Highlight Plight of Farmers:** The Rashtriya Kisan Mahasangh is planning a Kashmir to Kanyakumari yatra in August to highlight the government's failure in addressing issues plaguing agriculture. (Visit <https://thewire.in/agriculture/nation-wide-yatra-planned-to-highlight-plight-of-farmers> for further reading).
- **Affordable Housing Scheme:** A recent report 'Affordable Housing – The Next Big Thing?' released in March 2018 by FICCI-CBRE has estimated a shortage of houses for the urban population at two crore, which it said can take up to eight to ten years to overcome. According to the report, the affordable housing segment hasn't really gained the required momentum to address this gap. A major reason has been the lack of private participation in the segment. (Visit <https://thewire.in/economy/what-is-holding-up-modi-governments-affordable-housing-scheme> for further reading).
- **Agricultural Revival and Reaping the Youth Dividend:** In recent years, "youth" has emerged as a distinct category of population to be governed in India. Policy efforts to realise the "demographic dividend" amidst an agrarian crisis have however not met with success as suggested by reports of jobless growth on the one hand and poor quality of employment generated outside agriculture on the other. What are the prospects of improving youth livelihoods within agriculture? Can the youth revive the prospects of agriculture? Improving incomes within agriculture while also paying sufficient attention to caste and gender relations that shape labour hierarchies, access to land, youth preferences and mobility aspirations is critical to imagining a future that sustains agriculture and youth livelihoods. [Visit <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/26-27/review-rural-affairs/agricultural-revival-and-reaping-youth.html> for further reading].
- **The Value of Rural Women's Labour in Production and Wood Fuel Use:** How do gender-related factors influence cooking fuel use? Why does an LPG capital subsidy lead to fuel stacking rather than fuel switching? A framework for analysis is used in the article to to assess the limitations of capital subsidies for LPG in remote

rural areas where women's labour has a low opportunity cost. [Visit <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/26-27/special-articles/value-rural-womens-labour-production-and.html> for further analysis and reading].

- **Decline in sowing of Kharif Crops:** There has been a more than 20 per cent decline in total sowing area of Kharif crops this June as compared to the same period last year. The total sown area as on June 29, 2018 stood at 16.52 lakh hectares as compared to 210.75 lakh hectare at this time in 2017. According to the press release issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and farmers' welfare, the impact of delayed arrival of the southwest monsoon, especially in eastern, central and northern India, is now evident. More than a week-long break in monsoon has affected sowing of several crops. Cotton, oilseeds, pulses and coarse cereals are among the worst-hit crops. Both spatial and temporal distribution of rain is important for kharif crops, which accounts for about 50 per cent of agricultural production in the count. [Visit <https://www.downtoearth.org.in/news/agriculture/impact-of-stalled-monsoon-30-45-decline-in-sowing-of-kharif-crops-in-june-61051> for further reading]
- **Songs from the Farmland:** Singing comes naturally to most of the 5,000 people of Phek, a village in Nagaland close to the India-Myanmar border. They love to sing as they toil in their terraced rice paddies. [Visit <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/leisure/story/20180716-songs-from-the-farmland-1278979-2018-07-08> for further reading]
- **Can Hydropower Projects in Sikkim reactivated?** The indigenous tribal community in Sikkim regard their land and the Rivers Teesta and Rangeet as sacred and integral to their civilisations heritage. However, the industrialisation efforts have not only displaced and marginalised this community from the development plans within their ecologically and culturally protected area. The need for grassroots protest and organisation against the construction of hydro-electrical dams along the river and in protected forest areas has recently been reinvigorated. [Visit <https://www.epw.in/engage/article/can-act-movement-sikkim-be-reactivated> for further reading]
- **Stone Crushing Factories Take a Toll on Workers:** Opportunities for working class families are severely limited in Rajasthan due to the state's dry climate and infertile land. In the city of Beawar, about 50 km from Ajmer, the government had sold land to stone crushing factories two decades ago, in a bid to provide employment to the people. People were initially overjoyed, as the factories provided some succour. However, in the subsequent years, working in hazardous conditions without any safety gear or equipment, the workers have faced several health issues. Many people were severely injured, while the health of others deteriorated after contracting tuberculosis. Silicosis, a disease which does not have any cure yet, has taken the lives of many workers. Women whose husbands were killed by Silicosis have been forced to take up the same job as they try to make ends meet. A daily wage worker in Beawar makes about Rs 200-300 for an eight-hour shift. [Visit <https://thewire.in/labour/photo-essay-stone-crushing-factories-take-a-toll-on-workers> for further reading]
- **Lynching Cases and WhatsApp:** IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had last week asked for greater accountability from WhatsApp, saying that the government will not tolerate any misuse of the platform to spread fake messages designed to "provoke" and "instigate" people. Rumours on WhatsApp have triggered a spate of incidents involving mob fury, a recent one being lynching of five men on the suspicion of being child-lifters in Maharashtra's Rainpada village of Dhule district. In response, WhatsApp had informed the government that fake news, misinformation and hoaxes can be checked by the government, civil society and technology companies "working together". The platform began an awareness campaign to help users identify and prevent the spread of false information, hoax messages and fake news. It has also brought out full-page advertisement

in leading newspapers, first in the series of its user awareness drive, giving "easy tips" to decide if information received is, indeed, true. Without specifying whether it will stop services of any person found to be spreading fake news, the company had said it has made changes on group chats to prevent the spread of unwanted information. [Visit <https://www.theweek.in/news/india/2018/07/10/Lynching-cases-WhatsApp-shares-easy-tips-to-spot-fake-news-hoax.html> for further reading].

- **Economics of Population:** The 15th Finance Commission has recommended the use of Census 2011 instead of the norm of considering Census 1971, and this change has led to political protests and accusations of bias as many states that have done well in controlling population will end up receiving less money from the Central tax pool. The Finance Commission always makes the states uneasy. For this is the constitutional mechanism to share the Central tax pool with states. But the 15th Finance Commission has let out a paroxysm of political protests, particularly by the southern states, literally dividing the states on north-south line. At the core of this lies a change in the base year for population figure that significantly decides the states' tax revenue share. [For further reading DowtoEarth magazine 1-15 July 2018]
- **Starvation Deaths:** Over the past year, at least 20 persons have succumbed to starvation across the country: 12 in Jharkhand, three in Karnataka, three in Uttar Pradesh and two in Odisha. The deceased range from 11-year-old Santoshi Kumari to 67-year-old Etwariya Devi. All the victims were either from the Dalit, Adivasi, Other Backward Class (OBC) or Muslim communities. In at least 11 cases, Aadhaar-related failures directly contributed to starvation. In all the cases, the victims' intake of food drastically reduced due to disruptions in access to subsidised foodgrains, and social security pensions. [For further reading visit: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/28/letters/starvation-deaths.html>]
- **The start-up strategy:** Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Raman Singh said at the India Today State of the State Conclave in Raipur on June 29. The chief minister was explaining his model of development that has resulted in a six-time surge in the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP)-from Rs 47,000 crore to nearly Rs 3 lakh crore since Chhattisgarh became a state in 2000. The per capita income increased seven-fold, from Rs 12,000 to Rs 92,000. For this turnaround, Singh claims credit for pioneering some landmark schemes that the central and state governments replicated later, be it the right to food security or the right to skill development training. [For further reading visit: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/state-of-the-states/story/20180716-the-start-up-strategy-1277913-2018-07-08>]
- **Credible Chhattisgarh:** Chhattisgarh is a poignant paradox, a young state with an ancient, rich historical heritage, bounteous in minerals and a mining and industrial powerhouse but with a low human development index. While the central plains in the Raipur-Bhilai-Durg belt are industrialised, urbanised and prosperous, the southern tip is mired in penury; while Naya Raipur is an urban marvel, the state altogether has one of the lowest rates of urbanisation; and with almost 45 per cent forest cover, the state has a serene green environment but with threats from a violent red corridor. Standing at the threshold of a structural transformation, Chhattisgarh can become one of India's most developed states provided it balances the pulls from different directions and turns the 'paradox' into an opportunity for growth and equitable development. [For further reading visit: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/state-of-the-states/story/20180716-credible-chhattisgarh-1277912-2018-07-08>]
- **Developmental Rhetoric, Uprooted Lives:** Any developmental activity can be meaningful only when the dispossessed and displaced people are taken care of and adequately rehabilitated. Nevertheless, their basic rights to life and decent rehabilitation are often violated by governments and project authorities. Such

violations are particularly evident in the Gundlakamma Reservoir Project in Andhra Pradesh. [For further reading visit: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/28/commentary/developmental-rhetoric-uprooted-lives.html>]

- **Odisha's Fish Pond Scheme:** The Odisha government has launched a state-sponsored scheme called "Fish Pond Yojana" to promote fish farming, especially freshwater aquaculture, and to enhance farmers' incomes in 2017–18. The scheme aims to cover waterbodies of about 2,200 hectares under fish farming with a budgetary provision of ₹96 crore and a subsidy amount of ₹25 lakh from financial year 2018–19. Apparently, the state government has planned to reduce the import of freshwater fish, like the Indian major carp, and boost food and nutritional security in the state. [For further reading visit: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/28/letters/odishas-fish-pond-scheme.html>]
- **MINORITIES IN INDIA - Tools of an ideology:** India has a long tradition of acknowledging and protecting minorities and according special rights to them. Some of these rights are entrenched in the Constitution. However, we have been witnesses to movements, organisations and ideologies that contest and condemn these rights, sometimes even with diabolic social violence. [For further reading visit: <https://www.frontline.in/cover-story/article24201425.ece>]
- **The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016:** The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, which has met with fierce resistance in the north-eastern states, especially Assam, is likely to be shelved by the union government and not introduced in this session of Parliament (Bhattacharya 2018). The bill declares Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians fleeing religious persecution from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan as not being "illegal migrants" for the purposes of the Citizenship Act, 1955, and also reduces the time required for such persons from these countries to obtain citizenship by naturalisation from 11 years to six years. The agitation, though, had nothing to do with the exclusion of Muslims from the provisions of this bill. Rather, it had to do with the grant of any exemption or benefit in favour of anyone from Bangladesh who might benefit from its provisions (Bhattacharya 2018). [For further reading visit: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/29/law-and-society/national-register-citizens-and-supreme.html>]
- **Foreign Direct Investment (FDI):** With an apparent aim to formulate the New Industrial Policy (NIP) based on consultative approach, the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) has recently floated a discussion paper, "Industrial Policy 2017," and has sought suggestions on key thematic areas of industrial development. Apart from some significant objectives such as adequate job creation, attracting \$100 billion foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows annually in the next two decades, promotion of foreign technology transfer has been outlined as one of the foremost priorities of the proposed policy. The NIP shall subsume the National Manufacturing Policy and is expected to specifically review the FDI policy regime to facilitate greater technology transfer. [For further reading visit: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/29/commentary/pursuing-fdi-technology.html>]
- **Sugar Industry:** India's sugar industry is not just a source of income and sweetener for millions, it is a key ingredient in the country's politics. An Rs.80,000-crore labour-intensive industry that is spread across the country, sugar cultivation and its value chain are a main source of employment in large tracts of rural India. In several regions, voting patterns depend on the treatment given to the sugar sector. [For further reading visit: <https://www.frontline.in/the-nation/agriculture/article24321068.ece>]
- **GST rate cut:** Consumer electronics, kitchen appliances, leather items, footwear get cheaper. In its 28th meeting, the GST Council gave its approval to slash tax rates on over 100 items that were in the highest 28 per cent tax bracket under the Goods and Services Tax. GST rates on articles including consumer durables like

smaller television sets, refrigerators, washing machines, paints and varnishes, lithium ion batteries, and more were brought down from 28 per cent to 18 per cent. The tax council also rationalised rates on several other items too. [For further reading visit: <https://www.businesstoday.in/current/policy/gst-rate-cut-consumer-electronics-kitchen-appliances-leather-items-footwear-get-cheaper/story/280512.html>]

- **Gross Domestic Product (GDP):** The Gross Value Added (GVA) numbers for 2017/18 grew by 6.47 per cent, the slowest in four years since the Narendra Modi government took over. Even as the numbers for the first quarter of 2018/19 are awaited, all trends show that even this jump would not have been possible without the government spending more. While Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a measure of the value of goods and services produced in an economy in a given period, GVA is what accrues to the producer before the product/service is sold. The GDP equals GVA plus indirect taxes minus subsidies. One of the constituents of GVA is public administration, defence and other services. It is a good representation of the government in the economy. Take a look at the top graph that plots the growth in public administration, defence and other services since FY2012/2013. [For further reading visit: <https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/the-buzz/government-domestic-product-the-new-gdp/story/280069.html>]
- **Agriculture:** Drops of water bead up or roll right off the leaves of the lotus, making for that metaphysical metaphor – live like a lotus in the water. But the leaves of plants such as wheat, onion and cabbage are also water-repelling, or hydrophobic, and this can be a problem for farmers because pesticides sprayed on the leaves bounce off, leaving only a minuscule portion behind. Professor Kripa Varanasi's team at Massachusetts Institute of Technology has developed a new technology that has the potential to reduce the amount of pesticide that rebounds off the leaves of crops. Results in the lab indicate that this system could allow farmers to use only a tenth of the usual amount of pesticide to get the same effect they do now. This summer, the system, which promises to benefit both the environment and the farmer, is being tested on the ground. [For further reading visit: <https://scroll.in/magazine/884074/an-indian-whose-tech-made-ketchup-glide-out-of-a-bottle-is-now-making-pesticides-stick-to-crops>]
- **Migration:** Lakhs of people mig-rated from north India to the south in pursuit of employment opportunities. The trend of southward migration picked up somewhere around the 1980s, str-engthening impressively in the subsequent decades. [For further reading visit: <https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/drawn-by-development-north-indians-continue-to-migrate-to-south/300407>]
- **Local Health Traditions (LHTs):** The Indian government's attention to the mainstreaming of traditional systems of medicine and the revitalisation of community-based local health traditions (LHTs) needs to be viewed as a part of its overall mandate of strengthening traditional systems of medicine. An analysis of existing policy documents and reviews reveals that LHTs have an eclectic policy history in India, marked by several decades of neglect by the state, with sporadic attention to the LHT practitioners as community health workers, to an upsurge of seemingly explicit, and yet somehow obtuse interest in revitalisation. Tracing the evolution (and dissolution) of these trajectories chronologically reveals that there is ambiguity and inconsistency around the rationales for the revitalisation of LHTs, potentially leading to fragmented medical pluralism. [For further reading visit: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/30/special-articles/making-local-health-traditions-india.html>]
- **Cash Transfer:** In an era increasingly dominated by the digital, technology-enabled solutions have come to be viewed as a one-stop solution to the age-old administrative woes of corruption and inefficiency. Evidence from a detailed case study of payments under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in a region of Telangana shows that technological solutions in the domain of government-to-citizen cash transfers

are far from perfect. The mechanisms of techno-utopianism suffer from many of the same flaws as the ones they replaced and, in some cases, they have introduced new flaws. [For further reading visit: <https://www.epw.in/journal/2018/30/special-articles/are-technology-enabled-cash-transfers.html>]

- **White Revolution:** India is the world's largest producer and consumer of dairy products. According to market research company IMARC, the milk and dairy products industry reached Rs7.9 lakh crore in 2017. In 2016, the milk sector alone was valued at Rs3 lakh crore and is projected to scale Rs7.3 lakh crore by 2021. "Currently, the organic dairy industry accounts for less than 1 per cent of the total dairy market in India. The segment is expected to grow steadily in the next three to five years," says Aarthi Janakiraman, Industry Manager, TechVision, Frost & Sullivan. [For further reading visit: <https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/the-hub/white-revolution-2-0/story/280063.html>]
- **Waterways:** On a recent misty morning, a long line of freighters carrying automobiles and heavy machinery slowly snaked their way along a bend of the Yangtze River in south-western China. Out of the fog, a towering 185 metre concrete edifice the world's largest dam at the Three Gorges, appeared to block their path. Then, the magic happened: a gush of water followed by a slow, cranking sound, as the freighters slowly defied gravity and rose out of the water on a massive ship lift. Within an hour, the ships from Shanghai scaled the heights of the Three Gorges Dam, and continued onward up the Yangtze to a sprawling port in Chongqing, the biggest port in China's heartland. From Chongqing, the goods are offloaded onto trains that run to Germany and to trucks that travel a highway south to Kunming. Plans are underfoot to link Kunming by expressway and rail to Singapore in the south and to the Bay of Bengal port of Kyaukpyu in Myanmar in the west, with the hope of transforming landlocked interior China into an unlikely centre for regional trade. [For further reading visit: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/neighbours/story/20180806-waterways-of-the-future-1296561-2018-07-28>]
- **Darjeeling Tea is losing its aroma:** They call it 'the Champagne of Teas', an epithet commensurate with its awesome prestige across the world. But shelves stocking premium Darjeeling at the gourmet tea house Mariage Freres in Paris lie forlornly empty of their aromatic cargo. Their famed Darjeeling sells at euro 76 for 100 grams, or Rs 57,200 a kilo, but supplies have shrunk lately because of events convulsing the rolling hills of north Bengal 7,500 km away. Haute Parisian palate, it seems, will have to wait. The 105-day shutdown last year in the hills of Darjeeling has plunged tea estate owners and plantation workers into an unprecedented crisis. Planters who lost at least 70 per cent of their premium first and second flush crop—almost wholly exported—estimate the combined value of the loss at Rs 500 crore. [For further reading visit: <https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/why-darjeeling-tea-is-losing-its-aroma/300400>]
- **GST:** The Goods and Services Tax (GST) has just completed a year, and it has been an eventful journey. It is showing signs of settling down, but it will be probably a year or more before all the glitches and annoyances that have come to the fore after the rollout are actually sorted out. [For further reading visit: <https://www.businesstoday.in/magazine/editors-note/gsts-tumultuous-journey/story/280056.html>] ❖