



livelihoods

today and tomorrow

May 2018

Monthly Livelihoods Update

“A month that was !”

Macroeconomics

Agriculture

Industry

Social Issues

Policies and Partnerships

Updates from Weeklies

Summary of Daily Livelihoods Update

1. Macroeconomics

Trends:

- ◇ WPI inflation eases to 2.47% in March as food articles turn cheaper. This is line with CPI (Retail inflation), which slipped to a five-month low of 4.28 per cent in March on account of decline in food prices. Inflation in 'fuel and power' basket however rose to 4.70 per cent in March from 3.81 per cent in the previous month.
- ◇ India's retail inflation, based on Consumer Price Index (CPI) eased to a 5 month low of 4.28% in March. The food inflation for the month stood at 2.81% compared to 3.26% in February. Prices of vegetables, other food items and beverages softened.
- ◇ India's trade deficit nearly doubles to \$87.2 billion in 2017-18, according to data by Commerce Ministry
- ◇ Cash Crunch: Government says it is temporary and is planning to address by issuing more Rs 500 rupee notes. RBI says there is enough cash in RBI vaults and currency chests. Non functional ATMs to be normalised soon.
- ◇ SBI research placed cash shortage at Rs 70000 crore
- ◇ Government has collected 7 lakh 41 thousand crore rupees from the Goods and Services Tax (GST) during 2017-18.
- ◇ RBI bans banks from dealing with Bitcoin and other crypto currencies. Reserve Bank mulls its own digital currency. RBI keeps repo rate (the rate at which banks borrow from RBI) unchanged at 6%.
- ◇ According to IMF, India is the 6th largest economy with a GDP of \$2.6 trillion. Top five are USA, China, Japan, Germany and UK.
- ◇ According to World Bank, India has 19 crore adults without a bank account, making us second largest unbanked population after that of china. It also observed that half of Indian accounts are inactive in the past one year.
- ◇ India continues to be the highest recipient of remittances, as per World Bank's report. Upsurge is expected to continue in 2018 owing to prospects of advanced economies like USA.
- ◇ Increasing NPAs are impacting education loans.

Global Scenario and Growth Prospects:

- ◇ China-USA Tariffs: In response to USA's decision to impose 25% tariff on 1333 imports from China, China imposes new tariffs on key exports of USA like Soya, wine, Pork, locomotives...Etc. This is an emerging global scenario where not only rules of World Trade Organisation continue to impact but other Multilateral groupings (e.g. RCEP), unilateral decisions by countries, competing trade tariffs are increasingly impacting global trade, economies of nations, Intellectual Property Rights regime, commodity prices...etc. This continuously changes the context of livelihoods, especially for farmers, small businesses...Etc.
- ◇ Union Minister for Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu says India should move World Trade Organization (WTO) against protectionist tendencies of countries hurting its interests. Mr Prabhu

spoke out against the escalating trade confrontation between the US and China.

- ◇ Indo – EU FTA talks to begin, likely to work in several areas including energy, climate change and water management
- ◇ The US treasury Department has added India to a “monitoring list” of countries with potentially questionable foreign exchange policies, along with china, Germany and three other nations.
- ◇ Under China’s BRI, china mulls economic corridor via Himalayas. It would require cooperation from India, Nepal and China.
- ◇ According to ADB, India’s economic growth will pick up in 2018-19 to 7.3% on the back of improved rural consumption and a modest rise in private investment while the debilitating effects of demonetisation and GST implementation dissipate.
- ◇ A report by World Bank says India has recovered from demonetisation and GST. World Bank predicts that Indian Economy’s growth will accelerate from 6.7% in 2017 to 7.3% in 2018 and 7.5% in 2019.
- ◇ IMF has said that India is expected to grow at 7.4% in 2018 and 7.8% in 2019. India would re-emerge as one of the fastest growing major economies in the period.

2. Agriculture

Weather, Climate:

- ◇ Skymet forecasts 2018 is likely to be a normal year for monsoon from June to September. IMD forecasts normal monsoon with 97% rainfall of Long period Average of 89cm. The positive forecast is expected to boost economy in general and cheer agriculture in specific. Second stage forecast with regional distribution and monthly rainfall would be updated in June.
- ◇ According to a study by HSBC bank, India is the most vulnerable country to climate change, followed by Pakistan, Philippines and Bangladesh in the assessment of 67 countries on vulnerability to the physical impacts of climate change, sensitivity to extreme weather events, exposure to energy transition risks and ability to respond to climate change. Unirrigated areas are most impacted.
- ◇ Union Government, Maharashtra Government and the World Bank signed a USD 420 million project to help small and marginal farmers in the Marathwada and Vidarbha regions of Maharashtra in practicing climate resilient agriculture.
- ◇ Unseasonal rainfall and hailstorms in north India, puts at risk the Rabi crop, especially wheat, mustard and mangoes, raising fears of increasing rural distress. Uncertain rains in Telangana resulted in crop loss especially in market yards.
- ◇ According to officials, in Andhra Pradesh, in the week at the end of April, in just 13 hours, 36, 749 lightning strikes recorded. It is an uncommon situation and reflects the “an extreme weather pattern”. This is leading to fatal deaths.
- ◇ Fusarium wilt, which threatens banana (India is the top producer) hits farms in Bihar, UP and is seen spreading to MP and Gujarat.
- ◇ India is tying up with USA and Finland to develop a pollution forecast system that will help anticipate

particulate matter levels two days in advance and at greater resolution than what is possible now. Ministry of Earth Sciences is coordinating this exercise and the plan is to have better system in place by winter.

- ◇ India's coast experienced rough sea waves in April. INCOIS has been observing and informing.
- ◇ Water storage available in 91 major reservoirs of the country for the week ending April 26th, 2018 goes down by 1%.

Government Initiatives:

- ◇ NITI Aayog missed the deadline to suggest a viable procurement model to implement government's promise of procuring agriculture produce at 1.5 times the production cost.
- ◇ Kerala government is set to launch community radio for farmers.
- ◇ Environment ministry notifies fresh draft rules with no restrictions on sale of cattle for slaughter in animal markets and a mandatory "prevention of cruelty to Animals Committee" in every district.
- ◇ NABARD to expand its long-term lending to Rs 80,000 crore in FY19
- ◇ Government bans imports of hormone oxytocin to stop its misuse in the livestock industry. It is said to cause hormonal imbalance and shorten the lives of milch animals. Though India halted retail sales in 2014, we have struggled to curb illegal sales and high volumes of imports
- ◇ India is likely to provide financial support to cane farmers for produce sold to sugar mills. This is in line with scrapping of 20% tax on export. The sugar industry is facing glut and low prices in the global market. The direct subsidy may result in litigation with other WTO members.
- ◇ Farmers' Investment Support Scheme of Telangana:
 - Rs 4000 an acre per crop for two crops
 - Telangana's demand for Rs6000 crore cash.
 - Fears over cash allayed for Telangana's Crop Investment Support Scheme as RBI give categorical assurance for supplying Rs 6000 crore cash. Telangana secured a loan amount of Rs 2000 crore during the yield price based auctions conducted by RBI on 10th and 24th April.
 - The fact that tenant farmers cannot avail the crop investment support is a matter of concern.
 - Telangana government to give crop investment support to farmers recognised under FRA as well
- ◇ Indian Railways has decided to build a 500km wall along the Delhi-Mumbai route in order to restrict human and animal interference. Though this is a welcome move to reduce animal fatalities, it may aggravate the problem of habitat fragmentation due to linear projects.
- ◇ The Rajasthan government has introduced a loan-waiver scheme for farmers under which crop loan of up to 50,000 rupees will be waived as per the budget announcement. The scheme has been launched under which cooperative banks will hold camps for waiving loans up to 50,000 rupees of small and marginal farmers.
- ◇ Gastrotope, an agrifood startup accelerator and Infobridge have signed an agreement with Govt of AP to create Farm to fork ecosystem in Vishakhapatnam. The programme commits to invest \$ 10 million in 10 start-ups in 2018.
- ◇ Uttarakhand's second mega food park comes up in Udham Singh Nagar. It is expected to benefit around

25000 farmers. First one is already operational in Haridwar.

- ◇ MSP for FAQ of raw jute has been increased to Rs 3700 per quintal for 2018-19 season from Rs 3500 per quintal in 2017-18 season.

Technological Solutions to Agriculture:

- ◇ NITI Aayog pilots Artificial Intelligence based initiatives in agriculture, education and healthcare in collaboration with private sector organisations.
- ◇ Alibaba, largest Chinese e-commerce company is using AI in pig farms. AI identifies pigs using facial recognition, tracks their age and weight, assesses pig's fitness, observes changes in their behaviour, analyses possibility of healthy piglets...etc.
- ◇ ICRISAT and DowDuPont sign an agreement to share CRISPR (Genome editing technology) and allied technologies. This would reduce the breeding cycle to three to four years. Better varieties of seed will be made available to farmers.
- ◇ NABARD in collaboration with Bengaluru and Dharwad centres of University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS) has come up with an integrated farming model wherein farmers can get regular income even during drought. The model entails setting up smaller parallel business like poultry, pisciculture, aquaculture, fisheries, shrimp farming ...etc, which can ensure steady income when regular crops fail

3. Industry

- ◇ SIDBI has charted a plan to promote micro enterprises in 115 aspirational districts across the country.
- ◇ RBI lifted credit caps for all service sector MSME borrowers qualifying under the PSL norms, with immediate effect. It would be a relief, as this would ensure credit flow to the sector in the wake of tightened NPA norms.
- ◇ The Gujarat Livelihood Promotion Company (GLPC), under the state rural development department has developed its own platform, GST Suvidha Provider (GSP), to bring GST compliance within the reach of small businesses, especially MSMEs. This will also create job opportunities for youth as GST Sahayaks.
- ◇ Gold refineries mulled on the outskirts of Hyderabad at Kongara kalan village
- ◇ Google India has announced plans to set up a programme "solving for India" to mentor start-ups in India. The programme seeks to support and mentoring to deploy machine learning/ artificial intelligence solutions in India
- ◇ Academics to Industry: IIT Delhi will help its doctoral students in converting their theses into start-ups. They will be provided a monthly compensation. The three year fellowship will provide seed capital, free mentoring and accommodation students.
- ◇ Centre government is planning to provide incentives to digital transactions by providing cash backs and price benefits. The proposal to encourage digital transactions may be placed before Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council.
- ◇ SIDBI celebrated its foundation day on 2nd April as day of Sampark (connect), Sanwad (interaction), Suraksha (security) and Sampreshan (disseminate). It launched Samridhhi- the virtual assistant on bank's revamped

universal loan portal www.udyamimitra.in. It will answer standard queries of aspirants 24*7. This aims to transform MSME ecosystem.

- ◇ Minister of Commerce and Industry launched FIEOGlobalLinker, a digital platform for MSME exporters to digitise their business and join a global community of growing business.
- ◇ Action plan is proposed by Commerce ministry at district level to promote economic activities at district level in order to push up overall growth.
- ◇ E-way bill system for the intra state transport of goods rolled out on April 15th
- ◇ NITI Aayog to launch Atal New India Challenge in collaboration with five ministries under Atal Innovation Mission (AIM). AIM will invite prospective innovators, MSMEs and start-ups to design market-ready products across 17 identified focus areas including climate smart agriculture, smart mobility, predictive maintenance of rolling stock and waste management
- ◇ Haryana state government is going to host World Union of Wholesale Markets (WUWM) conference at Gurugram in October 2018. The WUWM objective is to promote wholesale markets across the world for establishing uniformity in systems, processes, technology, transparency and trade by exchange of information.

4. Social Issues

Women and Children:

- ◇ NCERT publishes information about childline helplines (1098) and POSCO e-box for children in all course books from class 6 to 12. The easy accessibility of this information in the hands of children themselves may also deter the potential abusers, at least to a reasonable extent.
- ◇ An analysis by CRY (Child Rights and You) revealed that 50% of the sexual crimes against minors took place in 5 states: Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and West Bengal. UP alone accounted for 15% of such crime.
- ◇ 498A: SC to review the order which banned immediate arrest of accused in dowry cases, as many states found it not practical and not implementable.
- ◇ Rape victim's Privacy: Delhi High Court has ordered media houses that revealed identity of Kathua rape victim to pay Rs 10 lakh each to the court. It will be transferred to Jammu and Kashmir Victim Compensation Fund.
- ◇ The Union Minister for Women and Child Development has outlined various steps to be taken by the States/ UTs in preventing and curbing the crimes against women and children. One of the important guidelines is: All police officers should be re-trained on various aspects of sexual offences particularly those related to collection and preservation of evidence.
- ◇ SC says consent of bride is inherent in Hindu Marital Law. CJI observes that any woman subjected to forceful marriage is at liberty to initiate civil action.

Education

- ◇ An online survey by "Local Circles" involving parents, gave following observations:

- 78% citizens believe current school education curriculum needs lots of upgrades
 - 88% of them wants skill based courses from class IX for those academically not inclined
 - 74% believe creativity and spatial knowledge should also be imparted
 - 90% people say it is very important to include “How to learn and think” in curriculum
 - 41% say curriculum should focus more on hands on field based learning
- ◇ Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights will assess each government, private and municipal schools on three primary criteria: Safety, teaching-learning facilities, community engagement in case of government and municipal schools and social inclusion in private schools in the city. This is a welcome step in quantifying school performance, RTE and providing informed choices to parents and students.

Health and Wellbeing:

- ◇ Sugar tax came into force in the UK as part of the government's plan to combat obesity and sugar related disease. All revenues raised through the levy will directly fund new sports facilities in schools as well as healthy breakfast clubs, ensuring children lead healthier lives.
- ◇ Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has notified that all tobacco products and cigarette packs will have a national toll-free number printed on them from September this year to assist users to quit addiction.
- ◇ Data from ministry of Consumer Affairs suggests that about one third of the complaints received against misleading advertisements are from healthcare industry. Most of them are related to exaggerated claims on the efficacy of healthcare products.
- ◇ Maharashtra government has announced that cancer patients would be provided free chemotherapy treatment at district hospitals with the first phase of the plan starting in June.
- ◇ Telangana CM asks health department to conduct eye tests for each and every person in villages and towns across the state.
- ◇ Expansion of cancer care in AP through NTR cancer trust at district level with participation from health ministry, Tata trust and other organisations.
- ◇ Assam launches a cashless health scheme that offers free medical care of up to 2 lakh rupees for every individual from both BPL and APL families. The scheme, Atal amrit Abhiyan will cover 92% of state's population with annual income below 5 lakh rupees.
- ◇ UP plans to establish SHISHU SWAGAT KENDRA- PALNA and put cradles in front of the buildings in all government hospitals and orphanages, so that unwanted babies given away by parents can take care.
- ◇ The Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) will grant an additional paid leave of three months to women conductors during pregnancy, taking the total maternity leave offered to nine months.
- ◇ Health and wellness centre announced as part of Ayushman Bharat launched in Jangala village of LWE affected district of Bijapur, Chhattisgarh. The centre will have the facility of tele consultation.
- ◇ Central information Commissioner (CIC) said there should be no delay in the disbursement of pension to senior citizens and retired employees in the name of aadhar linking. He said delaying pension payments is inhumane.
- ◇ EPFO (Employees Provident Fund Organisation) instructed all pension disbursing banks and post offices to

not deny pension on the basis of aadhar or in case of pensioners facing difficulty in providing digital life certificates.

- ◇ Kerala tourism is set to post 1000 resource person to promote destinations at grassroots level and Transpersons, differently abled will be roped in. This is a conscious effort by State Tourism Policy, 2017 which envisions active participation of Transgeneders and differently abled in promoting tourism.
- ◇ India and Timor Leste have signed a MoU in the field of public health to extend affordable healthcare to the people of the Southeast Asian nation.
- ◇ A study published in RBI's monthly bulletin on an analysis of 17 countries shows India's social sector spending remains woefully below peers, including Latvia and Iceland, in terms of GDP.
- ◇ Haryana Decided launched Gram Swaraj Abhiyan on April 14th, an outreach campaign with the motto of "Sabka saath, Sabka Gaon, Sabka Vikas". The campaign is undertaken to promote social harmony, spread awareness about pro-poor initiatives of government, and reach out to poor households to enrol them and also to obtain their feedback on various welfare programmes.
- ◇ First meeting of National Council on India's Nutrition challenges-Decisions:
 - The government will cover 235 districts in the Phase II of POSHAN Abhiyaan, which aims to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia among children and adolescent girls along with reducing low birth weight in the country.
 - Smart phones may be procured for Anganwadi supervisors instead of tablets
 - Direct transfer of funds to states/UTs for cash award to frontline functionaries instead of creation of corpus fund.
- ◇ UAE approves issuance of law on equal wages, salaries for men and women
- ◇ New website and mobile app of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis.
- ◇ The Prime Minister Office (PMO) has approved Labour Ministry's proposal on universal social security for 500 million workers in the country.
- ◇ The EU and the UN co-chairs a two-day international conference aiming to pump financial aid for Syrians and garner political support for UN-led intra-Syrian talks.
- ◇ Trump administration decided to terminate Temporary Protection Status (TPS) for around 9,000 Nepalese immigrants in U.S. Temporary Protection Status is a designation provided to the peoples on humanitarian ground
- ◇ AFSPA lifted in Meghalaya and it is relaxed in Arunachal Pradesh (8 police stations instead of 16 earlier). AFSPA has been withdrawn from Tripura in 2015. Home ministry finds that there has been a decline of 63% in insurgency related incidents in the region.
- ◇ Health ministry mulls new rules for e-pharmacies. E-pharmacies will have to register and cannot sell narcotics, tranquilizer and psychotropic drugs.
- ◇ Union Government plans integrated initiative for prevention & control of viral hepatitis, with a budget of more than Rs 517 crore for three years. India is committed to ending viral hepatitis by 2030.
- ◇ Rajinder Sachar, prominent human rights activist and former chief justice of the Delhi High Court, passed away yesterday. He headed the committee to examine the social, economic and educational status of

Muslims in India.

- ◇ The UN Security Council is heading to Asia for a first-hand look at the plight of 700,000 Rohingya Muslims who fled a military crackdown in Myanmar and the several hundred thousand who remain in the country's northern Rakhine State.
- ◇ Central government approved for diversion of 77 hectares of forest land for the Rs. 1.08 lakh crore value of bullet train project, between Mumbai and Ahmedabad.
- ◇ Marine plastic debris has emerged as a problem in the coastal areas of Kerala. It endangers fish, birds, and ecosystems and threatens the livelihoods of fishermen.
- ◇ According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Maharashtra stands at 1st place in having 16% of country's polluted river stretches during 2008 to 2012 followed by Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and West Bengal. These five states alone accounted for 45% of country's polluted rivers.
- ◇ After electrifying Leisang village in Manipur on 28th April, government declared total electrification in the country.
- ◇ Consumer Choice: TRAI rolled out a new website that lets users compare telecom tariffs offered by different service providers. It is presently made available for Delhi circle and feedback about new site is being taken.
- ◇ Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) moots an ambitious model of a public Wi-Fi grid that aims to slash Internet access cost by 90 per cent, and push broadband proliferation in India.

5. Policies and Partnerships

Policy, Rules and Regulations:

- ◇ Government revises target to complete PMGSY from 2022 to 2019, sensing the importance and urgency of rural roads for national development. Government pushes the pace of road construction from 134km per day to 167km per day to reach PMGSY target early.
- ◇ National Sample Survey (NSS) would go digital in 2019. It will begin with 77th round in January 2019, where field officers would be asked to record, tabulate and store data in digital format. If the digitisation process runs smoothly, NSS which usually takes 6 months could be completed in just 1 month.
- ◇ 76th round of NSS would begin in July and end December. It has two components: Drinking water and sanitation, Persons with Disabilities (PWDS).
- ◇ Cabinet approves the Protection of Human Rights (Amendments) Bill, 2018 for better protection and promotion of human rights (strengthens Human Rights Institutions) in the country.
- ◇ Centre allows states to set up their own Insurance companies to implement PMFBY.
- ◇ FSSAI proposed draft rules for advertisement of food products that will bar food companies, restaurants and hotels from putting up ads that are against healthy lifestyles or portray packaged food as a complete replacement for normal meal.
- ◇ The ministry of Tribal Affairs has approved establishment of the first multipurpose "Van Dhan Vikas Kendra" on pilot basis in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh for providing skill up gradation and setting up of primary

processing and value addition facility for Minor Forest Produce (MFP).

- ◇ SC asks centre to submit draft water sharing proposal for Cauvery by may 3rd
- ◇ Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs observes that over 240 fishermen missing for 5 months after cyclone Ockhi may have dim chances of returning even after the timely search and rescue operation. This prompts a review on the safety of lives and livelihoods of fishermen along India's coast
- ◇ Tripura hosts first meeting of the NITI Forum, a unit of NITI Aayog in Agartala today. The 'NITI Forum for North East' was constituted in February this year with an aim to ensure the sustainable economic growth of the North Eastern Region of the country and periodically review the development status in the region.
- ◇ T-web as one stop shop services is planned in Telangana.
- ◇ Rural Development Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said that the government will achieve the target of constructing one crore houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin by 31st of March next year.
- ◇ Environment ministry has notified Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules 2018. The amended rules lay down that the phasing out of Multilayered Plastic (MLP) is now applicable to MLP, which are "non recyclable, or non energy recoverable or with no alternate use".
- ◇ Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana was launched in Telangana on the birth anniversary of DR.B.R.Ambedkar. Under the scheme, an adult woman member of a below poverty line family identified through the SECC is given a deposit free connection with financial assistance of Rs 1600 per connection by the centre.
- ◇ Environment Ministry has come out with a draft national action plan proposing multiple strategies to reduce air pollution. The draft of National Clean Air Programme is open for comments from various stakeholders till 17th may.
- ◇ To provide an extra layer of privacy to Aadhaar, UIDAI has introduced an updated QR code
- ◇ MoEF&CC has framed a new draft Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2018. Comments have been sought from the public within 60 days of the uploading of the draft Notification (uploaded on April 18th 2018)
- ◇ On the occasion of National Panchayatraj Day, PM says Panchayat institutions foster a spirit of democracy and further the development aspirations of our citizens. He will launch Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan in Mandla district of MP. It includes an initiative towards e-Panchayat. A special Gram Sabha meeting organized in all seventy Gram Panchayat of Andaman & Nicobar Islands to commemorate the day. The focus is on implementation of various welfare schemes.
- ◇ Union Food and Public Distribution Minister said that all students living in the hostels, where 2/3rd belong to SC, ST and OBC communities, will be entitled to 15 kg of food grain per month at subsidised rates. It is likely to benefit over one crore students from these communities.
- ◇ The Jammu and Kashmir government has approved an ordinance providing death penalty for the rape of children below 12 years of age.
- ◇ USA is planning to end work permit for H-1B visa holders' spouses. The move to end the 2015 rule could have an effect on over 70000 H-4 visa holders, who have work permits.
- ◇ Union cabinet has given approval to the declaration of Scheduled Areas in respect of Rajasthan under Fifth Schedule. The STs residing in Banswara, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh and partial areas of Udaipur, Rajsamand, Chittorgarh, Pali and Sirohi districts of Rajasthan will be benefitted.

- ◇ Cabinet approves restructured National Bamboo Mission
- ◇ Bihar state cabinet okayed Rs 840 crore scheme to provide alternate employment to 1 lakh extremely poor families who were dependent on the country liquor and toddy trade for livelihood before prohibition
- ◇ Government will soon acquire the stake of RBI in housing finance regulator National Housing Bank. Presently, RBI holds 100% stake.
- ◇ Ministry of Tourism, Government of India in collaboration with Google India launched a 360 degree Virtual Reality (VR) experience video on Incredible India. This is expected to attract more tourists.
- ◇ Telangana State Fisheries department's pilot project for promoting Scampi, fresh water prawn cultivation has shown encouraging results.
- ◇ Ganga Hariteema Yojana (Ganga Greenery scheme) in Uttar Pradesh is being launched in 27 districts of the state located on the bank of river Ganga. Objectives of the schemes include enhancing green cover in the catchment areas of the river Ganga and to control the land erosion.

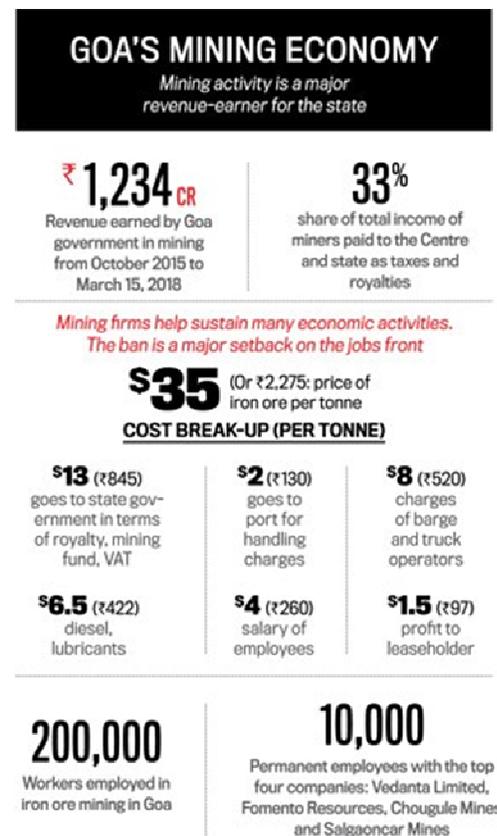
Partnerships and Ideas for Development:

- ◇ AIIB (Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank) has approved a \$ 140 million loan to improve rural road connectivity in 5640 villages of Madhya Pradesh.
- ◇ ADB agreed to give an aid of RS 1,700 crore to Uttarakhand, for infrastructure development and creation of sewerage treatment facilities in urban areas.
- ◇ WB, centre and Tamil Nadu signed an agreement for a WB loan of \$ 100 million to promote rural enterprises, facilitate access to finance, create employment opportunities for youth and particularly women. As part of this rural transformation project, over 4.11 lakh people from 26 districts will be benefitted.
- ◇ The Government of India, the government of Madhya Pradesh and the World Bank signed a \$210 million loan agreement for the Madhya Pradesh Rural Connectivity Project. The project is expected to improve the durability, resilience and safety of the gravel surfaced rural roads and enhances the capacity of the state to manage its rural road network.
- ◇ HRD launched the 2nd edition of the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan under which students from 750 higher educational institutions will adopt villages and visit them to get acquainted with lifestyle of people there and the problems faced by them.
- ◇ PM launches a scheme for the transformation of "Aspirational districts" (classified by NITI Aayog) in Chhattisgarh.
- ◇ CII president observed: If farm income in the country is to be doubled, it cannot happen without the private sector investing in the agriculture sector and policy think tank NITI Aayog should come out with a comprehensive ranking system for states in agriculture.
- ◇ NABARD is planning to give out a water atlas. It will help in judicious use of water, altering crop patterns. It would be of more use when farmers shift to less water intensive crops and increase water use efficiency.
- ◇ Indian Micro Fertilizers Manufacturers Association (IMMA) says that India should set up Indian Good Agricultural practices (IND-GAP) on lines of Euro-GAP and Global-GAP standards.
- ◇ UN has launched road safety trust fund aimed at spurring action to help save lives in road accidents.

- ◇ Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said:
 - Stringent road safety laws are necessary to deal with road accidents.
 - There is a lack of fear and lack of respect for laws on road safety which is the reason why accidents occur.
 - Road safety cannot be achieved without people's participation.
- ◇ Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said states and the Centre have to work jointly to provide skill training to a large number of people especially youth.
- ◇ Global IT challenge (GITC) for youth with disabilities will be held in New Delhi during 8th to 11th November, 2018. The competition is a testing ground for individual as well as group competencies in the field of IT.
- ◇ India Mobile Congress a platform for policymakers, industry and regulators will be held from 25th to 27th of October this year at Aerocity in New Delhi.
- ◇ New Industrial Policy is being planned in which emphasis has been laid on setting up of industries in rural areas, linking of self help groups and cooperative institutions with small scale industries and with global supply chain.
- ◇ Mediation centres planned to deal with e commerce complaints.
- ◇ Happy Cities Summit Amaravathi 2018 in Guntur for 3 days
- ◇ Ola, cab aggregator plans to introduce 10000 Electronic Vehicles, mostly in the form of e-rikshaws and e-autorikshaws in a year. This is a welcome step in electrifying mobility in India. ❖

Updates from Weeklies

- A study on CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) activities** in India noticed following trends:
 - ◇ Increase in number of firms reporting CSR expenses in their annual reports and increase in firms that are undertaking expenses on CSR activities
 - ◇ Still, 52% of the firms that come under the purview of the law did not report CSR expenditures.
 - ◇ CSR expenditure is clustering around mandatory 2% of profits. This is a worrying trend as the compliance is accompanied with reduction in donations by firms
 - ◇ In terms of activities, a major focus has been on health and education, closely followed by environmental protection
 - ◇ Long way to achieve full potential of CSR rules (For detailed analysis of the study, http://www.epw.in/system/files/pdf/2018_53/14/SA_LIII_14_070418_Sangeeta_Bansal.pdf)
- Mining and Livelihoods:** Goa mining ban has left many people uncertain about their future. This could have an impact on socio economic prospects of Goa. The ban and uncertainty in policies has impacted big companies like Vedanta. This could impact the CSR activities in the region. (For further reading... <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/the-big-story/story/20180409-go-ban-iron-ore-mining-jobless-workers-manohar-parrikar-1201187-2018-03-29>)
- Climate change and Health:** A modelling study done by The Lancet Planetary Health Journal shows that India and China would recover much more than what they would spend on implementing the Paris Climate Agreement between 2020 and 2050. This is due to health savings on account of reduced air pollution related illness and deaths. (For further reading... <http://www.frontline.in/science-and-technology/climate-pact-or-better-health/article10095790.ece>)
- Data Privacy:** The Face book/Cambridge Analytica episode proves once again that data is the new oil. We are now entering a world that is seeing an explosive growth of data. We are generating huge amounts of data about ourselves every second-when we browse, search, use e-mail, do commerce online, make banking or credit card transactions etc. There is an urgent need for Countries to come up with policies on data management.
- Clean Air:** The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change told the Supreme Court that the National Clean Air Programme, which seeks to reduce air pollution across the country by 35% in 3 years and 50% in 5 years will be finalised. The draft broadens the focus from Delhi to 100 cities in India.
- Animal Husbandry:** The Rajasthan Bovine Animal (prohibition of slaughter and regulation of temporary migration or export) amendment Bill, 2018 defines cow, calf, heifer, bull and bullock a “bovine animal” and expressly excludes buffalo. This is a relief for traders of cattle and meat and for transporters.

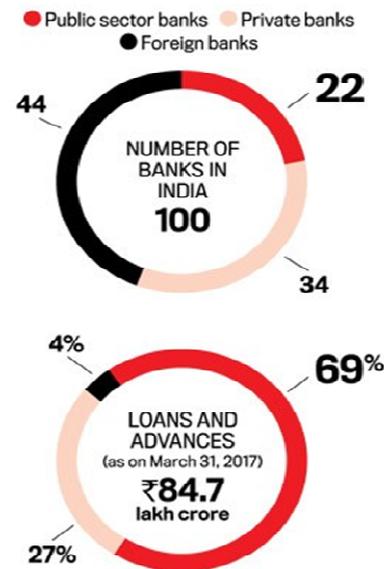


- **Cropping Pattern:** Indigo farming debuts in the hills of Uttarakhand as people find it ecologically and economically beneficial. (Detailed understanding on Down To Earth, 1-15 April, 2018 issue)
- **Affordable medicine:** The government's has removed two heads of National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority in the past four years. This is criticised by health experts as it may only weaken the country's lone drug pricing watchdog.
- **Farmer Collectives:** The failure of cooperatives to address the problems of marginal farmers has led to increase in the number of Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs). There are concerns on the implications of increasing contract farming tie ups between FPCs and corporate.
- A book review of a publication on functioning of MGNREGS. Name of the book: **MGNREGA: Employment, Wages and Migration in Rural India** by Pramod Kumar and Dipanwita Chakraborty <http://www.epw.in/journal/2018/14/book-reviews/indias-national-employment-undertaking.html-0>)
- **India's Food Security-Phosphorous:** To increase India's food security, increasing agricultural productivity is vital. But, with the declining fertility levels, this seems to be challenging. Phosphorous is insignificant in Indian soils and its availability is crucial to increase soil fertility. There needs to be a clear policy on phosphorous management in India in addition to awareness and sensitisation, as we rely mostly on imports for phosphorous. (For further reading... http://www.epw.in/system/files/pdf/2018_53/15/CM_LIII_15_140418_Madhuri_Nanda.pdf)
- **Mission Madhya Pradesh:** A diverse analysis on the state of development in Madhya Pradesh. It evaluates districts of MP on aspects of prosperity, poverty, agricultural development, infrastructure, manufacturing, health...etc. (For detailed analysis of the study.. <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/nation/story/20180416-madhya-pradesh-shivraj-singh-chouhan-india-today-state-of-states-conclave-1206280-2018-04-05>)
- **Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT)-Shortcomings:** A survey on Direct Benefit Transfer project of PDS in Nagri block of Ranchi district (Jharkhand) reveals that DBT is aggravating the problems of hunger, food security and poverty. Some of the observations are:
 - ◇ Poor are now forced to make multiple trips to avail their PDS rice
 - ◆ First to check with the banks whether money is credited
 - ◆ To draw money from customer service centres (Pragya Kendra)
 - ◆ To ration shop to buy rice
 - ◇ Inadequate transport facilities, crowded centres is a worry for people from distance
 - ◇ Cases of domestic violence
 - ◇ Lag in the timing of purchasing of rice from ration shops and depositing of money by the government. This puts additional burden on people. (For further reading..... <http://www.frontline.in/the-nation/from-pillar-to-post/article10106484.ece?homepage=true>)
- **Waste Management:** Managing landfills in big cities like Delhi has become a major challenge especially in the areas of: waste segregation, health concerns of waste handlers, nearby dwelling areas, volume of landfills, converting waste to energy, funds to manage the landfills. (For further reading..... <https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/the-greater-kailash-of-garbage/300033>)

- **Renewable Energy Generation:** A report by parliamentary standing committee observed that underutilisation of funds and poor capacity generation will derail India's renewable energy plans. Though India is on right track in improving renewable energy in energy basket, it needs to be accelerated. (Source: Down to Earth April 16-30, 2018 issue)
- **Environment:** Taking a serious note of the death of 184 lions in the state in last two years, the Gujarat High Court on March 26 sought explanations of the Union and state governments over the disturbing trend. Thirty-two lions had died due to "unnatural" causes.
- **Food Security:** Global Report on Food Crises by Food Security Information Network finds...
 - ◇ 124 million people suffered from acute food insecurity in 2017, says on March 26. This is a 11% increase from 2016
 - ◇ 74 million of them are in urgent need of assistance in 18 countries due to intensified and protracted conflicts and insecurity
 - ◇ 39 million face the crisis due to climate change related disasters, mainly droughts
 - ◇ 32 million of those facing food insecurity due to climate change are in Africa
 - ◇ 32 million or more living in north-eastern Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen and South Sudan are in urgent need of assistance. Two counties of South Sudan declared famine in February 2017 (Source: Down to Earth April 16-30,2018 issue)

- **Non Performing Assets (NPA):** In the wake of mounting NPAs, some issues that plague the banking sector are:

- ◇ Highest share of NPAs with public sector banks continues
- ◇ Increasing bad loans of private banks is a new challenge
- ◇ Allegations of crony capitalism, political interference and its impact on integrity of banks
- ◇ Conflict of interest at the top management level
- ◇ Effectiveness of monitoring tools of RBI
- ◇ Moving beyond regulatory regime to an ecosystem where voluntary compliance to transparency is adopted



(For further reading <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/the-big-story/story/20180423-chanda-kochhar-icici-bank-nepotism-videocon-venugopal-deepak-kochhar-1211476-2018-04-12>)

- **HIV/AIDS scenario in India:** Since 2000, India has reduced the annual increase of HIV/AIDS cases by 57%. But, the shortcomings of our efforts are evident in:
 - ◇ We could not address the social stigma attached to the disease. The way we look at it medically has changed drastically from seeing HIV/AIDS as a death warrant to a manageable health condition
 - ◇ Campaigns by government, NGOs mainly catered to high risk groups' such as sex workers and

homosexuals. But children and housewives are outside the loop. This lack of awareness will erode the achievements

- ◇ Constant access to ART drugs is a problem as majority take treatment from government hospitals. Ensuring regular and required supply of medicines will go a long way in reducing mortality due to HIV/AIDS.

(For further reading <https://www.outlookindia.com/magazine/story/saved-yet-shamed/300064>)

- **Urban Management-Transport Planning:** Urban planning is increasingly becoming a bigger challenge and transport is at the centre of it.

- ◇ Increasing motorisation is leading to issues of congestion, local emissions, pollution, and concerns about energy security
- ◇ Citizens as co-producers, as they are well aware of the issues in different domains and are in a position to contribute constructively.
- ◇ Exploring the idea of polycentric governance in Bengaluru's transport planning (Visit...http://www.epw.in/system/files/pdf/2018_53/16/SA_LIII_16_210418_Vivek_Vaidyanathan.pdf for further reading)

- **Funds and Population:**

- ◇ Reducing population growth has become a flash point in Indian politics and also about the Terms of Reference of the 15th Finance Commission
- ◇ 14th Finance Commission's 10% weight to the population of states in 2011 was to address the interstate inequality. Southern states have expressed concern about this as they feel it does not recognise their efforts in reducing the population growth.
- ◇ There is an issue of poorer states having less development expenditure and richer states having higher development expenditure in various schemes.
- ◇ Moving towards an equitable, non discretionary regime in disbursement of funds instead of state specific populist ideas is being looked at.
- ◇ Disparities in income and development is not only specific to North vs. South India, but was evident in East Germany vs. West Germany, Eastern Vs Western Europe and recently the issue of Catalonia in Spain. Even though south feels aggrieved, for India to develop, growth and development of all states is inevitable.

(Watch <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WurHezbeKiY> for detailed analysis) ❖