

**NATIONAL**

**National Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2018:**

The Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has conducted the National Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2018.

This ranking was done based on a comprehensive set of parameters including surveys of public places like schools, Anganwadis, PHCs, Bazaars, Panchayat. It also took into consideration citizen's perception of Swachhata and their recommendations for improvement of program and data from SBM-G. As part of this survey, 6786 villages in 685 districts across India were covered.

**Haryana Ranked Best State, While Satara Named Best District**

Overall Ranking

- Top 3 States: Haryana (1st), Gujarat (2nd) and Maharashtra (3rd).
- Top 3 Districts: Satara (Maharashtra), Rewari (Haryana) and Pedapalli (Telangana).

The latest ranking of 2018 by Swachh Bharat Abhiyan announced Indore as the cleanest cities in India for the second time.

**Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA)**

- Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) or Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) is a nation-wide campaign in India for the period 2014 to 2019 that aims to clean up the streets, roads and infrastructure of India's cities, towns, and rural areas.
- Run by the Government of India, the mission aims to achieve an "open-defecation free" (ODF) India by 2 October 2019, the 150th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, by constructing 90 million toilets in rural India at a projected cost of Rs. 1.96 lakh crore (US\$30 billion). The mission will also contribute to India reaching Sustainable Development Goal Number 6 (SDG 6).
- The mission has two thrusts: Swachh Bharat Abhiyan ("gramin" or 'rural'), which operates under the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation; and Swachh Bharat Abhiyan ('urban'), which operates under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- As part of the campaign, volunteers, known as Swachhagrahis, or 'ambassadors of cleanliness', have promoted indoor plumbing and community approaches to sanitation (CAS) at the village level.
- In the Union Budget 2018, the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan was allocated a total of Rs 17,843 crore compared to last year's allocation of Rs 19,248 crore.
- Swachh Bharat Gramin, the rural wing of the sanitation programme has been allocated Rs 15,343 crore while Swachh Bharat Urban's allocation for the financial year 2018-19 is Rs 2,300 crore.
- 6 crore toilets was completed and the government was looking to construct 2 crore toilets in the next financial year.

**Previous sanitation campaigns**

On 1 April 2000, the Government of India restructured the Comprehensive Rural Sanitation Programme and launched the Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) which was later (on 1 April 2012) renamed "Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan" by then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan was restructured by Cabinet approval on 24 September 2014 as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.

**What is Digi Yatra initiative?**

Air passengers can soon use facial recognition technology to enter any airport in the country under the recently unveiled Digi Yatra initiative by the Ministry of Civil Aviation. The initiative seeks to promote paperless and hassle-free air travel. There would be one-time verification at the departure airport while travelling for the first time using the ID. After successful verification, facial recognition biometric would be captured and stored in the Digi Yatra ID.

With this initiative, the civil aviation ministry is looking to make ticket booking, airport entry and boarding pass security check-in digital. The technology will soon be operational at Bengaluru and Hyderabad airports. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) plans to roll out the initiative at Kolkata, Varanasi, Pune and Vijayawada airports by April 2019, as per the ministry.

**Key features of the initiative and how it works:**

1. Centralised registration system for passengers and each of them would get a unique ID on booking the tickets
2. ID can be created by sharing name, e-mail id, mobile number and details of any identity proof, including Aadhaar
3. The airline would share the passenger data and the ID with the airport from where the passenger would be flying out

4. Optionally linking of Aadhaar to airlines at the time of booking for faster airport entry and automated check-ins without requiring any paper-based interventions
5. A biometrics-based digital processing system for passenger entry and related requirements at the airport
6. Voluntary for passengers on whether to opt for facial recognition biometric for air travel
7. The Digi Yatra platform would be operational by February 2019
8. Will be available at major airports in the country
9. Real-time notifications about congestion and delays of flights
10. Passengers would be notified when their luggage reaches the baggage claim belt

#### **Lion deaths in Gujarat spark talks of alternative home for big cats**

The Wildlife Week celebrations began across the country in October & in the same week, it has emerged that within a month, 23 Asiatic lions (at the time of going to press) have died at Gujarat's Gir Forest National Park, which is home to all the world's remaining 525 Asiatic lions. When the first deaths were reported between September 10 and 21, forest officials said it was because of "infighting" (competition for territorial supremacy) between the prides. Since then, another 10 have perished. Now, there is speculation that there is evidence of a "viral infection" in some blood and tissue samples. Some reports have even said canine distemper virus (CDV) has been found in four samples.

Experts say the Gir lions have always been susceptible to a variety of viruses because they share territory with the tribal herdsman community called Maldharis, their cattle and other domestic animals such as dogs. These deaths, they say, could have been avoided if a long-term epidemiological communicable disease study had been put in place at least 10 years ago to understand the disease load of the different prides. Moreover, animals don't die because of just a virus attack but because of low immunity. There is high chance that lions in Gir have low immunity because of inter-breeding that has been taking place for centuries.

- In 1994, an outbreak of canine distemper virus, which can spread from dogs in the wild, killed around 1,000 lions in Tanzania's Serengeti National Park.
- In 2013, the Supreme Court ruled that Gujarat needed to relocate some of its lions to neighbouring Madhya Pradesh to avoid the possibility of disease or some other disaster wiping out the entire population. The Gujarat government refused to translocate the lions to Kuno in Madhya Pradesh last year over concerns of its co-existence with the tiger and the difference in the climatic condition of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh.
- "Canine distemper virus is extremely infective. In Serengeti it killed a thousand lions in three weeks' time. Such epidemics are like natural catastrophes that come without any fore-warning. Translocation is good for lion conservation and one has to only follow the Supreme Court's order to implement it," according to Ravi Chellam, a conservation scientist.
- The rising number of deaths in such a short span of time has been a cause of worry for conservationists and wildlife experts.
- As a precautionary measure, all lions residing in the Samardi area were rescued and brought to the Jamwala Rescue centre, and actions were being taken to insulate them from the disease.
- "No virus or bacteria has been reported from 31 lions rescued from the Samardi forest area," according to Dushyant Vasavda, Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) in Junagadh.
- "An alternate home must be found for the lions if there was a suitable habitat. Canine distemper was responsible for wiping out 1,000 out of 3,000 lions in Tanzania and one must do everything to avoid a similar situation," said H S Singh, a member of the National Board for Wildlife Committee. He, however, said Kuno was not suitable for lions due to its high temperature.
- Rajan Joshi, a wildlife conservationist said he had written to the Gujarat chief minister last month warning about the possibility of canine distemper for the cause of deaths of lions. "I strongly believe that a second home is necessary for the lions as their population has started spilling outside the protected areas. Also the government needs to give more support to the local community for better conservation of lions."
- The Asiatic lion population spilled outside the Gir forest, as reflected in the Census released in 2015, according to which one in three lions resided outside the sanctuary area.
- The 2015 lion census by the Gujarat government showed that the western state was home to 523 lions, a 27% increase compared with the 2010 Census.
- The rise in population has forced many lions to move out of the protected area where around 315 lions reside according to the 2015 Census. The lion population is today spread in around 22,000 sq km across five districts in Gujarat.

- The success story of Asiatic lions in Gir has become a model of conservation, with constant patrols against poachers. The protected area of Asiatic lions is spread over 1,452 sq. km and includes five regions, including the Gir National Park, the Gir sanctuary, Matiyana and Paniya.
- According to the forest department statement, the population has reached around 600.
- Around five years ago, the state government proposed to the Centre to notify an area of 3,467 sq. km near Gir as an ecologically sensitive zone, barring any industrial development or mining activity in the area. According to Chief Conservator of Forest Vasada, the matter is currently in the court.
- Also, a new conservation area in the Jesar-Hipavadli zone, situated around 70km from Gir and spread across 109 sq. km, has been proposed as an “alternative home” for the lions in Gujarat. However, the Centre was yet to clear the proposal, a senior government official said on the condition of anonymity.
- Barda Wildlife Sanctuary near Junagadh was also identified as an alternative home for lions but the plan was yet to be realised. The main reason was rapid urbanisation in the area, which saw a large influx of human population, according to the official mentioned above.

## INTERNATIONAL

### **21 IORA Countries adopt Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy**

2nd IORA Renewable Energy Ministerial Meeting held at 2nd Global Re-Invest India-ISA Partnership Renewable Energy Investor's Meet & Expo in Greater Noida. 21 countries in Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) adopted Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy in Indian Ocean Region.

What is Indian-Ocean Rim Association?

The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), formerly known as the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative and Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation (IOR-ARC), is an international organisation consisting of coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean.

IORA is a regional forum, tripartite in nature, bringing together representatives of Government, Business and Academia, for promoting co-operation and closer interaction among them.

The Coordinating Secretariat of IORA is located at Ebene, Mauritius.

The organisation was first established as Indian Ocean Rim Initiative in Mauritius on March 1995 and formally launched on 6–7 March 1997

Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) has identified six priority areas, namely:

1. Maritime security,
2. Trade and investment facilitation,
3. Fisheries management,
4. Disaster risk reduction,
5. Academic and scientific cooperation and
6. Tourism promotion and cultural exchanges.

**21 member states:-** Australia Bangladesh Comoros India Indonesia Iran Kenya Madagascar Malaysia Mauritius Somalia Mozambique Oman Seychelles Singapore South Africa Sri Lanka Tanzania Thailand United Arab Emirates Yemen

### **Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy**

- It calls for the development of a common renewable energy agenda for the Indian Ocean region and the promotion of regional capacity building.
- It also calls for promotion of technology development and transfer, strengthening of public private partnerships (PPP) in renewable energy and collaboration among IORA member states and member nations of International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- IORA member countries also resolved to collaborate with International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). They will also collaborate with ISA member nations to exchange knowledge and share views and potential interests in renewable energy sector paved by MoU signed between IORA and ISA with focus on joint capacity-building programs, R&D activities in solar energy and exchange of best practices.
- IORA member nations and IRENA also agreed to undertake expansion of Global Renewable Energy Atlas, world's largest-ever joint renewable resource data project, coordinated by IRENA. This will help in creating Indian Ocean region's first and most comprehensive map and database which can be used to tap sizable renewable energy potential of region and collaborate on opportunities available under International Renewable Energy Learning Platform (IRELP).

**REINVEST- 2018: 2nd Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo held in Noida**

The second Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo (REINVEST- 2018) was organised by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy in Noida from October 3 to 5, 2018.

It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the presence of Secretary General of United Nations Antonio Guterres. 2nd Global RE-INVEST also hosted First Assembly of International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Meeting of the Energy Ministers of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) countries.

The 2nd RE-INVEST was aimed at accelerating worldwide effort to scale up renewable energy and connect global investment community with Indian energy stakeholders.

**NITI Aayog And United Nations In India Sign Sustainable Development Framework For 2018-2022**

NITI Aayog and United Nations has signed Sustainable Development Framework for 2018-2022. The agreement is reflection of commitment and efforts made by India towards attaining Sustainable Development Goals. The NITI Aayog is the national counterpart for the UN in India for the operationalisation of the UNSDF. Nineteen UN agencies have signed on the UNSDF 2018-2022.

Seven priority areas of UNSDF 2018-22

The UNSDF 2018-22 comprises of seven priority areas that outline the work that UN agencies will undertake jointly or individually fully aligned with the priorities of the Union Government.

1. The seven priority areas outlined in the UNSDF are:
2. Poverty and Urbanization
3. Health, Water, and Sanitation
4. Education and Employability
5. Nutrition and Food Security
6. Climate Change, Clean Energy, and Disaster Resilience
7. Skilling, Entrepreneurship, and Job Creation
8. Gender Equality and Youth Development.

Across these outcome areas, UN will support Union Government in south-south cooperation in partnership with Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). The total planned budget outlay for implementation of UNSDF is approximately Rs. 11000 crore, of which 47% is planned to be mobilized through course of implementation from multiple sources, including private sector and government.

The programmatic work outlined in UNSDF targets seven low-income states viz. Bihar, Jharkhand, MP, Odisha, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and UP along with North-East region and aspirational districts identified by the NITI Aayog. It will work on improving lives of most marginalized, poor, and vulnerable communities and people in the country, especially women and girls.

UNSDF also includes set of UN flagship programs that are aligned with major government schemes. These flagship programs will be scalable innovative, multi-sectoral solutions to some of most pressing development challenges that India faces and also serve as catalysts for increased investment of development finance.

UNSDF programmes range from affordable housing for poor to increasing access to clean energy in rural off-grid areas, protecting all children from vaccine-preventable diseases, providing quality education for all children and skilling for young people, especially young girls and ending stunting to improving child sex ratio.

**ECONOMY**

**SIDBI launches national level entrepreneurship awareness campaign Udyam Abhilasha**

- Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has launched Udyam Abhilasha a national level entrepreneurship awareness campaign. It was launched in 115 Aspirational Districts identified by NITI Aayog in 28 States.
- For implementing this campaign, SIDBI has partnered with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, a Special Purpose Vehicle, (CSC SPV) under Ministry of Electronics & IT through their CSCs. It will also tie-up with Banks, NABARD, NBFCs, SFBs, District Industries Centres, State Government etc.
- The campaign will run from 3 October to 8 October, 2018 across India and reach out to around 15,000 youth.
- CSC Village Level entrepreneurs (VLEs) will play role of catalyst under this campaign for these aspiring entrepreneurs. VLEs will provide training, support aspirants to establish new units, assisting them in availing loans and make them aware about various Government initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, SUI etc. and educate them in business literacy.

**Aspirational districts**

- The Union Government had selected 115 backward (aspirational) districts for rapid transformation by 2022 in line with Government's vision to create 'New India'.

- NITI Aayog had selected these districts on six socio-economic parameters, pertaining to health and nutrition, education, financial inclusion and skill development, agriculture and water resources and basic infrastructure.
- Broad contours of the programme are Convergence of Central and State Schemes; Collaboration of Central, State level 'Prabhari' Officers and District Collectors and Competition among districts driven by Mass Movement or Jan Andolan.

#### **MISCELLANEOUS**

##### **Government inks \$150 Million loan agreement with ADB for India's first Global Skills Park in MP**

Government has inked US \$150 million loan agreement with multilateral lender Asian Development Bank (ADB) for establishing India's first Global Skills Park in Bhopal, capital of Madhya Pradesh. It will be equipped with international training facilities to enhance the quality of Madhya Pradesh's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system.

##### **Government inks \$240 million loan agreement with ADB for WB Drinking Water Sector Improvement Project**

India and Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed \$240 million loan agreement for West Bengal Drinking Water Sector Improvement Project to provide safe drinking water to people in three districts of West Bengal. The project aims at providing safe and sustainable drinking water to people in Bankura, North 24 Parganas and Purba Medinipur affected by arsenic, fluoride and salinity.

##### **Justice Ranjan Gogoi sworn in as 46th Chief Justice of India**

Justice Ranjan Gogoi was sworn-in as 46th Chief Justice of India. He succeeded Justice Dipak Misra who retired from the office. He will have tenure of about 13 months, from October 3, 2018 till his retirement on November 17, 2019.

Justice Gogoi is a native of Assam and is son of former Assam Chief Minister Keshab Chandra Gogoi.

Article 124 of the Constitution of India provides for the manner of appointing judges to the Supreme Court.

##### **India ranked 28th on government's adoption of e-payments in 2018: EIU**

India was ranked 28th among 73 countries in 2018 Government e-Payments Adoption Ranking (GEAR). Norway has topped 2018 GEAR list scoring 89.7 points in seven categories.

##### **2018 GEAR**

It is an Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) global Index and benchmarking study commissioned by financial services corporation Visa. It ranks governments by quantifying their e-payment capabilities based on various indicators. It evaluates extent to which major countries around world have adopted e-payment systems, based on digital platform. The ranking is based on seven parameters viz. Government-to-Citizen (G2C), Citizen-to-Government (C2G), Business-to-Government (B2G), Government-to-Business (G2B) transactions, infrastructure, socio-economic and policy environment.

##### **2018 Nobel Chemistry Prize**

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has selected US scientists Frances Arnold and George Smith and British researcher Gregory Winter for the 2018 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. They were selected for harnessing power of evolution to develop enzymes and antibodies that have led to new pharmaceuticals and biofuels.

##### **Operation Samudra Maitri**

India has launched massive humanitarian operation Samudra Maitri to provide assistance to earthquake and tsunami victims in Indonesia. The operation was launched after telephonic conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indonesian President Joko Widodo and following Indonesia's acceptance of international aid.

A shallow earthquake of magnitude 7.5 (richter scale) had struck in neck of Minahasa Peninsula, Indonesia on 28 September 2018 with its epicentre located in mountainous Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi. The earthquake was located 77 km away from provincial capital Palu.

##### **R N Ravi appointed Deputy National Security Advisor**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has redesignated R N Ravi, Chairman of Joint Intelligence Committee as Deputy National Security Advisor (Internal Affairs). He will be third deputy NSA to National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval after former Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief, Rajinder Khanna and serving diplomat Pankaj Saran.

##### **Three-tier internal security structure**

At present, India has three-tier internal security structure which includes National Security Council (NSC), headed by Prime Minister, Strategic Policy Group (SPG) and a National Security Advisory Board (NSAB). PM-headed NSC is apex body and National Security Advisor (NSA) works as its secretary. The SPG is headed by cabinet secretary and it has chiefs of armed forces, Intelligence Bureau (IB) and RAW as its members. It is



responsible for policy-making and for follow up action in matters of national security. The NSAB does long term analysis and provides perspectives on issues of national security.

**National Security Advisor (NSA)**

NSA is the chief executive of National Security Council (NSC) and primary advisor to Prime Minister on national and international security and oversees strategic issues. It is NSA to whom intelligence agencies such as Research & Analysis Wing (RAW) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) report, rather than directly to Prime Minister. Due to such vested powers, NSA is prominent and powerful office in the bureaucracy. NSA is assisted by a Deputy NSA. The post was created in November 1998 by Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government. Brajesh Mishra was first to be appointed NSA of India. Since the inception of the post, all NSAs appointed belong to Indian Foreign Service (IFS) except M K Narayanan and incumbent, Ajit Doval, who belong to Indian Police Service.

**Sahyog HOP TAC -2018**

The maiden joint exercise of Coast Guards of India and Vietnam "Sahyog HOP TAC -2018" was held in the Bay of Bengal off the Chennai coast, Tamil Nadu. The exercise was aimed at acquainting coast guards of both countries with each other's' capabilities and strengthening working level relationship to rescue lives at sea. From Indian side, Coast Guard ships Shaurya, Arnvesh and inreceptor boat C-431 along with Dornier aircraft and Chetak helicopter participated in the joint exercise. It also saw participation of Sagar Manjusa vessel of National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT).

**Pankaj Sharma appointed India's Ambassador to UN Conference on Disarmament**

Pankaj Sharma has been appointed as ambassador and India's permanent representative to United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, an official statement said.

**UN Conference on Disarmament**

UN Conference on Disarmament (CD) is not formally United Nations (UN) organization. It is multilateral forum established in 1979 by international community to negotiate multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements. It is headquartered in Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.