Tamil Nadu – merges ‘Chief Minister’s Health Insurance Scheme’ with ‘Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana’ (Ayushman Bharat) – taking the total health cover to Rs 5 lakh

- The state now covers 1,027 medical procedures for 1.57 crore families, most of whom earn less than Rs 72,000 per annum
- The centre’s scheme will cover 1,300 medical procedures in the private sector
Tamil Nadu – gets 5 Awards from the Centre – for effective implementation of ‘Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) Scheme

- ‘Excellence in NREGA Administration’ Award received by – S P Velumani, Min for Municipal Administration and Rural development

- The state government has been honoured for giving work for 58 lakh people for 23.89 crore man day works
- They have paid Rs 5,344 crore as wage for the period
- The state government has also received an award for the initiatives under Geo-MGNREGA, performance in Aadhaar seeding and conversion
- Collectors Annadurai and Prashant M Wadnere – honoured for the effective implementation of the scheme in Thanjavur and Tiruvannamalai districts
- Tuticorin district administration – honoured with the ‘National Award’ for achieving Self-sufficiency under 7 schemes under ‘Grama Swaraj Abhiyan’
Dr Jeyanthi Kumaresh, Veena exponent – to be conferred with ‘Indira Sivasailam’ Award on Oct 12th, 2018 at the Music Academy, Chennai

Chennai corporation – to outsource waste Management in 8 more zones, apart from the already privatized ‘3 zones’
SCHEMES

- **E-Rythu (e-farmer)**, a mobile platform – launched by Andhra Pradesh – to enable small-scale farmers to market their produce at reasonable prices
  
- It was developed by ‘Mastercard Labs for Financial Inclusion’ in Nairobi, Kenya, and has been customized for India by its team based at Pune
- It aims to digitize agriculture marketplaces, payments, workflows and provide farmers an easy way to buy, sell and receive payments for agricultural products via their smartphones

STATES

- **Maharashtra** – ‘Marbat festival’ is celebrated in Nagpur, Maharashtra
  
- The 150 year old festival is celebrated only in Nagpur
  
- During the festival, effigies representing the evil forces called ‘Marbats’ of Kali (black) and Pivli (yellow) are burnt
Goa – launches a helpline number ‘181’ for Women in Distress

- It was unveiled by the Women and child development ministry in association with GVK-EMRI
- It will provide counseling, guidance and information for Women to deal with the domestic violence and other crimes against women

NATIONAL

Apsara-U (Apsara Upgraded) – is the new, refurbished version of India’s oldest Nuclear research reactor ‘Apsara’

- It was shut down permanently in 2009 for repair and was reconditioned by Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay, Mumbai - to have double the capacity compared to its earlier version
The upgraded version uses ‘Low Enriched Uranium’ and will be helpful to increase indigenous production of radio-isotopes for medical application, research in nuclear physics, material science and radiation shielding.

**Apsara – Background**

- It was the first nuclear research reactor in Asia, developed indigenously in Aug 1956
- It was the concept of Dr Homi Bhabha, the father of Indian Nuclear programme, in the year 1955
- The name ‘Apsara’ was coined by India’s 1st Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru
- It was a Light water moderated reactor with maximum power output of 1 MW thermal, using enriched uranium

**Model International Center for Transformative Artificial Intelligence** – to be set up by NITI Aayog, Intel, and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in Bengaluru, Karnataka

- The initiative is part of NITI Aayog’s ‘National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence’, which focuses on establishing the centre with private sector collaboration
- The centre will have special focus on application-based AI research in healthcare, agriculture and smart mobility
- The centre will be developing and deploying AI-led application-based research projects apart from establishing best practices in domains of fundamental research, physical infrastructure and talent acquisition
Min of Railways – launches ‘Rail Sahyog’ webportal – to assist Corporates and PSUs for funding the creation of amenities at Railway stations through the CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) initiatives

- Launched by – Piyush Goyal, Min of Railways and Coal
- It not only provides an opportunity for industries and associations to collaborate with Indian Railways but also beneficial for passengers
- The launch was in line with PM Narendra Modi's vision for a ‘New India by 2022’
- The various activities identified by the Railways to be funded through CSR include the construction of Toilets, provision of dustbins, bottle crushing machines, benches and free Wi-Fi in the Railway stations

Election Commission of India – removes ‘NOTA’ option from the Rajya sabha and the State’s Legislative Council Polls – as per the Supreme Court’s directive on Aug 21st, 2018

- The NOTA option will be available only in Lok Sabha and state’s assembly election
- The option of ‘NOTA’ was first introduced in the Dec 2013 assembly elections
- The NOTA button in the EVM machine has a pink colour so that it could be recognised easily
PM – announces an increase in Remuneration for the Government’s ‘Accredited Social Health Activist’ (ASHA) and Anganwadi workers

- The announcement was made during his video bridge interaction with lakhs of ASHA, Anganwadi and auxiliary nurse midwife (ANM) workers

- With the increase, those receiving Rs 3000 so far, would now receive Rs 4500 and those receiving Rs 2200 would now get Rs 3500

- The honorarium for Anganwadi helpers has also been increased from Rs 1500 to Rs 2250

- The Anganwadi workers and helpers using techniques such as Common Application Software (ICDS-CAS) would be getting additional incentives based on their performance, ranging from Rs 250 to Rs 500

- ASHA Scheme of Community Health workers
  - Instituted by - Ministry of Health and Family Welfare under ‘National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)’
  - Objective - to provide every village in the country with a trained female community health activist ASHA

- Work – Selected by the Village itself, they form an interface between the community and the public health system

- At present there are over 9 Lakh ASHAs spread across 33 states with the exception of Goa, Chandigarh and Puducherry

- Anganwadi scheme
  - They are Rural Child care centres, started in the year 1975 as part of ‘Integrated Child Development Services program’ to combat child hunger and malnutrition
  - As many as 13.63 lakh Anganwadi and mini-Anganwadi centres are operational at present
Airports Authority of India – drops the proposed ‘Water Aerodrome project’ at Lake Chilika in Odisha due to environmental concerns at the world's second largest brackish water lake

The reports of ‘Chilika Development Authority’ pointed out that the proposal will seriously jeopardise the habitat of Chilika’s nearly one million avian visitors which come from the Arctic and Eurasian regions

CABINET APPROVALS

Important Cabinet Approvals on 12th Sep 2018

Approval of New Umbrella Scheme “Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan” (PM-AASHA)
The Scheme is aimed at ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers for their Agricultural produce
- It has 3 Components namely –
  - Price Support Scheme
  - Price Deficiency Payment Scheme
  - Pilot of Private Procurement and Stockist Scheme
- Government has already increased the MSP of kharif crops by following the principle of 1.5 times the cost of production
- **MoUs Approved**
- India and Brunei Darussalam - Cooperation in the operation of Telemetry Tracking and Telecommand station for satellite and launch vehicles, and for cooperation in the field of Space Research, Science and Applications
- India and South Africa - cooperation in the exploration and uses of outer space for peaceful purposes
- India and Egypt - cooperation in the field of Agriculture & allied sectors
- India and Malta - cooperation in the field of Tourism

**INTERNATIONAL**

**United States - announces the closure of the ’Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) mission’ in Washington DC**

- The PLO, the internationally-recognised representative of the Palestinian people, opened the mission in 1994
- Earlier, US had recognised ‘Jerusalem’ as the capital of Israel in December 2017 and moved its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in May 2018
The PLO was created in 1964 to represent various Palestinian factions and it currently runs the Palestinian Authority, the semi-autonomous, interim government that manages certain areas of the Palestinian territories.

**INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS**

**Bihar and Nepal – to have the direct ‘Bus’ service now**

- The new service will connect Bodh Gaya and Patna in Bihar to Kathmandu and Janakpur in Nepal
- It was commissioned following an agreement between India and Nepal
- The inaugural bus was flagged off by Nitish Kumar, Chief Minister of Bihar

**COMMITTEES**

**Justice Mukul Mudgal – to head the 11-member selection committee to identify this year’s Dronacharya and Dhyanchand awardees**

- It has to be recalled that Justice Mudgal had earlier headed the SC-appointed probe into the 2013 IPL spot-fixing scandal
- He was the retired Chief justice of Punjab and Haryana high court
- Dronacharya Award – is presented to coaches for their outstanding and meritorious work on a consistent basis over a period of four years.
Dhyanchand Award – is given to sportspersons for their life-time achievements and contribution to sport during both their active career and after retirement.

The National Sports Awards ceremony, held on August 29 every year to commemorate the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand, will be organised on September 25 this year.

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

87th Izmir International Trade Show, Turkey

India was the Focus country in the event, held from 7th to 11th September, 2018.

Trade Promotion Council of India had led a 75-member Indian delegation for this trade show.

India had displayed a mega business standalone pavilion ‘Source India’ that hosted 75 Indian companies.

The main objective of India’s participation in the trade show is to increase India’s exports to Turkey and other neighbouring countries.
2nd India-UAE Partnership Summit – to be held in Dubai from Oct 30 for 2 days

It is being organised by the Business Leaders Forum

DEFENCE

Sagarmatha Friendship-2 – a Joint Military exercise between Nepal and China to take place in Chengdu, China from Sep 17th to 28th, 2018

The 1st exercise in the series took place in April 2017 at Chengdu

It has to be recalled that Nepal had pulled out of the Joint Bimstec Military drill scheduled at Pune
**APPOINTMENTS**

**New Indian Envoys to various Countries**

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<th>WHO'S HEADED WHERE</th>
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<tr>
<td>Harsh Shringla: US</td>
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<td>Vikram Misri: China</td>
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<td>Sanjay Varma: Japan</td>
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<td>Suchitra Durai: Thailand</td>
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<td>Saurabh Kumar: Myanmar</td>
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<td>Sanjay Verma: Spain</td>
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- Pankaj Saran – to become 2\textsuperscript{nd} Deputy National Security Advisor in New Delhi
**AWARDS**

**Rajalakshmi Nandakumar, an India-born woman scholar in the US - has been chosen for a prestigious 2018 ‘Marconi Society Paul Baran Young Scholar’ award**

- The award to be conferred is in recognition for her work to help detect potentially life-threatening health issues using smartphones
- She studies at University of Washington
- She has created a technology that turns an ordinary smartphone into an active ‘sonar system’ capable of detecting physiological activities such as movement and respiration, without requiring physical contact with the device

**Arul Chinnaiyan, an Indian-American Scientist & Professor at the University of Michigan – awarded “Outstanding Investigator Award” along with a grant of $6.5 million by the U.S. National Cancer Institute**

- This grant is aimed at identifying cancer biomarkers which may improve diagnosis and help develop new targeted therapies for Cancer disease
2nd ‘WiFi Leadership’ Awards 2018 – announced in ‘My India WiFi India Summit & Awards’, New Delhi

- Organised by – DigiAnalysys
- Theme – ‘Achieving 10 million WiFi Hotspots by 2018’
- Main Award winners
  - BSNL – has won ‘Best WiFi service provider’ Award
  - Kirat Communications – has won ‘Best WiFi startup’ award
  - D-Link (India)- has won ‘Best Home WiFi product’ award
  - Kamakshi Clouds – has won ‘Best IoT solution’ award

SPORTS

ISSF Shooting World Championships, Changwon, South Korea

- The trio of Gurnihal Singh Garcha, Anantjeet Singh Naruka and Ayush Rudraraju – won Silver in India’s 1st ever Skeet shooting medal at the World championships
- India has so far won all its shotgun medals in the trap and double trap disciplines
- Gurnihal Singh Garcha (19 years old) – won Bronze in the sixstrong individual event

- Overall, India won 22 medals, including seven gold and eight silver, and secured the fourth spot in the medals table behind China, Russia and Korea
Jhulan Goswami, Indian Pace bowler – becomes the 1st player to reach 300 wicket landmark in Women’s cricket across all the formats

✔ She has recently retired from T20 cricket but holds the record for more than 200 wickets in One day internationals

✔ Another Indian Cricketer Mithali Raj went past England's Charlotte Edwards (117) as the most-capped captain in women's ODIs with her 118th appearance