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## Important Days

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<tr>
<td>January 1</td>
<td>Global Family Day</td>
<td></td>
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<td>January 4</td>
<td>World Braille Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 9</td>
<td>Pravasi Bharatiya Divas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 10</td>
<td>World Hindi Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 12</td>
<td>National Youth Day</td>
<td>Channelizing Youth Power for Nation Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 15</td>
<td>Army Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 21</td>
<td>Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura’s statehood day</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>National Girl Child Day</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>January 24</td>
<td>Uttar Pradesh foundation day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 25</td>
<td>National Voters Day</td>
<td>No Voter to be left behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>Republic Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>International Customs Day</td>
<td>SMART borders for seamless Trade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 28</td>
<td>Data privacy day</td>
<td></td>
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Important days</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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<tr>
<td>February 2</td>
<td>World Wetlands Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 4</td>
<td>World Cancer Day</td>
<td>I Am and I Will</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 10</td>
<td>National Deworming Day</td>
<td>Investment in Women and Girls in Science for Inclusive Green Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 11</td>
<td>International Day of Women and Girls In science</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>February 12-18</td>
<td>National Productivity Week</td>
<td>Circular Economy for Productivity &amp; Sustainability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 13</td>
<td>World Radio Day</td>
<td>Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace’</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 20</td>
<td>World Day of Social Justice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 21</td>
<td>International Mother Language Day</td>
<td>Indigenous languages matter for development, peace building and reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 24</td>
<td>Central Excise Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February 28</td>
<td>National Science Day</td>
<td>Science for people and people for science</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Message</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>Zero Discrimination Day</td>
<td>Act to change laws that Discriminate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 1</td>
<td>World Civil Defence Day</td>
<td>Children's safety, our responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>World Wildlife Day</td>
<td>Life below water: for people and planet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 3</td>
<td>World Hearing Day</td>
<td>Check your hearing!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 4</td>
<td>National Safety Day</td>
<td>Cultivate and sustain a safety culture for building nation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 8</td>
<td>International Women’s Day</td>
<td>&quot;Think equal, build smart, innovate for change&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 10</td>
<td>CISF Raising Day</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 12</td>
<td>Corporation Bank’s 114th Foundation Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 13</td>
<td>(2nd Wednesday of March) No Smoking Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>World Kidney Day</td>
<td>‘Kidney health for everyone, everywhere’</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>International Pi Day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 14</td>
<td>The 22nd annual International Day of Action for Rivers</td>
<td>‘Celebration of the role of women in protecting and managing our rivers’</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 12 to 16</td>
<td>India Smart Utility Week</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>World Consumer Rights Day</td>
<td>‘Trusted Smart Products’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 15</td>
<td>World Sleep Day</td>
<td>Healthy Sleep, Healthy Aging</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>National Ordnance Factories Day</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>Global Recycling Day</td>
<td>Recycling Into The Future</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>International Day of Happiness</td>
<td>Happier Together</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>World Sparrow Day</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>World Forestry Day</td>
<td>Forests and Education: Learn to Love Forests</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>World Down Syndrome Day</td>
<td>Leave No One Behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>World Poetry Day</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>March 21</td>
<td>International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination</td>
<td>‘Mitigating and countering rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 22</td>
<td>World Water Day</td>
<td>Leaving No One Behind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>World Meteorological Day</td>
<td>The Sun, the Earth and the Weather</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23</td>
<td>Marty’s Day (Shaheed Diwas)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Important days</td>
<td>Theme</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade</td>
<td>‘Remember Slavery: The Power of the Arts for Justice’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 25</td>
<td>International Day of Solidarity with Detained and Missing Staff Members</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 26</td>
<td>Epilepsy Awareness Day or Purple Day</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 27</td>
<td>World Theatre Day</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Important days</td>
<td>Theme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 2</td>
<td>World Autism Awareness Day</td>
<td>Assistive Technologies, Active Participation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 4</td>
<td>International Day for Mine Awareness</td>
<td>‘United Nations Promotes SDGs – Safe Ground – Safe Home’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April 5</td>
<td>National Maritime Day (India)</td>
<td>Indian Ocean-An Ocean of opportunity</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 6</td>
<td>International Day of Sport for Development and Peace</td>
<td>Universal Health Coverage: Everyone, Everywhere</td>
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<td>April 7</td>
<td>World Health Day</td>
<td>-</td>
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<td>April 7-13</td>
<td>World Allergy Week</td>
<td>The Global Problem of Food Allergy</td>
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<td>April 10</td>
<td>World Homoeopathy Day</td>
<td>Linking Education and Clinical Practice with Research: Advancing Scientific Collaborations</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 11</td>
<td>National Safe Motherhood Day</td>
<td>‘Midwives for Mothers’</td>
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<td>April 12</td>
<td>The International Day of Human Space Flight</td>
<td>To honour the first ever flight of a human (Yuri Gagarin) in space</td>
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<td>April 17</td>
<td>World Haemophilia Day</td>
<td>“Reaching Out: The First Step to Care”</td>
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<td>April 18</td>
<td>World Heritage Day</td>
<td>“Rural Landscapes”</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 19</td>
<td>World Liver Day</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 21</td>
<td>National Civil Service Day</td>
<td>-</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 21</td>
<td>World Creativity and Innovation Day (WCID)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22</td>
<td>World Earth day</td>
<td>Protect Our Species</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 23</td>
<td>World Book and Copyright Day</td>
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<td>April 24</td>
<td>National Panchayati Raj Day</td>
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<td>April 24</td>
<td>International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace</td>
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<td>April 25</td>
<td>World Malaria Day</td>
<td>Zero malaria starts with me</td>
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<td>April 26</td>
<td>World Intellectual Property Day</td>
<td>“Reach for Gold: IP and Sports.”</td>
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<td>April 24 - 30</td>
<td>World Immunization Week 2019</td>
<td>Protected Together: Vaccines Work</td>
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<td>April 28</td>
<td>World Day for Safety and Health at Work</td>
<td>Safety and Health and the future of work</td>
</tr>
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<td>April 28</td>
<td>International Workers Memorial Day</td>
<td>Dangerous substances – get them out of the workplace</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 29</td>
<td>International Dance Day</td>
<td>Dance and spirituality!</td>
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<td>April 30</td>
<td>Ayushman Bharat Diwas</td>
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### Important Banking News

**RBI**

**RBI Allowed one-time restructuring of loans to MSME sector**

- Reserve Bank of India allowed a one-time restructuring of existing debt up to Rs. 25 crore for the companies which have defaulted on payment but the loans given to them have continued to be classified as standard assets. The decision will help the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) which are facing cash crunch in the wake of demonetisation and GST implementation.

**RBI issued fresh guidelines on limiting the customer liability in fraudulent PPI transactions**

- Reserve Bank of India has issued fresh guidelines on limiting the customer liability for unauthorised electronic payments involving Prepaid Payment Instruments (PPIs). RBI stated that, the rules are applicable to all authorised non-bank PPI issuers such as Paytm, Mobikwik, PhonePe and Oxigen, among others. In case of third-party breach, the customer will not lose any money if reported within three days. Fraud is reported within 4-7 days, then the customer liability is same as the transaction value, or Rs. 10,000 per transaction, whichever is lower. PPI issuer shall credit the amount within 10 days.

**Nepal’s central bank asked RBI to Make Rs. 200, Rs. 500, Rs. 2000 currency notes legal in country**

- The Nepal Rastra Bank asked the RBI to declare newly circulated Indian currency notes of denominations higher than Rs 100 legal tender in the country. As of now, the RBI has only allowed the circulation of Indian currency notes of Rs 100 and less in Nepal and provides exchange facilities for bills of these denominations. The NRB stated that country’s banking system, including banks, financial institutions and NRB, hold Indian currency denominations of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 worth Rs 48 million.

**Sri Lanka’s Central Bank gets $400 million swap from RBI**

- Sri Lanka’s Central Bank stated that the Reserve Bank of India has agreed to provide USD 400 million under a swap arrangement to boost the island nation’s reserves.
- The RBI has agreed to provide the funds under its SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Swap Facility.

**RBI makes changes in Gold Monetisation Scheme**

- The Reserve Bank of India has changed its Gold Monetisation Scheme (GMS), 2015 to make charitable institutions, Central Government, State Government or any other entity owned by Central Government or State Government eligible to deposit under the scheme.
• The government had launched the GMS in 2015 to mobilise the gold held by households and institutions in the country. The scheme allows bank’s customers to deposit their idle gold holdings for a fixed period in return for interest in the range of 2.25-2.50%.

RBI fined Rs. 1 crore fine on Bank of Maharashtra

• The Reserve Bank of India imposed a Rs. 1 crore penalty on state owned Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) for non-compliance of Know Your Customer guidelines and fraud classification norms.

• This penalty has been imposed taking into account the failure of the bank to adhere to directions issued by the RBI.

Reserve Bank of India to inject Rs 37,500 crore through OMO in February

• Reserve Bank of India will inject Rs 37,500 crore into the system through purchase of government securities in February to increase liquidity. RBI has been decided to conduct purchase of government securities under Open Market Operations (OMOs) for an aggregate amount of Rs 375 billion in the month of February 2019 through three auctions of Rs 125 billion each during the 2nd, 3rd and 4th week. There will be no auction during the first week due to the scheduled Monetary Policy Committee meeting.

RBI released December 2018 Financial Stability Report

Overall assessment of systemic risks

• India’s financial system remains stable, and the banking sector shows signs of improvement, even though the global economic environment and the emerging trends in financial sector pose challenges.

Financial Institutions: Performance and risks

• Credit growth of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) has improved between March 2018 and September 2018, driven largely by private sector banks (PVBs).

• The asset quality of banks showed an improvement with the gross non-performing assets (GNPA) ratio of SCBs declining from 11.5 per cent in March 2018 to 10.8 per cent in September 2018.

• Under the baseline scenario, GNPA ratio may decline from 10.8 per cent in September 2018 to 10.3 per cent in March 2019.

• Analysis of the financial network structure for the period September 2017 – September 2018 reveals a shrinking inter-bank market and increasing bank linkages with asset management companies-mutual funds (AMC-MFs) for raising funds and with NBFCs/Housing Finance Companies (HFCs) for lending.

Global and domestic macro-financial risks

• The global growth outlook for 2018 and 2019 remains steady although the underlying downside risks have risen.

• Spill-over risk to emerging economies engendered by tightening of financial conditions in Advanced Economies, protectionist trade policies and global geopolitical tension has significantly increased.

• The gradual monetary policy normalisation in advanced economies (AEs) as also the uncertainty in global trade regime may adversely affect capital flows to emerging markets (EMs) and exert upward pressure on EM interest rates and corporate spreads.

• On the domestic front, growth of gross domestic product (GDP) showed slight moderation in Q2:2018-19 while inflation remains contained.

• In domestic financial markets, structural shifts in credit intermediation and the evolving interconnectivity between banks and the non-banks call for greater vigilance.
Reserve Bank of India lifts lending curbs on three public sector banks

- RBI lifted lending curbs on three public sector banks (PSBs), Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra and Oriental Bank of Commerce to exit the PCA framework following capital infusion by the government and a decline in net non-performing asset ratio.
- Eight public sector banks - Allahabad Bank, United Bank of India, Corporation Bank, IDBI Bank, UCO Bank, Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank and Dena Bank still remain under PCA framework, which imposes lending restrictions and prevents them from expanding.
- Last month, the government announced infusion of Rs. 28,615 crore into seven public sector banks (PSBs) through recapitalisation bonds. Out of the seven state owned banks, Bank of India got the highest amount of Rs 10,086 crore, followed by Oriental Bank of Commerce Rs 5,500 crore and Bank of Maharashtra (Rs 4,498 crore).
- PSBs have also made a record recovery of Rs 60,726 crore in the first half of the current financial year.

RBI imposed penalties on Axis Bank, UCO Bank and Syndicate Bank

- The RBI has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs. 2 crore each on UCO Bank and Axis Bank, and Rs. 1 crore on Syndicate Bank.
- Penalty of Rs. 2 crore has been imposed on Axis Bank and UCO Bank for non-compliance of norms related to payment through cheques.
- In another case, a penalty of Rs. 20 lakh has been imposed on Axis Bank for contravention of the directions related to detection and impounding of counterfeit notes.
- The penalty on Syndicate Bank has been imposed for violation of guidelines related to checking fraud and managing risk.

RBI imposed a penalty of Rs. 1 crore fine on Union Bank of India

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed a penalty of Rs. 1 crore on Union Bank of India for delay in exchange of information regarding the conduct of the borrower's account with other lenders.
- The Banking Regulation Act, 1949 confers power on Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under Section 47(A) to impose penalties if there has been any default or contravention.

Sixth Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement: Repo Rate Reduced to 6.25%

- On the basis of an assessment of the current and evolving macroeconomic situation, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to reduce the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points from 6.5 per cent to 6.25 per cent with immediate effect.
- Reverse repo rate under the LAF stands adjusted to 6.0 per cent, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 6.5 per cent.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Repo Rate</th>
<th>6.25%</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reverse Repo Rate</td>
<td>6.00%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSF Rate</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bank Rate</td>
<td>6.50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRR</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLR</td>
<td>19.25%</td>
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RBI removed Allahabad Bank, Corporation Bank, Dhanlaxmi Bank from PCA framework

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) removed three commercial banks - Allahabad Bank, Corporation Bank and Dhanlaxmi Bank from the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework allowing them to resume their normal lending activities. With the removal of Allahabad Bank and Corporation Bank, six public sector banks are still under the PCA framework. Bank of India (BoI), Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) and Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) were taken out of PCA framework on January 31.
**RBI raised collateral-free farm loan limit to Rs 1.6 lakh**

- RBI raised the limit of collateral-free agricultural loans to Rs. 1.6 lakh from the current Rs. 1 lakh with a view to help small and marginal farmers. RBI also set up an internal working group to review agriculture credit and arrive at a “workable solutions and policy initiatives”. Currently, the banks are mandated to extend collateral-free agricultural loans up to Rs. 1 lakh. This limit was fixed in the year 2010.

**RBI doubles the limit of 'bulk deposit' from Rs. 1 crore to Rs. 2 crore**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) decided to raise the criteria for 'bulk deposits' for banks to Rs. 2 crore from the current Rs. 1 crore, to provide more operational freedom to lenders to raise funds. Interest rates on bulk deposits are marginally higher than on smaller-amount fixed deposits for similar maturity period. The instructions regarding bulk deposits were last reviewed in January 2013 and defined as single rupee deposits of Rs 1 crore and above.
- The proposal was suggested by the National Federation of Urban Cooperative Banks and Credit Societies Ltd. (NAFCUB). RBI also proposed that banks would maintain their bulk deposit interest rate cards in the core banking system for supervisory review.

**RBI imposed monetary penalty on seven banks**

- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs. 1.50 crore each on Allahabad Bank, Bank of Maharashtra and Indian Overseas Bank, and Rs. 1 crore on Andhra Bank.
- The penalty has been imposed on the public sector banks (PSBs) for non-compliance with various directions issued on monitoring of end use of funds, exchange of information with other banks, classification and reporting of frauds, and on restructuring of accounts.
- The central bank also imposed a monetary penalty of Rs. 20 lakh each on HDFC Bank, IDBI Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank for non-compliance with various directions issued by the RBI on Know Your Customer (KYC) norms / anti-money laundering (AML) standards.

**RBI imposed monetary penalty on 3 banks**

- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs. 1.50 crore on Oriental Bank of Commerce and Rs. 1 crore each on Bank of India and Punjab National Bank.
- The penalty has been imposed on the banks for non-compliance with various directions issued on monitoring of end use of funds, exchange of information with other banks, classification and reporting of frauds, and on restructuring of accounts.

**RBI lifts cap on FPI investments in corporation bonds**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) lifted the 20% limit on investments by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) in corporate bonds of an entity with a view to encouraging more foreign investments.
- In April 2018, RBI was stipulated that FPI should not have an exposure of more than 20% of its corporate bond portfolio to a single corporate.

**RBI to give Rs. 28,000 crore to Government as interim dividend**

- The Reserve Bank has announced that it will transfer an interim surplus of 28,000 crore rupees to the central government for the half-year ended 31st December 2018.
- With this interim transfer, the government will get a total Rs. 68,000 crore from the central bank in the current fiscal.
- The RBI had transferred Rs. 40,000 crore to the government in August 2018. This will be the highest receipt from RBI in a single financial year for the government, exceeding the Rs 65,896 crore it received in FY16 and Rs 40,659 crore in FY18.
RBI, Bank of Japan sign Bilateral Swap Arrangement
- Reserve Bank of India and Bank of Japan have signed a Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA).
- The BSA provides for India to access 75 billion US dollars whereas the earlier BSA had provided for 50 billion dollars.
- The financial cooperation would further enhance the strong economic ties between India and Japan.

RBI forms task force to see overseas Rupee
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) task force would likely also suggest policy measures to strengthen the local markets, helping avoid wild swings in exchange rates for the rupee. The eight-member committee headed by Usha Thorat – former deputy governor, Ajit Ranade – chief economist of Aditya Birla group, and Sajjid Chinoy – chief economist India, JPMorgan. The committee will assess the causes behind the development of the offshore rupee market while studying the effects of the overseas market on the rupee exchange rate per dollar and liquidity in the domestic market.

RBI imposed 8 crore fine on 3 banks for non compliance in SWIFT operation
- The Reserve Bank of India has imposed a total monetary fine of Rs. 8 crore on three banks - Karnataka Bank, United Bank of India and Karur Vysya Bank - for non-compliance of directions on Swift messaging software.
- While the RBI imposed Rs. 4 crore fine on Karnataka Bank, United Bank is facing a penalty of Rs. 3 crore. The regulator has levied Rs. 1 crore fine on Karur Vysya Bank.
- The RBI has levied an aggregate penalty of Rs 40 million on the Karnataka bank for delayed implementation of four of the Swift related operational controls.
- Earlier, four banks -- SBI, Union Bank of India, Dena Bank and IDBI -- had informed exchanges about monetary penalty slapped on them by the regulator for non-compliance with various directions.
- Fine of Rs. 3 crore was imposed on Union Bank, Rs. 2 crore on Dena Bank, and Rs 1 crore each on IDBI and the SBI.

RBI to infuse Rs. 12,500 crore via OMOs
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has stated that it will infuse 12,500 crore rupees into the system through open market operations (OMOs). It is based on an assessment of prevailing liquidity conditions and also of the durable liquidity needs going forward, it will conduct the purchase of the government securities under open market operations. OMOs are money market tools to infuse or suck out liquidity from the system.

RBI identifies SBI, ICICI and HDFC Bank as Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs)
- The Reserve Bank of India has released the list of Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs). The Reserve Bank had issued the Framework for dealing with D-SIBs in July 22, 2014.
- Domestic Systemically Important Banks are those banks which if fails would have a significant impact on the economy. RBI has a various set of criteria to add a bank to this list. The basic condition is that a bank size should be more than 2% of Indian GDP. The D-SIBs banks are classified into 5 buckets. Bucket 1, Bucket 2, Bucket 3, Bucket 4 and Bucket 5. With Bucket 5 being the most important followed by rest in decreasing order.
- State Bank of India is in Bucket 3, while HDFC and ICICI Bank both are in Bucket 1. Rest all buckets are empty. These three banks are in the D-SIBs list since Sep 04, 2017. No new bank has been added after the revised list is released on March 14, 2019.

RBI to infuse fresh liquidity worth $5 billion into the system
- The Reserve Bank of India announced to infuse long term liquidity worth $5 billion into the system through Foreign Exchange swap arrangement with banks for 3 years. The swap is in the nature of a simple Buy/Sell.
foreign exchange swap with the RBI. A bank can sell U.S. dollars to the RBI and simultaneously agree to buy the same amount of U.S. dollars at the end of the three year.

- Under the swap auction, minimum bid size would be USD 25 million and in multiples of USD 1 million thereafter, the eligible participants are allowed to submit multiple bids. However, the aggregate amount of bids submitted by single eligible entity should not exceed the notified amount of auction. Authorised Dealers (ADs) – category-1 banks will be the eligible entities to participate in the auction.

**RBI to reform Ways And Means Advance system for states**

- Reserve Bank of India has proposed a rule-based approach in fixing new Ways and Means limits for the state governments, replacing the previous expenditure-based system. It will set up a panel to recommend parameters of the new system which is aimed at preventing automatic monetisation of deficits.
- The central bank which acts as debt manager for state governments provides short-term loan to them to bridge temporary liquidity mismatches. The temporary loan facility is called Ways and Means Advances. The states have also agreed to link their receipts and payment systems with RBI’s integrated accounting system (e-Kuber) for greater system efficiency.

**RBI slaps Rs. 2 crore penalty on PNB**

- The Reserve Bank of India has slapped a penalty of Rs. 2 crore on Punjab National Bank for non-compliance of regulatory directions with regard to SWIFT operations.
- SWIFT is a global messaging software used for sharing information on inter-bank transactions by financial entities. Earlier this year, the Reserve Bank had imposed penalties worth 71 crore rupees on 36 public, private and foreign banks for non-compliance with various directions on time-bound implementation and strengthening of SWIFT operations.

**RBI raises FPI investment limit in G-Secs**

- The Reserve Bank of India upped the investment limit for FY2019-20 for foreign portfolio investors (FPI) in Central government securities (G-Secs) to 6 per cent of outstanding stock of securities from 5.5 per cent in FY2018-19.
- The limit for FPI investment in State development loans (SDLs) and corporate bonds has been left unchanged at 2 per cent and 9 per cent of outstanding stocks.
- The current limit of Rs. 6,49,900 crore, the revised limit for FPI investment in debt for FY2020 has been set at Rs. 6,98,300 crore for the first half, and Rs. 7,46,500 crore for the second half of the financial year.

**RBI sets NBFC-MFIs' average base rate at 9.21% for April-June**

- The Reserve Bank set the average base rate to be charged from borrowers by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and micro-finance institutions (MFIs) at 9.21 per cent for the first quarter of the next fiscal.
- RBI, on the last working day of every quarter, comes out with the average of the base rates of the five largest commercial banks for the purpose of arriving at the interest rates to be charged by NBFC-MFIs to its borrowers in the ensuing quarter. The regulator in February 2014 had issued directions to NBFC-MFIs regarding pricing of credit.

**Supreme Court quashes RBI circular on debt resolution**

- The Supreme Court struck down a Reserve Bank of India (RBI) circular that gave defaulting companies 180 days to agree on a resolution plan with lenders or be taken to bankruptcy court to recover debt of Rs. 2,000 crore and above.
- The bench said the February 12, 2018, circular was beyond the scope of the RBI’s powers. The decision was taken by a two-judge bench headed by RF Nariman.

**RBI to inject USD 5 bn more liquidity through 2nd dollar-rupee swap auction**
• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will inject long-term liquidity worth USD 5 billion into the banking system through dollar-rupee buy-sell swap for a tenure of three years on April 23, the second such auction within a month.

• The swap will be in the nature of a simple buy/sell foreign exchange swap from the Reserve Bank side. Under the swap, a bank would sell US dollars to the RBI and simultaneously agree to buy the same amount of US dollars at the end of the swap period. The minimum size of each bid should be USD 10 million and in multiples of USD 1 million thereafter.

**First Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement 2019-20**

• Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) decided to reduce the policy repo rate under the liquidity adjustment facility (LAF) by 25 basis points to 6.0 per cent from 6.25 per cent with immediate effect.

• Reverse repo rate under the LAF stands adjusted to 5.75 per cent, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the Bank Rate to 6.25 per cent.

• GDP growth for 2019-20 is projected at 7.2 per cent – in the range of 6.8-7.1 per cent in H1:2019-20 and 7.3-7.4 per cent in H2. The next meeting of the MPC is scheduled during June 3, 4 and 6, 2019.

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**RBI sets WMA Limit for Government at Rs. 75000 crore**

• The Reserve Bank of India, in consultation with the Government of India, has decided that the limits for Ways and Means Advances (WMA) for the first half of the financial year 2019-20 (April 2019 to September 2019) will be Rs. 75000 crore. The Reserve Bank may trigger fresh flotation of market loans when the Government of India utilises 75% of the WMA limit. The interest rate on WMA will be Repo Rate and overdraft will be 2% above the Repo Rate.

• The Reserve Bank of India gives temporary loan facilities to the centre and state governments as a banker to government. This temporary loan facility is called Ways and Means Advances (WMA).

• The WMA scheme for the Central Government was introduced on April 1, 1997, after putting an end to the four-decade old system of adhoc (temporary) Treasury Bills to finance the Central Government deficit.

**RBI issues guidelines for banks to set up currency chests**

• The Reserve Bank of India came out with guidelines for banks to set up new currency chests, which include a minimum area of 1,500 square feet for the strong room.

• For those situated in hilly/ inaccessible places, the strong room/ vault area of at least 600 sq ft.

• Besides, the new chests should have a processing capacity of 6.6 lakh pieces of banknotes per day.

• For those situated in the hilly/ inaccessible places, the capacity of 2.1 lakh pieces of banknotes per day.

• An RBI appointed committee had recommended that the apex bank should encourage banks to open large currency chests with modern facilities and Chest Balance Limit (CBL) of at least Rs 1,000 crore.

• This has been done on the recommendation of Shri D.K. Mohanty Committee.

**RBI Issues Rs. 50 notes with Governor Shaktikanta Das’ signature**

• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) issued banknotes of Rs. 50 denomination bearing the signature of Governor Shaktikanta Das. The design of these notes is similar in all respects to Rs. 50 banknotes in
Mahatma Gandhi (new) series. The dimension of Rs. 50 note is 66 mm x 135 mm. In the back side of the note has Hampi with chariot as motif.

**RBI signs up for FX Global code**
- The RBI has signed a Statement of Commitment (SoC) to the FX Global Code. The code, launched on May 25, 2017, is a compilation of best market practices, formulated by central banks and market participants, developed under the auspices of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), Basel.
- The RBI said the code is applicable to the wholesale FX market participants covering sell-side, buy-side and financial intermediaries, and is voluntary in nature. It does not impose any legal or regulatory obligations, and is intended to be a supplement to the local laws, rules and regulations. It is currently being implemented globally by the Global FX Committee (GFXC) in co-ordination with the Local FX Committee (LFXC) in each jurisdiction.

**RBI has Rs. 3 lakh crore in excess reserves, says BofAML**
- The Bimal Jalan committee formed to study the RBI's capital structure is likely to identify excess reserves of up to Rs. 3 lakh crore ($43 million), Bank of America Merrill Lynch (BofAML) said.
- Capping overall reserves at 20% from 25.5% will release Rs. 1.96 lakh crore.
- There's no restriction which prevents RBI from transferring the money to government.

**RBI sells entire stake in NHB, Nabard to govt for Rs. 1,470 crore**
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has divested its entire stake in Nabard and National Housing Bank (NHB) for Rs. 20 crore and Rs. 1,450 crore, on 26 February and 19 March, respectively. With this, the Government of India now holds 100% stake in both the financial institutions.
- RBI held 100% shareholding in NHB, which was divested on 19 March 2019. The current change in the capital structure of both the financial institutions was brought in by the Government of India through amendments to the NABARD Act, 1981 and the NHB Act, 1987.

**RBI became the first APAC central bank to begin interest rate easing cycle**
- The Reserve Bank of India is the first central bank in the Asia-Pacific region to begin an explicit interest rate easing cycle. The monetary policy committee led by Shaktikanta Das cut the repo rate by 0.25 percentage point in February 2019 and again by 0.25 percentage point in March 2019, taking the total repo rate down to 6% per cent, the lowest in about nine years since 2010.
- Inflation at 2.9 per cent has remained within the RBI's comfort zone of 4 per cent (+/- 2 per cent).
- Fitch has predicted GDP growth rate of 6.8% in FY20 for India.

**RBI to introduce new Rs. 20 banknote**
- The Reserve Bank of India announced it will “shortly” issue banknotes of Rs 20 denomination in the Mahatma Gandhi (new) series. The new Rs. 20 note will feature a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi on the front and a motif of the Ellora caves on the back, “depicting the country’s cultural heritage”.
- The RBI said the base colour of the note is greenish yellow. It will bear the signature of RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das. Dimension of the banknote will be 63 mm x 129 mm.

**RBI extends deadline for legal entity identification**
- The RBI extended the deadline for Legal Entity Identifier (LEI) codes for participation in non-derivative markets. Now, the deadline for entities with net worth of over Rs. 1,000 crore to get the code is December 31, 2019, against the earlier deadline of April 30 this year.
- This is also the deadline for those with net worth between Rs. 200 crore and Rs. 1,000 crore, while for entities with net worth of less than Rs. 200 crore, the deadline has been extended to March 31, 2020.

**RBI extends ombudsman scheme to non-deposit taking NBFCs**
• Reserve Bank of India has announced to extend the ambit of Ombudsman scheme for NBFCs to all eligible non-deposit taking NBFCs as well. The scheme which lays down rules for redressal mechanism in cases of customer complaints was earlier applicable only to deposit-taking NBFCs.

• All Non-Deposit Taking Non-Banking Financial Companies having customer interface, with assets size of Rupees 100 crore or above will come within the ambit, and shall comply with the provisions of the Ombudsman Scheme for Non-Banking Financial Companies.

• The scheme still excludes various NBFC groups such as Infrastructure Finance Companies (NBFC-IFC), Core Investment Company (CIC), Infrastructure Debt Fund-Non-Banking Financial Company (IDF-NBFC) and also NBFCs under liquidation.

SBI

SBI Card and Etihad Guest tie-up to launch premium card for international travel

• SBI Card and Etihad Guest, the loyalty programme of Etihad Airways, have joined hands to launch a travel specific Visa credit card for members and Indian travellers. This is the first international co-brand partnership of SBI Card, the country's second largest credit card issuer. The card will be available in two variants, Etihad Guest SBI Card and Etihad Guest SBI Premier Card, will bring an unmatched value proposition to Etihad Guest members and international travellers from India. It has been launched against the backdrop of increasing international travel in the country. Travel is now a key spend category for Indian consumers, with 33 per cent of overall card spends in the SBI Card portfolio made within the travel industry.

State Bank of India set to own 15% in Jet Airways

• India’s largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) is set to swap part of its loans into a stake of at least 15 per cent in Jet Airways. The airline’s founder and chairman Naresh Goyal stake cut to below 20 per cent from 51 per cent.

• Etihad Airways PJSC, the foreign partner with a 24 per cent stake, is expected to infuse additional funds to take its holding to more than 40 per cent.

RBI imposed fine of Rs. 1 crore on State Bank of India

• Reserve Bank of India has slapped Rs 1 crore penalty on the country's largest lender for not monitoring the end use of funds in respect of one of its borrowers. The Banking Regulation Act, 1949 confers power on Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under Section 47(A) to impose penalties if there has been any default or contravention.

SBI reduced home loan interest rate by 5 basis points

• Country’s largest lender State Bank of India announced a cut in interest rates by 5 basis points on its home loans up to Rs 30 lakh.

• Now the home loan rates up to Rs. 30 lakh stands at 8.70%

SBI reports frauds worth Rs.7951 crore in Apr – Dec FY19

• SBI had reported frauds amounting Rs. 7,951 crore during the first nine months of fiscal 2019, mainly due to frauds declared in some large-value accounts. All those accounts became non-performing assets "much earlier" and that most of the portfolio was already provided for with full provision. The resolution process for recovery is on via various debt recovery regulatory bodies.

Hitachi arm & SBI to roll out digital payments platform

• State Bank of India and Hitachi Payment Services Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hitachi Ltd launched their merchant-acquiring joint venture, SBI Payment Services Pvt Ltd (SBIPSPL), in Mumbai, for
establishing a digital payments platform for India and other countries in the region. The joint venture (SBI) has a 74 percent stake, and the balance is with Hitachi Payment Services) will facilitate expansion of the digital payments landscape in India via its digital payments platform.

**State Bank of India to join SWIFT's global payment interface**

- State Bank of India will soon sign up with the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Transactions’ (SWIFT) Global Payment Interface (GPI) which is set to make cross-border transactions much more secure and transparent.
- India’s largest lender will join 11 of its counterpart banks that will have subscribed to this payments platform.
- SWIFT gpi is being used by 3500 banks across the globe carrying transactions worth over $300 billion daily.
- The gpi-enabled banks can also opt for an additional feature called Payment Control Service (PCS) where in case of any irregularities during the payments' transaction such as higher-than-usual fund size or uncommon transaction timeframe, the channel can block the transaction and notify the bank.

**SBI links pricing of loans, deposits to the repo rate**

- The **State Bank of India (SBI)** will use the repo rate of RBI as a benchmark to set the savings deposit interest rates and interest rates for short-term loans from May 01, 2019.
- With this the State Bank of India will become the **first bank in the country to use an external benchmark** like repo for interest rates of saving deposits and loans. This has been done for quick transmission of changes in the RBI’s policy rates.
- However, those saving deposit accounts with balance less than Rs. 1 lakh and borrowers with CC/OD limits up to Rs. 1 lakh will be exempted from this. These will continue to be linked to MCLR. This has been done to insulate them from the movement of external benchmarks like repo rate. In savings account with deposits balances above Rs. 1 lakh, the effective interest rate will be 2.75% below repo rate. All cash credit accounts and overdrafts above Rs. 1 lakh would be priced at 2.25% over the repo rate.

**SBI launched doorstep banking service for senior citizens**

- State Bank of India launched ‘Doorstep Banking’ for senior citizen customers over 70 years of age, differently-abled customers and infirm customers including visually impaired customers.
- Doorstep banking services are available to KYC-compliant account holders, with a valid mobile number registered with the bank and residing within 5 kilometres radius from their home branch. This service will not be available for accounts operated jointly, minor accounts, and accounts of non-personal nature.
- Eligible customers can avail these services with a nominal fee of Rs. 100 per transaction for financial transactions and Rs. 60 per transaction for non-financial transactions.

**SBI customers can withdraw cash without ATM cards**

- The State Bank of India has launched the YONO Cash service for its customers which will allow them to withdraw cash from ATMs without their debit cards. A part of SBI’s digital banking platform, You Only Need One (YONO), the cardless cash withdrawal service will be available across 16,500 ATMs of the bank in the country. Such SBI ATMs will be called YONO Cash Point.
- SBI customers can use the YONO app on their smartphones to withdraw cash from SBI ATMs, or YONO Cash Points, without using their debit and credit cards. After installing the YONO app on their phones, SBI account holders will have to set a 6-digit YONO PIN for withdrawing cash. Once a request for withdrawing cash is placed, a 6-digit code will be sent to the user's phone via SMS, which will then have to be entered into a YONO Cash Point.

**SBI raises Rs. 1,251.30 crore by issuing Basel III-compliant tier-I bonds**
• The country’s largest lender State Bank of India (SBI) has raised Rs. 1,251.30 crore by issuing Basel III-compliant additional tier-I bonds. The proceeds from these bonds will help SBI to boost its additional tier 1 capital ratio to meet systematically important bank (D-SIB) criteria to which SBI is mandated to meet.

• The bonds with a face value of Rs 10 lakh each bears a coupon rate of 9.45 per cent per annum payable annually with call option after 5 years or any anniversary date thereafter.

SBI Minimum Balance Rules, Charges for this Financial Year
• Customers of the State Bank of India (SBI), the country’s largest nationalised bank, are required to maintain an average monthly balance in their savings accounts.

• The branches have been categorised into four types – metro, urban, semi-urban and rural. The bank levies charges ranging from Rs. 5 to Rs. 15 excluding the GST if any customer fails to maintain the average monthly balance.

• For SBI branches in metro and urban areas, the average monthly balance is Rs. 3,000 whereas customers are required to maintain Rs. 2,000 and Rs. 1,000 minimum balance in saving accounts at branches in semi urban and rural areas, respectively.

SBI cuts interest rates on home loans
• The State Bank of India has re-priced home loans up to Rs. 30 lakh by 10 basis points.

• Accordingly, the interest rate on housing loans of such size will now be in the range of 8.6 to 8.9 per cent.

• The new one-year marginal cost of funds-based lending rate is down to 8.50 per cent now from 8.55 per cent. This is the first reduction by SBI in over 17 months.

SBI General launches cyber defence insurance for businesses
• SBI General Insurance has launched a product to protect businesses from financial and reputational losses due to cyber attacks. In the initial phase, the focus will be on SMEs and mid-market businesses.

• This offers protection against the growing threat of cyber breaches and is designed to protect against major insurable cyber exposures like hacking attacks, identity theft, disclosure of sensitive information and business interruption.

• The new insurance plan of SBI General Insurance comes with CyRUSS (Cyber Risk Underwriting and Solution Suite). CyRUSS is a cloud-based tool for commercial cyber polices including risk assessment, ongoing risk management and claim management as well.

SBI Launches first Green Car Loan
• State Bank of India announced the country’s first ‘Green Car Loan’ (Electric Vehicle) to encourage customers to buy electric vehicles. The new scheme will offer loan at 20 basis points lesser than the interest rate on the existing car loan schemes.

• The EMI per Rs. 1 lakh will be lower at Rs. 1,468 for 96 months against Rs. 1,622 for 84 months, based on the maximum tenor, in line with the existing scheme.

Asian Development Bank
Centre and ADB sign 926 million loan agreement to operationalize two lines of Mumbai Metro
• The Centre and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a 926 million dollar loan agreement to operationalize two lines of the Mumbai Metro Rail System. It is the single largest infrastructure project loan in ADB history approved by the ADB Board. It will help fund lines 2A (Dahisar to D.N. Nagar), 2B (D.N. Nagar-Bandra-Mandale), and 7 (Dahisar-East to Andheri-East), totaling about 58 kilometres,
Once operational by the end of 2022, an estimated two million passengers a day will use the two new lines and will travel in improved safety and comfort. It will also reduce emissions from vehicles, with carbon dioxide emissions expected to fall by about 166,000 tons a year.

India and ADB sign 26 million dollar loan pact for improving drainage infrastructure in Dibrugarh

- The Centre and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) have signed a 26 million dollar loan agreement to provide additional financing for improving drainage infrastructure in Dibrugarh town of Assam under the ongoing Assam Urban Infrastructure Investment Program.
- The ongoing loan of 51 million dollars under the Assam Urban Infrastructure Investment Program is helping to improve water supply infrastructure in Guwahati and solid waste management and drainage infrastructure in Guwahati and Dibrugarh.
- Additional Secretary in Department of Economic Affairs (Fund Bank and ADB), Sameer Kumar Khare and India Resident Mission of ADB, Hoe Yun Jeong signed the agreement in New Delhi

ADB to invest USD 50 mn in solar project developer Avaada

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) has inked an agreement to invest USD 50 million in solar energy project developer Avaada Energy Pvt Ltd to help the company scale up rapidly. The investment will come equally from ADB's Ordinary Capital Resources and Leading Asia's Private Infrastructure Fund (LEAP).
- LEAP is a funding arrangement provided by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) which is administered by ADB. The project will contribute to the strategy of the government to increase the share of renewable energy generation capacity from about 20 per cent in 2018 to 40 per cent by 2030. It will also help to reduce India's emission intensity of its gross domestic product by 33-35 per cent by 2030. The investment contributes to ADB's goal to provide cumulative climate finance of USD 80 billion from 2019 to 2030.

ADB committed $3 billion in sovereign loans to India in 2018

- ADB committed to provide USD 3 billion in sovereign loans to India in 2018, the highest level of assistance since sovereign operations began in the country in 1986.
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB), owned by 68 member countries, committed a total of USD 3.88 billion, including sovereign loans and co-financing during the year ended December 2018.

World Bank

India signed USD 25.2 million loan agreement with the World Bank

- The Government of India, the State Government of Chhattisgarh and the World Bank signed $25.2 Million Loan Agreement to support the State’s Reforms in Expenditure Management. This support will cover Expenditure Planning, Investment Management, Budget Execution, Public Procurement and Accountability.
- The Chhattisgarh Public Financial Management and Accountability Program, which is the First Bank-Financed State-Level Project in Chhattisgarh in nearly a decade, will also help the State strengthen its Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and Tax Administration Systems.

India signed loan agreement with World Bank Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project

- India signed a loan agreement with the World Bank for 96 Million US dollars for additional financing of Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project.
- The 96 million dollars loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has a 5-year grace period and a final maturity of 15 years.
- The World Bank has been supporting the State Government since 2014 to restore housing and rural connectivity and to build the resilience of communities. The additional financing of 96 million dollars will further help in the reconstruction of bridges, road and river bank protection works, and in the construction of a training facility for the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF)
India and World Bank Signs $137 Million Loan Agreement for the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)

- India, The World Bank and representatives of 5 state governments of India and implementing agencies signed the loan agreement for additional financing of $137 million for the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)
- That will help rehabilitate and modernize over 220 selected large dams in the states of Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand.
- In 2010, the Bank’s Board approved $350 million to finance the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project to improve the safety and sustainable performance of over 220 selected dams in India.

Other Banking News

Allahabad Bank, SBI Life Join hand for Bancassurance Partnership

- State-owned Allahabad Bank has tied up with SBI Life Insurance to sell the policies of the insurer from over 3,200 branches, the tie-up, one of the largest Bancassurance partnerships in the country, 3,238 branches of Allahabad Bank across the country offer SBI Life's range of protection, wealth creation and savings products to its customers.

RBI allows Paytm Bank to restart account opening

- Paytm Payments Bank has received the green light from the Reserve Bank of India to restart opening accounts for its customers, Paytm Payments Bank had stopped enrolling new customers from 20 June following an audit by RBI, which made certain observations about the process the company follows in acquiring new customers and its adherence to know your customer (KYC) norms.

Complaints registered at Banking Ombudsman surge 25% in FY18

- The number of complaints registered at banking ombudsman offices have seen a 25% increase in the fiscal year 2018. The banking ombudsman offices in tier-1 cities like New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad accounted for more than 57% of the total complaints received. 97% of the Complaints were resolved in 2017-18, up from 92% a year earlier. Most complaints received against public sector banks were pension-related while most complaints received against private banks were for credit cards discrepancies.

HDFC Mutual Fund piped ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund to become largest AMC in India

- HDFC Mutual Fund has piped ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund to become the country’s largest asset management company (AMC) after a gap of over two years. As of December-end, HDFC MF manages assets to the tune of Rs 3.35 lakh crore, while those of ICICI Prudential MF stood at Rs 3.08 lakh crore.
- SBI MF is at the third slot with AUM of Rs 2.64 lakh crore, followed by Aditya Birla Sun Life MF Rs 2.42 lakh crore, and Reliance MF Rs 2.36 lakh crore.

Bharti AXA Life delivers policy, renewal premium receipts via WhatsApp

- Private sector insurer Bharti AXA Life Insurance has started delivering policies and renewal premium receipt to customers via instant messaging platform WhatsApp. Bharti AXA Life Insurance, a joint venture between Bharti Enterprises and French Insurance major AXA.

Public Sector lender Syndicate Bank and SBI Life Insurance signed Bancassurance pact

- Syndicate Bank and SBI Life Insurance have signed a pact to offer a comprehensive financial planning solution to its customers. This partnership will see over 3000 branches of Syndicate Bank offer SBI Life’s diverse range of insurance products to its customers.
ICICI Bank, Small Business FinCredit join hands to provide loans to MSMEs

- Private lender ICICI Bank has joined hands with Small Business FinCredit (SBFC) to jointly offer loans worth Rs 1 crore to the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), for tenure of 15 years per customer.
- Under the pact, the bank will co-originate loan against property with SBFC at a mutually settled ratio.

AGS Transact Tech set to launch QR-based cardless withdrawals at white-label ATMs

- Payment solutions provider AGS Transact Technologies has initiated cardless cash withdrawals, based on quick response (QR) code on its white-label ATMs (WLAs).
- AGS Transact operates white-label ATMs under the ‘OnGo’ brand name.

UBI, Srei Equipment Finance enter pact for MSME sector finance

- United Bank of India and Srei Equipment Finance has entered into an agreement for financing the MSME and agriculture sectors. Under the pact, UBI would leverage its low-cost loans with Srei to enable purchase of equipment and vehicles in a seamless manner.

Centre amalgamates three regional rural banks into a single Bank

- The Centre has amalgamated three Regional Rural Banks (RRB) Punjab Gramin Bank, Malwa Gramin Bank and Sutlej Gramin Bank into a single RRB with effect from January 1. The sponsor banks of the RRBs are National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the Government of Punjab and Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India and Punjab and Sind Bank.

IRDAI fines United India Insurance Company Rs 5 lakh for violating claims settlement

- IRDAI slapped a penalty of Rs 5 lakh on United India Insurance Company for violating norms regarding the settlement of motor claims.
- The insurer also violated file and use guidelines issued by the Authority.

Government allowed Iranian bank to open branch in Mumbai

- The government has allowed an Iranian bank to open a branch in Mumbai.
- Iran’s Bank Pasargad will open its branch within the next three months.

Cabinet approved recapitalisation of Export-Import Bank of India

- The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has approved the recapitalization of EXIM Bank.
  1. Issuance of Recapitalization Bonds by Government of India to the tune of Rs.6,000 crore for capital infusion in Export Import Bank of India (Exim Bank).
  2. The equity will be infused in two tranches of Rs. 4,500 crore in FY 2018-19 and Rs.1,500 crore in FY 2019-20 respectively.
  3. The Cabinet also approved an increase in the authorized capital of Exim Bank from Rs. 10,000 crore to Rs. 20,000 crore. The recapitalisation bonds will be on the lines issued to Public Sector Banks.

SoftBank to acquire 40% stake in FirstCry for $400mn

- Japanese conglomerate SoftBank is reportedly set to invest $400 million to acquire a 40% stake in Pune-based baby products startup FirstCry at a valuation of around $600-700 million.
- This comes after previous reports claimed that FirstCry may raise at least $150 million at an $800-900 million valuation from SoftBank.
- FirstCry was founded in 2010 by Supam Maheshwari and Amitava Saha.
LIC completes 51% controlling acquisition in IDBI Bank

- The country's largest life insurer LIC has completed acquisition of 51% stake in the IDBI bank, making it the lender's majority shareholder. The deal had received approval from the Union Cabinet in August last year.
- It was completed through a combination of preferential allotment and open offer of equity. IDBI Bank has about 1.5 crore retail customers and about 18,000 employees.

ICICI Bank launches premium savings account for men

- ICICI Bank has launched a new premium savings account for upwardly-mobile male customers, named ‘The ONE’. It is available in two variants - Magnum and Titanium. It offers the account holder with a range of benefits including the option of opting for health and term life insurance. It also waives the processing fees for home loans for account holders. When the customer opens the account, the bank provides an Amazon Gift Card on specified debit card spends, using which they can join Amazon Prime.
- The account holders of the Titanium variant will also receive a complimentary one-year subscription of Zomato Gold.

National Company Law Tribunal approves merger of Tata Teleservices with Bharti Airtel

- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has approved Bharti Airtel’s acquisition of Tata Teleservices’ (TTSL) mobility business. The merger, which is subject to the approval of Department of Telecommunications (DoT) now, will help Airtel to strengthen its 4G network and compete with Reliance Jio and come closer to number one player, Vodafone-Idea, in terms of market share. Airtel will get additional spectrum pool of 178.5 MHz in the 1800, 2100 and 850 MHz bands all widely used for 4G out of this merger.

YES Bank ties up with Maharashtra to onboard fair price shops as BCs

- The Maharashtra government has partnered with private sector lender YES Bank, under its e-PDS State programme, to onboard fair price shops (FPS) as Business Correspondent Agents. As part of the initiative, the lender will engage fair price shops to provide banking services such as small-value cash deposits into any bank account, including domestic remittances and withdrawal from any bank account via Aadhaar-enabled payment system. Such shops will also be able to collect digital payments through Aadhaar-enabled payments for ration, and will also offer value-added services such as bill payments and mobile recharges.

ICICI Bank, top arranger of bond issues this fiscal

- ICICI Bank has become the top arranger of bond issues for the period between April and December 2018. According to data from Prime Database, the private sector bank helped Indian firms raisers. Rs. 95,856.10 crore through bonds and non-convertible debentures through 107 issues. This was followed by Axis Bank, which helped India Inc raise Rs. 93,296.27 crore from such instruments through a total of 101 issues. According to the data, Indian companies raised a total of Rs. 3.65 lakh crore from bonds and NCDs through 1,547 issues between April 1 and December 31 last year.

DHFL raises Rs. 1,375 crore via securitisation financing

- Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd has raised Rs. 1,375 crore from funds managed by Oaktree Capital Management. L.P. Oaktree is a leading global alternative investment management firm with assets under management of about $124 billion.
DHFL intends to further reduce its real estate project finance exposure through more such transactions in the future.

**IndiaFirst Life Insurance buys 9 percent stake in CSC e-Governance Services**

- IndiaFirst Life Insurance has bought nine per cent stake in CSC e-Governance Services India Ltd. IndiaFirst Life Insurance is a joint venture between Bank of Baroda, Andhra Bank and Legal and General (UK)
- CSC is an integral part of Digital India initiative of the government under Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. The financial inclusion journey, the two entities have worked towards enabling village-level entrepreneurs for reaching out to the last mile customers with tailored solutions.

**FDI grew 18% in FY18 to Rs 28.25 lakh crore: RBI data**

- According to RBI data on 'Census on Foreign Liabilities and Assets of Indian Direct Investment Companies, 2017-18', foreign direct investment (FDI) during the previous fiscal grew 18 per cent to Rs 28.25 lakh crore. FDI increased by Rs 4,33,300 crore, including revaluation of past investments, during 2017-18 to reach Rs 28,24,600 crore in March 2018 at market value.
- Overseas direct investment (ODI) by Indian companies increased by 5 per cent to Rs 5.28 lakh crore.
- The census showed that Mauritius continued to be the largest source of FDI in India (19.7 per cent) followed by the US, the UK, Singapore and Japan.
- In case of overseas investment by Indian companies, Singapore (17.5 per cent) was the major destination, followed by the Netherlands, Mauritius and the US.

**NABARD fix 2019-20 priority sector lending target at Rs. 1,01,378 crore for Telangana**

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has fixed the total priority sector credit potential for Telangana at Rs. 1,01,378.60 crore for 2019-20.
- This represents a 9 per cent increase over the target for 2018-19 which was at Rs. 83,389 crore.
- NABARD has released its State Focus Paper at the State Credit Seminar, this serves as a guiding document for banks and state government.

**Ujjivan Small Finance Bank launched Ujjivan Bank Kisan Suvidha loan for small and marginal farmers**

- Ujjivan Small Finance Bank (SFB) launched Ujjivan Bank Kisan Suvidha loan to offer financial credit services to small and marginal farmers. The product provides collateral free loans to individuals with amount ranging from Rs. 60,000 to Rs. 2 lakh. With this Ujjivan becomes the first bank to offer loans for agriculture and allied activities such as dairy purchase and maintenance, post-harvest transportation, farm implements purchase, fishery, sheep rearing, sericulture, floriculture etc. The product is launched in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Karnataka and Odisha.

**Government revised GDP growth from 6.7 to 7.2 per cent**

- The government revised its forecast for GDP growth for 2017-18 to 7.2% from the earlier estimate of 6.7%. It also revised the actual growth rate in 2016-17 to 8.2% from the 7.1% estimated earlier.
- The revisions were made by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation in its First Revised Estimates of National Income, Consumption Expenditure, Saving and Capital Formation for 2017-18.
- The government has also estimates GDP growth to be at 7.2 per cent for the current financial year.

**Lendbox receives NBFC - peer-to-peer (P2P) certification from RBI**

- Delhi based P2P Lending platform, Lendbox has received its NBFC - Peer-to-Peer (P2P) certification from the RBI. NBFC-P2P is a new class of NBFCs, for non-banking institutions which carry on the business of Peer to Peer Lending in adherence to the guidelines released by Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Lendbox
began operations in November 2015 and is one of India’s largest P2P Lending platforms with almost 200,000 registered users and a loan book size of almost 40 crores.

**Asian Development Bank buys 14% stake in Annapurna Finance**
- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has bought a 14% stake in micro-financier Annapurna Finance for Rs. 137 crore, reinforcing the belief that India’s microfinance sector is on course to attracting long-term funds from global lenders and investors. The expansion of equity will help the firm expand its loan portfolio in asset classes such as MSME and affordable housing. ADB has backed MFIs to help achieve its broader objective of reducing poverty in Asia and the Pacific. The investment by ADB will expand Annapurna’s net worth to Rs 580 crore.
- This was Annapurna second equity expansion in as many years, following OIJIF’s Rs 155-crore investment in June last year. OIJIF is backed by State Bank of India and State General Reserve Fund of Oman.

**Two RRBs to be merged to form Tamil Nadu Grama Bank**
- The Ministry of Finance has announced the amalgamation of two regional rural banks in Tamilnadu-Pallavan Grama Bank, sponsored by Indian Bank and Pandyan Grama Bank, sponsored by Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) into a single regional rural bank in the state and name the new entity as Tamil Nadu Grama Bank.
- The amalgamated regional rural bank Tamil Nadu Grama Bank will be under the sponsorship of Indian Bank, with its head office at Salem. The amalgamation would be effective from 1 April.

**Fitch Group arm projects fiscal deficit to slip to 3.6% in 2019-20**
- Fitch Solutions, the research arm of Fitch Group, projected the government's fiscal deficit to overshoot the budgeted target by 0.2 per cent to 3.6 per cent of GDP in 2019-20 fiscal. Fitch Solutions revised its forecast for the central government fiscal deficit to come in at 3.6 per cent of GDP in FY 2019-20, from 3 per cent previously.

**FDI declines 11% to $22.66 billion during April-September**
- According to commerce and industry ministry, Foreign direct investment (FDI) into India has declined 11 per cent to $22.66 billion during April-September period of the current fiscal. The foreign fund inflows during April-September 2017-18 stood at $25.35 billion.
- Key sectors that received maximum foreign investment during the first six months of the fiscal include services ($4.91 billion), computer software and hardware ($2.54 billion), telecommunications ($2.17 billion), trading ($2.14 billion), chemicals ($1.6 billion), and automobile industry ($1.59 billion).
- Singapore was the largest source of FDI during April-September 2018-19 with $8.62 billion inflow, followed by Mauritius $3.88 billion.
- FDI had increased at a five-year low growth of 3 per cent at $44.85 billion in 2017-18.

**Fino Payments Bank introduced sweep account facility in association with Suryoday Small Finance Bank**
- Fino Payments Bank (FPB) has announced the launch of a sweep account facility in association with Suryoday Small Finance Bank (SSFB). As per the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), payment banks can only take deposits up to Rs. 1 lakh per account. The partnership would allow customers to seamlessly transfer the excess amount from their account in Fino Payments Bank (FPB) to Suryoday Small Finance Bank (SSFB) (partner bank) account.

**IBA issues guidelines to waive off various fees to Kisan Credit Card**
- The Indian Banking Association (IBA) issued advisory guidelines requesting banks to waive off the processing, documentation, inspection, ledger folio charges and all other service charges for crop loans up to Rs 3 Lakhs or for the Kisan Credit Card Scheme. Agriculture Ministry stated that, there are over 21 crore small and marginal farmers in the country and providing them timely and affordable credit is the key to attaining inclusive growth.
• The Kisan Credit Card Scheme aims at providing adequate and timely credit support from the banking system to the farmers to meet the short term credit requirements for cultivation of crops, investment credit requirements for agriculture and allied activities and other needs. The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme is a credit scheme introduced in August 1998 by Indian banks. This model scheme was prepared by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) on the recommendations of R.V. GUPTA committee

EPFO hikes provident fund interest rate by 0.1% to 8.65%
• The Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) hiked the interest rate on employees’ provident fund by 10 basis point from 8.55 per cent to 8.65 per cent for the 2018-19 fiscal year
• Central Board of Trustees (CBT) headed by the Union labour minister is the highest decision making body of the EPFO that finalises rate of interest on PF deposits.
• The proposal approved by the trustees would now go to the finance ministry for its approval

Government to infuse Rs. 48,239 crore in 12 PSU banks for 2018-19
• The government approved the infusion of Rs. 48,239 crore in 12 public sector banks to help them meet regulatory capital requirements and boost overall growth. With this latest of capital infusion, the government has now provided Rs. 1, 00,958 crore out of the Rs. 1.06 lakh crore bank recapitalisation plan.
• Allahabad Bank will receive Rs. 6,896 crore, Union Bank will receive Rs. 4,112 crore, Bank of India Rs. 4,638 crore, Bank of Maharashtra Rs. 205 crore, Corporation Bank Rs 9,086 crore, Andhra Bank Rs. 3,256 crore, Syndicate Bank Rs. 1,603 crore, Punjab National Bank Rs. 5,098 crore and Central Bank of India Rs. 2,560. The government also infuse Rs. 2,839 crore in United Bank and Rs. 3,330 crore in UCO Bank

Foreign direct investment during April-December 2018-19 falls 7% to USD 33.49 billion
• Foreign direct investment (FDI) in India falls by 7 per cent to USD 33.49 billion during April-December in the current fiscal. Foreign fund inflows during April-December 2017-18 stood at USD 35.94 billion. The key sectors received the maximum foreign investment during the nine months of the fiscal. Services USD 5.91 billion, computer software and hardware USD 4.75 billion, telecommunications USD 2.29 billion, trading USD 2.33 billion, chemicals USD 6.05 billion, and the automobile industry USD 1.81 billion. Singapore was the largest source of FDI during April-December 2018-19 with USD 12.97 billion inflow

Syndicate Bank to bring down NPA in the current year
• Syndicate Bank to bring down NPA in the current year. The bank is aiming at bringing down the gross NPA to below 12% and the net NPA to below 6% in the current year from the existing level of 12.5 and 6.5 % respectively.
• The bank has made a profit in the third quarter after loss in the previous quarters of FY 19. The bank is planning to launch employee share purchase scheme in the first week of March. The scheme offers shares of the bank at a discount ranging from 23 to 25 % with lower grade employees getting maximum discount. The bank is expecting to raise Rs 500 to 600 crore from the process.

RBI to soon put into circulation Rs. 100 bank notes in new series
• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will shortly put into circulation new series Rs. 100 denomination bank notes bearing the signature of New Governor Shaktikanta Das. The design of these notes is similar in all respects to the Rs. 100 bank notes in circulation currently. All bank notes in the denomination of Rs. 100 issued by the RBI in the past will continue to be legal tender

Kotak Mahindra Bank raises foreign investment limit
• Kotak Mahindra Bank has raised the limit on total shareholding of foreign institutional investors and foreign portfolio investors in the company to 45 percent from 43 percent.
• The hike in the shareholding limit comes after central bank directive on reducing its Chief Executive Uday Kotak's stake in the bank.

April – January Fiscal deficit touches 121.5% of FY19 target
• India's fiscal deficit during April-January stood at Rs. 7.7 lakh crore or 121.5% of the budgeted estimate of Rs 6.24 lakh crore for 2018-19. The gap between the government's revenue and expenditure had stood at 113.7% in January 2018. While presenting the Interim Budget earlier this month, the government had revised the fiscal deficit target for FY19 to 3.4% of GDP from 3.3%.

BoB ties up with German KfW for USD 130m to refinance solar units
• State-run Bank of Baroda has tied up with Germany's KfW Development Bank for funding of USD 113 million to refinance solar projects.
• The tie-up is part of an Indo-German Solar Energy Partnership signed in 2015

ICICI Bank introduced super-premium credit card Emerald
• ICICI Bank has launched a super-premium credit card, the ICICI Bank Emerald Credit Card, in two variants – American Express and Mastercard. The Emerald Credit Card is targeted at salaried customers with a minimum income of Rs 3 lakh a month and self-employed customers with an annual income tax return of at least Rs 30 lakh.

IDBI Bank, LIC ink bancassurance pact
• IDBI Bank will now have to offer LIC’s insurance products at its branches. IDBI Bank and Life Insurance Corporation of India have signed a bancassurance agreement under which the lender will offer LIC’s insurance products at its branches. IDBI Bank as a corporate agent of LIC would get a window to provide LIC’s entire gamut of insurance offerings to the bank’s 1.80-crore customer base spread over 1,800 branches across the country.

DCB Bank launches Open Banking for gen-next banking solutions
• DCB Bank announced the launch of its Open Banking Platform as part of efforts towards creating a collaborative ecosystem with enterprises, fintechs and app developers, and enhancing customer-service delivery.
• Over 20 start-ups, fintechs, merchants, enterprises and developers will partner with DCB Bank for access to its Open Banking Platform APIs as well as collaboration on innovation and customer centric products.

NTPC inks Rs 2,500 crore loan pact with HDFC Bank
• State-run power giant NTPC has signed an agreement with HDFC Bank for a Rs 2,500 crore loan to part finance capital expenditure. The loan is extended at an interest rate linked to three-month marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) of the bank. The loan has a door-to-door tenure of 15 years and will be utilised to part finance the capital expenditure of NTPC

PSU Banks bad loans decline to Rs. 8, 64, 433 crore in April-Dec FY19
• Bad loans of public sector banks declined by more than Rs 31,000 crore to Rs 8,64,433 crore in the first nine months of the current fiscal as compared to end of March 2018. Non Performing Assets (NPAs) or bad loans of the banks stood at Rs 8,95,601 crore at the end of previous fiscal. NPAs declined as a result of the government’s 4Rs strategy of recognition, resolution, recapitalisation and reforms.

HDFC ERGO Launched the first-of-its-kind ‘Trip Protector’ Policy
• HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company, India's third-largest non life insurance provider in the private sector, launched the Trip Protector insurance policy, a pioneering policy in the non-life insurance segment in India.
• In the event of a cancellation, either a flight or hotel booking, Trip Protector insurance policy will safeguard travellers financially against the cost of cancellation levied by Hotels or Airlines. The policy is initially

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offered to customers of HDFC Bank on the purchase of Airline tickets or Hotel Bookings done using their individual HDFC Bank credit cards

Corporation Bank celebrates 114th Foundation Day
- Corporation Bank observed its 114th Foundation Day. The bank started operating on March 12, 1906, in Udupi under the leadership of Khan Bahadur Haji Abdullah Haji Kasim Saheb Bahadur with a first day business of Rs. 38, 13 Annas and two Paisa. To commemorate the 114th Foundation Day, 114 CSR activities were undertaken by the bank across the country.
- Bank Managing Director and CEO P.V. Bharathi, Executive Directors Gopal Murli Bhagat and Birupaksha Mishra and other senior officials were present at the occasion

DBS to operate as wholly-owned subsidiary in India from March 1
- The RBI approved merger of Singapore-based DBS Bank's Indian unit with its wholly owned local subsidiary, DBS Bank India. The merger will be effective from March 1.
- The wholly-owned subsidiary model allows foreign lenders to be treated as a local bank, removing certain restrictions they face such as those on opening new branches.

To mark Gandhi’s 150th birth anniversary Commemorative notes is to be released
- To celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, a Dubai-based numismatics company has launched a unique series of commemorative notes. The notes are designed by Dubai-based Indian artist, Akbar Saheb who is also the sole illustrator of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s book, Mann Ki Baat. The illustrations on the note are based on interesting and famous incidents from Gandhi’s personal and political life.
- The limited-edition Zero Euro 12–notes commemorative series is being unveiled by UAE-based specialized numismatics company, Numisbing, with just 5000 notes of each design

Banks need to lend RS. 1 lakh crore to meet MUDRA target for FY19
- Banks will have to lend about Rs. 1 lakh crore more to meet the Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA) scheme's target of Rs. 3 lakh crore for 2018-19, as per government data. Over 3.89 crore MUDRA loans have been sanctioned so far this fiscal. The scheme aims to provide loans up to Rs. 10 lakh to non-corporate, non-farm small and micro-enterprises

HDFC Bank plans to acquire 9% stake in CSC E-Governance for 14.6 crore
- Private sector lender HDFC Bank will buy a 9.11 per cent stake in CSC E-Governance Services. The acquisition, for Rs. 14.62 crore, which HDFC Bank termed as a “strategic investment”, will be on cash basis.
- HDFC Bank has executed an agreement for subscribing to 37,993 equity shares of face value of Rs. 1,000 each to be issued by CSC E-Governance Services India Limited at Rs. 3,848 per equity share

HDFC Bank crosses Rs. 6 trillion market capital
- India's most valued lender HDFC Bank Ltd crossed the Rs. 6 trillion market capitalisation for the first time, making it only the country's third firm to achieve the milestone.
- Tata Consultancy Services Ltd (TCS) and Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) are the other two companies that crossed the market capitalisation of Rs. 6 trillion. RIL remained the most-valued company with a market value of Rs. 8.54 trillion, followed by TCS with a market value of Rs. 7.51 trillion.
- HDFC Bank’s steady 20% profit growth quarter-after-quarter as well as its immunity to the bad loans crisis have helped the stock.

IDBIBank receives nod to handle import, exports transactions with Iran
• The IDBI has received government nod to handle import and export transactions with Iran, a move which would help in promoting two-way trade amid US sanctions on the Persian Gulf nation
• IDBI Bank has been identified to route the payments. UCO Bank had in the previous round of sanctions handled rupee payments. Iran is India’s third-largest oil supplier after Iraq and Saudi Arabia. It was India’s second biggest supplier of crude oil after Saudi Arabia. Bilateral trade between India and Iran increased to USD 13.8 billion in 2017-18 from USD 12.9 billion in the previous fiscal. However, India's exports were only worth USD 2.5 billion to that country.

United Bank, HDFC Life signed Bancassurance deal
• United Bank of India has signed a bancassurance deal with private life insurer HDFC Life Insurance Company
• United Bank has a strong presence in rural and semi-urban areas, with over 2,000 branches and offices, while HDFC Life is India’s largest non-bank-promoted private life insurer.
• This partnership, United Bank’s customers will be able to take advantage of HDFC Life’s expertise in life insurance products, distribution and customer service.

NHA, IRDAI to set up working group for Ayushman Bharat implementation
• Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) and National Health Agency (NHA) will set up a joint working group for better implementation of Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY). The joint working group, to be chaired by Dinesh Arora, Deputy CEO of NHA, will have 10 members from both the organisations.
• They will work together to standardise hospital rates and also reduce fraud. NHA is the apex agency that looks after the implementation of PMJAY.

White label ATM allowed to get Source cash directly from RBI
• The Reserve Bank relaxed norms for white label ATM (WLA) operators and allowed them to buy wholesale cash directly from the central bank to enhance the viability of white-label ATMs (WLAs)
• It has been decided to allow them to buy wholesale cash, above a threshold of 1 lakh pieces (and in multiples thereof) of any denomination, directly from the Reserve Bank and currency chests against full payment
• The RBI also permitted WLA operators to source cash from any bank, including cooperatives and regional rural banks. WLAs are owned and operated by non-bank entities on behalf of the banks.
• RBI has also allowed WLA operators to display advertisements pertaining to non-financial products or services anywhere within the WLA premises, including the ATM screen, except the main signboard.
• Banks can issue co-branded ATM cards in partnership with the authorised WLAOs, and may extend the benefit of ‘on-us’ transactions (where the customer or cardholder and ATM are of the same bank) to their WLAs as well.
• White label ATM (WLA) comes under The Payment & Settlement Systems Act, 2007

PNB sanctions loans worth Rs. 689 crore to 1,600 MSMEs via 59-minute loan portal
• State-owned Punjab National Bank (PNB) has sanctioned loans worth Rs 689 crore to over 1,600 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) through the psbloansin59minutes.com. Under the Mudra Yojana, the bank has offered loan to over 2.69 lakh small entrepreneurs this fiscal (till February 14, 2019).
• In November 2018, Hon'ble Prime Minister announced the launch of the 59-minute loan portal to enable easy access to credit for MSMEs.
• MSMEs through this portal can avail loans of up to Rs. 1 crore in 59 minutes or less than an hour. MSMEs apply for loans using their GST registration as the portal is integrated with GST server at the back-end as
well as IT, credit bureaus and banks. It is able to quickly score the applicant on individual models of lenders (currently only public sector banks).

- PNB has bagged many awards last month under the Enhanced Access and Service Excellence (EASE) reforms agenda. The bank won the Reforms Excellency Award. It was also declared the winner in the customer responsiveness, responsible banking and credit Off-take category. The bank has also figured in the Forbes world’s best bank 2019 report in terms of customer satisfaction ratings.

Bank of Baroda launches creche/daycare facility for children of employees

- Bank of Baroda has become one of the first public sector banks to launch a crèche/child daycare facility for children of its employees. After launching such a facility at its Mumbai corporate office in Bandra Kurla Complex which houses some 1500-plus employees, the bank intends to roll out more of them at its head office in Vadodara.
- This initiative is designed to help employees save time and reduce stress of finding the right care for children in the age group of 6 months to 6 years. Bank of Baroda will bear 60% of the cost every month for each employee, while 40% will be taken care by the parents

RBI categorises IDBI as private bank

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has re-categorised IDBI Bank as a private sector lender.
- This comes after LIC acquired a 51% stake in the bank on January 21, becoming its majority shareholder. IDBI Bank has been under the RBI’s Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework which bans it from activities including corporate lending and branch expansion. The bank’s gross non-performing assets (NPAs) shot up to 29.67 per cent of gross advances as at December 31, 2018 against 24.72 per cent in the year-ago period.

Paytm Payments Bank launches mobile banking app

- Paytm Payments Bank launches mobile banking app
- The new app has been introduced exclusively for its bank’s customers to provide wide range of banking services in a phased manner. The purpose of new app is to segregate its operations from the existing app which caters to customers of several group entities. However, PPB customers will continue to serve its customers on its older app should its customers desire so. Both apps will co-exist. The mobile app will enable customers to check their balances, raise request for physical debit cards, access digital debit cards, etc., with 24x7 help and support.

Bank of India raises Rs. 660 crore by selling shares to employees

- State-owned Bank of India (BoI) has raised Rs. 660.80 crore by issuing shares to employees under Employee Share Purchase Scheme (ESPS). The bank issued 6,25,52,188 shares of Rs 10 each to eligible employees.
- It offered a discount of 24.28 percent on the applicable price to the employees and about 94.70 percent of total employees participated in the scheme. These shares are issued with a lock-in period of one year

Karur Vysya Bank raises Rs. 487 crore through private placement of Tier II bonds

- Karur Vysya Bank stated that it has raised Rs. 487 crore through Basel-III compliant bonds to fund its growth plans.
- The Capital Raising Committee of the board allotted 48,700 BASEL-III compliant unsecured, redeemable, non-convertible tier-II bonds in the nature of debenture of Rs. 1,00,000 each aggregating to Rs. 487 crore. The capital was raised on private placement basis

Bandhan Bank gets RBI approval for acquisition of Gruh Finance

- Bandhan Bank has received no objection from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the proposed acquisition of Gruh Finance. Gruh Finance, the affordable housing finance arm of HDFC Ltd, was taken
over in January by Kolkata-based Bandhan Bank in a share-swap deal. As part of the deal, Bandhan Bank has to transfer 14.9 per cent stake to HDFC for merging Gruh with itself. The deal will allow Bandhan Bank's promoter Bandhan Financial Holdings to come down to about 61 per cent from about 82 per cent, and HDFC to hold around 15 per cent in the merged entity from about 57 per cent in Gruh. The swap ratio for the amalgamation will be 568 shares of Bandhan Bank for every 1,000 shares of Gruh Finance.

**MCCIL recognised as a Third-Country Central Counterparty (TC – CCP) by Bank of England**

- Metropolitan Clearing Corporation of India Ltd (MCCIL) has become the first SEBI recognised clearing corporation in India to get recognition as a **Third-Country Central Counterparty (TC-CCP)** by Bank of England.
- MCCIL is an arm of Metropolitan Stock Exchange of India. The recognition granted by the Bank of England will enable MCCIL to offer clearing services to UK-based entities after Britain’s exit from the European Union. That is when BREXIT comes into effect.
- There are currently seven clearing houses recognized by SEBI including BSE's Indian Clearing Corporation Ltd and NSE's NSE Clearing Ltd.

**ICICI Lombard partners with MobiKwik for Cyber Insurance Cover**

- ICICI Lombard General Insurance, a leading non-life insurance company, has entered into a strategic partnership with MobiKwik, a digital financial services platform, to provide cyber insurance cover for the latter’s mobile wallet users.
- The relationship aims to provide protection against unauthorised and fraudulent transactions online, across bank accounts, debit/credit cards and mobile wallets. The cyber-insurance can be availed digitally through the app at only Rs. 99 per month and with a sum insured of Rs. 50,000.
- The policy’s validity is only for one month. MobiKwik users can enroll under this insurance product at the time of loading money into their wallet or in a standalone format.

**Indian Bank – carrying ‘Your Own Bank’ tag with utmost pride!**

- Indian Bank, with over 9400 touch points across the country, has crossed the milestone business level of Rs. 4.00 lakh crore. The Bank has featured in the most trusted brands in the Public Sector Bank category and has been acknowledged as India's Best Bank.
- It has many 'Firsts' to its credit when it comes to merging banking and technology for better, safer and more convenient solutions. The Bank was the first to migrate from Total Bank Computerization (TBC) to 100% Core Banking Solutions (CBS). Installing the first ATM by any public sector bank in 1989, installing the first drive-in ATM of the country during 1990, introducing the first ever voice-guided biometric ATM in 2007 to name a few.
- The Bank launched an industry-first mobile app to block and manage limits of debit card and credit card, the 'IB Smart Remote'. Because of these factors, carrying the tag 'Your Own Bank', the Bank is looked upon with pride in India.
- On 9th March 2019, the Bank celebrated ‘International Women's Day’ and felicitated twelve women achievers. On that day, the Bank also launched ‘IB- Surabhi’, a Savings bank Account exclusively for women.

**Deutsche Bank is to set up bad-loan buying unit in India**

- Deutsche Bank AG is setting up a unit in India to buy and reorganize soured debt as it seeks to profit from an unprecedented bad-loan clean up in the nation with one of the world’s worst non-performing loan ratios. The German bank felt the need to have its own asset reconstruction company to buy and reorganize non-performing credit as current Indian rules restrict overseas investors from buying soured loans directly from lenders in the country. Bank of America Corp is also considering setting up a similar unit.
• More than 29 ARCs have been set up in India after parliament passed a law in 2002 to help banks clear their balance sheets by selling bad loans.

**Forex reserve swells by over $3.6 billion to $405.6 billion**

• According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's foreign exchange (forex) reserves surged by $3.602 billion to $405.638 billion in week to March 15, 2019. The surge was driven by rise in foreign currency assets, a major component of the overall reserves. Forex reserves had increased by $258.8 million to $402.035 billion in the previous week. The reserves had touched a life-time high of $426.028 billion in the week to April 13, 2018. Since then, it has been on a slide and is now down by over $20 billion.

• Gold reserves rose by $38.9 million to $23.408 billion. The special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund rose by $5.9 million to $1.461 billion. The country's reserve position with the Fund, too, increased by $12.1 million to $2.995 billion.

**BoB inks MoUs with 6 firms to develop agri-digital platform 'Baroda Kisan'**

• Public sector lender Bank of Baroda will develop an agri-digital platform called 'Baroda Kisan' in order to provide solutions for all major agricultural requirements.

• Six companies - Skymet Weather Services, Weather Risk Management Services, BigHaat, Agrostar India, EM3 Agri Services and Poorti Agri Services -- have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the bank for this project.

• The agri-digital platform will be executed by IT Centre of Excellence (ITCoE) of Bank of Baroda in partnership with IBM India. The platform aims to solve agricultural plights by providing reliable and customized information, inputs for use, the convenience of renting farm equipment, and market linkage for sale of agriculture produce.

**ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund launches Bharat Consumption Scheme**

• ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund launched ICICI Prudential Bharat Consumption Scheme, which will remain open for subscription until April 9. The scheme aims to benefit from the Indian consumption story, considered as one of the fastest growing consumption markets globally. Minimum investment: Rs 5,000 and in multiples of one rupee thereafter.

• 1 percent if investments are redeemed within 12 months from the date of allotment. The benchmark for the Scheme is Nifty India Consumption Index and will be managed by Rajat Chandak and Dharmesh Kakkad. The overseas investments of the scheme will be managed by Priyanka Khandelwal.

**Government to infuse Rs. 5,042 cr into Bank of Baroda**

• The government has decided to infuse Rs. 5,042 crore into state-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB) ahead of merger of two other public sector lenders Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with BoB.

• The merger of Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with BoB would be effective from April 1.

• According to the Scheme of Amalgamation, shareholders of Vijaya Bank will get 402 equity shares of BoB for every 1,000 shares held. In the case of Dena Bank, its shareholders will get 110 shares for every 1,000 shares of BoB.

**Axis Bank opens its 4,000th branch in Pune**

• The country’s 3rd largest private bank, Axis Bank, has opened its 4,000th branch in the country in Pune at Eon, Kharadi. The new branch was inaugurated by Amitabh Chaudhry, Managing Director and CEO, Axis Bank, and Ravi Narayanan, President and Head Branch Banking, Axis Bank.

• The bank has added 297 branches in the current fiscal across India.

**Small savings schemes' interest rates to remain unchanged for Apr-Jun quarter**

• Interest rates on small saving schemes such as National Savings Certificate and Public Provident Fund will remain unchanged for the April-June quarter.
### Schemes and Interest Rates

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<tr>
<th>Schemes</th>
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<td>Savings Deposit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS)</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Provident Fund Account (PPF)</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>National Savings Certificates (NSC)</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP)</td>
<td>7.7% (maturity- 112 months)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sukanya Samriddhi Accounts</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
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</table>

### PNB sells stake in PNB Housing Fin for Rs. 1,851.60 crore
- Punjab National Bank (PNB) will sell its stake in PNB Housing Finance to General Atlantic and Varde Partners for Rs. 1,851.60 crore,
- Varde Partners and General Atlantic will buy 1.09 crore shares each. The shares will be acquired at Rs. 850 per share, valuing the purchase at Rs. 925.80 crore each for the buyers.

After the transaction, PNB will continue to hold a 19.78 per cent stake in the housing finance arm, and will remain the promoter and strategic shareholder of the company.

### NCLT approves merger of IndusInd Bank with Bharat Financial Inclusion (BFIL)
- NCLT Mumbai approves IndusInd Bank and Bharat Financial Inclusion Ltd merger
- As per the report, the merger is expected to complete within 2-4 weeks. Post-merger, microfinance firm Bharat Financial will become a subsidiary of the private lender.

### Vijaya Bank, Dena Bank to merge with Bank of Baroda
- In a first three-way amalgamation, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank will merge with Bank of Baroda to create the third-largest lender of the country.
- The customers including depositors of Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank will be treated as customers of Bank of Baroda with effect from 1st April this year.
- The first-ever three-way consolidation of banks in India, with a combined business of 14.8 lakh crore rupees, making it the third-largest bank after State Bank of India and ICICI Bank.

### Kotak Bank to levy charges on UPI transactions like Paytm, Google Pay, PhonePe
- From the 1st May 2019, Kotak Mahindra Bank will charge for Unified Payments Interface (UPI) transactions.
- UPI was the leading contributor of the digital payments push since demonetization. For each bank account, first 30 UPI fund transfers will continue to be free, every month.
- The charges Rs. 2.50 per transaction for below or equal to Rs. 1,000, and above Rs. 1,000, Rs. 5.00 per transaction, will be applicable for all fund transfers done via UPI using a Kotak Bank account. This will also include payment apps, such as Paytm, Google Pay, and PhonePe.
- The 30 free UPI funds transfers will also include money transfer made to any bank account using the account number and IFSC code. That will also attract the same charges as UPI transactions.

### Cardif sells 5 crore shares in SBI Life Insurance for 2,889 crore
- BNP Paribas Cardif, the foreign partner of SBI Life Insurance, sold 5 crore shares of the company for Rs. 2,889 crore.
- The sale was done at average price of Rs. 577.93 per equity share. Canada Pension Plan Investment Board has bought 2 crore shares at an average price of Rs 577.50 per shares, as per the regulatory filing.
- The company is required to increase its public shareholding to 25 per cent of its paid-up equity share capital on or before October 2, 2020.
Bank of Maharashtra gets Rs. 205 crore capital from government
- State-owned Bank of Maharashtra stated that the government has infused Rs. 205 crore into the bank in lieu of preferential allotment of shares. Following the allotment of shares, the shareholding of the government has increased to 87.74 per cent in the bank from 87.01 per cent earlier. The paid-up capital of bank had increased from Rs 2,598.45 crore to Rs 2,753.17 crore.

Karnataka Bank signs MOU with Bharti AXA Life Insurance
- Karnataka Bank has entered into a memorandum of understanding with Bharti AXA Life Insurance Company to distribute the latter’s life insurance products.
- This is the third such tie-up by the bank after PNB MetLife Life Insurance Company and LIC of India, both of which continue to provide insurance solutions to the customers of Karnataka Bank.

Priority Sector Lending Certificates volume crosses Rs. 3-trillion mark
- The priority sector lending certificates (PSLCs) volume rocketed to Rs. 3.3 trillion in FY19, up from Rs. 1.9 trillion in the last financial year and Rs. 50,000 crore in FY17.
- PSLCs are used to enable banks to achieve the priority sector lending target and sub-targets by purchasing these instruments in the event of shortfall.
- Those falling short of targets have the choice to place money with Nabard and Sidbi at low interest rates or invest in PSLCs issued by fellow lenders which carry higher coupon.

RBI tweaks LCR norms to boost liquidity
- RBI has tweaked liquidity coverage ratio (LCR) norms to provide an additional 2 per cent window to lenders. LCR indicates the proportion of highly liquid assets held by banks to ensure their ability to meet short-term obligations.
- RBI has extended the timeline for linking floating interest rates on personal, home, auto and MSEs loans to external benchmarks.

Bank of India to sell 25% stake in life insurance JV SUD Life Insurance for Rs. 1,106 crore
- Public sector lender Bank of India offered to sell a 25 per cent stake in its joint venture company Star Union Dai-ichi Life Insurance Co Ltd for approximately Rs. 1,106 crore ($159.87 million).
- Star Union Dai-ichi Life Insurance Co. Ltd. (SUD Life) is a joint venture (JV) of Bank of India, Union Bank of India and Dai-ichi Life, a leading life insurance company of Japan.
- Bank of India to sell 6.49 crore shares, or 25.02 per cent stake, in Star Union Dai-ichi Life Insurance Co at a floor price of 170.50 per share.

IDRBT sets up 5G Lab for banking, financial sector
- The Institute for Development and Research in Banking Technology (IDRBT), an arm of Reserve Bank of India, has launched a 5G Use Cases Lab for banking and financial sector. The 5G technology, along with blockchain, will be progressively adopted by banks.
- 5G had already arrived in the world and the department had already launched test beds for 5G use in the academia in Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangalore to develop 5G for Indian use.
- It will also collaborate with various stakeholders including banks, government and financial institutions for 5G promotion and absorption of best practices.

IDBI Bank launches paperless account facility for NRIs
- The Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) living in nearly 40 countries will now be able to open account in IDBI Bank without submitting paper documents.
- IDBI Bank has launched ‘NRI-Insta-Online’ account opening process for NRIs residing in Financial Action Task Force (FATF) member countries. The person will not be required to furnish physical documents as well as KYC proofs for opening an account with the bank.
FATF is an inter-governmental body which devices policy and sets standards to promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures to combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

Canara Bank becomes the first public sector bank in India to meet RBI’s EMV mandate

• ACI Worldwide, a global provider of realtime electronic payment and banking solutions, announced that Canara Bank has successfully rolled out major new functionality to support EMV card acquiring across its ATM network and Aadhaar Authentication. Canara Bank, one of India’s largest public sector banks with nearly 6,300 branches and a network of more than 10,000 ATMs, is the first public sector bank to shift to EMV chip and PIN for card present transactions across the country’s vast ATM network.

• The EMV shift, as in other major global markets, is aimed at reducing lost and stolen card fraud and making counterfeit card fraud more difficult. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had set a deadline of December 31, 2018 for the switch, mandating use of an embedded chip to replace the traditional magnetic stripe card.

The IMF and World Bank launches ‘Learning Coin’ to explore blockchain technologies

• The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank are launching their own blockchain and digital currency to familiarize staff with the concepts.

• The currency will only be accessible within the organizations and will not be able to buy real-world goods and services. But a model digital currency economy will operate, as a kind of trial run. Staff will earn the tokens by achieving training goals, then exchange their earnings for rewards of some kind.

• The tokens will be accessed on an app called ‘Learning Coin’ to emphasize its educational use. The app will also support the institutions’ blogs, research and video content.

Bank of Baroda, Srei Equipment Finance tie up for infra equipment loans

• Srei Equipment Finance Ltd (SEFL) and India’s second largest state-run lender Bank of Baroda have entered into a co-lending arrangement for infrastructure equipment. The offerings would include both business to business (B2B) and business to customer (B2C) propositions

• The partnership will allow Kolkata-based Srei Infrastructure Finance Ltd’s equipment finance arm and Bank of Baroda to collaborate and widen their respective customer base.

• As part of the arrangement, the companies will use iQuippo, a digital marketplace for origination of loans, collection of loan dues, and auction and valuation of equipment.

Exim Bank funds projects worth USD 267 million in Rwanda

• The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) stated that Exim Bank has provided soft loans of USD 266.60 million to Rwanda for various projects. The funding, done in three separate tranches to Rwanda, is to support agricultural projects, development of special economic zones (SEZs) and for financing road project in the African nation.

• According to the agreements, Exim Bank will provide USD 100 million for financing the development of two SEZs and expansion of the Kigali SEZ in Rwanda.

• USD 100 million for financing three agriculture project schemes -- Warufuli Multipurpose Project, Mugesera Irrigation Project and Nyamukanera Irrigation Project. USD 66.60 million will be funded for the Base-Butaro-Kidaho Road Project.

Kotak Bank launches debit card-based e-mandate on NPCI’s API platform

• Kotak Mahindra Bank has announced the launch of an industry-first debit card-based authentication solution on NPCI’s e-Mandate API platform.

• Kotak becomes the first Destination Bank to go live with Net Banking and Debit Card-based e-mandate authentication, the bank said in a statement adding that the capability will enable its customers to create...
**Government raises authorised capital of Allahabad Bank to Rs. 8,000 crore**

- State-owned Allahabad Bank the government has increased its authorised capital by Rs. 5,000 crore to Rs. 8,000 crore. The central government after consultation with the Reserve Bank of India has increased the authorised capital of the bank from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 8,000 through Gazette Notification.
- The increase in authorised capital will help enable the bank to raise further fund up to a maximum ceiling of Rs. 8,000 crore.

**Canara Bank, Canara HSBC OBC Life launch ‘Webassurance’**

- Public sector lender Canara Bank and its life insurance partner Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance announced the launch of ‘Webassurance’.
- Four life insurance products of Canara HSBC OBC Life would be made available to customers of Canara Bank, covering the key needs of child future, savings and investments, retirement planning and protection.
- Canara HSBC OBC Life is jointly owned by two public sector banks Canara Bank (51 per cent) and Oriental Bank of Commerce (23 per cent) and HSBC Insurance (Asia Pacific) Holdings (26 per cent), the Asian insurance arm of banking and financial services groups HSBC.

**Important Financial & Economy Affairs**

**Government sets up export promotion cell for MSMEs**

- The MSME ministry has established an export promotion cell to create a sustainable ecosystem for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs). The ministry has also proposed to formulate a governing council that will be chaired by secretary of the MSME ministry. The cell would evaluate readiness of MSMEs to export their products and services, recognise areas where improvements are required in order to be able to export effectively and efficiently and integration of MSME into global value chain.

**SEBI allowed custodial services in commodity market**

- Markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has allowed custodial services in the commodity derivatives market, which would enable participation of institutional investors, including mutual funds, in the segment. SEBI stated that under the new framework, existing custodians will be permitted to add commodities as an asset class and provide physical delivery of both the securities and commodities. Currently, the regulation on custodian of securities provides safekeeping of securities, gold or gold related instruments, title deeds of real estate and services incidental.

**Growth to remain in 7-7.5% range in next few years: PM advisory panel**

- The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, headed by NITI Aayog Member Bibek Debroy stated that India’s economic growth is expected to remain in the range 7-7.5 per cent in the next few years. The growth rate can be easily increased by 1 per cent by addressing structural problems through reforms. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) in its latest forecast pegged the growth at 7.2 per cent for 2018-19. The EAC-PM is an independent body constituted to give advice on economic and related issues to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister.

**India to surpass UK in world's largest economy rankings in 2019: PwC**
India is likely to surpass the United Kingdom in the world's largest economy rankings in 2019, to become world's fifth largest economy, according to a report by global consultancy firm PwC.

As per the report, while the UK and France have regularly switched places owing to similar levels of development and roughly equal populations, India's climb up the rankings is likely to be permanent.

PwC's Global Economy Watch report projects real GDP growth of 1.6 per cent for the UK, 1.7 per cent for France and 7.6 per cent for India in 2019. According to World Bank data, India became the world's sixth largest economy in 2017 surpassing France and was likely to go past the UK which stood at the fifth position. The US was the world's largest economy with a size of 19.39 trillion dollars, followed by China at 12.23 trillion dollars at the second place in 2017.

Maharashtra FM-led GoM to look at issues related to lottery under GST

A ministerial panel headed by Maharashtra Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar will examine uniformity of taxation on lottery under GST or other issues arising out of it. Under GST, state-organised lottery falls under the 12 percent tax slab while state-authorised lottery attracts 28 percent tax. The panel will also examine any other issue related to enforcement, including the legal framework, in order to curb evasion of tax on lottery and suggest appropriate tax rate to address the problem. The GoM for lottery will submit its report to GST Council in next its meeting for approval.

GST on Haj reduced from 18% to 5%

GST on Haj has been reduced from 18 per cent to 5 per cent and this will significantly lower the air fare thus saving Haj pilgrims’ 113 crore rupees this year.

For the first time since the independence that 2,340 women from India will go on 2019 Haj without Mehram.

SEBI proposed relaxed norms for REITs, InvITs to increase access to investors

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed a new framework for REITs (Real Estate Investment Trusts) and InvITs (Infrastructure Investment Trusts) in order to provide flexibility to the issuers in terms of fund raising and increasing the access of these investment vehicles to investors.

Under the proposal, minimum allotment and trading lot for publicly issued REITs and InvITs will be reduced.

It has been proposed that the leverage limit for InvITs will be increased from the existing 49 per cent to 70 per cent.

SEBI had notified REITs Regulations in 2014, allowing setting up and listing of such trusts which are very popular in some advanced markets.

At the time of initial/follow-on issue, the minimum application and allotment lot shall be of 100 units and the value of one such lot shall be within the range of Rs 15,000-20,000.

The minimum subscription from any investor in an initial offer and follow-on public offer is not less than Rs 2 lakh for REIT, and Rs 10 lakh in case of InvIT.

The prescribed trading lot for the purpose of trading of units of the REIT on the stock exchange is Rs 1 lakh, while the same is Rs 5 lakh for InvIT.

SEBI has proposed a separate framework to enable unlisted privately placed InvITs, the minimum investment by an investor should not be less than Rs 1 crore.
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<td>India Ratings</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>World Bank</td>
<td>7.3%</td>
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<td>Central Statistics Office (CSO)</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
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**Goods and Services Tax collection drops to Rs. 97,247 crore in February**
- GST collections dropped to Rs. 97,247 crore in February from Rs. 1.02 lakh crore in the previous month.
- The total gross GST revenue collected in February 2019 is Rs 97,247 crore of which Central GST is Rs. 17,626 crore, State GST (SGST) is Rs. 24,192 crore, Integrated GST (IGST) is Rs. 46,953 crore and Cess is Rs. 8,476 crore.
- Goods and Services Tax collections in the current fiscal till February totalled Rs. 10.70 lakh crore. The government has lowered the GST collection target for current fiscal to Rs. 11.47 lakh crore in the Revised Estimates, from Rs 13.71 lakh crore budgeted initially. For the next fiscal 2019-20, the GST collection target has been budgeted at Rs 13.71 lakh crore.

**OECD cuts global growth forecast over trade, Brexit uncertainty**
- The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, has again cut its 2019 forecast for global economic growth due to ongoing trade tensions and Brexit uncertainty. In an interim version of its Economic Outlook, the OECD lowered its forecast to 3.3 per cent for this year, down from the 3.5 per cent it predicted in November, which was itself a downgrade from a previous 3.7 per cent.
- The 19-nation eurozone was particularly hard hit, with predicted growth dropping from 1.8 per cent to one per cent. The growth forecast for European powerhouse Germany sank to 0.7 per cent from 1.4, while Italy’s fell from 0.9 per cent growth into a recession at minus 0.2 per cent.
- Britain’s growth forecast was chopped from 1.4 to 0.8 per cent, which would mark the first time it had fallen below one percent since 2009 following the global economic crisis.

**SEBI lifts foreign investment cap on corporate bonds**
- Markets regulator SEBI withdrew the 20 percent limit on investments by Foreign Portfolio Investors in corporate bonds of an entity. In June last year, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) had mandated that no Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) shall have an exposure of more than 20 percent of its corporate bond portfolio to a single corporate. The central bank in February lifted the restriction in view of market feedback.

**India’s April-February fiscal deficit at 134% of FY target**
- The country's fiscal deficit touched 134.2 per cent of the full-year revised budgeted estimate at the end of February 2019. The fiscal deficit target for FY19 was revised upwards to 3.4% of GDP in the interim budget for FY20 presented on February 1 from 3.3% estimated initially.
- The fiscal deficit for April-February 2018-19 was Rs. 8.51 lakh crore as against the revised estimate (RE) of Rs. 6.34 trillion for the entire year, according to Controller General of Accounts (CGA) data. The government's tax revenue stood at Rs. 10.94 trillion and non-tax revenue was Rs 1.7 trillion.
- Total expenditure incurred by the government during April-February 2018-19 was Rs. 21.88 trillion (89.08 per cent of RE), of which Rs. 19.15 trillion was on revenue account and Rs. 2.73 trillion on capital account.
Fitch cuts India GDP growth forecast for FY20 to 6.8%

- Fitch Ratings cut India’s economic growth forecast for the next financial year starting April 1, to 6.8 per cent from its previous estimate of 7 per cent, on weaker than expected momentum in the economy.
- The rating agency has also cut growth forecasts for FY20 and FY21 to 7 per cent from 7.3 per cent and 7.1 per cent from 7.3 per cent, respectively
- Fitch Ratings cut India’s FY19 GDP growth forecast to 7.2% from 7.8% on December 6

GST collections for March hit record high of Rs. 1.06 lakh crore

- Finance Ministry stated that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection stood at Rs. 1.06 lakh crore in March, recording the highest-ever monthly collection since GST launch.
- Around 75.95 lakh GSTR-3B returns were filed for February up to March 31, as against 73.48 lakh a month ago. This is the fourth time the collections crossed Rs. 1 lakh crore this fiscal.
- Total gross GST revenue collected in March, 2019 is Rs. 1,06,577 crore of which Central GST is Rs. 20,353 crore, State GST is Rs. 27,520 crore, Integrated GST is Rs. 50,418 crore and cess is Rs. 8,286 crore
- The collection in March 2019, has been highest since introduction of GST and also reflects a 15.6 per cent growth over March 2018, collection of Rs. 92,167 crore.
- Monthly average of GST revenue during 2018-19, stood at Rs. 98,114 crore which is 9.2 per cent higher than the previous fiscal.
- The government has lowered the GST collection target for 2018-19 fiscal to Rs 11.47 lakh crore in the revised estimates, from Rs 13.71 lakh crore budgeted initially

Eight core industries show 2.1% growth in February 2019

- The combined index of eight core industries stood at 125.8 in February 2019, which indicates a marginal increase of 2.1 per cent during the month.
- The eight core industries, including coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity, are responsible for almost 41 per cent of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- **Coal production:** It grew by 7.3% in February 2019 against 1.3% growth in the same period a year ago.
- **Steel production:** It recorded 17.92% growth as against 5% growth in the same period a year ago.
- **Natural gas production:** It grew by 3.8%.
- **Fertilizers Sector:** It grew by 2.5%.
- **Cement production:** It grew by 8%.
- **Electricity production:** It grew by 0.7%, falling from 4.6% growth in February 2018.
- **Production of crude oil:** It recorded -6.1% growth.
- **Refinery products:** It recorded -0.8% growth

Paytm gets SEBI approval to offer stock broking services

- Alibaba-backed Paytm's subsidiary Paytm Money has received approval from Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) to begin stock broking services to let its users buy shares through the platform.
• The broking services will allow investors to trade in the cash segment, derivatives, exchange-traded funds (ETFs), among other listed entities. In addition to this, Paytm Money’s membership with exchanges BSE & NSE was also approved.

**Sebi extends phase 1 deadline of UPI for retail IPO investors till June 30**
• Markets regulator Sebi extended the timeline for the implementation of phase 1 of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) as an alternative payment mechanism for retail investors buying shares in a public issue from March 31 2019 to June 30 2019. The timeline for implementing phase 2 and phase 3 shall remain unchanged from the date of completion of phase 1.
• In November 2018, SEBI has issued a circular to introduce the use of Unified Payments Interface (UPI) as a payment mechanism with Application Supported by Block Amount (ASBA) for applications in public issues by retail individual investors through intermediaries.

**Lakshmi Vilas Bank approves merger with Indiabulls Housing Finance**
• Private lender Lakshmi Vilas Bank has approved a scheme of amalgamation with Indiabulls Housing Finance.
• For every one share of Rs 10 each, shareholders of Lakshmi Vilas Bank will receive 0.14 equity share of Rs 2 each of Indiabulls Housing Finance. The merged entity’s net worth will be **Rs. 19,472 crore**, with 14,302 employees and a loan book of Rs 1.23 lakh crore.
• The merger is subject to approval from shareholders, Competition Commission of India (CCI), National Housing Bank (NHB) and National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

**Government sells enemy shares worth Rs. 1,150 crore in Wipro**
• The government sold enemy shares worth around Rs. 1,150 crore in IT firm Wipro to Life Insurance Corporation and two other state-owned insurers.
• Enemy property refers to the assets left behind by people who migrated to Pakistan or China and are no longer citizens of India. According to block deal data available with BSE, the Custodian of Enemy Property for India sold more than 4.43 crore Wipro shares at a price of Rs. 258.90 per share.
• Apart from Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), General Insurance Corporation and The New India Assurance Corporation have bought the shares. The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management has been authorised to sell the shares.

**Government manages to meet revised fiscal deficit target of 3.4% of GDP**
• The Government has managed to meet the revised fiscal deficit target of 3.4 per cent of the GDP after it cut last minute expenditure and rolled over fuel subsidies to make up for the shortfall in tax collection.
• The interim Budget presented in February revised upward the fiscal deficit target to 3.4 per cent from 3.3 per cent of GDP estimated earlier for 2018-19.
• The direct tax collections fell short by **Rs. 50,000 crore**, GST collections has touched **Rs. 1.06 lakh crore** in March and the gross GST revenues has achieved the target of Rs. 11.47 lakh crore.

**IMF cuts India GDP growth forecast to 7.3% for 2019-20**
• The International Monetary Fund (IMF) cut India’s GDP growth forecast for 2019-20, following similar action by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
• In India, growth is projected to pick up to 7.3% in 2019 (2019-20) and 7.5% in 2020 IMF said in its World Economic Outlook report.
• Both ADB and RBI last week cut their 2019-20 growth projection for India to 7.2% from 7.4% earlier.
• The Central Statistics Office (CSO) to trim its 2018-19 forecast to 7% in February from 7.2% estimated in the previous month.

**Government retains GPF interest rate at 8% for Apr-Jun quarter**
• The government has retained the interest rate for General Provident Fund (GPF) and other related schemes at 8 per cent for the April-June quarter. The interest rate on GPF was at 8 per cent in the January-March quarter of 2018-19.

• The interest rate will be applicable on provident funds of central government employees, railways and defence forces.

IRDAI asks insurers to share status of claims with policyholders from July 1
• The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has advised all the insurance company to devise a framework to share the status of claims by developing a tracking mechanism for policyholders so as to enable them to know the status of their claim.

• Insurance companies will have to inform about claim settlement status to policyholders at various stages of processing from July.

SEBI reduces minimum subscription requirement for InvITs, REITs
• Markets regulator Sebi has reduced the minimum subscription requirement as well as defined trading lots for Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs) and Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvITs).

• REITs have to offer their units in lots worth at least Rs. 50,000 in initial and follow on public offers.

• The minimum value of a single lot should be Rs. 1 lakh in the case of InvITs.

Deposits in Jan Dhan bank accounts set to cross Rs. 1 lakh crore
• The total deposits in bank accounts opened under the Jan Dhan scheme are set to cross Rs. 1 lakh crore soon.

• Government data claimed that the cumulative balance in 35.29 crore accounts under the flagship programme of the Modi government reached Rs. 97,665.66 crore as on April 3.

• The Modi government launched the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) on August 28, 2014, with universal banking access in focus. More than half of the Jan Dhan account holders are women, while nearly 59 per cent accounts are from rural and semi-urban areas.

• Four years after its launch, the government enhanced the accident insurance cover under the scheme to Rs 2 lakh from the earlier Rs. 1 lakh in 2018. The overdraft limit in Jan Dhan was doubled to Rs. 10,000 in September 2018.

Mudra loans miss target by Rs. 27,000 crore in FY19
• Small business loans disbursed under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) have fallen short of the target set for 2018-19.

• Against a target of Rs. 3-lakh crore, only Rs. 2.73-lakh crore was disbursed as on March 31, 2019, according to government data. This is first time that the target was unmet in the last three years.

• There have been reports of a 50 per cent increase in the non-performing assets of Mudra loans in the first three quarters of last fiscal.

Sebi fixes minimum net worth for clearing corporations at IFSC
• The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has prescribed that all recognised clearing corporations in International Financial Services Centre (IFSC), need to maintain Rs. 50 crore net worth in the form of liquid assets on commencement of operations.

• SEBI has announced that the minimum Net worth Requirements for Clearing Corporations in International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) over a period of three years from the commencement of operations should be at least Rs 100 Crore. This has been reduced from Rs. 300 crore earlier.

IRDAI forms panel to review microinsurance framework
The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has set up a committee to review the regulatory framework on microinsurance and recommend measures to increase the demand for such products.

With IRDAI Executive Director Suresh Mathur as the chairman, the 13-member panel has been tasked with suggesting product designs with customer-friendly underwriting, including easy premium payment methods and simple claims settlement procedures.

Ratings

Fitch affirms India's rating at BBB- with stable outlook for 13th year in row

- Fitch retained India's sovereign rating at 'BBB-', the lowest investment grade, with stable outlook, saying a weak fiscal position continues to constrain its rating.
- This is the 13th year in a row that global rating agency Fitch has rated India at 'BBB-'. It had last upgraded India's sovereign rating from 'BB+ ' to 'BBB-' with a stable outlook on August 1, 2006. Fitch expects growth of 6.8 per cent in the current fiscal and 7.1 per cent in the next. Fitch Ratings is a subsidiary of Hearst Corporation.

WTO trims global trade growth forecast for 2019 to 2.6% from 3.7%

- The World Trade Organization forecast that the Global trade growth is expected to be lower in 2019 than it was last year. The WTO had in its preliminary estimates predicted a 3.7 percent expansion of trade for this year, but has revised that down to 2.6 percent, marking a decline on the three-percent growth recorded in 2018.
- In its forecast report in September 2018, the WTO had lowered the global 2018 and 2019 trade growth to 3.9 and 3.7 percent, respectively.

ADB cuts its India GDP growth forecast for 2019-20

- According to Asian Development Outlook (ADO) 2019, Asian Development Bank (ADB) has lowered India's growth forecast for 2019-20 to 7.2 per cent from 7.6 per cent estimated earlier.
- The growth rate in FY 2020-21 likely to be 7.3 per cent.
- Recent policy measures by the government to improve the investment climate and boost private consumption and investment will help India to lift economic growth in the next two fiscal years. India will remain one of the fastest-growing major economies in the world this year given strong household spending and corporate fundamentals.
- Consumer price inflation is expected to rise to 4.3% in FY2020 and 4.6% in FY2021. The current account deficit is expected to widen a bit to 2.4% of GDP in FY2020 and 2.5% of GDP in FY2021.

World Bank Projects India’s GDP to Expand 7.5% in FY20

- India's GDP growth is expected to accelerate moderately to 7.5 percent in fiscal year 2019-20.
- The economy driven by continued investment strengthening, particularly private-improved export performance and resilient consumption. The real GDP growth is estimated at 7.2 percent in financial year 2018-19. Meanwhile, agriculture growth was robust at 4 per cent.

IMF cuts India GDP growth forecast to 7.3% for 2019-20

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) cut India’s GDP growth forecast for 2019-20, following similar action by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- In India, growth is projected to pick up to 7.3% in 2019 (2019-20) and 7.5% in 2020 IMF said in its World Economic Outlook report.
- Both ADB and RBI last week cut their 2019-20 growth projection for India to 7.2% from 7.4% earlier.
- The Central Statistics Office (CSO) to trim its 2018-19 forecast to 7% in February from 7.2% estimated in the previous month.
Important Business News

Kia Motors India set to begin trial production

- Kia Motors is eighth largest automotive company in the world
- Kia Motors, the South Korean global automotive major, is all set to commence trial run of its $1 billion greenfield plant in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh. The company’s first car from the plant, SP2i, a sports utility vehicle showcased at the Auto Show as a SP concept, is poised to be rolled out by July this year for sale in India
- Kia motors along with the auto ancillaries from South Korea is one of the largest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in India in automobile sector. The Greenfield facility will have installed capacity of 300,000 vehicles annually from day one

Paytm Acquired Noida-Based NightStay

- Indian payments conglomerate Paytm Acquired hotel booking platform Nightstay, launching the domestic hotel bookings on its platform for an undisclosed amount. The digital payments brand owned by One97 Communications is set to invest Rs. 500 crores to scale up its operations and expand the hotel-booking portfolio
- In the first phase of hotels launch, the company has partnered with over 5,000 hotels across the budget, luxury and business segments. NightStay co-founder and CEO Nasr Khan will be leading the newly launched hotel-booking category at Paytm

PNB MetLife introduced P.V. Sindhu as brand ambassador

- The Punjab National Bank associated life insurance company, PNB MetLife has introduced the ace shuttler PV Sindhu as its brand ambassador. Sindhu will support various initiatives under project Damini, a CSR initiative intended to empower girls at every stage of the journey into womanhood.

Indostar Capital Finance to buy India Infoline Finance's Commercial Vehicle Finance Business

- IndoStar Capital Finance Ltd (IndoStar), a non-banking finance company, has signed a binding agreement to acquire the Commercial Vehicle (CV) finance business of India Infoline Finance Ltd (IIFL Finance), a subsidiary of IIFL Holdings Ltd.

Swiggy acqui-hires Bengaluru-based AI startup Kint.io

- Online food ordering and delivery firm Swiggy announced it has acqui-hired Bengaluru-based AI startup Kint.io an artificial intelligence (AI) startup, for an undisclosed sum. Acqui-hiring refers to buying out a company or an entity primarily for the skills and expertise of its staff, rather than for its products or services. The team at Kint.io will join the company to boost its computer vision technology and superior consumer experience. The founding members of Kint.io, Pavithra Solai Jawahar, and Jagannathan Veeraraghavan, will join the Swiggy team

Adani Group wins bids to operate five Airports for 50 years

- Gautam Adani's Adani Group has won bids to operate five out of six airports, put up for privatisation by the central government, for the next 50 years. The AAI chose the winner on the basis of "per-passenger fee" offered by the bidders. The Airports are Ahmedabad, Thiruvananthapuram, Lucknow, Mangaluru and Jaipur airports

Facebook acquired GrokStyle virtual search start-up to boost AI capabilities

- Facebook acquired US-based virtual search startup GrokStyle, to enable users shop better using artificial intelligence capabilities, for an undisclosed amount.
- San Francisco Based GrokStyle was founded in 2015

Government relaxes Angel Tax norms for Start-ups
• In a move to provide relief to and boost investments into start-ups in India, the government has decided to simplify the process for them to get exemptions under the Income Tax Act 1961. The government has increased the age cap for start-ups from 7 to 10 years. It will also recognize an entity as a start-up if its turnover for any of the financial years since its incorporation or registration does not exceed Rs. 100 crore instead of the existing Rs. 25 crore. Currently the limit for tax exemption is Rs. 10 crore.

**Hyundai and Kia to invest $300 million in Ola**

• Hyundai Motor Group and Kia Motors Corporation announced a strategic partnership to invest 300 million dollars (about Rs 2,000 crore) in ride-hailing platform Ola for providing smart mobility solutions.
• The agreement will see the three companies extensively collaborate on developing unique fleet and mobility solutions, build India-specific electric vehicles and infrastructure, as well as nurture opportunities for driver partners with customised vehicles on the Ola platform.

**Tata Communications partners with China Telecom for IoT devices**

• Tata Communications announced that it is working with China Telecom Global to launch Internet of Things (IoT) service in the Chinese market
• The partnership will allow companies to deploy and manage IoT devices easily and cost-effectively within China and internationally across multiple industries, including consumer and industrial electronics manufacturing, automotive, transport and logistics
• China Telecom Global and Tata Communications will cooperate to support global IoT opportunities. The Tata Communications MOVE service leverages the company's relationships with more than 600 mobile network operators worldwide. Through this partnership, China Telecom Global also provides Tata Communications with connectivity for Mainland China, Hong Kong and Macau.

**NSEIT acquires global cybersecurity company Aujas**

• NSEIT, the IT-services focused subsidiary of the National Stock Exchange has acquired Aujas Networks Ltd. a company which provides information security consulting and IT risk management services. The combination with Aujas helps us offer next generation cybersecurity services and platforms to address emerging security threats.
• NSEIT and Aujas will focus on offering market leading solutions to customers globally. Aujas is a perfect fit due to its expertise in cybersecurity transformation services, strong team, and global customers. NSEIT currently provides technology solutions across industries such as capital markets, financial markets, banking and insurance.

**Government extends IGST, compensation cess exemption till March 2020**

• The directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) has extended integrated GST (IGST) and compensation cess exemptions for goods procurement under advance authorisation scheme, export oriented unit (EOU) scheme and export promotion capital goods (EPCG) scheme of foreign trade policy 2015-20 to 31 March 2020. This decision is aimed at giving relief to exporters as they do not have to pay IGST at initial point itself. In the GST regime, exporters have to pay the indirect tax and then seek refund, which is cumbersome process.

**Wipro acquires Philippines largest personal care company Splash Corporation**

• Wipro Consumer Care signed an agreement to acquire Splash Corporation, a Philippines-based personal care company. Wipro stated that this is the company’s 11th acquisition in the consumer line business, and the 9th acquisition in the personal care segment overall.
• Splash is the largest Philippine personal care player and among the top five in the Philippines market. It recorded a revenue of $80 million last year.
Infosys arm to buy 75% stake in Dutch bank subsidiary

- Global software major Infosys stated that its consulting arm would buy 75 per cent equity stake in Starter N.V., a subsidiary of the Dutch-based ANN AMRO Bank for Rs. 999 crore ($144 million) for strategic partnership in The Netherlands.

Reliance Jio acquires chatbot making startup Haptik for Rs. 700 crore

- Reliance Industries (RIL) subsidiary Reliance Jio Digital has acquired a majority stake in Mumbai based Artificial Intelligence-based conversational platform Haptik for Rs. 700 crore.
- In the Rs. 700-crore deal, Rs. 230 crore will go for business transfer and Rs. 470 crore will go towards expansion.
- Reliance will hold about 87% of Haptik while the company's founders and employees will own the rest of the shares through stock option grants. All of Haptik’s business and holdings will be transferred to Reliance Jio Digital Services.

BSNL gets licence for in-flight connectivity

- Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has received the In-Flight Connectivity license from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) for enabling in-flight and maritime connectivity (IFMC) within Indian airspace.
- BSNL and Inmarsat, which is the satellite partner of BSNL, also operates the GX Aviation service will be able to offer in-flight connectivity to airlines. With this facility users can send messages, surf the internet and/or tweet, when a flight is at a minimum height of 3,000m in Indian airspace.
- Presently any form of internet connectivity for both domestic and international flights is not available on Indian flights. After this facility enabled, users will still have restricted amounts of data available for their uses, applicable for all airlines.

HDFC AMC ranked 1st in terms of Assets

- India’s asset management companies (AMCs) own assets under management (AUM) worth Rs24.46 trillion, according to data released by the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi).
- HDFC Asset Management Co. Ltd has claimed the top spot with an average AUM of Rs3.42 trillion, overtaking ICICI Prudential Asset Management Co. Ltd with an average AUM of at Rs3.20 trillion.
- Out of the total industry assets, a huge 82.7% is owned by the top 10 AMCs, who have owned around 80% of the industry assets over at least three years now.

Dream11 becomes the first Indian gaming company to be a unicorn

- Dream11 an online gaming firm has received secondary investment by Steadview Capital. With this Dream11’s valuation has become more than $1 billion and hence making it the first Indian gaming company to enter the Unicorn club. Dream11 is also the official fantasy cricket partner of IPL 2019. MS Dhoni is the brand ambassador of Dream11

PayU acquires digital financial security firm Wibmo for USD 70 mn

- Digital payments facilitator PayU has acquired US-based financial technology firm Wibmo for USD 70 million (about Rs. 484 crore), that will help the company scale-up its business. Under the agreement, PayU and Wibmo businesses will continue to run separately.
- Wibmo, a digital payment security and mobile payment technologies firm, will continue to operate and serve all of its clients as a wholly-owned subsidiary of PayU.

ETMONEY becomes India's first comprehensive financial services app to integrate UPI

- India's largest app for financial services, ETMONEY has integrated Unified Payment Interface (UPI) as a payment method on its platform as it looks to double its monthly user base by the end of the year.
integration of UPI will simplify the mutual fund payment experience for millions of ETMONEY users as
the company continues its journey to simplify the financial lives of new age Indians.
• They can select from a list of UPI-enabled apps installed on their phone including Google Pay, BHIM UPI
and PhonePe among others.

CRISIL board gives nod for transfer of ratings business to new subsidiary
• CRISIL Ltd, a diversified global analytics company, will transfer its ratings business to its proposed new
wholly-owned subsidiary. The board of CRISIL gave the nod for the transfer. CRISIL covers more than
28,000 large and mid-scale corporates and financial institutions.
• SEBI had last year modified its regulations for credit rating agencies and mandated the segregation of
rating and non-ratings businesses of credit-rating agencies.
• CRISIL proposes to undertake the transfer of its ratings business through a scheme of arrangement in terms
of Section 230 to 232 of the Companies Act, 2013, to be approved by the stock exchanges and the National
Company Law Tribunal.

Bandhan Bank gets CCI nod for merger with Gruh Finance
• Bandhan Bank has received approval from the Competition Commission of India (CCI) for the proposed
scheme of amalgamation of Gruh Finance with the bank. Gruh Finance, the affordable housing finance arm
of HDFC Ltd, was taken over by Bandhan Bank in a share-swap deal in January
• The approval has been made under sub-section (1) of Section 31 of the Competition Act, 2002. As part of
the deal, Bandhan Bank has to transfer 14.9% stake to HDFC for merging Gruh Finance with itself.

Cholamandalam MS General Insurance gets ISO 31000:2018 certification
• Cholamandalam MS General Insurance Company Limited has been certified with ISO 31000
• ISO 31000:2018 is an international risk management standard. The standard provides guidelines, principles, framework, and a process for managing risk. It can be used by any organization regardless of its
size, activity or sector. The Certificate is valid for a period of 3 years from April 07, 2019, to April 06, 2022.

5 Asian tea producers form ATA to boost trade
• Indian Tea Association, China Tea Marketing Association, Indonesian Tea Marketing Association, Sri
Lanka Tea Board and Japan Tea Association—the five bodies from five tea growing and consuming
countries in Asia—have now come forward to form what is called The Asian Tea Alliance (ATA).
• The whole idea is to boost tea trade from these countries. ATA, which was floated in Guizhou in China,
will now work towards enhancing tea trade, cultural exchanges, technology exchanges, promoting tea
globally, enhancing global consumption of tea, while creating a sustainability agenda for the future of
Asian tea.
• Earlier, Indian Tea Association and China Tea Marketing Association teamed up to promote green and
black tea consumption in major tea markets of Europe, the US, Russia and West Asia, besides India and
China.

Reliance retail crosses Rs. 1 lakh crore revenue milestone in FY19
• Reliance retail has become the first Indian retail company to clock more than Rs. 1 lakh crore in annual
revenues.
• The retail venture of Reliance Industries reported an income of Rs. 1,30,556 crore for 2018-19, 89% more
than the previous year’s Rs. 69,198 crore
• Reliance Retail also became the first Indian retailer to cross more than 10,000 stores. It operates 10,415
retail stores in more than 6,600 cities and towns, covering an area of over 22 million sq ft, as on March 31
BuyUcoin Introduces first Indian platform for wholesale Cryptocurrency trading

- BuyUcoin, a New Delhi based Indian Cryptocurrency Exchange, which is the second oldest Cryptocurrency Exchange in India, has announced the launch of a new and unique platform for wholesale cryptocurrency trading which allows its users to trade on a large scale with low price fluctuations.
- The platform currently works on a free trading model, charges zero fee on any trade.
- The platform is aptly described and known as OTC (Over-the-counter) desk. It is preferred by traders who deal with cryptocurrency in bulk and want to resist much price fluctuations during the trade.

Microsoft becomes world's third company to be worth $1 trillion

- Microsoft has reached a valuation of one trillion dollars for the first time after posting a 19pc increase in profits.
- It makes Microsoft only the third publicly-traded company in history to reach the threshold, after Apple and Amazon passed it. Apple was the first to hit the historic mark in August, followed by Amazon, which operates cloud-computing services that compete with Microsoft.

HDFC Bank and Max Bupa launch AnyTimeHealth machines to distribute health insurance products

- HDFC Bank and Max Bupa (insurance company) have launched a ‘‘AnyTimeHealth (ATH)’’ machines.
- ATH machines are completely automated, technology-based machines which allow customers to avail health assessment and buy a policy instantly, without any manual intervention.
- In the phase-1, 15-20 ATH machines will be installed at HDFC Bank branches across multiple cities.

Important Cabinet Approvals

- MoU between India and Japan on Development of Advanced Model Single Window.
- MoU on Maritime issues between India and Denmark
- Signing of the TOR provide tax assistance to Swaziland
- Creation of the post of Vice Chancellor for National Rail & Transport Institute set up in Vadodara, Gujarat
- Bilateral Swap Arrangement between India and Japan
- MoU between India and France on technical bilateral cooperation in the field of new and renewable energy

Cabinet approves the creation of National Bench of GSTAT

- The Union Cabinet approved the creation of the National Bench of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunal.
- It will be presided over by the President and shall consist of one technical member (Centre) and one technical member (State). The National bench would be set up in New Delhi. It also approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between India and Kuwait for the cooperation on recruitment of domestic workers.
- Over 3 lakh Indian domestic workers, of which 90,000 are women, in Kuwait would to be benefited by the move.
- The Cabinet also gave its nod for the extension of Delhi metro corridor from Dilshad Garden to New Bus Adda, Ghaziabad. The total distance of the extended line would be 9.41 km.

Cabinet approves signing of MoU between India and Kuwait on recruitment of domestic workers

- Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding between India and Kuwait for cooperation on the recruitment of domestic workers.
- It provides a framework for cooperation on matters related to domestic workers deployed in Kuwait and provides safeguards for them. The MoU is initially valid for a period of five years and incorporates
provision for automatic renewal. Around three lakh Indian domestic workers deployed in Kuwait will benefit from the decision.

- The Cabinet committee approved Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN (Jaiv Indhan –Vatavaran Anukool falsawasheesh Nivaran) Yojana. It will provide financial support integrated Bioethanol projects using lignocellulosic biomass and other renewable feedstock. The total financial outlay is of Rs.1969.50cr for the period from 2018-19 to 2023-24.

- Cabinet approved Rs.1450 crore for the share capital of RBI in National Housing Bank (NHB), which operate as the principal agency to promote housing finance institutions in India. The decision is the resultant of the amendments made to the NHB Act, 1987 in 2018.

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved construction of four lane bridge which connects Dhubri in Assam and Phulbari in Meghalaya over Brahmaputra. It will be constructed with loan assistance from Japan International Cooperative Agency at the Civil Construction cost of Rs.3548cr and total capital cost of Rs.4997.04cr.

- Cabinet approved the proposal for setting up a Centre for Disability Sports at Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh which will be registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. The estimated cost of setting up the centre shall be of Rs.170.99 crore for a period of 5 years.

- Cabinet approved National Policy on Software Products 2019 with an outlay of Rs.1500cr for a period of 7 years.

- Cabinet approved draft Homeopathy Central Council (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019 which looks for the extension of the period for reconstruction of the council from the existing one year to 2 years.

- Union Cabinet approved metro rail projects of Kanpur and Agra cities in Uttar Pradesh. The estimated cost of the project is Rs.8379.62cr and will be completed in 5 years.

- Cabinet approved the proposal for implementation of scheme titled ‘Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India Phase II (FAME India Phase II) approved by the Union Cabinet for the promotion of Electric mobility in the country. The total outlay is of Rs.10,000cr for a period of 3 years with effect from 1st April 2019.
• Cabinet approved inclusion of Common Service Centre (CSC e-Governance Services India) as Enrolment Agency for Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan (PM-SYM) which will enable workers in unorganized sector to get monthly pension of Rs.3000 on attaining the age of 60 years.

• Cabinet committee has approved laying down procedure and mechanism for asset monetization of CPSEs/PSUs/other government organizations and immovable enemy properties as per section IV of section 8A of the Enemy Property Act, 1968.

• Union Cabinet approved setting up of new AIIMS at Manethi, Haryana at a cost of Rs.1299cr. Cost of construction and running would be met by the Central Government under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).

• CCEA approved investment for transmission component of Arun-3 Hydro Electric Project (Nepal portion) by Sutlej Jal Vikas Nigam (SJVN) Limited. The project is on Arun River in Sankhuwasabha district of Eastern Nepal.

• The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the investment sanction for construction of 624 Mega watts Kiru Hydro Electric Project in Jammu and Kashmir.

• Approved the investment for 1320 Mega Watt Khurja Super Thermal Power Plant at Bulandshahar in Uttar Pradesh.

• Investment for 1320 Mega Watt Buxar thermal Power Project in Bihar was also approved.

• Approved proposal for promulgation of Central Educational Institutions (Reservation in Teachers’ Cadre) Ordinance, 2019

• The construction of a 3rd railway line between Narayangarh in West Bengal and Bhadrak in Odisha of 155 kilometres length. The total estimated cost of this project is 1866 crore rupees and will be completed by 2023-24.

• The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has also approved additional funds to Sugar Mills amounting to 2790 crore rupees.

• The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) in February with various countries in the field of Housing, Youth Affairs and earth sciences.

• Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi approved MoU between India and Indonesia on combating illicit trafficking on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and its precursors. The MoU will help both the countries in mutual cooperation in regulation of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and also in combating drug trafficking.

• Union Cabinet was Cabinet apprised about the MoU signed between India and Morocco for cooperation on youth matters. The MoU will strengthen and encourage cooperation between the two countries on youth matters.

• MoU signed between India and Morocco to promote exchange of information and technical cooperation in the field of Housing and Human Settlement.

• The Memorandum of Understanding signed between India and Argentina in February 2019 on Antarctic Cooperation to help Scientific Cooperation on projects in the field of Earth Sciences. It will also help in the protection and conservation of Antarctica and Southern Oceans.

• MOU signed between India and Saudi Arabia for cooperation in the field of Housing. It will promote technical cooperation between both the countries including affordable / low income housing and will also enhance participation of authorities and companies in the housing and infrastructure projects.
• Union Cabinet has given ex-post facto approval for the MoU signed in February between India and Republic of Korea on Startup Cooperation. It will facilitate and promote bilateral cooperation between the startups of both countries.
• The Union cabinet also approved acquiring land of Central Water Commission at Nallagandla, Hyderabad by Telangana State Government for road widening.
• Creation of additional posts of three Judicial Members and three Technical Members in the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).
• The Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has given its approval for the creation of 1 post of Deputy Comptroller & Auditor General (Coordination, Communication and Information System).
• The Cabinet has given the approval for ongoing GSLV continuation programme Phase-4 that consists of 5 GSLV rocket flights during 2021-2024. The total fund requirement for the phase 4 programme is Rs 2,729.13 crore. This amount includes the cost of 5 Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicles (GSLVs), addition of essential facility, programme management, launch campaign and extra funds required to meet the scope of the programme.
• They given approval for the proposal of the Department of fertilizers for extension of the duration of New Urea Policy-2015 for existing gas-based area unit from April 1, 2019 until further orders.
• Cabinet approves pact between India and Denmark in the field of Renewable Energy
• Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications, Government of India and The Ministry of Science and ICT (Korea Post), Government of the Republic of Korea have mutually collaborated to issue Postage Stamps on the theme “Queen Hur Hwang-ok of Korea”.
• To enhance the ties between India and Brazil to work out the future agenda for the amalgamation for innovation in Science & Technology diplomacy to develop a concrete deliberated plan in the area of biotechnology education, training and research.
• Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bolivia on collaboration in the field of Geology and Mineral Resources.
• To strengthen bilateral cooperation and mutual understanding between India and Cambodia in the field of communications.
• Memorandum of Understanding between India and Bolivia in the Field of Traditional Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy. The pact was signed in March 2019 in Bolivia.

Important State Wise National News
Andaman and Nicobar

Capital - Port Blair; Governor - Admiral D K Joshi

Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair declared as an authorized Immigration Check post
• Veer Savarkar International Airport in Port Blair has been declared as an authorized Immigration Check post for entry into/exit from India with valid travel documents for all classes of passengers. This decision of the Union Government will open up the Port Blair Airport for direct international flight and immigration facilities. The announcement was made by Information, Public Relations and Tourism Division of Andaman and Nicobar Administration.
Assam

Capital – Dispur; CM – Sarbananda Sonowal; Governor – Jagthesh Muki

Assam approves 10% quota for economically weaker sections of general class

- The Assam Cabinet has approved 10% quota for the economically weaker sections of the general category in government jobs and education. The meeting chaired by Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal also approved the guidelines for disbursement of Rs. 5,000 each to five lakh farmers of the state under the Mukhya Mantri Krishi Sa Sajuli Yozana for purchase of farm tools and implements. The Cabinet approved a loan amount of ₹95 crore from NABARD. The loan amount will be utilised to construct and strengthen embankments, dykes and other infrastructure across the state. The Cabinet also approved incentives for government doctors, nurses and other healthcare workers under Ayushman Bharat and Atal Amrit Abhiyan.

Assam launched PRANAM Commission to protect parents of government employees

- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal launched the PRANAM Commission, a panel set up to look after the issues concerning a Bill, for protection of parents of state government employees.
- The Parents Responsibility and Norms for Accountability and Monitoring (PRANAM) is an effort to protect elderly parents of government employees in their times of need.

Assam government launched ‘Rice Knowledge Park’ under APART

- Rice Knowledge Bank-Assam is an agriculture webportal. It is dedicated to magnifying knowledge on rice production technologies and techniques, best production practices and state agriculture facts. It was launched under the World Bank funded project – Agri-business and Rural Transformation (APART).
- This portal is the efforts of Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services Society (ARIAS), Assam Agricultural University (AAU) with technical assistance from the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).

Home Minister inaugurated BOLD-QIT project in Assam

- Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the project BOLD-QIT (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique) on India-Bangladesh border in Dhubri District of Assam.
- It deals with the problem of border safeguarding in the areas where border fences can’t be constructed due to Brahmaputra River. This project, under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS), will equip the unfenced areas along the riverine border with sensors, enabling the troops to take prompt action against intrusion.

Country’s first oil museum to come up in Guwahati

- Assam, the state where oil was discovered and produced for the first time in the country more than a century ago, will have the first Oil Museum in the country.
- All major oil and gas PSUs of the country – ONGC, IOCL, HPCL, BPCL and EIL are coming together for this project, which was launched by Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. The oil museum will be named after KD Malaviya, called the father of India’s hydrocarbon industry.
- The museum to come up at a cost of Rs 104 crore.

Initiative to promote digital electoral literacy, ‘i-help’ launched in Assam

- The Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and Common Service Centres (CSC) in Assam has launched an initiative named ‘i-help’ to promote digital electoral literacy in the state of Assam. Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) of Assam, Chandra Sahu launched the ‘i-help’ initiative. This particular initiative will fill the digital divide and fulfill the objective of turning the General Election more inclusive and participatory.
- The CSCs are internet-enabled access points spread throughout the country delivering various government and non-government digital services to the citizens and is uniquely positioned in rural areas to significantly
extend the awareness and outreach activities of CEO, Assam. The entire initiative is being launched under the Systematic Voters Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) in the state to ensure that no voter is left behind.

**Assam CEO Mukesh Sahu launches ‘Enajori’ initiative in Guwahati**
- Assam Chief Electoral Officer Mukesh Sahu launched the Enajori initiative in Guwahati. It is a special initiative for persons with disabilities with an aim that 'No Voter to be Left behind'.
- It is a joint initiative of CEO Assam and Social Welfare Department with an objective to make Lok Sabha Elections accessible to Persons with Disability, PwD voters.
- Section 11 of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016 states that Election Commission of India and State Election Departments shall ensure that all polling stations are accessible to persons with disabilities and all materials related to the electoral process are easily understandable by and accessible to them.

**Assam’s Bongaigaon district admin develops 'Sankalp' app to reach out to 1st-time voter**
- In Assam, the Bongaigaon district administration has developed a mobile app Sankalp to particularly reach out to the first-time voters. It is a special initiative has been taken to encourage the first-time voters. NIC team has developed the app. The first-time voters on their mobile phones, requesting them to download the ‘Sankalp’ app. The new voters will also be able to sign a digital ‘sankalp patra’ to cast their votes on the day of polling.

**(Bohag Bihu) Rongali Bihu festival celebrated in Assam**
- The Bihu Festivals is one of the most popular festivals of Assam, a north-eastern state in India. The Bihus are the most important festivals of Assam, which are celebrated each year on April 14th with loads of fun and abundance.
- Of the three Bihu Festivals held in Assam, the Rongali Bihu Festival is celebrated in Spring. The Assamese people, irrespective of caste, creed, faith, religion and belief, take part in the Bihu Festival. Three Bihu festivals are celebrated in a year called as Rongali Bihu or Bohag Bihu, Bhugali (Magh Bihu) and Kangali (Kati Bihu) for marking the distinctive phase in the farming calendar.
- This festival is observed at almost the same time as Baisakhi in Punjab, Poila Baisakh in Bengal, Puthandu in Tamil Nadu and Vishu in Kerala this year.

**Andhra Pradesh**

Capital – Amravati; CM – Chandrababu Naidu; Governor - ESL Narasimhan

Polavaram project enters Guinness Book of World Record
- The Polavaram multipurpose irrigation project entered the Guinness Book of World Records by pouring 32,000 cubic metres of concrete in 24 hours during the work of dam construction. Work on the project, being undertaken by the private sector Navayuga Engineering Co Ltd, is being conducted with extraordinary speed to make the dam ready for irrigation purposes by June. The project beat the existing record of 21,580 cubic metres which was achieved by Abdul Wahed Bin Shabib, RALS Contracting LLC and Alfa Eng. Consultant (all UAE), in Dubai between May 18 and 20 in 2017. Polavaram Project is an under construction multi-purpose irrigation project on the Godavari River in Andhra Pradesh.

Andhra Pradesh government to provide 100 units free power to MBCs
- Andhra Pradesh government will provide 100 units free power to the Most Backward Classes (MBCs)
• The government give aid of up to Rs 15 lakhs for foreign education of BCs, also setting up a Jyotiba Phule memorial centre with Rs 100 Crores, and set up 69 new gurukul schools in addition to the existing 106 gurukul schools

PM Modi dedicates Visakhapatnam SPR facility to the nation
• Prime Minister dedicated to the nation the 1.33 million metric tonnes of Visakhapatnam Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) facility of the Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve Limited (ISPRIL) built at a cost of Rs. 1,178 crore
• He also inaugurated Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited’s Vashishta and S1 development project located in the Krishna-Godavari Offshore Basin. Modi also laid the foundation stone for setting up of a new terminal of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) at Krishnapatnam. It will be built at a cost of Rs 700 crore.

India’s first district cooling system to be built in Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh
• UAE-based international cooling provider (Tabreed) has entered into a 30-year concession with Andhra Pradesh government to build, India’s first district cooling system in the state’s new capital Amaravati. The agreement is for a contracted cooling capacity of 20,000 refrigeration tonnes. This will be the Tabreed’s first plant outside its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) marken

NTPC to set up 25 MW floating solar power plant at Simhadri, Andhra Pradesh
• National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) -Simhadri is setting up a 25 MW floating solar power plant in its water storage reservoir as part of the company’s efforts to diversify into the solar segment
• NTPC-Simhadri was also setting up a flue-gas desulphurisation plant (FGD) like the other thermal stations of the company. It had four units 500 MW each.

NGT imposes Rs. 100-crore penalty on Andhra Pradesh government over illegal sand mining
• The National Green Tribunal has slapped an interim penalty of Rs 100 crore on the Andhra Pradesh government for inaction to prevent illegal sand mining in the state.
• The tribunal headed by Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel who is the chairperson of NGT directed the state government to deposit Rs. 100 crore ‘environment compensation’ with the Central Pollution Control Board (CPSB) within a month.

Arunachal Pradesh
Capital –Itanagar; CM –Pema Khandu; Governor - B. D. Mishra
Country’s longest single lane steel cable bridge opened in Arunachal Pradesh
• India’s longest 300 metre single lane steel cable suspension bridge was inaugurated by Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu. The bridge across the Siang River at Yingkiong in Upper Siang district has been named Byorung Bridge. It will reduce the distance from Yingkiong to Tuting town by almost 40 km. The earlier road length was 192 km.

'Boori Boot Yullom' festival begins in Arunachal Pradesh
• The Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh is celebrating its fortnight-long Boorib Boot Yollo festival. Boorib Boot Yollo is observed in the month of February every year to welcome spring and a successful harvest. During the festival, people invoke God to bless them with prosperity and seek protection from any kind of disease. This festival is celebrated particularly in two districts of Arunachal, Upper Subansiri and Lower Subansiri district

PM Modi launched a dedicated channel ‘DD Arunprabha’ for Arunachal Pradesh
• Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a dedicated 24x7 Satellite channel, ‘DD Arunprabha’ for Arunachal Pradesh. DD Arunprabha is the Doordarshan’s second channel for the northeastern region, DD Northeast was the first one.

• Modi also laid the foundation stone of Film and Television Institute (FTI). The permanent campus of the institute will come up at Jollang-Rakap (Jote) in Arunachal Pradesh.

Centre extends "disturbed area" tag under AFSPA for three districts of Arunachal Pradesh

• The Centre has extended the "disturbed area" tag under Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) for three districts of Arunachal Pradesh for another six months.

• The decision was taken after considering the present law and order situation in the six districts of the state. The three districts which will continue to be designated as disturbed areas under AFSPA are Tirap, Changlang and Longding.

• The designation, which allows imposition of AFSPA, will also continue for the four police stations areas of the state's three other districts bordering Assam. They include Namsai and Mahadevpur police stations in Namsai district, Roing in Lower Dibang Valley district and Sunpura in Lohit district.

Bihar

Capital – Patna; CM – Nitish Kumar; Governor - Lalji Tandon

Bihar 1st state to deploy dog squad to check liquor smuggling

• Bihar has become the first state in the country to have raised a special dog squad to detect liquor consignment.

• As many as 20 liquor-tracker dogs which were imparted training for nine months in Hyderabad have been deployed in nine police ranges in the state. Bihar had banned liquor in the state in 2016.

Bihar government approved 10 % quota for weaker sections in general category

• Bihar government has approved 10 percent quota for weaker sections in general category in jobs and educational institutions. The reservation is meant for individuals whose annual income is below 8 lakh rupees and who possess less than 5 acres of agriculture land. Other states which are implemented the reservation Bill - Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Assam. Parliament recently passed the Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill, 2019, approving 10 per cent reservation for the economically weaker section in general category.

3-day Krishi Kumbh to begins at Motihari in Bihar

• Bihar Governor Lalji Tandon and Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh jointly inaugurated the Krishi Kumbhin Bihar. This is the largest Krishi Kumbh of Eastern India. Over fifteen thousand farmers across different states and about two hundred agricultural scientists are participating in the Kumbh. There will be 14 technical sessions during three day Krishi Kumbh. The objective of Krishi Kumbh is to promote modern techniques and diversification in agriculture that could help in doubling farmer’s income. This Kumbh will be meeting point for policymakers, government, media, industries and other stakeholders to share knowledge discuss problems and presenting solutions for geometric progression growth of the agriculture in India.

Bihar government announced universal old age pension scheme

• Bihar government has announced a universal old age pension scheme - Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna (MVPY) for all people above 60 years of age. The scheme will come into force from the 1st of April this year.
Except those who are retired from the government service, all other people above 60 years will be eligible for 400 rupees monthly pension irrespective of caste, religion or community. Currently, old age pension scheme is applicable to only the BPL category. The Chief Minister also announced a pension of 6,000 rupees for journalists above 60 years of age.

Goa

Capital: Panaji; CM: Manohar Parrikar; Governor: Mridula Sinha

Goa Cabinet approves Rs. 2,000 fine for drinking in public

The Goa Cabinet has approved a proposal to impose a fine of Rs. 2,000 on people who drink alcohol or cook in public and a fine of Rs. 10,000 if a group of people is doing so. Offenders who do not pay the fine will face up to three months' imprisonment. The amendment is expected to be tabled during the Assembly session.

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated Atal Setu in Goa

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari inaugurated four-lane, 5.1 kilometre long “Atal Setu”, the third Cable Bridge across river Mandovi in Panaji, Goa. The bridge is a joint venture between the GSIDC (Goa State Infrastructure Development Corporation) and Larsen and Toubro. AtalSetu Bridge is the third longest cable stayed bridge in the country. The construction lasted over four and a half years, having started on June 14, 2014, total worth of the project is over 600 crore Rupees

Gujarat

Capital: Gandhinagar; CM: Vijay Rupani; Governor: Om Prakash Kohli

Gujarat becomes 1st state to implement 10% quota to EWS

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani has announced that his government will implement the 10 per cent reservation for economically weaker sections of the general category with immediate effect. His announcement comes less than a week after Parliament passed a constitutional amendment bill to facilitate 10 per cent reservation for upper castes in higher education and employment. The 10% quota will be applicable for higher education and govt job. Not applicable for recruitment/admission that have already started.

PM Narendra Modi inaugurated 9th Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit in Gandhinagar

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has inaugurated the 9th edition of Vibrant Gujarat global investors’ summit- 2019 at Mahatma Mandir Gandhinagar, Gujarat. Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev addressed the Vibrant Gujarat Summit. More than 30 thousand international and Indian delegates including the Heads of State from 5 countries are participating in the summit. Apart from this, 11 international organizations are participating as partner organizations for the Summit.

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Gujarat government signs around 130 MoUs with investment commitments worth over Rs 56,000 crore in various sectors

Gujarat government has signed around 130 MoUs with investment commitments worth over 56,000 crore rupees in various sectors on the first day of the three-day Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit.

China-based Tsingshan group has committed to invest 21,000 crore rupees to set up a steel plant and a facility to manufacture car batteries.
• Besides this mega agreement, MoUs worth over 35,000 crore rupees were also signed during the opening day of the three-day business conclave.

Haryana
Capital –Chandigarh; CM - Manohar Lal Khattar; Governor - Satyadev Narayan Arya
Haryana government approved new MSME, Pharma policies to boost development
• The Haryana government approved new policies for MSME and pharmaceutical sectors with a view to boosting the industrial growth and attracting investment in the state.
• Haryana Pharmaceutical Policy 2019, aiming to attract investment in the pharmaceutical sector to the tune of Rs 2,000 crore and to generate 25,000 new jobs, and establish a state-of-the-art Pharma Park at Karnal and to develop Haryana into a hub for pharmaceutical manufacturing.
• Haryana Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Policy 2019, It enables access to finance to MSMEs, promote entrepreneurship through start up and incubation support, support for revival of sick enterprises and enhance competitiveness through ease of doing business

First-of-its-kind 'Voter Park' inaugurated in Gurugram
• India's first-of-its-kind 'Voter Park' was inaugurated in Gurugram, aimed at increasing voter awareness and educating people about the electoral process. Haryana Chief Electoral Officer Rajeev Ranjan inaugurated the park in Vikas Sadan building complex. At the park, voters will get information about the polling process and the history of elections in the country.

Himachal Pradesh
Capital –Shimla; CM -Jai Ram Thakur; Governor - Acharya Devvrat
Himachal Pradesh approves 10% general category quota
• Himachal Pradesh has approved 10% reservation in jobs and educational institutions for economically weaker sections in the general category, becoming the fourth state to do so.
• Gujarat, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh are the three other states to implement the reservation.
• The amendment was approved by the Parliament on January 9 and by President Ram Nath Kovind on January 12.

Tashigang in Himachal Pradesh is world's highest polling station
• Tashigang, a small Himachal Pradesh village at an altitude of 15,256 feet, is now the highest polling station in the world. Located around 29 km from the India-China border, this polling station covers two villages of Tashigang and Gete. As per the revised electoral rolls, the two villages have 48 voters, of which 30 are men and 18 women.

Jammu & Kashmir
Capital –Jammu (winter) Srinagar (summer); CM - Vacant; Governor - Satya Pal Malik
Jammu and Kashmir government to provide cattle to BPL families
• The Jammu and Kashmir government has decided to give away cattle received from the military farms to the families living below the poverty line. The decision was taken here at a meeting of defence representatives and officers of animal husbandry department, chaired by advisor to the Governor Khurshid Ahmed Ganai, regarding the handing over of cattle to state government after the closure of military farms. The military dairy farms at Nowshera, Udhampur and Jammu have a total of 1917 cattle heads of different types.
• The advisor directed officers of animal husbandry department to prepare a plan for the distribution process with special preference to SC/ST families.

**Jammu and Kashmir government sets up panel for school infrastructure**

• The Jammu and Kashmir administration has set up a panel for implementation of saturation of toilets, drinking water and electricity in government schools in the state. The General Administrative Department (GAD) has ordered constitution of district-level committee on this issue. A five-member committee will be headed by the district development commissioner as chairman.
• The committee will prepare a detailed project report after undertaking actual assessment of deficient schools on the minimum requirement basis. The panel will monitor the works executed by different agencies, including public health engineering, power development department and engineering wing of the School Education Department and to ensure completion of works by February 28.

**Jammu and Kashmir Governor gives nod to bill for reservation to Paharis**

• The amendment provides for addition of a separate category for the persons belonging to the Pahari community, clan or tribe having distinct, cultural, ethnic and linguistic identity among the Socially and Educationally Backward classes (other than Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes).

**Jammu and Kashmir government grants Divisional Status to Ladakh region**

• Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satya Pal Malik granted Ladakh a divisional status, thus creating three administrative units of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh in the State. The J&K government has approved the creation of a separate administrative and revenue division for Ladakh. It will comprise Leh and Kargil districts, with headquarters at Leh. Earlier, Ladakh was a part of the Kashmir division. Kashmir valley geographically the smallest division at 15,948 sq. km, Jammu division at 26,293 sq. km and Ladakh, the biggest division, at 86,909 sq. km.

**Jammu and Kashmir government to give monthly stipend and jobs for those who Shun militancy**

• Draft on Reintegration proposes a monthly stipend of Rs. 6,000 and jobs for those who Shun militancy by the Jammu and Kashmir government. The reintegration policy draft proposes a monthly stipend of Rs 6,000 for a militant who surrenders ‘to encourage him to join the mainstream’.

The new Reintegration policy draft is under the consideration of Jammu and Kashmir administration headed by Governor Sathya Pal Malik. Militants found to have been involved ‘in heinous crimes’ won’t get the proposed benefits.

**Jharkhand**

**Capital – Ranchi; CM - Raghubar Das; Governor - Draupadi Murmu**

**PM Modi inaugurated 6 irrigation projects in Jharkhand**

• Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated six irrigation projects, including the Rs 2,391.36 crore Mandal dam that will provide irrigation to 19,604 hectare in Palamau and Garhwa districts. The Mandal dam, work on which began in 1972, but has been stalled since 1993, will be built on North Koel river under Barwadih block in Latehar district.

**MIB to extend support for organizing 2nd Jharkhand International Film Festival at Ranchi**
Ministry of Information and Broadcasting will extend support for organizing second Jharkhand International Film Festival at Ranchi in Jharkhand to promote and showcase the Best of Indian cinema. The three-day Film Festival will be held from 1st of next month. The objective of promoting the Festival is to encourage states that have showcased potential of promoting cinema. The aim of the scheme is to promote good films reflecting the changes and challenges and opportunities of society and to provide an opportunity of exposure to regional films to new trends in cinema.

**Karnataka**

**Capital – Bengaluru; CM – Kumarasamy; Governor - Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala**

**India’s first agromet forecast center inaugurated in Dharwad, Karnataka**

- Union Minister for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences, and Environment Dr Harsha Vardhan inaugurated the North Karnataka Agromet Forecasting and Research Centre (NKAFC) in Dharwad, Karnataka.
- This is country’s first agromet forecast centre which will provide accurate information on weather. About 25 lakh farmers in the region would get information on various platforms including SMS, Whatsapp, social networking sites and community radio stations.

**Areca nut gets its first GI tag for ‘Sirsi Supari’**

- Areca nut, also known as supari or betel nut, is the latest entrant in the list of agricultural produce with a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. The ‘Sirsi Supari’ is grown in Sirsi, Siddpaur and Yellapur taluks of Uttara Kannada district in Karnataka. Production of arecanut in these three taluks is around 7 per cent of the production of Karnataka State.
- Grown on an area of around 40,000 acres, the annual production of ‘Sirsi Supari’ is estimated to be around 40,000 tonnes. The Totagars’ Cooperative Sale Society (TSS) Ltd, a Sirsi-based agri cooperative, is the registered proprietor of the GI ‘Sirsi Supari’

**Paralympic high jumper Girish Gowda appointed as Karnataka Lok Sabha Elections Ambassador**

- Silver Medalist in Paralympic high jump, Girish Gowda has been appointed as the ambassador of Karnataka Lok Sabha Elections 2019.
- He represented India in men’s high jump F-42 category during 2012 Summer Paralympics games held in London, where he clinched silver medal. With this, he became the first Indian to win medal in this category.

**Yarn bank set up to help weavers in Karnataka**

- A yarn bank has been set up at the Mysore Powerloom Silk Manufacturers Cooperative Society to benefit the state’s weavers.
- The bank, with aid from the Centre, will supply pure silk yarn and zari to weavers who subscribe. Currently, the weavers have to source yarn locally through agents and wholesalers.

**Kerala**

**Capital – Thiruvananthapuram; CM – Pinarayi Vijayan; Governor – P.Sadasivam**

**India’s largest startup ecosystem inaugurated in Kerala**

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated a 1.8 lakh square feet facility housing incubation setups across a string of segments in modern technology. The Integrated Startup Complex under the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) includes the ultra modern facilities of Maker Village that promote hardware
startups, the BioNest that promotes medical technologies, BRINC which is the country’s first international accelerator for hardware startups.

- The Kerala state government intends to expand its incubation space further and after the completion of three more projects, Kerala will have a total startup and incubation space of 5 lakh Sq ft. This will be one of the largest incubation facilities in the world.

**PM Narendra Modi dedicated Kollam bypass in Kerala to the Nation**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the 13-km Kollam bypass of National Highway 66 to the nation.
- Kollam Bypass will reduce travel time between Alappuzha and Thiruvananthapuram. This is the first National Highway project in the country taken up on a 50:50 Centre-State partnership. The 13-kilometre long two lane bypass is constructed at a cost of 352 crore rupees. It has three major bridges over the Ashtamudi lake, having a total length of 1540 metres and an underpass.

**PM Modi dedicated Kochi Refinery project to Nation**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the Integrated Refinery Expansion Complex of BPCL in Kochi to the nation.
- The integrated refinery is a modern expansion complex and would transform the Kochi Refinery as the largest PSU refinery in the country with world class standards. Modi also inaugurated Mounded Storage Vessel at IOCL LPG bottling plant in Kochi, Kerala. Mounded Storage Vessel, IOCL LPG Bottling Plant has a total storage capacity of 4350 MT. He also laid the foundation stone for a petrochemical complex at the refinery and a skill development institute at Ettumanoor.

**Kerala to launch ‘Pravasi Dividend Pension Scheme’**

- The Kerala government will soon launch a ‘Pravasi Dividend Pension Scheme’ to provide regular pension to Non Resident Keralites on a onetime payment of Rs 5 lakh. There are 2.1 million migrants from Kerala across the world whose estimated total annual remittances to the state has been found to be Rs 85,092 crore. Investments ranging from Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 50 lakh being deposited as a whole or as six instalments paid within three years.
- Each beneficiary will be entitled to receive pensions ranging from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 50,000 every month, three years after the final deposit has been made at a dividend rate of 12%.

'Operation Olympics' commenced in Kerala

- 'Operation Olympics', an expert programme to train athletes in 11 disciplines has commenced in Kerala.
- The Kerala sports department and the state sports council are preparing the 123 athletes, who are participating in the programme, for the Olympics. The objective of 'Operation Olympics is to provide international standard training with the help of eminent trainers from both India and abroad. The programme includes expert training in athletics, boxing, cycling, swimming, shooting, wrestling, badminton, fencing, rowing and archery.

**Kerala State sets up Price Monitoring and Research Unit**

- Kerala has become the first State to set up a price monitoring and research unit (PMRU) to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO). The move comes more than five years after the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) proposed such a system for the States and the Union Territories.

**Union Tourism Minister K.J. Alphons inaugurated the ‘Eco Circuit’ Project in Kerala**

• This Eco Circuit project was sanctioned in December 2015 for Rs. 76.55 crores. Major works carried out under the project includes Eco Adventure Tourism Park at Vagamon, Cultural Centre at Kadamanitta, Idukki. Swadesh Darshan scheme is one of the flagship schemes of Ministry of Tourism for development of thematic circuits in the country.
• The scheme was launched in 2014-15 and as on date the Ministry has sanctioned 77 projects worth projects for Rs. 6131.88 Crore to 30 States and UTs.

Kerala’s jaggery gets GI tag
• The Marayoor Jaggery, a traditional and homemade product manufactured at Marayoor, a place in Idukki district of Kerala, has bagged Geographical Indication tag.
• Marayur jaggery is known especially for its organic and traditional production using the sugar cane cultivated in the region. Jaggery is a dark brown sugar balls made from sugarcane and no chemicals are added during the manufacturing process.

Madhya Pradesh

Capital – Bhopal; CM – Kamal Nath; Governor – Anandiben Patel

Madhya Pradesh government makes it mandatory for industries to hire 70% locals
• Madhya Pradesh state government has made it mandatory for all industries to provide seventy percent of the jobs to locals. The government has decided to set up training sessions and employment fairs in each district to register unemployed youths. Youth will be first provided a stipend and later jobs under state’s 70 percent clause.

Madhya Pradesh government launched ‘Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana’
• Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath launched state’s flagship scheme ‘Mukhyamantri Yuva Swabhiman Yojana’ (MYSY). The scheme guarantees 100 days of employment a year to urban youth along with a stipend of Rs. 4,000 a month. Only those youths, whose family’s annual income is less than Rs 2 lakh and who are in the age group of 21-30 years, are eligible for the scheme.

Ancient tribal language Gondi to be taught in tribal districts of Madhya Pradesh
• Ancient tribal language Gondi will be taught in tribal districts of Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath has decided to include Gondi in the primary education curriculum of the state’s tribal-dominated districts.

National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation to be set up at Sehore in Madhya Pradesh
• Secretary of Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities at Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment Shakuntala D Gamlin laid the foundation stone of the ‘National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation’ at Sherpur village along Bhopal-Sehore highway, Sehore district of Madhya Pradesh.
• This Institute will be first of its kind in the country. The Centre has approved an outlay of Rs 180 crore for this project for an initial period of three years. The land for this institute measuring about 25 acre was allocated free of cost by the Madhya Pradesh government in October 2018.
• It will promote mental health rehabilitation using an integrated multidisciplinary approach, to undertake capacity building and to involve in developing trained professionals in the area of mental health rehabilitation and help the Government in formulating policy and programs/models for rehabilitation of persons with mental illness.

Madhya Pradesh government issues ordinance to give 27% quota to OBCs
• Madhya Pradesh state government has issued an ordinance raising reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) to 27 per cent from the present 14 per cent. At present, the state provides 20 per cent
reservation to Scheduled Tribes (ST), 16 per cent to Scheduled Castes (SC) and 14 per cent to OBCs. The announcement was made by the state’s Law and Legal Affairs Minister PC Sharma

**Madhya Pradesh Government to Create an Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department)**

- Madhya Pradesh Government announced that it is going to create an Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department) by merging several existing department. The 'Anand Vibhag' (Department of Happiness) set up by the previous government in the state, a first in the country, would be incorporated into the new department.
- The proposed Adhyatmik Vibhag (Spiritual Department) going to be formed by merging Dharmik Nyas Evam Dharmasv Department (Religious Trust and Endowment Department), Anand Vibhag (Happiness Department) in addition to the Directorate of Religious Trust and Endowment, Madhya Pradesh Teerth Evam Mela Pradhikaran and Rajya Anand Sansthan.

**Madhya Pradesh Government bans purchase of new vehicles, ACs**

- Chief Minister Kamal has put a ban on the purchase new vehicles and air conditioners (ACs) by the government departments along with a skew of other items. Also, the expenditure incurred on office furniture, books, magazines, stationery, guest expenses, press and publication, consultancy, sanitation, security, and other such heads has been limited. Hospitals, hostels, Anganwadis, shelter homes have been kept out of the purview of the latest directive of the Finance Department.

**The Bhopal Literature and Art Festival inaugurated at Bharat Bhavan**

- Bhopal's first literature festival organised by the Society for Culture and Environment inaugurated at Bharat Bhavan, The literary event will see participation by over 70 writers and artists attending the festival.

**Madhya Pradesh launched Rs.50,000 crore farm loan waiver scheme**

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath launched his government's Rs 50,000 crore farm debt waiver scheme named 'Jai Kisan Rin Mukti Yojana'. in Bhopal. It would benefit 55 lakh small and marginal farmers in the state.
- Farmers, who have registered themselves to pay GST and are paying income tax, cannot avail benefits under this scheme.

**Bhopal to become India's first city to have crematorium for cows**

- India's first crematorium for cows will soon be built in Bhopal.
- Bhopal Municipal Corporation is now looking for a piece of land for the construction of the crematorium.
- Moreover, for the safety of the animal, temporary cowsheds (gaushalas) will also be set up in villages, highways, panchayats and municipalities across the region.

**Madhya Pradesh government launched Employment scheme for urban youth**

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath announced the launch of the 'Yuva Swabhiman Yojana' for youths from the economically weaker sections in urban areas.
- Under this scheme, 100 days of employment will be provided to youths from economically weaker sections in urban areas. They will also be given skill training.

**Maharashtra**

**Capital – Mumbai; CM – Devendra Fadnavis; Governor – Vidyasagar Rao**
PM Modi inaugurated infrastructure projects in Solapur, Maharashtra

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched road and underground sewerage system projects developed at an investment of Rs 1,100 crore in Solapur. Modi inaugurated the four laned section of Solapur - Tuljapur - Osmanabad of NH-211 (New NH-52).
- Modi also laid the foundation stone for 30,000 houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, the total cost of the project is Rs 1811.33 crore.

World Orange Festival inaugurated in Nagpur

- The second World Orange Festival will be organised in Nagpur.
- The festival, while offering its famed oranges to the world, will also showcase and brand the exquisite fruit in order to boost its export. Agricultural experts and scientists from various countries will participate in the workshops and guide farmers.

10th edition of India Rubber Expo 2019 inaugurated in Mumbai

- The three day event being held at the Bombay Exhibition Centre is one of the most anticipated events in the rubber industry’s calendar.

All-woman political party launched in Maharashtra

- An all-woman political party was launched in Mumbai under the banner of National Women’s Party (NWP). The party aims to field candidates in half of the state’s 48 Lok Sabha constituencies. The party has also been launched in Delhi and Karnataka. The first ever women’s political party unveiled its agenda and stated they would demand 50 per cent reservation for women in elected bodies, including in Lok Sabha.

Maharashtra cabinet approves Rs. 25 crore for Divyangs

- In a move that will benefit around 650 Divyang (differently-abled) people in the state, the Maharashtra cabinet gave its approval to provide Rs. 25 crore aid to them as part of a scheme. Each Divyang person will get a financial help of Rs 3.75 lakh to purchase eco-friendly vehicles and start mobile vehicle shops. The decision is aimed at making the differently-abled persons financially independent.

Maharashtra government launched special scheme to curb infant deaths

- The Maharashtra government launched a special scheme to curb infant deaths. State child development Minister Pankaja Munde distributed baby care kits to the children born in primary health centres and government hospitals. The scheme is applicable only for the first child and will benefit around four lakh women across the state Women.
- Each kit contains a blanket, a small mattress, a towel, a thermometer, baby oil, shampoo, toys, nail-cutter, gloves, socks, among other things. The cost of the kit is around Rs. 2,000. The state government has allocated Rs 20 crore for the scheme.

Maharashtra government sets up panel to review welfare schemes for tribals

- The Maharashtra government has set up a committee to review various schemes being implemented for the welfare of tribals in the state. The 17-member committee, headed by former MLA and Shramjeevi Sanghatna president Vivek Pandit, will undertake the study of various works done for providing employment opportunities, minimum wages and proper livelihood to tribals. The committee will suggest measures to ensure that children in tribal regions were not deprived of education. The committee will hold its meetings every three months and submit its recommendations to the government.

Maharashtra government sets up transgender welfare board
The Maharashtra government has formed a Transgender Welfare Board to provide formal education, employment opportunities, conduct health programmes and give legal help to the community.

Eligible third gender students would be provided hostel accommodation under the Babasaheb Ambedkar Swadhar Scheme. Under this scheme, Rs. 48000-60000 would be given as scholarship annually. The board would implement skill development programmes to help educated transgenders get jobs.

Maharashtra government hikes bonus for paddy farmers to Rs. 500 per quintal

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis increased the bonus for paddy cultivation from Rs. 200 to Rs. 500 per quintal.

Fadnavis also waived annual lease for fishing in ponds up to 500 hectares of area.

India’s first LGBTQ clinic and HIV treatment centre inaugurated in Mumbai

The country’s first HIV treatment centre and holistic clinic for the for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) community has been inaugurated in Mumbai. A patient gets tested at India’s first holistic LGBTQ clinic and community-based HIV clinic at Humsafar Trust, Santacruz, Mumbai.

The centre will give free counselling and provide Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART). ART is the use of HIV medicines to treat the infection, and is recommended for everyone who is infected with virus and delays the progression of the disease.

EC comes up with PWD app for over two lakhs Divyang voters in Maharashtra

In Maharashtra, Election Commission has come up with a mobile application called 'PWD' for making voting easier and implement the poll body's slogan of Accessible Elections for over two lakhs Divyang voters across the state.

The app would facilitate Divyang voters special facilities including wheelchairs, ramps and transport from home at polling booths during the Lok Sabha elections.

EsselWorld Launches India’s First Foreign Interactive Bird Park in Mumbai

India’s first exotic Bird Park ‘EsselWorld Bird Park’ was launched by EsselWorld Leisure Pvt. Ltd., the family entertainment arm of the $6-billion Essel Group in Mumbai. It is home to over 500 exotic birds from more than 60 species of flying, terrestrial and aquatic birds and has 200 species of special plants and trees for the birds.

The star attractions at the Bird Park are the African Grey Parrot, Blue Gold Macaw, Cockatiel, Rainbow Lorikeet, Toucan, Black Lory, Violet Turaco and many other varieties of bird. EsselWorld is the largest amusement park in the country.

 Manipur
Capital – Imphal; CM - Nongthombam Biren Singh; Governor – Najma Heptulla

Manipur Assembly Passed Anti-mob Violence Bill

The Manipur Assembly has passed a bill which recommends life imprisonment for those involved in mob violence,

It recommends a rigorous life imprisonment term if the crime results in the death of a victim. The Assembly also passed the Manipur Goods and Services Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2018

Phayeng Village Becomes India’s 1st Carbon-Positive Settlement

Phayeng Village in Imphal West district of Manipur has become India’s first carbon-positive settlement.

A village is given carbon-positive tag if it sequesters more carbon than it emits, slowing accumulation of greenhouse gases (GHGs) and mitigating effects of climate change. Phayeng Village is scheduled caste
village of the Chakpa community. It provides 100% funding to activities under it which are implemented in project mode. National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) nodal implementation agency for these projects.

Meghalaya

Capital – Shillong; CM - Conrad K Sangma; Governor – Tathagata Roy
Meghalaya government to rename Dikkibandi stadium after P A Sangma
• The Meghalaya Cabinet has decided to rename the Dikkibandi stadium in Tura town after former Lok Sabha Speaker Purno A Sangma. The Dikkibandi Stadium formerly known as MP stadium
• Purno A Sangma served as Chief Minister of Meghalaya from 1988 to 1990

India’s deepest shaft cave discovered in Meghalaya
• India's deepest shaft cave Krem Um Ladaw was recently discovered in East Khasi Hills district of Meghalaya.
• The cave has 105 m deep shaft entrance passage. It was discovered during 28th edition of annual ‘Caving in the Abode of the Clouds Expedition’ that took place in February 2019. Its discovery comes one year after discovery of world’s longest sandstone cave Krem Puri in Mawsynram region of Meghalaya’s East Khasi Hills district. Overall 2019 expedition explored and mapped 12.3 kms of new cave passage.

8 new caves were also explored and mapped including revisit to Krem Shrieh (Tangnub). Krem Shrieh which was earlier explored in 2000 was now extended from 8,713m to 9,844m. Other major caves explored and mapped were Retdung Khur (3724m), Tui Khur Lut (2185m) and Kellung Puk (788m.)

Mizoram

Capital – Aizawl; CM - Zoramthanga; Governor – Kummanam Rajasekharan
Mizoram government bans import of pigs and piglets
• Mizoram government has banned import of pigs and piglets to prevent outbreak of a disease that has cost the lives of thousands of swines in the state. The porcine reproductive and respiratory syndrome (PRRS) has cost the lives of over 10,000 swines in Mizoram since 2013 and it is believed that it happened due to import of pigs and piglets from Myanmar where the disease was known to be prevalent

Nagaland

Capital – Kohima; CM - Neiphiu Rio; Governor – Padmanabha Acharya
Around 5,000 Naga Konyak women dance to set a new world record
• In an attempt to set a new Guinness World Records in the category of ‘largest traditional Konyak dance display,’ around 5,000 Konyak community women, all decked up in colourful traditional attire, danced to the tune of a ceremonial song, coinciding with the Aoleang festival. The theme of this year’s Aoleang, also called Mini Hornbill festival, was ‘Empowering women for cultural heritage.’

New Delhi

Capital – New Delhi; CM - Arvind Kejriwal; Governor – Anil Baijal
"Sopan 2019" The Festival of Young Musicians and Dancers held in New Delhi
• Music and dance festival 'Sopan 2019' has started, to encourage young and upcoming artistes to take up traditional art, in New Delhi. It is organised by Sahitya Kala Parishad and the Delhi government in association with New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC). These six day long festival is an opportunity for upcoming talents from vocals and instruments to dance forms to set an audience base for themselves.
**Delhi government presents Rs. 60,000 crore budget for 2019-20**

- Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Manish Sisodia presented a Rs 60,000 crore budget for 2019-20 in the Assembly. Allocation of Rs. 100 crore for providing Minimum Support Price (MSP) to farmers as recommended by the Swaminathan Commission. Rs. 15,000 crore allocated for education sector. A total of 375 crore rupees have been set aside for 100 mohallah clinics and Rs. 6,380 crores have been made in the budget for Municipal corporations of Delhi.

**Delhi government launched bike ambulance services**

- Delhi government has launched bike ambulance services to ensure health assistance reaches on time in the congested areas of the national capital. The bike ambulances, which will be called the "First Responder Vehicles", will have a portable oxygen cylinder, first aid kit and dressing materials, air-splints, GPS and a communication device. Against the sanctioned funds of Rs 40 lakh, the project was completed at Rs 23 lakh.

**Delhi Government to introduce AC Electric Buses**

- The Delhi Cabinet has approved a proposal to add 1,000 low-floor AC electric buses to the capital’s public transport fleet.
- The first lot of electric buses will reportedly hit the streets before the end of 2019.

**Delhi Government established high-level committee to reform higher education**

- The Delhi government’s Dialogue and Development Commission (DDC), a think-tank that advises the government on key issues, has set up a 17-member high-level committee to “reform higher education” in the capital.
- The panel, to be chaired by DDC vice-chairperson Jasmine Shah, will recommend goals, metrics, policies, and actionable plans for reforming Delhi's higher education system within a year.
- Nalanda 2.0, a non-profit policy think tank with a mission to make India's higher education system world class, is the knowledge partner of DDC on this initiative.

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**Odisha**

**Capital – Bhubaneswar; CM – Naveen Patnaik; Governor – Prof Ganeshi Lal**

**Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik announced interest free loans for women Self Help Groups**

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced interest free loans of up to Rs.3 lakh for women self help groups (WSHGs) in the state. There are around six lakh women self help groups in Odisha. The initiative will benefit about 70 lakh women in the state. The chief minister also distributed financial assistance of Rs. 3,000 each to six lakh WSHGs as part of the state government's efforts to digitally empower women. Launched a scheme to distribute Rs. 15,000 seed money per group to three lakh new self-help groups. He announced incentives of Rs. 500 per month for anganwadi workers and Rs. 200 for helpers.

**Odisha launched free LED bulb distribution scheme**

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the ‘Ama Ghare LED’ (LED bulbs in our houses) scheme which will benefit about 95 lakh families in the State. Each beneficiary family will get four LED bulbs free of cost under the scheme, LED bulbs (9-watt each) will be distributed to the beneficiaries registered under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) and the State Food Security Scheme (SFSS).
- Distribution of the bulbs will be started at the PEETHA (Peoples Empowerment – Enabling Transparency and Accountability of Odisha Initiatives) schemes on January 15, Odisha Power Transmission.
Corporation Limited (OPTCL) will be implementing the scheme and the bulbs will be distributed through camps and PDS outlets across the State.

**Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced "Jiban Sampark" project**

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik announced "Jiban Sampark" project in partnership with UNICEF India to generate awareness about the development and welfare initiatives of state government among the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups of the state. The announcement was made after Patnaik inaugurated the annual tribal fair popularly known as "Adivasi Mela" the annual event which has 180 stalls to showcases tribal market, food, agriculture produces and forest products.
- The Jiban Sampark's focus areas will include skill development, empowering communities, cooperation and innovation among the groups of 75 tribal communities in the country, 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups residing in remote and far off areas of 12 district in Odisha.

**Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stone for Rs 2,345 crore highway projects in Odisha**

- Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari laid the foundation stone for three highway projects worth over Rs. 2345 crore rupees. The projects including four-laning of the 41.7-km Talcher-Kamakhyanagar section of NH 200/23 (new NH 53) at a cost of Rs 795.18 crore. 51.1-km Kamakhyanagar-Duburi section of NH 200 (new NH 53) at a cost of Rs 761.11 crore and 39.4-km Duburi-Chandikhole section of NH 200 (new NH 53) at a cost of Rs 789.23 crore.

**Odisha government launches boat ambulance service for remote areas**

- The Odisha government has launched a boat ambulance service to ferry patients to hospitals in remote areas at a cost of Rs 5.40 crore. Six boat ambulances, being added to the road fleet for now, will be part of the '108' ambulance service. Two boat ambulances each have been sanctioned for Malkangiri and Kendrapara districts, and one each for Koraput and Kalahandi.

**Odisha to provide free sanitary napkins to 17 lakh girl students**

- Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik announced his Government's decision to launch a scheme under which sanitary napkins will be provided free of cost to girl students of government and government-aided schools in the state. The scheme called Khushi will benefit 17 lakh girl students from Class VI to XII. In addition to this, the state government will also expand social marketing of sanitary napkins for women and girls in the community at subsidised rate.

**Skill Development Minister inaugurated Skill Saathi Youth Conclave in Odisha**

- Union Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Inaugurated a "Skill Saathi Youth Conclave in Bhubaneswar, Odisha. Skill Saathi is a career counselling initiative of the National Skill Development Corporation, under the aegis of Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, to create awareness about the Skill India Mission and guide candidates by providing them with information on career paths and opportunities. The conclave mobilised over 2 lakh candidates who were counselled across 427 locations covering all blocks and urban local bodies, across 30 districts in the state.

**Odisha cabinet approved State Film Policy 2019**

- With an aim to promote Odia films and create an conducive eco-system for production of films in the region, the state government rolled out Odisha State Film Policy-2019. The policy will promote quality Odia films, facilitate film tourism in the state, establish Odisha as a destination for film shooting and improve screen density in the state.
- To encourage filmmakers to shoot in Odisha, a subsidy upto Rs. 2.5 crore will be provided to English/Hindi/International/other language films that promote Odisha, its culture, heritage, tourist destinations.

**Odisha Chief Minister laid the foundation stone for Subarnarekha port**
Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik laid the foundation stone of the Subarnarekha port in Balasore district of Odisha.
The proposed port is being developed by Tata Steel and Creative Port Development Pvt. Ltd, which would own 51% and 49% stakes in the project respectively. The Port Estimated to be constructed at a cost of Rs. 5,000 crore
Patnaik also attended the Talasari festival and addressed a large gathering of youth in Balasore

Odisha government launched KALIA Chhatra Bruti scholarship scheme
- Odisha government has launched the Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA) Chhatra Bruti scholarship for the children of farmers, who studying in government professional colleges on merit
- The state government will bear all expenditure including course fees, hostel fees and mess fees under Kalia scholarship. The Kalia scholarship funds would be directly sent to the bank accounts of the eligible students through DBT.

Odisha celebrates 84th foundation day
- Odisha is celebrating 84 years of its foundation on 1st April 2019. The day is also known as ‘Utkal Divas.’
- Earlier, Odisha was a part of Bihar, it became the first state to be formed on the linguistic basis in 1936.
- The name of the state was changed from Orissa to Odisha, and the name of its language from Oriya to Odia, in 2011

Odisha receives GI tag for 'Kandhamal Haldi'
- 'Kandhamal Haldi', a variety of turmeric indigenous to southern Odisha, has earned the Geographical indication (GI) tag from Intellectual Property India. The recognition coincided with the state's Foundation Day (Utkal Divas). Odisha, on April 1 1936.
- This unique variety of turmeric is grown in Odisha’s southern hinterland. It is key cash crop of tribal people from Kandhamal district of Odisha.
- It has multifaceted utility in food, medicine and cosmetics considering its unique aroma and color to food items and various cuisines.

Punjab
Capital–Chandigarh; CM–Amarinder Singh; Governor–V.P. Singh Badnore

Punjab government to set up development authority for Anandpur Sahib
- The development authority for Anandpur Sahib will be set up to execute the development plans in the wake of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev in November this year. Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh made this announcement at Anandpur Sahib. The authority would be established on the pattern of Dera Baba Nanak Development Authority

Indus River Dolphin declared Punjab’s State aquatic animal
- Punjab government declared the endangered Indus river dolphins, one of the world’s rarest mammals, as the state’s aquatic animal. The decision was taken at the meeting of the state board for wildlife chaired by chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh. At present, there are only around 1,800 of these in the Indus in Pakistan. Their population in the Beas is between 8 to 10. The chief minister also gave approval to declare the Kanjli Wetland and the holy Kali Bein River as a wildlife conservation reserve to mark the historic 550th birth anniversary of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev.

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Punjab to build Jallianwala memorial with soil from its 13k villages

- To commemorate 100 years of Jallianwala Bagh Massacre. Punjab government has decided to build a memorial in Amritsar with soil from all 13,000 villages of the state. The memorial is being built to "eulogize the immense contribution of Punjabis in the national freedom struggle". The spot for the memorial is yet to be identified.

**Rajasthan**

Capital – Jaipur; CM – Ashok Gehlot; Governor - Kalyan Singh

Rajasthan government to issue 1Lakh power connections to farmers by June

- Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot has directed officials to issue one lakh electricity connections by June to farmers who have deposited the demand money. He also asked them to expedite the work on solar energy to provide households in remote areas with electricity. He further asked them to ensure no power cuts in domestic connections between 7am-11am, and 6pm-10pm.

12th Jaipur literature festival begins

- 12th Jaipur literature festival, considered to be the Kumbh of Literature, held in Jaipur. Around 500 authors, literateurs and thinkers are participating in the five-day event. Writers from 17 languages are participating this time and the youngest author is just 10 years old. The festival is to host many well-known personalities including Prasoon Joshi, Javed Akthar, and many others.

Union Minister Rathore inaugurated Passport Service Centre at Kotputli, Rajasthan

- Union Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore inaugurated a Passport Service Centre at Kotputli in Rajasthan. This center would provide a number of services to the local people at their home. He also inaugurated a solar plant at a school in Kotputli, Rajasthan. Solar power generated by this plant would fulfill the energy requirements of the school and people residing in the area will also be benefitted by the power generated by this plant.

Rajasthan government announced monthly allowance scheme for educated, unemployed youth

- Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot announced the monthly allowance scheme for educated, unemployed youth from March 1. Through this scheme unemployed boys will receive Rs. 3,000 while girls will get an assistance of Rs. 3,500 as monthly unemployment allowance. The new scheme is likely to benefit one lakh educated youth in the state and cost the exchequer Rs 525 crore.

International annual Desert festival held in Jaisalmer

- The 40th International Annual Desert Festival held on the sand dune, Rajasthan.
- The three-day festival, exhibits rich cultural heritage of the desert state, commenced with a colourful procession from Gadsisar lake fort. The festival is organised by the Rajasthan tourism and district administration.

Rajasthan assembly passed a bill to scrap minimum qualification for local polls

- Rajasthan Legislative Assembly passed Rajasthan Municipalities (Amendment) Bill, 2019, and The Rajasthan Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2019 to remove the minimum education criterion for panchayat and civic polls candidates. The previous BJP government had introduced the minimum qualification of class 10 for Zila Parishad/Panchayat member election, and class 5 or 8 class for the post of sarpanch.

Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 'Titanwala Museum' in Rajasthan
• Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the 'Titanwala Museum' in Bagru that showcases the Chhipa community's hand-block printing. The museum is an effort towards preserving the art of traditional Bagru block printing. Bagru printing is one of the traditional techniques of printing with natural color followed by the chippas of Rajasthan.

Rajasthan Diwas
• Rajasthan Day is celebrated on 30th March every year on which the state Rajasthan came into existence as it was previously known as Rajputana. On 30th March 1949, Rajasthan was formed.

Sikkim

Sikkim Capital – Gangtok; CM – Pawan Kumar Chamling; Governor – Ganga Prasath.

Sikkim will become first state to roll out Universal Basic Income
• Sikkim becomes the first state in the country to introduce the scheme called the Universal Basic Income (UBI).
• Universal basic income (UBI) is a model for providing all citizens of a country with a given sum of money, regardless of their income, resources or employment status, this scheme is alternative to social welfare programmes with benefits towards reducing poverty.

Sikkim launches 'One Family, One Job' scheme
• Sikkim Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling launched the 'One Family One Job' scheme which entitles one government job for every family in the state, Sikkim has become the first state in the country to carry out such an exclusive programme for the people who would now be entitled to state government employee benefits.

First Swadesh Darshan project inaugurated in Sikkim
• Shri. K.J. Alphons, Union Minister for Tourism inaugurated the project “Development of North East Circuit in Gangtok, Sikkim. The project implemented under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India was sanctioned by the Ministry in June 2015 for Rs. 98.05 Crores.
• Under this scheme, the Government is focussing on development of quality infrastructure in the country with objective of providing better experience and facilities to the visitors on one hand and on other hand fostering the economic growth. Ministry has sanctioned 16 projects for Rs. 1349.04 crores covering all North Eastern States under its schemes of Swadesh Darshan and PRASHAD.

Sikkim signs MoU with Microsoft for digital learning
• Microsoft India entered into a pact with the Sikkim state government to improve the education system in the state by boosting digital literacy and the knowledge of new-age technology among students and teachers in government schools. As part of the collaboration, Microsoft would support the state in integrating IT content in the state board curriculum and build student capacity besides building teacher capacity through the Microsoft Educator Network and Innovative Educator Program.

Tamil Nadu

Tamil Nadu Capital – Chennai; CM – Edapadi Palanisamy; Governor – Banwarilal Purohit.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister launches nursery classes in government schools
• A scheme introducing nursery classes in State run schools was launched by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami. The classes would be conducted jointly by the School Education Department and
the Social Welfare Department in all 32 districts. The scheme, with Montessori education as the basis, is expected to benefit about 52,900 children in 2,381 anganwadi centres located in State-run middle schools. The schools would be managed by headmasters of middle schools and would be under the administrative control of officials of the Integrated Child Development Scheme.

2-Day Global Investors Summit begins in Chennai

• The two-day Global Investors Summit, being organised by Tamil Nadu government, held in Chennai. It is being participated by about five thousand delegates from industries in India and abroad. In the inaugural event, the Adani Group Chief Executive Officer Karan Adani committed an investment of 12 thousand crore rupees in its Kattuppalli port expansion project. The Ford Motors inaugurated its Global Technology and Business Facility at its sprawling Sholinganallur campus in Chennai. More investment commitments are expected to be made during the ongoing two-day interactions.

Deals worth Rs. 3 lakh crore signed at Tamil Nadu Global Investors Meet

• Tamil Nadu CM Edappadi K Palaniswami announced the state has signed agreements amounting to over Rs. 3 lakh crore during the second edition of the Global Investors Meet (GIM). Some of the biggest investors included Chennai Petroleum, Hyundai Motor India and MRF. MoUs worth Rs. 30,000 crore were signed between the government and nearly 12,000 small businesses.

PM Modi laid foundation stone for AIIMS Madurai in Tamil Nadu

• Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for All India Institutes of Medical Sciences, AIIMS at Madurai in Tamil Nadu. Narendra Modi also inaugurated the Super Speciality blocks of government medical college hospitals in Madurai, Tirunelveli and Thanjuvar built at a total cost of Rs.450 crores contributed by the Centre and Rs. 85 crores contributed by the State. Modi also inaugurated 12 Passport Seva Kendra across Tamil Nadu. The Institute is to be built within 45 months at an allocated budget of Rs. 1,264 crores.

• AIIMS, Madurai will be a 750 bedded hospital with 30 Emergency/Trauma beds, 75 beds in the ICU & Critical Care unit, 215 beds in Super Specialty unit, will also offer 100 MBBS seats.

Tamil Nadu becomes first state to get second Coast Guard district headquarters

• Tamil Nadu became the first state in the country to get a second Coast Guard district headquarters Thoothukudi. The first district headquarters is Chennai. Second Coast Guard district headquarters inaugurated, by state Governor Banwarilal Purohit, with an aim to augment security mechanism on the eastern coast and the state in particular.

NGT imposed Rs. 100 crore fine on Tamil Nadu government for its failure to prevent pollution of the Adyar and Cooum rivers and the Buckingham Canal.

• National Green Tribunal (NGT) has slapped a whopping Rs. 100 crore on Tamil Nadu government for its failure to prevent pollution of the Adyar and Cooum rivers and the Buckingham Canal.

• The Bench comprising the Chairman Adarsh Kumar Goel, Judicial member Justice K. Ramakrishnan and expert member Nagin Nanda directed the constitution of a joint committee comprising of representatives of CPCB, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Madras School of Economics, National Environmental Engineering Research Institute and the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board to assess the causes and quantum of damage to the environment as well as further steps required for restoration of environment.

Drainage cleaning robot introduced in Chennai, Tamil Nadu

• A drainage-cleaning robot has been introduced for the first time at the Chennai city corporation as part of efforts to rid of manual scavenging. The robot named Bandicoot has been introduced at a cost of 18 lakh rupees.
Drainage cleaning could be detected by viewing the blockages on the screen. The robot could be taken to any place in the corporation area.

**Chennai Central station to be named after MGR – PM Modi**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the Chennai Central railway station will be renamed after former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MG Ramachandran. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in Tamil Nadu to officially launch the National Democratic Alliance’s poll campaign for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.
- The 146-year-old iconic railway station is one of the major landmarks in the city. He launched several schemes, and unveiled projects in roadways, railways, and energy sector worth Rs. 5010 crore.

**Tamil Nadu’s Erode Turmeric Gets GI Tag**
- The tag is a name or sign used on products that correspond to a specific location and prevents misuse of the popularity of the products by others. After an eight-year-long process, Erode turmeric finally got a Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the Geographical Indication Registry.
- Erode turmeric is a rhizome, both finger and bulb obtained from the Erode local cultivar. Erode turmeric cultivar is called ‘Chinna nadan’, that turmeric is one of the oldest spices used in India.

**Rotary Club of Madras North initiated Project Kannamma**
- **Project Kannamma** is the initiative of the **Rotary Club of Madras North** to provide sanitary napkins to the students.
- Under the Project Kannamma, sanitary napkins are provided to over 300 students from across Government Schools in and around Chennai.

**Telangana**
- **Capital – Hyderabad; CM – Chandrasekhar Rao; Governor – ESL Narashiman.**

**Telangana to give Rs. 25 lakh each to families of Pulwama martyrs**
- Telangana CM K Chandrashekar Rao announced Rs. 25 lakh assistance to families of each of the 40 CRPF jawans martyred in the Pulwama terror attack.
- The Assembly and Council adopted a resolution condemning the attack and expressing sympathy with the families and martyrs.

**Telangana government launches digital portal for MSMEs**
- The State government launched a digital business networking portal for MSMEs - Telangana State GlobalLinker (ts-msme.globallinker.com) - to digitise over 2.3 million MSMEs of the State. The solution aims to address key challenges faced by MSMEs with the core objective of making their business growth simpler, more profitable and enjoyable.
- Telangana State GlobalLinker will provide MSMEs - a digital profile (including an online product catalogue an eCommerce store), access to global networking opportunities to find buyers & suppliers, economies of scale on a wide range of business services, access to industry news, articles and discussions.

**Telangana secured top spot in eLearning Training for Field Staff**
- Telangana state has ranked number one in eLearning training by reaching to 20,000 field staff during 2018-19.
- This is the second year in succession that the State got the distinction under the Department of Personal and Training (DoPT). Dr MCR HRD Institute enrolled over 20,000 field staff in different districts of the State to impart training on 12 soft skills modules and three domain-specific modules on RTI, Office Procedures, and Finance & Accounts, apart from Sustainable Development Goals. The training is being imparted to achieve the goal of ‘training for all’.
Tripura
Capital – Agartala; CM – Biplab Kumar Deb; Governor – Kaptan Singh Solanki.

Tripura government launched Notun Disha initiative
- The government of Tripura announced ‘Notun Disha’ (New Direction) for assessing the academic level of students in classes III-VIII and then improving their current level. It was launched by state Education Minister Ratan Lal Nath.
- The Notun Disha is a one-month project to provide training to teachers. Training will be provided by NGOs and educational institutions to 800 teachers. In that initiative the state government has decided to distribute laptops to 800 school teachers to assess the level of students’ development in different disciplines.

Tripura has second highest number of child marriages
- Tripura ranks second position with respect to the highest prevalence of child marriage among girls aged 15 years to 19 years at 21.6 per cent which is significantly higher than the national average of 11.9 per cent. Also found that more than 80 per cent of child marriages were registered in three districts of the state.
- The four districts include Dhalai, South Tripura, North Tripura, and West Tripura have the highest number of child marriage. A report released by the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), Young Lives – an international study on childhood poverty.

Uttarakhand
Capital – Dehradun; CM – Trivendra Singh Rawat; Governor – Baby Rani Maurya

Uttarakhand's first tulip garden in Pithoragarh
- Uttarakhand's first tulip garden will come up over 50 hectares of forest land in Pithoragarh district at a cost of Rs 50 crore. The garden to be developed by the ONGC, under its corporate social responsibility programme (CSR) in over 50 hectares of forest land near Chandak hill top. The proposed tulip garden will be the country's second after the one located in Srinagar (J&K)

Himalayan Cloud Observatory set up in Tehri district to monitor cloud activities
- A Himalayan Cloud Observatory has been set up in Tehri district to receive forecast and monitor cloud burst incidents in the Himalayan region and help minimise the damage. The Observatory has been established in the SRT campus and is currently in the testing period.
- This is the second observatory in the country to monitor cloud activities by the Indian Science and Technology Department and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur that can function in high-altitudes.

Uttar Pradesh
Capital – Lucknow; CM – Yogi Adityanath; Governor – Ram Naik

Uttar Pradesh becomes 3rd state to approve 10% general category quota
- Uttar Pradesh government approved 10% reservation in jobs and educational institutions for the economically weaker sections in general category.
- Gujarat and Jharkhand are the two other states to incorporate the additional quota.
- The Constitution (124th Amendment) Bill, 2019 was passed by the Parliament on January 9 and was approved by President Ram Nath Kovind on January 12.
Uttar Pradesh cabinet renames Mughalsarai tehsil as Deendayal Upadhyay

The Uttar Pradesh cabinet approved the proposal of renaming the Mughalsarai tehsil as Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay, the co-founder and president of Bharatiya Jana Sangh.

- Many places in the state have witnessed change in names in the recent past under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government.
- In August last year, the iconic Mughalsarai Railway station got officially renamed as Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Junction. On October 16 last year, Allahabad was formally rechristened to Prayagraj.

Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

- Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is a celebratory day observed (starting in 2015) on 9 January by the Republic of India to mark the contribution of the overseas Indian community towards the development of India. The day commemorates the return of Mahatma Gandhi from South Africa to Mumbai on 9 January 1915.
- Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas began at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh. Prime Minister of Mauritius, Pravind Jugnauth will be the chief guest.

Uttar Pradesh government approved construction of Ganga expressway to connect Prayagraj with western UP

- Uttar Pradesh state cabinet approved construction of a four lane Ganga Expressway connecting Prayagraj to Western Uttar Pradesh which would cost about 36,000 crore rupees. Ganga Expressway will be 600 kilometres long and can be expanded to six-lane in future. New Ganga Expressway will be the longest expressway in the world.
- The state cabinet also gave approval to 291 kilometres long Bundelkhand Expressway will be constructed at a cost of 8864 crore rupees.

Union Minister Harsimrat Kaur laid foundation stone of Mega Food Park in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh

- Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal laid foundation stone of a Mega Food Park in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh. The Mega Food Park is being set up in over 57 acre of land at a cost of around 121 crore rupees. The Centre has also approved a financial assistance of 50 crore rupees to the project.

The Park will provide direct and indirect employment to five thousand persons and benefit about 25,000 farmers.

West Bengal

Capital – Kolkata; CM – Mamta Benerjee; Governor - Keshari Nath Tripathi

West Bengal Government Announced two Initiatives for Farmers

- The West Bengal government announced two welfare initiatives for farmers. Both initiatives, which are part of the 'Krishi Krishak Bondhu' scheme. The first of the two initiatives will provide Rs 2 lakh to the family of a deceased farmer,
- Under the second initiative, farmers would get Rs 2,500 twice a year for growing a single crop on one acre of land.

West Bengal government launched ‘Banglar Shiksha’ portal

- West Bengal Education Minister Partha Chatterjee inaugurated a web portal, ‘Banglar Shiksha’, which is set to provide real-time data on state-run and aided schools. This is first-of-its-kind online initiative in the state as well as in the country. It will be operated on a trial basis for two months to remove glitches. The portal
should be fully functional by May 1. The portal will store real-time data of 1.5 crore students, five lakh teachers and one lakh schools.

Other National News

Government Extends CLSS for MIG scheme till 31st March, 2020

- The Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) for Middle Income Group (MIG) Scheme has been extended by another 12 months till 31.03.2020, Till December 30 this year, around 3,39,713 beneficiaries have availed the CLSS under the PMAY (Urban). Under the CLSS, the MIG beneficiaries with an annual income of above Rs 6 lakh and up to Rs 12 lakh would get an interest subsidy of four per cent on a 20-year loan component of Rs 9 lakh.
- Those with an annual income exceeding Rs 12 lakh and up to Rs 18 lakh would get interest subsidy of three per cent.

ISRO Launched Samwad with Students Programme

- As part of the enhanced outreach programme of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), a new platform named Samwad with Students (SwS) was launched in Bengaluru. The Indian Space agency will engage youngsters across the country in activities concerning space science under this programme. During the inauguration in Bengaluru yesterday, 40 students and 10 teachers from select schools interacted with ISRO Chairman Dr. K Sivan about the Indian Space Programme and their benefits to the common man.

All houses in 25 States Electrified under Saubhagya Yojana

- The country achieved yet another milestone in the power sector with completion of electrification in 100% households in 25 states at year end. Only about 10.48 lakh households are left to be electrified in 4 states - Assam, Rajasthan, Meghalaya and Chhattisgarh. The central government launched 'Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana' (Saubhagya) in September 2017 to achieve the goal of universal household electrification in the country by 31 March, 2019.

Parliament passed National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018

- The Indian Parliament passed the National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018, following the approval of the Rajya Sabha. The Lok Sabha had already passed the Bill on July 23, 2018. The Bill seeks to amend the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) Act, 1993. That bill seeks to retrospectively grant recognition to certain institutions running teacher education courses as well as grant retrospective permission to start new courses.
- The Bill was introduced by the Union Minister of Human Resource Development, Prakash Javadekar in Lok Sabha on December 18, 2017.

Indian Oil Corporation will commission its first liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal at Ennore in Tamil Nadu

- Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the nation's biggest oil firm stated that, it will commission its first Rs. 5,151 crore worth liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal at Ennore in Tamil Nadu. This is the first LNG import terminal IOC has built on its own, it holds 95 per cent stake in the Ennore LNG import terminal. Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) has 5 per cent. The firm is also working on laying a 1,385 km natural gas pipeline originating from the Ennore terminal to Nagapattinam in Tamil Nadu via Puducherry.

Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education amendment Bill passed in Parliament
• Parliament has passed the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Bill, 2018. The Lok Sabha had already passed the bill seeking to further amend the Right to Education Act, 2009. The existing policy under the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, prohibits schools from detaining students till they complete elementary education. The Bill seeks to amend the Right to Education (RTE) Act to abolish the “no-detention” policy in schools.

**National Green Tribunal imposes Rs 100-crore fine on Meghalaya government**

- The National Green Tribunal has imposed a fine of 100 crore rupees on Meghalaya government for its failure to curb illegal coal mining in the state. The amount of the fine has to be deposited with the Central Pollution Control Board within two months. The action comes after a high-level committee submitted an adverse report to a bench headed by NGT chairperson AK Goel.

**Indian Panorama Film Festival inaugurated in New Delhi**

- A 10-day long Indian Panorama Film Festival began at Siri Fort Auditorium in New Delhi. Indian Panorama Film Festival, being organized by Directorate of Film Festivals, Ministry of I&B, was inaugurated by Secretary, Ministry of I&B, Shri Amit Khare. The opening feature film ‘Olu’ directed by Shri Shaji N Karun.

**World Book Fair inaugurated in Delhi**

- The 27th New Delhi World Book Fair inaugurated at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. Human Resources Development Minister Prakash Javadekar inaugurated the 9-day annual event. All India Radio is the radio partner for the fair.
- To mark Mahatma Gandhi’s 150th birth anniversary, there will be special book exhibition of books on and by Mahatma Gandhi. More than 600 publishers will display books at more than 1350 stalls at the fair.
- The theme of this year is ‘Readers with Special Needs’.

**Government launched nationwide cleanliness survey ‘Swachh Survekshan 2019’**

- Union Housing and Urban Affairs Minister, Hardeep Singh Puri, launched the ‘Swachh Survekshan 2019’, the fourth edition of the annual nationwide cleanliness survey of urban India in New Delhi. The Swachh Survekshan 2019 aims to evaluate the achievements in the cleanliness level in urban areas of the country.
- The survey will cover 40 crore people across over four thousand towns and cities. Swachh Survekshan 2019, completely digital and paperless survey, will be completed in a record time of 28 days.

**Central Government launched Green-Ag project**

- The Government of India launched a Global Environment Facility (GEF) assisted project, namely Green-Ag, in partnership with FAO. The overall objective of the project is to catalyse the transformative change of India’s agricultural sector to support achievement of national and global environmental benefits and conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes of five states, namely Madhya Pradesh (Chambal landscape), Mizoram (Dampa landscape), Odisha (Similipal landscape), Rajasthan (Desert National Park landscape) and Uttarakhand (Corbett-Rajaji landscape).

**Archaeological Survey of India declared 6 monuments as ‘protected and of national importance’**

- The Ministry of Culture announced that Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) declared 6 monuments as ‘protected and of national importance’ under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, in 2018. No new monument was included in the list of sites of national importance in 2016 and 2017. The last monument to be included in the list, in 2015, was the Vishnu Temple in Nadavayal in Kerala’s Wayanad district.
1. 125-year-old Old High Court Building in Nagpur, Maharashtra,
2. The Group of Temples in Ranipur Jharail in Bolangir district of Odisha,
3. 2 Mughal-era monuments in Agra-Haveli of Agha Khan and Hathi Khana,
4. The Neemrana Baori in Alwar district of Rajasthan,
5. The Vishnu Temple in Kotali, Pithoragarh district in Uttarakhand.

Government allocated Rs. 10,900 cr for development of 40 satellite launch vehicles in next 4 years

- The Union Government has allocated 10,900 crore rupees for the development of 40 satellite launch vehicles in the next four years. Dr Sivan stated that Chandrayan Mission will be launched within three months. It will land in one part of the Moon which is still unexplored. The human space flight Gaganyaan is planned to be launched by 2022, the 75th anniversary of Independence.

Cabinet approved restructuring of National Health Agency as “National Health Authority”

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the restructuring of existing National Health Agency as "National Health Authority" for better implementation of Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY). The National Health Authority would be empowered with full autonomy, accountability and the mandate to implement PM-JAY through an efficient, effective and transparent decision-making process by aligning the accountability with responsibility.

High-level committee set up to implement Clause 6 of Assam Accord

- Government had notified the High Level Committee (HLC) for implementation of Clause 6 of Assam Accord. The clause envisaged that appropriate constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards, should be provided to protect, preserve and promote the cultural, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the people of Assam. Retired IAS officer M.P. Bezbarah is chairman of the 9 member Committee. The committee will examine the effectiveness of actions since 1985 to implement Clause 6 of the Assam Accord.

NAFED to set up 100 bio-CNG plants via PPP with Rs 5,000-cr

- Farm cooperative major NAFED announced setting up 100 bio-CNG manufacturing facilities using agri waste such as stubble through public private partnership (PPP) with an estimated investment of Rs 5,000 crore. The first three centres will come up in Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh, which is the largest sugarcane producing state where waste from sugar mills is available in abundance. An agreement has already been signed with 4-5 private investors like Reliance, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and technology provider. Another agreement has been signed with Indian Oil for purchase of bio-CNG from the plants at a rate of Rs 48 per kg.

Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg in India on 3-Day Visit

- Prime Minister of Norway Erna Solberg has arrived in New Delhi on a three-day state visit to India. She was accompanied by senior officials from her government and a large business delegation. She will participate in the Indo-Norwegian Business Conference. Solberg will also deliver the Inaugural address at the Raisina Dialogue.

Cabinet approved 10% quota for economically backward in general category

- The Union Cabinet approved a 10 per cent reservation for ‘economically backward’ upper castes in government jobs. The government has announced reservation in jobs for those belonging to the upper castes and earning less than Rs 8 lakh per year. A bill to amend Article 15 and 16 of the Constitution will be moved in the Parliament to this effect.

International Kite Festival 2019 inaugurated in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

- Nine day long international kite festival was inaugurated at Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, by the Governor OP Kohli. Ahmedabad has been hosting this international kite festival since 1989, this grand event is a part of the celebrations for Makar Sankranti (also called Uttarayan). About 500 kite fliers from 13 different states of the country and 19 cities of Gujarat are also taking part.
Lok Sabha passed Citizenship Amendment bill

- The Lok Sabha has passed the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill. The Bill seeks to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to make illegal migrants who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship. The bill relaxes this 11 year requirement to 6 years for persons belonging to the all the six religions from the three countries. Under the 1955 Act, requirements for citizenship by naturalisation is that the applicant must have resided in India during the last 12 months,

Private FM channels allowed to carry All India Radio news

- Minister of State (IC) for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports, Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore (Retd.) launched the sharing of All India Radio News with private FM broadcasters. Private FM channels can now carry All India Radio News free of cost on trial basis up to 31st May this year. News Services Division of All India Radio has permitted its news bulletins in English and Hindi to be carried in unaltered form by Private FM Channels as per certain terms and conditions.

GST ministerial panel approved Kerala levying 1% cess for 2 years

- The ministerial panel under Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi approved levy of 1% ‘calamity cess’ by Kerala for a period of two years to fund rehabilitation work in the state hit by floods. The goods and services, which will attract the 1% cess, would be decided by Kerala and any other state considering to do the same would have to approach the council. The council also suggested to the GST Council to allow additional borrowing over the permitted limit by states hit by natural calamity.
- The GST law provides for levy of special taxes for a specified period to raise additional resources during any natural calamity or disaster.

HRD Ministry introduced a 70 Point Grading Index to Assess the Quality of School Education

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development has introduced a 70 point grading index to assess the quality of school education offered by states. State performance grading will be done wherein the states will be marked out of 1,000 scores on 70 parameters. This will give the correct picture of where every state stands. There will be a fair competition to improve each other's performances.

Andaman to be First Island to operate seaplanes under UDAN-3

- According to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, islands in Andaman will soon be connected by seaplanes. The ministry has approved operations on 13 water aerodrome routes, under the regional connectivity scheme Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN). Five are from Andaman, while the others are from dams in Gujarat and coastal areas in Kerala.
- UDAN-RCS, UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) is a regional airport development and "Regional Connectivity Scheme" (RCS) of Government of India.

University Grants Commission to set up CARE to refine and strengthen research publication

- UGC decided to set up Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE) to refine and strengthen research publication. With an aim to refine and strengthen the University Grants Commission (UGC) approved list of journals.
- The good quality Research Journals in disciplines under Social Sciences, Humanities, Languages, Arts, Culture, Indian Knowledge Systems etc., will be maintained by CARE and referred to as ‘CARE Reference List of Quality Journals’. UGC has constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Prof. P. Balram, to review its quality mandate relating to promotion of Research and to review the existing M.Phil/ Ph.D Regulations.

PM Modi will inaugurate the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on 21st January
Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 15th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas on 21st January, at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, the three days long event will attract many eminent persons of Indian origin from the world over, Minister of state in External Affairs General V K Singh stated that, the first day of the Divas will be dedicated to the youth, There will be seven sessions in the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas programme. 

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated once in every two years to strengthen the engagement of the overseas Indian community with the Government of India and reconnect them with their root.

During the Convention, selected overseas Indians are also honored with the prestigious Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award to recognize their contributions to various fields both in India and abroad.

Cabinet Approves 3 New AIIMSs in Gujarat, Jammu And Kashmir

The Union cabinet has given its approval for establishment of three new AIIMS at Samba in Jammu, Pulwama in Kashmir and Rajkot in Gujarat, These All India Institutes of Medical Sciences will be set up under Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana, The objective is to establish the new AIIMS as Institutions of National Importance for providing quality tertiary healthcare, medical education, nursing education and research in the region.

Establishment of new AIIMS involves creation of Hospital, Teaching Block for medical and nursing courses, residential complex and allied facilities/services,

AIIMS New Delhi is governed by the All India Institute of Medical Sciences Act, 1956

National Informatics Centre Command & Control Centre inaugurated

Minister for Electronics and IT (MeitY) Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurated the National Informatics Centre (NIC)’s Command and Control Centre (CCC), Prasad also inaugurated the Centre of Excellence in Artificial Intelligence (AI) developed by the NIC to help government departments improve efficiency in their service technically like photo verification of beneficiaries for grant of services in large-scale projects, distribution of subsidies etc.

NIC has been offering Data Centre and Cloud services to the Government. Currently, it has 4 National Data Centres and 30 Mini Data Centres across the country hosting over 10,000 e-Governance applications.

6 states signed agreement for Renukaji dam multipurpose project

Six states Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Delhi, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh signed an agreement for construction of Renukaji Dam Multi Purpose Project, Agreement on water sharing was signed on 28 August 2008.

Renukaji Dam project has been conceived as a storage project on the Giri river (tributary of the Yamuna) in Sirmour district of Himachal. It envisages construction if 148 m high rock-filled dam for supply of 23 cumec water to Delhi and other basin states, Three projects are proposed to be constructed on the Yamuna and two of its tributaries, Tons and Giri, in the hilly regions of Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh of the Upper Yamuna Basin.

These include Lakhwar project on the Yamuna in Uttarakhand, Kisau on the Tons in Uttarakhand and Himachal, and Renukaji on the Giri in Himachal.

VP Naidu inaugurated 25th edition of Partnership Summit 2019

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the 25th edition of Partnership Summit 2019 in Mumbai.

Theme of Summit is New India Rising to Global Occasions
• The summit is expected to build new partnerships and explore investment opportunities in sectors like Artificial Intelligence, big data, food processing, defence, aeronautics, renewable energy and tourism.

• The Partnership Summit 2019 is being organised by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Maharashtra Government and the Confederation of Indian Industry.

Government launched Web Wonder Women Campaign

• The Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, has launched an online campaign, ‘#www : Web WonderWomen’.

• The Campaign aims to discover and celebrate the exceptional achievements of women, who have been driving positive agenda of social change via social media, the Campaign has been launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India in association with the NGO Breakthrough and Twitter.

Government launched National Clean Air Programme

• Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Dr Harsh Vardhan launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) aiming to reduce toxic particulate matter by 2024,

• With 2019 as its first year, Centre has set a mid-term (five-year) target to reduce air pollution by 20-30% by 2024, taking 2017 as the base year, the Environment Ministry has announced a budget of Rs 300 crore for two years to tackle air pollution across 102 cities, which have been identified by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for not meeting the pollution standards set by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.

Rajyavardhan Rathore launched National Youth Parliament Festival 2019

• Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports, Col Rajyavardhan Rathore launched the National Youth Parliament Festival 2019 at New Delhi, The theme of the festival is Be the Voice of New India and Find solutions and contribute to policy

• The Ministry has decided to organise the youth festival at every district of the country so that the youth between the age group of 18 to 25 years can participate and discuss and debate about how to make a New India, the festival will be held at District, State and National level to select the best speakers, maximum of 50 best speakers from the digital screening and 50 best speakers from walk in process will be shortlisted by the screening committee to participate in the District Youth Parliament.

Government launched ‘Womaniya on Government e Marketplace’ initiative

• The Union Government launched the ‘Womaniya on Government e Marketplace (GeM)’, an initiative to enable women entrepreneurs and Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) to sell handicrafts, handloom, accessories, and other products directly to Government departments and institutions, GeM is an online platform of the ministry for procurement of goods and services by government departments, public sector units, and other agencies.

• GeM was setup in 2016 and has 731,431 product categories, with 180,862 registered sellers and 32,114 government buyers.

Government Launched two National level Initiatives in the field of science communication

• The Department of Science and Technology (DST) along with Doordarshan (DD), Prasar Bharati launched two science communication initiatives, DD Science and India Science

• Union Science & Technology Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan inaugurated the initiative.
DD Science is an one hour slot on Doordarshan National channel, which will be telecast Monday to Saturday from 5 pm to 6pm, India Science is an internet based channel, which is available on any internet-enabled device, and will offer live, scheduled play and video-on-demand services.

Government approves inducting women as jawans in Army's Military Police

- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has approved induction of women as jawans in the Army's Corps of Military Police.
- The women will be inducted in graded manner to eventually comprise 20% of total Corps of Military Police.
- Their roles would include probing rape and molestation cases, assisting the Army wherever required, searching or frisking women, among other duties.

PM Narendra Modi to inaugurate National Museum of Indian Cinema in Mumbai

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurates the National Museum of Indian Cinema in Mumbai.
- The museum spread across two adjacent buildings will not only cater to the needs of film critics and enthusiasts but also enthrall visitors through visuals, graphics, interactive

Aparna Kumar becomes 1st woman IPS officer to reach South Pole

- Aparna Kumar has successfully reached the South Pole after covering 111 kilometres of walking on the snow.
- She also carried equipment weighing 35 Kilograms along with her.
- She has already scaled the top six mountain peaks of the six continents of the globe.She became the first woman IPS officer to reach the South Pole.

2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 to be held in Goa from Jan 23

- The 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 on the Regulation of Homeopathic Medical Products will be held in Goa from 23rd January. AYUSH Minister Shripad Naik will inaugurate the three day forum.
- 20 countries will participate in the event. This forum will strengthen regulatory framework worldwide, to assure that the users of Homoeopathy could have wider access to quality-assured homeopathic medicines.

Indians over 65 and under 15 can now visit Nepal and Bhutan with Aadhaar

- Aadhaar cards are now valid travel documents for Indians under 15 and over 65 years travelling to Nepal and Bhutan, according to a Home Ministry communique. Indians other than those in the two age brackets will not be able to use Aadhaar to travel to the two neighbouring countries, for which no visas are needed, said the communique issued recently. Indian citizens going to Nepal and Bhutan don't need a visa if they have a valid passport, a photo identity card issued by the government of India or an election ID card issued by the Election Commission, it added.
- Earlier, persons over 65 and under 15 could show their PAN card, driving licence, Central Government Health Service (CGHS) card or ration card, but not the Aadhaar, to prove their identity and visit the two countries.

Central government considering paying farmers cash instead of subsidies: Report

- India is considering a plan to transfer cash to farmers to ease their financial burden instead of offering subsidies.
- Central government is planning to combine all farm subsidies, including fertilizer costs, and instead pay farmers cash. The additional cost will be limited to 700 billion rupees ($9.8 billion) annually after a full roll-
Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had budgeted 701 billion rupees for farm subsidies in the year ending March 31.

PM Modi inaugurates Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose museum at Red Fort

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Subhash Chandra Bose museum at the iconic Red Fort in New Delhi to mark the leader's 122nd birth anniversary. He also inaugurated the Yaad-e-Jallian Museum on the Jallianwala Bagh and World War I, the Museum on 1857- India's first war of Independence and Drishyakala-Museum on Indian Art within the Red Fort complex. The Museum on Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Indian National Army provides a detailed account of Subhash Chandra Bose and the history of Indian National Army.
- It also showcases various artefacts related to Subhash Chandra Bose and INA. The artefacts include wooden chair and sword used by Netaji, medals, badges, uniforms and other artefacts related to INA.

Ayush Minister Shripad Naik inaugurates 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019

- Minister of State for Ayush Shripad Naik inaugurated the 2nd World Integrated Medicine Forum 2019 in Panaji, Goa. The central government is committed to promoting all disciplines under Ayush including homoeopathy. Around 150 delegates from 21 countries are participating in the event.

10% quota in government jobs applicable from February

- Central government jobs and services which come up from February onwards will have to implement the 10% quota for economically weaker sections (EWS), the Union ministry of personnel, grievances and pensions has notified.
- An order passed by the ministry refers to an office memorandum of the social justice ministry, which mentions the Constitution (One Hundred and Third Amendment) Act 2019, that provides 10% reservation to the EWS category in jobs as well as educational institutions. Persons who are not covered under the existing scheme of reservations and whose family income is below Rs 8 lakh are identified as EWS for the benefit of reservation.

Lt Kasturi becomes 1st woman to lead all-men contingent on Republic-Day

- Lieutenant Bhavana Kasturi has become the first woman to lead an all-men Army contingent in Republic Day parade by leading the Indian Army Service Corps contingent.
- An all-women Assam Rifles contingent was also part of the parade for the first time.

I&B Ministry to increase advertisement rates by 11% to private TV channels

- Information and Broadcasting Ministry has decided to revise the advertisement rates offered by the Bureau of Outreach and Communication (BOC) to private TV channels.
- The revision would lead to an increase in rates of around 11 per cent over the rates of 2017 in respect of most of the private TV channels. It could be of higher percentage for some others, as per their reach and TV ratings. Differential rate structures for news and non-news channels will be offered, depending upon their overall reach in the country.

India’s 1st Geographical Indication Store opened in Goa

- Union Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu inaugurated India’s 1st Geographical Indication (GI) Store at Goa International Airport in Dabolim. The store is located on the first floor on Departure Terminal, and jointly set up by Airports Authority of India and The Cashew Export Promotional Council of India.
- Currently there are 270 GI registered products in the country. Products from the self-help groups, artisans and farmers’ produce will be also displayed on the airport at a concessional rate.
Western Railway provides segways to RPF personnel to enable stricter patrolling

- The Western Railway has provided segways, the two-wheeled, self-balancing and battery powered electric vehicles, to the Railway Protection Force (RPF) personnel deployed at major railway stations in Mumbai.
- The vehicle will help the RPF in keeping an eye on every nook and corner of the railway stations, specially on long platforms, this is the first of its kind initiative by the Indian Railways.

Train 18 named Vande Bharat Express

- India’s first indigenously built engineless semi high speed train, Train 18, has been named Vande Bharat Express.
- The train is set to run between Delhi and Varanasi at a maximum speed of 160 km/h. The 16 coach train, built in 18 months at a cost of Rs 97 crore by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, is regarded as a successor to the 30 year old Shatabdi Express.

India and China signed protocol for exports of Indian tobacco leaves to China

- India and China have signed the protocol for exports of Indian tobacco leaves to China. The protocol was signed during the recent visit of Commerce Secretary, Dr. Anup Wadhawan to Beijing.
- Dr. Wadhawan also had bilateral meeting with Vice Minister of General Administration of China Customs, Zhang Jiwen for examining market access and quarantine issues for India’s agriculture and allied products.

National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) to organize the first edition of Night at the Museum

- National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), New Delhi organized the first edition of Night at the Museum. The event organised in collaboration with the India Art Fair from 8:00 PM to 11:00 PM. Highlight objects include works of art of Rabindranath Tagore, Amrita Sher-Gil, Raja Ravi Verma, Nandalal Bose and Jamini Roy. NGMA aims to conduct Night at the Museum as a regular activity and will organise it on the last working day of every month.

ICAR launched National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP)

- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) launched National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP) to attract talent and strengthen higher agricultural education in the country. It is inaugurated at the fourth Convention of 2-day “Agrivision-2019” organized by Vidyarthi Kalyan Nyas in Pusa, New Delhi.
- ICAR has launched Rs 1100 crore ambitious National Agricultural Higher Education Project (NAHEP), this project will be funded by the World Bank and the Indian Government on a 50:50 basis. In addition, a four year degree in Agriculture, Horticulture, Fisheries and Forestry has been declared a professional degree.
- Rajendra Agriculture University has been upgraded as Dr. Rajendra Prasad Central Agricultural University to strengthen the government’s effort to bring green revolution in Eastern India including North East.
- Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) has been set up in Barhi, Jharkhand on the lines of IARI, Pusa New Delhi, and another IARI is being set up in Assam.
- To promote the participation of students in agricultural business, Student READY (Rural Entrepreneurship Awareness Development Yojana) scheme is being run, under which practical experience of agriculture and entrepreneurship is provided to undergraduate students.

Government renamed DIPP as Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

- The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) has been renamed as the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade with a mandate to deal with matters related to start-ups, facilitating ease of doing business among others. The newly named department under the Ministry of
Commerce and Industry will look into matters related to promotion of internal trade, including retail trade,
welfare of traders and their employees. The President gave his nod to bring internal trade matters under the
Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade

PM Modi dedicated National Salt Satyagraha Memorial to the nation
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the National Salt Satyagraha memorial monument to recall
the historic Dandi Yatra on Mahatma Gandhi’s death anniversary. Mahatma Gandhi began the march
from Ahmedabad to Dandi near Surat on March 12th 1930 against the ban on Indians producing or selling
salt. The memorial has statues of Mahatma Gandhi and 80 Satyagrahis who had marched with him during
the historic Dandi Salt March. The cost of Memorial is Rs. 110 Crores.

Horticulture production to hit record 315 MT this year
- The agriculture ministry released the final estimates for 2017-18 and the first estimates for 2018-19 of area
and production of horticulture crops. As per the final estimates of 2017-18, horticulture production stood at
record 311.7 MT, which is 3.7 per cent higher than the previous year and 10 per cent higher than the past
five years’ average production. The area under coverage rose to 25.87 million hectares from 25.43 million
hectares. The production of fruits is estimated at 97.35 MT, while that of vegetables at about 187.5 MT.

India's tourism sector registers 19% growth in 2018
- The country's tourism sector fetched 234 billion US Dollar revenue last year, registering a growth of
over 19%. This revenue was contributed by 87 per cent domestic and 13 per cent foreign tourists.
- According to the 2018 report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), India is ranked third in
the tourism sector

Department of post to soon set up its own insurance company
- Department of post will soon set up its own insurance company which will deal with its business of
two products Postal life insurance and Rural Postal Life Insurance. Union Minister of state for
Communications Manoj Sinha stated that the proposal has been moved to Cabinet
- Target to set up Passport Seva Kendra in all Lok Sabha constituencies will be achieved by end of February

Piyush Goyal launches the IEA’s 'The Future of Rail' report
- Minister of Railways & Coal, Shri Piyush Goyal launched the report “The Future of Rail” of International
Energy Agency (IEA). “The Future of Rail” the first-of-a-kind report analyses the current and future
importance of rail around the world through the perspective of its energy and environmental implications.
The report reviews the impact of existing plans and regulations on the future of rail and explores the
policies that could help to realise an enhanced future of the railways.

PM Modi dedicates 294 km long electrified railway lines in West Bengal, to the nation
- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated Railway electrification of 294-km long Andal-Sainthia-
Pakur-Malda and Khana-Sainthia sections in West Bengal. Electrification of this section will enable
ease of transportation of coal, stone chips and ballast to North and North East India in a seamless
manner. He also dedicated the twenty kilometre long Hijli- Narayangarh third line to the Nation

India-Monaco Business forum held in New Delhi
- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, addressed the India-Monaco
Business Forum in New Delhi. Bilateral trade between India and Monaco in 2017-18 was USD 3.01
million, and there is immense potential to scale up the bilateral trade between the two nations. Monaco is
ranked 106th among foreign direct investor in India (from April 2000 to June 2018) with USD 2.51 million
FDI equity inflow
India's steel production increased by over 14 million tonnes in 3 years

- The total steel production in the country has increased from 88.98 MT in 2014-15 to 103.13 MT in 2017-18. The Government has notified the National Steel Policy, 2017 and the Policy for Providing Preference to Domestically Manufactured Iron and Steel (DMI&SP) in Government procurement. According to World Steel Association (worldsteel) India has jumped ahead of Japan to become world's second largest steel producing country in the world. Crude steel production of India in 2018 stood at 106.5 MT, an increase of 4.9 percent from 101.5 MT in 2017.

NBHC released kharif crop estimates for the year 2018-19

- National Bulk Handling Corporation (NBHC) has released kharif crop estimation for the year 2018-19 which shows that basmati rice production is expected to decline by 9.24% to 5.18 million metric tonne. The pulses production is projected to drop marginally to 9.10 million tonne from 9.35 million tonne last year. Total oilseeds production is estimated to be 19.87 million metric tonne which is 5.36 % lower than last year's of 21 million metric tonne.

NGT imposed Rs. 25 lakh fine on U.P. government

- The National Green Tribunal imposed a cost of Rs. 25 lakh on the Uttar Pradesh government for failing to stop dumping of sewage and untreated water in the Upper Ganga Canal.
- A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the urban development ministry to deposit a performance guarantee of Rs. 35 lakh.

Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation launched Shehri Samridhi Utsav

- Shehri Samridhi Utsav, an initiative of Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA),launched with an aims to extend the outreach of Deendayal Antyodaya Mission – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM), to the most vulnerable, showcase its initiatives and facilitate access of Self-Help Group (SHG) members to the other government schemes. Through Shehri Samridhi Utsav, SHG members across cities are being linked to national government schemes like Swachh Bharat Mission, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana and National Nutrition Mission. A major highlight of Shehri Samridhi Utsav is the National Exhibition cum sale of SHG products and National Street Food Festival being organized in New Delhi.

India and Germany join hands on water and waste management

- 3rd Indo-German Working Group for cooperation on water and waste management concluded in New Delhi.
- Indian delegation was led by Additional Secretary in the Environment Ministry Anil Kumar Jain while the German Delegation was headed by Director-General for Water Management and Resource Conservation, Dr. Regina Dube.

Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen launched 'Darwaza Band - Part 2' campaign in Mumbai

- The Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) launched the 'Darwaza Band -Part 2' campaign for sustainability of the Open Defecation Free (ODF) status of villages across the country. The campaign was launched by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in Mumbai in the presence of brand ambassador Amitabh Bachchan.
- The 'Darwaza Band- Part 2' campaign is supported by the World Bank. 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.
- The objectives of Swachh Bharat include eliminating open defecation through the construction of household-owned and community-owned toilets, the mission aims to achieve an "open-defecation free"
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).

- Swachh Bharat Abhiyan ("gramin" or 'rural'), operates under the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation
- Swachh Bharat Abhiyan ('urban'), operates under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

**HRD Ministry launched Operation Digital Board**

- The Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry launched Operation Digital Board on the lines of Operation Blackboard to provide better digital education in schools. Under the initiative, 7 lakh classrooms of 9th, 10th and 11th standards and 2 lakh classrooms of colleges and Universities will be equipped with digital boards in the next three years. It aims to converting a classroom into a digital class room and in addition to availability of e-resources at any time and at any place to students

**PM Modi dedicates 'National War Memorial' to nation**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated the National War Memorial near India Gate in New Delhi.
- The memorial honour soldiers who have laid down their lives in the service for the country since Independence.
- More than 25,000 soldiers of the Indian Armed Forces have made the supreme sacrifice to defend the country's sovereignty and integrity.

**Union Minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey launches national programme to eliminate viral hepatitis**

- Union minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey launched a national programme aimed at eliminating viral hepatitis, recognized as an important public health problem.
- The minister of state for health launched the National Action Plan - Viral Hepatitis at Mumbai in presence of Amitabh Bachchan, the goodwill ambassador for hepatitis, WHO South-East Asia Region.

**Government launched online portal Rail Drishti Dashboard**

- Railway Minister Piyush Goyal launched Rail Drishti Dashboard in New Delhi
- Rail Drishti Dashboard, an online portal to keep people informed about ongoing Railway works

**Rajnath Singh inaugurated Waste to Wonder Park in Delhi**

- The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated “Waste to Wonder” Park in Delhi. The park has been built by South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC). It is the first-of-its-kind tourist attraction in the world, with the replicas of the Taj Mahal, the Great Pyramid of Giza, Eiffel Tower, Leaning Tower of Pisa, Christ the Redeemer statue of Rio de Janeiro, Rome's Colosseum, and the Statue of Liberty which were opened for the public at the inauguration. The SDMC has installed solar trees and rooftop panels that will generate 50 KW powers to lighten the park

**PM unveiled world’s largest Bhagwad Gita at ISKCON Temple**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled world's largest Bhagwad Gita prepared by ISKCON Temple devotees in New Delhi on the occasion of Gita Aradhana Mahotsav. Measuring over 2.8 meters and weighing more than 800 kilogram. The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) is a worldwide confederation of more than 400 temples and runs 100 vegetarian restaurants and a wide variety of community serving projects.

**Andhra Pradesh gets new railway zone called ‘South Coast Railway’ in Vishakhapatnam**

- Indian Railways will be making a new zone in Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh named ‘South Coast Railway’, Railway Minister Piyush Goyal. The present divisions, including Guntakal, Guntur and Vijaywada and Waltair division will be split into two and will have the headquarter at South Coast Railway.
- Goyal added that a part of the Waltair division will be converted into a new division with its headquarter at Rayagada, Odisha.
5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meet held in Delhi
- 5th India-Bangladesh Joint Consultative Committee Meet held in Delhi.
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh Dr. A. K. Abdul Momen co-chaired the meeting. The last Joint Consultative Committee Meeting between the two countries was held in October 2017 at Dhaka. The Foreign Affairs Minister of Bangladesh arrived in New Delhi on a four day visit to India. It is the first high-level visit from Bangladesh since Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's victory in the parliamentary elections in December last year.

Smriti Irani launched India Size project in Mumbai
- Union Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani launched the India Size project in Mumbai. A first-of-its-kind project in the history of the country. India Size aims to arrive at a standard Indian Size for the ready-to-wear clothing industry, on the lines of the standardized sizes available in countries such as the USA and the UK.
- India size project will benefit manufacturers, consumers and generate data which will help tap into the potential of the sector.

Health ministry notified eight medical equipment as 'drugs'
- To regulate medical and diagnostic devices in India, the health ministry has notified eight medical equipments including all implantable devices, as "drugs" under Section 3 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, with effect from April 1, 2020. The medical equipment include all implantable medical devices, CT scan, MRI equipment, defibrillators, dialysis machine, PET equipment, X-ray machine and bone marrow cell separator.

India and Norway launched initiative to combat Marine Pollution
- The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change signed a letter of Intent establishing the India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative together with the Norwegian ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Indian and Norwegian governments agreed to work more closely on oceans by signing a MoU and establishing the India-Norway Ocean Dialogue during the Norwegian Prime Minister’s visit to India in January.
- Norway and India will share experiences and competence, and collaborate on efforts to develop clean and healthy oceans, sustainable use of ocean resources and growth in the blue economy.

India’s First Aqua Mega Food Park commissioned in Andhra Pradesh
- Union Minister of Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal commissioned Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park at Tundurru Village in Bhimavaram Mandal, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. The park is promoted by Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park Pvt. Ltd. It will be the first Mega Aqua Food Park operationalised exclusively for fish and marine products processing in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The Mega Park has been set up in 57.81 acres at a cost of Rs 122.60 crore.

AYUSH Ministry launched e-AUSHADHI portal
- Minister of State (IC) for AYUSH, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik launched the e-AUSHADHI portal, for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs. This e-AUSHADHI portal is intended for increased transparency, improved information management facility, improved data usability and increased accountability.
- The Minister informed that timelines will be fixed for processing of application through this portal with SMS and e-mail status updates at each step of the process.

Government implemented new pension scheme Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PMSYM)
- Government implemented new pension scheme Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan (PMSYM).
- Under the scheme workers of the unorganised sector will receive a minimum assured pension of Rs. 3000 per month after attaining the age of 60 years. Around 42 crore workers are estimated to be engaged.
in the unorganized sector in the country. The workers whose monthly income is fifteen thousand rupees per month or less and belong to the entry age group of 18 to 40 years are eligible for the scheme

**Expert committee recommends Rs. 9,750 monthly national minimum wage**

- The 7-member expert panel headed by V V Giri National Labour Institute (VVGNLI) Fellow Anoop Satpathy submitted its report titled “Determining the Methodology for Fixation of the National Minimum Wage”.
- The expert committee recommended a uniform national minimum wage of Rs. 375 per day or Rs. 9,750 per month or region-wise minimum wages ranging from Rs. 8,892 - Rs. 11,622 per month for five regions, with supplementary house rent allowance of Rs. 1,430 per month for urban workers.
- This wage-level is irrespective of sectors, skills, occupations and rural-urban locations for a family comprising 3.6 consumption units. The Present is National Minimum Wage Rs. 4,576.

**Dera Baba Nanak land check post designated as immigration centre**

- The Centre designated Dera Baba Nanak land Check post in Gurdaspur district of Punjab as an authorised immigration checkpoint to exit and entry for visiting Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara in Pakistan.
- Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu laid the foundation stone of the Dera Baba Nanak-Kartarpur Sahib Corridor at an event at Mann village in Gurdaspur district. The Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara is located on the banks of the Ravi river.

**India's first fulldome 3D Digital theatre inaugurated in Kolkata**

- Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma inaugurated the India's first 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science City in Kolkata, West Bengal. This facility is the first of its kind in the country and having a 23 metre titled dome to offer a fully immersive experience to the visitors. It is fully funded by the Ministry of Culture at a cost of Rs 20 crore.
- The Science City is operated by the National Council of Science Museums under the Ministry of Culture.

**Rajnath Singh launched pan-India number 112 for women safety**

- Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi launched a range of citizen safety initiatives in New Delhi. It includes the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS), for women safety in 16 states and Union territories. The service has already been launched in Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland. Persons in distress can dial a pan-India number 112. Under this system, all the states have to set up a dedicated Emergency Response Centre (ERC).
- A citizen may Press power button on a smartphone thrice quickly to activate a panic call to ERC. In case of a feature phone, long press on number 5 or 9 on the phone keypad will activate the panic call. The ERCs are connected to District Command Centres and the Emergency Response Vehicles. An amount of over 321 crore rupees has been provided for this initiative through the Nirbhaya fund.

**Rajnath Singh inaugurated cyber crime fighting facility**

- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the national cyber forensic lab (NCFL) and the Delhi Police's cyber crime unit Cyber Prevention, Awareness & Detection Centre (CyPAD). Both the cybercrime fighting units are based in a complex at Dwarka, New Delhi. NCFL is part of the Union Home Ministry’s Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Center. CyPAD of Delhi Police deal with crypto-currency frauds and international tech-supported frauds.

**14th Agricultural Science Congress inaugurated in New Delhi**

- Union Minister for Agriculture and Animal Welfare Radha Mohan Singh inaugurated the 14th Agricultural Science Congress in New Delhi. A four-day event aims to doubling farmers’ income by 2022.
Theme of 14th Agricultural Science Congress is 'Innovations for Transformation'. The event being organised by the National Academy of Agricultural Science (NASS), Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) and Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI). The Congress, organised once every two years, About 2,000 delegates from 17 countries are expected to attend the event.

79th Indian History Congress to be held in Bhopal

The 79th Indian History Congress (IHC) will be held at Barkatullah University in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh from February 26. This session was earlier scheduled at Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) from December 28, but it was cancelled by the local hosts due to financial reason. This is the second time the IHC would be held in Madhya Pradesh, Earlier it was hosted in 2011. Over 1,000 delegates including prominent historians are expected to participate in the IHC in Bhopal. Indian History Congress was established in 1935 and this is the largest professional and academic body of Indian historians. It promotes and encourages scientific study of Indian history.

Commerce Minister Suresh Prabhu launched ‘SWAYATT’ on GeM in New Delhi

Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, launched SWAYATT in New Delhi.

SWAYATT is an initiative to promote Start-ups, women and youth advantage through e-transactions on Government e Marketplace (GeM). This will bring together the key stakeholders within the Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem to Government e-Marketplace the national procurement portal.

Textiles Minister Smriti Zubin Irani launched four projects in North East for the development of Silk Sector

Union Minister of Textiles, Smriti Zubin Irani, launched four projects in North East for the development of silk sector through video conference in New Delhi.

Smriti Irani inaugurated Muga silk seed production centre in Tura, Meghalaya, silk printing and processing unit in Agartala, Tripura. Eri spun silk mill in Sangaihat, Imphal. Development of sericulture in Mamit, Mizoram.

The Minister also inaugurated new office buildings of Weavers Service Centres (WSC) in Indore, Madhya Pradesh and Kannur, Kerala.

Saudi Arabia becomes 73rd nation to join international solar alliance

Saudi Arabia signed the framework agreement of the International Solar Alliance (ISA) becoming the 73rd country to join the India-led renewable energy organisation.

International Solar Alliance (ISA) was unveiled by PM Narendra Modi and former French President Francois Hollande in 2015.

PM Modi flags off world's first diesel to electric converted locomotive

Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the first ever diesel-to-electric converted locomotive at the Diesel Locomotive Works (DLW) in Varanasi. The 10,000HP freight locomotive has been converted from two units of old diesel locomotives of 2600HP each with indigenous technology.

The feat was achieved in record time with the help of engineers from Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO), Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW), and Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL).

The work on the project began on December 22, 2017 and from concept to execution of the conversion of the diesel locomotive to electric was carried out in just 69 days.

Former SC Judge Justice PC Ghose to be India's first Lokpal

Former Supreme Court judge Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose was recommended to be the first Lokpal or anti-corruption ombudsman of India. His name was finalised and recommended by the Selection Committee comprising Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra
Mahajan and eminent jurist Mukul Rohatgi. Justice Ghose is a member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) since June 2017

- He is a former judge of the Calcutta High Court and former Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court.

Cabinet approves 10% reservation for general category poor in J&K

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Amendment Order, 2019. Finance Minister Arun Jaitley stated that it will serve the purpose of application of relevant provision of the constitution as amended through the constitution (77th Amendment) act, 2019 for Jammu and Kashmir by issuing the constitution Amendment order.
- This will pave the way for giving the benefit of promotion in service to the SCs, STs and also extend the reservation of up to 10 per cent for the economically weaker section in educational institution and public employment in addition to the existing reservation in the state.
- The Cabinet approved Agra and Kanpur Metro Rail Projects. The Cabinet also approved the promulgation of an Ordinance to make amendments to the Aadhaar Act 2016, Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2005 and the Indian Telegraph Act 1885.

Government may offer 2.5 lakh subsidy on electric cars

- The government has proposed a subsidy of up to Rs. 2.5 lakh on around 60,000 electric cars in India, whereas hybrids may get Rs. 20,000 over the next three years.
- The subsidy calculation will be done on the basis of the battery capacity of the respective vehicles, including electric two-wheelers and buses. The scheme will reportedly come into effect by April.

IRCTC launched digital payment gateway, IRCTC iPay

- Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), has launched its own payment aggregator system called "IRCTC iPay". With the launch of IRCTC iPay, passengers will not need any third-party platforms as all payment options like credit card, debit card, UPI – Unified Payment Interface, International Card are integrated into the platform. The back-end support will be provided by Delhi based MMAD communications, which is IRCTC's technology partner.

PM flags off Tejas Express, fastest train between Chennai & Madurai

- PM Narendra Modi flagged off the Madurai-Chennai Egmore Tejas Express, the fastest train running between the two cities, via video conferencing from Kanyakumari. The fully air-conditioned train comprises one executive chair car coach with 56 seats and 12 chair car coaches with 78 seats each. The train's features include infotainment system, attendant call button and smart windows.

PM launched ‘ONE NATION ONE CARD’ for all modes of travel

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the indigenously-developed National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) to enable people to pay multiple kinds of transport charges, including metro services and toll tax, across the country. Dubbed as ‘One Nation One Card’, the inter-operable transport card would allow the holders to pay for their bus travel, toll taxes, parking charges, retail shopping and even withdraw money.
- The ‘One Nation One Card’ card runs on RuPay card can be used for travelling in metros in any part of the country.

Government brings TMA scheme to boost agriculture exports of farm commodities

- The government introduced a Transport and Marketing Assistance (TMA) scheme for providing financial assistance for transport and marketing of agriculture products with a view to boosting export of farm commodities to certain countries in Europe and North America. Under the TMA scheme, the government
would reimburse a certain portion of freight charges and provide assistance for marketing of agricultural produce.

- The scheme covers freight and marketing assistance for export by air as well as by sea (both normal and refrigerated cargo). The scheme would be applicable for a period as specified from time to time. Presently, it would be available for exports effected from March 1 this year to March 2020.

**Mahesh Sharma Inaugurated ‘Azaadi Ke Diwane’ Museum at Red Fort in Delhi**

- The Minister of State for Culture (Independent charge) and Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Dr. Mahesh Sharma inaugurated ‘AzaadikeDiwane’ museum at Red Fort, New Delhi which is created by Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). The museum is the fifth in a series of recently inaugurated ones - the others being the Subhash Chandra Bose and INA museum, the Yaad-e-Jallian museum, the Museum on 1857 (on the country’s first war of Independence) the Drishyakala (a museum on Indian Art)
- The ‘AzaadikeDiwane’ museum talks about the sacrifices of India’s freedom fighters.

**Bharat Electronics launched SWAGAT- Automatic Fare Collection Gating System**

- Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL), a defence public sector undertaking, presented SWAGAT – the Automatic Fare Collection Gating System. PM Narendra Modi launched the system as part of the inaugural of Phase-I of the Ahmedabad Metro. SWAGAT is an initiative steered by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in collaboration with BEL and Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC) with the support of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI) and State Bank of India (SBI).
- SWAGAT is compliant with the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) ecosystem for hassle-free commute across India. The Automatic Fare Collection System has been designed and developed by CDAC, a R&D organization of the Ministry of Electronics & IT.

**Government has transferred first instalment of Rs. 2000 each to over two crore farmers so far under PM-Kisan scheme**

- The Centre has transferred the first instalment of two thousand rupees each to over two crore farmers so far under the ambitious Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-Kisan) scheme. In the Interim Budget 2019-20, the central government had announced the PM-Kisan scheme under which 6,000 rupees per year will be given in three instalments to 12 crore small and marginal farmers.
- Last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi officially launched the scheme in Uttar Pradesh by transferring the first tranche amount to over one crore farmers.

**NGT imposed Rs. 500 crore fine on Volkswagen for cheating emission tests**

- The National Green Tribunal slapped a fine of 500 Crore rupees on German auto major Volkswagen for damaging the environment using cheat device in its diesel cars in India. A bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel directed the carmaker to deposit the amount within two months.
- The tribunal enhanced the compensation amount of Rs. 171.34 crore, which was recommended by a NGT-appointed committee, as a means of "creating deterrence"

**Government to issue Rs. 20 coin for the first time**

- The Finance Ministry has announced the rollout of a new Rs. 20 coin shaped like a "dodecagon", a 12-edged polygon.
- The new coin will be heavier than all the existing coins at 8.54 grams. The coin will be two-toned with a 27-mm diameter, similar to Rs 10 coin. The outer ring will be 65% copper, 15% zinc and 20% nickel and the inner disc will be 75% copper, 20% zinc and 5% nickel.
- The obverse side of the coin will bear Lion Capital of Ashoka Pillar, on the reverse of the coin, the rupee symbol will be shown above the denominational value and there will be grains designed on the left
periphery of the coin to depict the country's agricultural dominance. The government is also releasing the new series of prototypes of coins of Re 1, Rs 2, Rs 5 and Rs 10. A new series of circulation coins, which are visually challenged friendly.

**MOHUA Hardeep Puri launched Indian Urban Observatory and Video wall at New Delhi**

- Hardeep S Puri, Minister of State (I/C) for Housing and Urban Affairs has launched a state-of-the-art India Urban Observatory at Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation in New Delhi. He also inaugurated the Video Wall in New Delhi.
- India Urban Observatory – It is a system to collect and analyze data from cities, both from real-time and archival sources. The Observatory will help in getting reliable, up-to-date information on a meaningful set of indicators over various domains such as transport, health, environment, water, finance, etc and will assist in developing best practices, future strategies and policy interventions as and when required.
- The Video Wall will display the Insights Gained from India Urban Observatory and Various Missions/Offices Aiming To Proactively Engage with Citizens with an aim of Spreading Awareness

**United States to set up six nuclear power plants in India**

- India and the United States have committed to strengthen bilateral security and civil nuclear cooperation, including the establishment of six US nuclear power plants in India. This commitment was made at the 9th round of the India-US Strategic Security Dialogue held in Washington DC.
- The two delegations reaffirmed their commitment to work together to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and to deny access to such weapons by terrorists and non-state actors.
- The Indian delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale, while the US delegation was led by Andrea Thompson, Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security.

**New Delhi, Islamabad agree to work on operationalizing Kartapur corridor**

- India and Pakistan have agreed to work expeditiously on operationalizing the Kartapur corridor.
- The corridor will facilitate Indian pilgrims to visit the holy shrine of Gurdwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur in Pakistan. The agreement was reached during the first meeting between the representatives of the two countries held at Attari in Punjab. The Indian delegation was led by Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, S C L Das while Pakistan delegation was led by Director General for South Asia and SAARC Dr. Mohammad Faisal.

**12 States in India have banned Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)**

- The Central Drug Regulator has directed all drug controllers in states and Union territories to not allow the manufacture, sale, import and advertisement of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems, including e-cigarettes and flavoured hookah. Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS), including e-cigarettes, heat-not-burn devices, vape, e-sheesha, e-nicotine flavoured hookah, and the like products have not yet been approved under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940. The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology proposed an amendment to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines) Rules 2018 to ban the advertisement of e-cigarettes.
- This commitment is to protect the health of children, adolescents and women of reproductive age, 36 countries around the world and 12 states in India have banned the sale of e-cigarettes due to its health harms.
- In India, Punjab, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Kerala, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Jharkhand have taken steps to ban the use of ENDS.
President Kovind Inaugurates Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

- The President of India Shri Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated FINE 2019, the Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. On the occasion, President Kovind also presented the 10th Biennial National Grassroots Innovation Awards.

- The four day event is being hosted outside Rashtrapati Bhavan for the first time since its establishment in 2000, with the assistance of Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.

- The Festival is unique initiative of the Office of the President of India to recognize, respect and reward grassroots creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship and provides a platform for the innovators to build linkages with potential stakeholders and get support in improving their prospects in coming years for the larger social good.

GI tag for Coorg Arabica Coffee, four other variety of coffee

- The Geographical Indications Registry has granted the Geographical Indication (GI) tag to Coorg Arabica Coffee, Wayanad Robusta Coffee, Chikmagalur Arabica Coffee, Araku Valley Arabica Coffee and Bababudangiris Arabica Coffee. Coorg Arabica Coffee is grown specifically in Kodagu district in Karnataka.

- The Kodagu district has unique biotic and abiotic conditions which provide uniqueness to the Coffee grown in it. The terrain provided for coffee by the broader landscape provides it a unique aroma and flavour notes to the coffee when roasted. Wayanad Robusta Coffee, the flora of Wayanad is characteristic of the Western Ghats and the plantation crops grown in the cool climate.

- Chikmagalur Arabica Coffee and Bababudangiris Arabica Coffee are both grown in Chikmagalur district, Karnataka which is also known as the birthplace of coffee in the country. Araku Valley Arabica Coffee, grown around Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh and Koraput district in Odisha, is light to medium in strength, has a pleasant acidity with a citrus note of grape fruit and a mild jaggery-like sweetness.

India Post releases ‘Special Stamp Cover on Ice Stupas’

- Department of Post (DoP) under Ministry of Communication & Technology has released Special Stamp on Ice Stupa (Artificial Glacier) in Leh, Jammu and Kashmir.

- This special stamp is aimed at creating awareness about depleting glaciers and its effect on the ecology around the Himalayas.

RSDC launches ‘Project Saamrath’

- The Rubber Skill Development Council (RSDC) has launched Project Saamrath, which is aimed at skilling, upskilling and reskilling 10 lakh personnel involved in the rubber sector, by 2020. The training is being provided under the Recognition of Prior Learning Scheme of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana across natural rubber plantations, tyre services and rubber manufacturing.

- The training is provided for jobs such as Latex Harvest Technician (tapper), Rubber Nursery General Worker, Rubber Processing Technician—Rubber Sheeting and General Worker Rubber Plantation, among others.

India achieves 84 % reduction in TB deaths among HIV patients: UN

- India has achieved an 84 per cent reduction in tuberculosis deaths among people living with HIV by 2017.

- According to the Joint United Nations Programme on the UNAIDS, it is the highest recorded decline among over 20 nations and it is also three years ahead of the 2020 deadline. UNAIDS is urging countries to step up action to meet the 2020 target of reducing TB deaths among people living with HIV by 75 per cent, as outlined in the 2016 United Nations Political Declaration on Ending AIDS.
India achieved the highest reduction at 84 per cent, followed by Eritrea (83 per cent, Djibouti (78 per cent) and Malawi (78 per cent)

**India’s Poverty Declines from 55% to 28% as per UNDP report**
- According to the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) 2018, India drastically reduced its poverty rate from 55 percent to 28 percent between 2005-06 and 2015-16. The report was developed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).
- India still had 364 million poor in 2015-16, the largest for any country, although it is down from 635 million in 2005-06. Globally, the poverty rate was found to be 23%. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia regions accounted together for 83% (more than 1.1 billion) of all multidimensionally poor people in the world.

**Government declares next census of India in 2021**
- The Home Ministry announced that the next census of India will be carried out in 2021 with March 1 of that year.
- The decision has been taken by the central government under the powers conferred by section 3 of the Census Act, 1948 (37 of 1948). For Jammu and Kashmir and snowbound non-synchronous areas of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, the reference date shall be the first day of October, 2020.
- India's last census was carried out in 2011 when the country's population stood at 121 crore. The Census of India 2011 represents the 15th such operation (since 1872) and the seventh after Independence.

**Government launched Blockchain Powered E-Marketplace for Coffee sellers**
- The Commerce Ministry launched a blockchain-based coffee e-marketplace in New Delhi.
- India has become the first country in the world to have a blockchain-based marketplace app for coffee trading launched by the Coffee Board of India and developed by Eka Software.
- The platform aims to "premium-ise" coffee, add "bean-to-cup traceability" and cut the role of middlemen.
- Around 20 coffee farmers, exporters, roasters, importers and retailers are already registered on the platform.

**Environmental Ministry forms panel for effective implementation of NCAP**
- The Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MOEFCC) announced that the committee will be under the chairmanship of its Secretary, C K Mishra, and will have one chief secretary each from over 20 states and union territories, including Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttar Pradesh, as its members.
- In its endeavour to implement the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), launched to tackle the air pollution menace in the country, the Centre has constituted a steering committee.
- The committee will provide overall guidance and directions for effective implementation of the NCAP for each financial year

**CRPF celebrating its 54th Valour Day**
- Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) is celebrating its 54th Valour Day on April 9th.
- On this day in 1965 a small contingent of 2nd Battalion of CRPF, successfully fought and repulsed an attack by a Pakistani Brigade on Sardar Post in the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. They eliminated 34 Pakistani soldiers and captured four soldiers alive.

**Pan-Aadhaar linking deadline extended by 6 months**
- The CBDT extended the deadline to link PAN with Aadhaar by six months from March 31 to September 30, 2019.
- However, it'll be mandatory to quote and link Aadhaar while filing income tax return from April 1, 2019 unless specifically exempted.
• This is the sixth time the government has extended the deadline for individuals to link their Permanent Account Number (PAN) to Aadhaar.

Government to set up Multi Disciplinary Terror Monitoring Group for J&K
• The government set up a multi-disciplinary terror monitoring group (TMG) to ensure synergised and concerted action against terror financing and other terror-related activities in Jammu & Kashmir.
• The multi-disciplinary terror monitoring group will have representatives from the Jammu and Kashmir Police, Intelligence Bureau, CBI, NIA, and Income Tax Department. The body will take coordinated action in all registered cases relating to terror and terror financing and bring them to logical conclusion.
• It will also investigate the network of various channels being used to fund terror and terror-related activities and take coordinated action to stop flow of such funds. The Terror Monitoring Group will meet on weekly basis and submit their action taken report regularly.

WhatsApp launched tip line to curb fake news
• WhatsApp has launched a tip line for Indians to submit rumors and uncertain information to combat false news in India during the national election.
• Developed in collaboration with India-based media skill training startup PROTO, the tip line feature will help create a database of rumors to study misinformation during elections as part of a research project commissioned and assisted by WhatsApp.

‘Experimental learning’ to be punchline for CBSE in 2019-20
• The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has come up with a new idea in order to replace rote learning with practical learning. The idea is to have a unique punchline every year by CBSE. This year, the punchline that CBSE will be using is ‘experimental learning’. This has been confirmed by the CBSE secretary Anurag Tripathi.
• CBSE has also launched a new App called ‘Shiksha Vani’ for disseminating the information to all its stakeholders. The mobile App is available for download only on the android platform as of now.

NGT monitoring committee to prepare plan for polluted rivers
• The Nation Green Tribunal (NGT) bench headed by Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel, has formed a Central Monitoring Committee that will prepare and implement a national plan to make over 350 river stretches across the country pollution free.
• The committee would comprise a representative of NITI Aayog; Secretaries of Ministry of Water Resources, Ministry of Urban Development and Ministry of Environment; Director General of National Mission for Clean Ganga and Chairman of Central Pollution Control Board.
• The NGT has directed the Central Monitoring Committee to give its report by July 31, while the first meeting of the Committee may be held by June 30.

India becomes YouTube’s largest and fastest growing market
• India has become YouTube’s largest and fastest growing market with 265 million Indians watching the video-sharing website every month. In the last year, YouTube’s consumption on mobile has increased to 85%, with 60% of the watch time coming from outside the six largest metros in India.
• Today, YouTube creators have become effective storytellers, with more than 1,200 Indian creators crossing the million subscriber-milestones, compared to five years ago, when there were only two creators.

Baisakhi harvest festival
• The festival of harvest Baisakhi is being celebrated with traditional enthusiasm in the northern part of the country. Baisakhi is celebrated with much fanfare in Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh.
• Traditional folk dances are performed on this day. Baisakhi also commemorates the formation of Khalsa Panth by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699.
128th Birth Anniversary of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar
- India celebrated Ambedkar Jayanti on April 14, 2019, to commemorate the 128th birth anniversary of the architect of the Indian Constitution, Dr BR Ambedkar. Often called as Babasaheb, he was born on 14 April 1891.
- He was independent India’s first law and justice minister as well as a founding father of the Republic of India. Ambedkar was posthumously conferred with the Bharat Ratna, India’s highest civilian award, in 1990.

Vice President releases postage stamp, Rs. 100 coin to commemorate 100 years of Jallianwala Bagh massacre
- Commemorating the 100 years of Jallianwala Bagh massacre, Vice-President of India M Venkaiah Naidu released the commemorative postage stamp at the Jallianwala Bagh memorial. The Vice-President also released coins of Rs 100 with ‘Centenary of Jallianwala Bagh Massacre’ written on it and the memorial drawn on it.
- The postage stamp also bears the image of the Jallianwala Bagh memorial and one of the stamps is dedicated to the martyrs who lost their lives in the massacre.
- It took place on 13 April, 1919 at Amritsar and is also known as Amritsar massacre. On this day, British troops under the Command of Gen Dyer fired on a large crowd of unarmed Indians in Amritsar in Punjab of India. Several hundred peoples were killed and many hundreds were wounded.

CBDT sets June 30 deadline to dispose of demonetisation cases
- Tax authorities have set a deadline of June 30 to clear up all demonetisation-related cases.
- In its interim action plan for the first quarter of 2019-20, the Central Board of Direct Tax (CBDT) has instructed its officials to dispose of all cases related to demonetisation where assessment is required to be framed.

Finance Ministry ratifies 8.65% interest on EPF for 2018-19
- The Finance Ministry has approved 8.65 per cent rate of interest on Employees’ Provident Fund (EPF) for 2018-19 as decided by retirement fund body EPFO, benefitting more than 6 crore formal sector workers.
- The Department of Financial Services (DFS), a wing of Finance Ministry, has given its concurrence to Employees Provident Fund Organisation's (EPFO) decision to provide 8.65 per cent rate of interest for 2018-19 to its subscribers.
- The EPFO had provided a five-year low interest rate of 8.55 per cent to its subscribers for 2017-18.

ICMR launches 'MERA India' to eliminate malaria from India by 2030
- The Indian Council of Medical Research has launched the 'Malaria Elimination Research Alliance (MERA) India' - a congregation of partners working on malaria control - in order to prioritise, plan and scale up research to eliminate the disease from India by 2030.
- The National Vector Borne Diseases Control Program (NVBDCP) of India has developed a comprehensive framework to achieve the overarching vision of "Malaria free India by 2030".

Government hikes customs duty on wheat to 40%
- The government has hiked the customs duty on wheat to 40 percent from 30 percent to curb imports and protect the domestic industry.
- The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has hiked the basic customs duty (BCD) on wheat to 40 percent.In May last year, the government had hiked BCD on wheat to 30 percent from 20 percent.
- The country's wheat production this season might cross 100 million tonnes, an all-time high. The output stood at record 99.70 million tonnes in the 2017-18 crop year (July-June).
Important International News

The U.S. and Israel Quit the U.N.'s Cultural Agency UNESCO
• The United States and Israel officially quit the U.N.’s educational, scientific and cultural agency,
• UNESCO is best known for its work to preserve heritage, including maintaining a list of World Heritage sites, and programmes to promote education in developing countries. Before The US has pulled out of UNESCO in 1984 because it viewed the agency as mismanaged, corrupt, and used to advance Soviet interests. The US rejoined in 2003.

China Building "Most Advanced" Naval Warships for Pakistan
• China is building the first of four ‘most advanced’ naval frigates for Pakistan as part of a major bilateral arms deal to ensure ‘balance of power’ in the Indian Ocean. The warship will be capable of anti-submarine and air-defence operations. The ships are of the Type 054AP class, meaning that it is based on the Type 054A of the People’s Liberation Army Navy (PLAN).

Tropical Storm Usman hits Philippines
• Storm Usman hit the Bicol region in Manila
• The tropical depression, locally named Usman, brought heavy rains, causing catastrophic flooding and triggering deadly landslides.

Trump Signed Asia Reassurance Initiative Act into Law
• U.S. President Donald J. Trump signed into law the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA), which passed the U.S. Senate earlier in December. The act establishes a multifaceted U.S. strategy to increase U.S. security, economic interests, and values in the Indo-Pacific region. Specifically, the ARIA will authorize $1.5 billion in spending for a range of U.S. programs in East and Southeast Asia and develop a long-term strategic vision and a comprehensive, multifaceted, and principled United States policy for the Indo-Pacific region, and for other purposes.

Guatemala to withdraw from UN backed anti corruption commission
• Guatemala was withdrawing from a United Nations backed anti corruption commission and giving its prosecutors a day to leave the country. President Jimmy Morales accused the International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, commonly known as CICIG, of polarising the country and putting its security at risk. The International Commission Against Impunity in Guatemala, or CICIG, was established over a decade ago with the authority to conduct independent investigations and work with the country's prosecutors.

First ever India-Central Asia Dialogue to be held in Uzbekistan
• The first India-Central Asia Dialogue will be held in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on January 12 and 13. The Dialogue will be co-chaired by External Affairs Minister (EAM) Sushma Swaraj and the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Abdulaziz Kamilov.
• India-Central Asia Dialogue, with the participation of Afghanistan, is expected to strengthen India's engagement, including political, economic, development partnership and cultural, with all the Central Asian countries and take it to a new level.

US launched new innovation initiative at Raisina Dialogue 2019
• The United States Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) launched a new innovation initiative at the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi. The initiative, titled "Fair Value for Innovation”,
• That will examine economic underpinnings that would enable breakthrough innovation, and explore how policymakers can harness innovation capital in India and around the globe through research, advocacy, partnerships, and programs. The Raisina Dialogue is India's most influential conference on geopolitics and
geo economics, convened by the Observer Research Foundation and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in New Delhi.

Japan launches satellite for world's 1st artificial meteor shower

- Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency has launched Tokyo-based startup Star-ALE's mini-satellite aimed to deliver the world's first artificial meteor shower.
- The satellite carries 400 tiny balls, which the startup says will be enough for 20-30 events, that will glow as they rush down the atmosphere on being released. ALE plans to deliver its first show in Hiroshima in early 2020.

Government signs agreements for Development Assistance Loans of Rs 3420 crore with JICA

- Japan will give a loan of Rs. 3,420 crore to India for the construction of the Chennai Peripheral Ring Road (Phase 1) and for Japan-India cooperative actions towards Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in India.
- The programme to promote SDGs in India focusses especially on social development.
- The loan agreements were signed between the Government of India and Japan International Cooperation Agency.

Nepal's central bank bans use of Indian currency notes

- Nepal's central bank has banned the use of Indian currency notes of Rs 2,000, Rs 500 and Rs 200 denominations.
- Under the new regulation issued, Nepali citizens cannot carry these denominations to countries other than India.
- Similarly, Nepalis are also not allowed to bring such notes from other countries. Indian notes of 100 or below, however, are allowed for trading and conversion.
- On December 13, the Nepal Cabinet had decided to publish the notification in the Nepal Gazette not to allow people to carry Indian currency notes above 100 denominations in Nepal.

Rio de Janeiro will be World Capital of Architecture for 2020: UNESCO

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has announced that the Brazilian city of Rio de Janeiro will be the World Capital of Architecture for 2020.
- Having defeated Paris and Melbourne, Rio will be the first city to receive the title under a program launched together by UNESCO and the International Union of Architects (UIA) in November last year.
- The city will host the World Congress of UIA, in July 2020, an event that occurs every three years.
- According to UNESCO, the World Capital of Architecture is intended to become an international forum for debates about pressing global challenges from the perspectives of culture, cultural heritage, urban planning and architecture.

Israel, US successfully test ballistic missile interceptors

The Israel and US countries have successfully tested ballistic missile interceptors deployed at Israeli airbases. The tests came a day after the latest deadly exchange of fire between Israel and Iranian forces operating in Syria. The Arrow 3 interceptor system, designed to shoot down missiles above the atmosphere, was deployed at air force bases across Israel two years ago.

Saudi Arabia builds its 1st ballistic missile factory
• Saudi Arabia, which does not currently possess nuclear weapons, has built its first-known ballistic missile factory.
• Satellite images reviewed by the experts appeared to show a rocket-engine production and test facility. The factory is reportedly in the same location as the al-Watah missile base which first became public in 2013.

Pakistan government declared sugarcane juice as the "national drink" of the country
• Government of Pakistan has declared sugarcane juice as the nation juice of Pakistan
• The announcement came after the government conducted a Twitter poll where people were asked to decide on the country’s national drink with two other options orange and carrot besides sugarcane.

Dubai airport retains its position as world's busiest airport in 2018
• Dubai International Airport has retained its position as the world's busiest airport for the fifth consecutive year in a row in 2018. Indian travellers emerging as the largest source of traffic for the airport, accounting for more than 12.2 million travellers. Most of them coming from the Indian cities of Mumbai, Delhi and Cochin. The annual customer tally at Dubai’s main transit hub increased by 1 per cent to 89.1 million last year from 88.2 million in 2017
• The number of flights fell 0.3 per cent to 408,251 during 2018 while the average number of passengers grew slightly by 1.3 per cent to 226 people per plane

US imposed sanctions on Venezuela’s state owned oil group
• The Trump administration imposed sweeping sanctions on Venezuelan state owned oil firm PDVSA
• Aimed at severely curbing the OPEC member’s crude exports to the United States and at pressuring socialist President Nicolas Maduro to step down

Syria signed long-term economic cooperation deal with Iran
• Syria has signed a long-term economic cooperation deal with Iran. The new agreement covers the industrial, agricultural, service, infrastructure and energy sectors among others
• Syria government also reached an agreement with Iran on the banking sector as well as establishing an electricity generating station in the coastal city of Latakia

Suman Kumari becomes first Hindu woman judge of Pakistan
• Suman Kumari has become the first Hindu woman in Pakistan to be appointed as a civil judge. She passed her LLB examination from Hyderabad and did her masters in law from Karachi's Szabist University
• Suman, who hails from Qambar-Shahdadkot, will serve in her native district
• Ratna Bhagwandas Chawla became the first Hindu woman elected to Pakistan's Senate in 2006
• Last year, Krishna Kumari Kohli, a Hindu woman became the first non Muslim female to win a women reserved seat in Senate of Pakistan

UAE and Saudi central banks launch common digital currency called 'Aber'
• The central banks of the UAE and Saudi Arabia have launched a common digital currency called "Aber" which will be used in financial settlements between the two countries through Blockchains and Distributed Ledgers technologies. The UAE central bank will establish an additional means for the central financial transfer systems of the two countries and enable banks to directly deal with each other in conducting financial remittances. The use of the currency will be restricted to a limited number of banks in each state
Italy, UN, launched Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development

- Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has opened a new centre, set up by the government in partnership with the UN to fight climate change and boost sustainable development in Africa. The new centre is located near the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in Rome.
- It will help develop and scale up innovative solutions for sustainable development, implement the goals of the UN’s 2030 Agenda and the landmark 2015 Paris Climate Agreement to end reliance on fossil fuels and cap global warming.

2019 is the International Year of the Periodic Table

- The United Nations announced 2019 as the International Year of the Periodic Table of the Chemical Elements to highlight its first publication in 1869. The periodic table was first designed by the Russian scientist Dmitri Ivanovich Mendeleev. The announcement by the United Nations will help to raise the profile of how chemistry can provide solutions to global challenges in agriculture, education, energy and health.

Sri Lanka celebrating its 71st Independence Day

- The National Day of Sri Lanka is celebrated on 4 February to commemorate its internal political independence from British rule on that day in 1948. The main function will be held at Galle face grounds in Colombo where President Maithripala Sirisena will be chief guest. Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih will attend the function as guest of honour. A total of 545 prisoners have been granted Presidential pardon to mark the occasion and will be released.

Thailand makes Siamese fighting fish national aquatic animal

- Tiny, testy and eye-catching with a colourful fin plumage, the Siamese fighting fish was named Thailand’s national aquatic animal.
- Thailand’s official national animal is the elephant.

Macedonia signs accord to join NATO

- Macedonia signed an accord to join NATO to become the 30th member of the US-led alliance.
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance between 29 North American and European countries.

Australian Rat becomes the first mammal to go extinct

- A small brown rat of northern Australia is the world’s first mammal to become extinct due to climate change. It was found only on a small sand island near the coast of Papua New Guinea.
- The Australian government has officially listed the Bramble Cay melomys as extinct.

International Paralympics Committee lifts Russia’s doping ban

- The International Paralympic Committee (IPC) lifts the ban on Russian Para athletes by March 15, under certain conditions. Russia has been barred from international competitions since August 2016. Russia had met 69 of its 70 reinstatement criteria.

Abu Dhabi included Hindi as third official court language

- Abu Dhabi has decided to include Hindi as the third official language used in its courts, alongside Arabic and English, as part of a move designed to improve access to justice.
- The Abu Dhabi Judicial Department (ADJD) stated that, it has extended the adoption of interactive forms of statement of claims filed before courts by including Hindi. The move was aimed to provide foreigners with better access to justice, without a language barrier.

Macedonia officially changed its name to North Macedonia

- The country formerly known as the Republic of Macedonia officially changed its name to the Republic of North Macedonia on paper ending a decades-long dispute that should pave the way for NATO membership.
Macedonia was internationally known as FYROM – the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedoniabecause Greece objected to the use of Macedonia, the name used for its own northern region. After declaring independence from Yugoslavia in 1991, the country chose the name Macedonia.

J.P. Morgan becomes first U.S. Bank with a Cryptocurrency
- JPMorgan Chase & Co, America’s largest bank, is launched its own Cryptocurrency
- The cryptocurrency, called “JPM Coin,” which has a fixed value redeemable for one U.S. dollar
- The bank operates a massive wholesale payment business, with more than $6 trillion in client funds transferred each day. The crypto-currency, which runs on blockchain technology, has been used successfully to move money between the bank and a client account.

Iran unveiled first semi-heavy missile-equipped submarine
- Iran’s President Hassan Rouhani has unveiled the first Iranian made semi-heavy submarine. The submarine named ‘Fateh’ (‘Conqueror’ in Persian), capable of being fitted with missile. The Fateh has subsurface-to-surface missiles with a range of about 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles), capable of reaching Israel and U.S. military bases in the region

'Festival of India' begins in Nepal
- A month-long 'Festival of India' began in Kathmandu to familiarise the new generation of the country about the similarities between the two countries.
- Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Rabindra Adhikari and Indian Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri jointly inaugurated the event. The festival, organised by the Indian Embassy and Swami Vivekananda Cultural Centre, is being held in Kathmandu and other major cities of Nepal from February 19th to March 21st.

Malaysia joins International Criminal Court
- Malaysia has become a member of the International Criminal Court. The ICC is the world's only permanent war crimes court and aims to prosecute the worst abuses when national courts are unable or unwilling. Malaysia becomes the 124th member of the court since its establishment in 2002.
- Burundi became the first country to quit the court in 2017

WHO unveils sweeping reforms in drive towards triple billion targets
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced the most wide-ranging reforms in the Organization's history to modernize and strengthen the institution to play its role more effectively and efficiently as the world's leading authority on public health.
- These include one billion more people benefiting from universal health coverage (UHC), one billion more people better protected from health emergencies and one billion more people enjoying better health and well-being.

Marshall Islands to launch digital currency
- The Marshall Islands is gearing to release a digital currency called ‘SOV’ this year, however, the launch date of the currency has not been decided. Neema, an Israel-based company, is partnering with the Marshall Islands government to develop the digital currency.
- The Marshall Islands, a tiny Pacific atoll nation with a population of just 55,000, passed legislation a year ago to develop digital currency as legal tender.

New visa agreement between Maldives & India comes into force
- The new visa agreement between Maldives and India has come into force. The agreement will provide a liberal visa policy for Maldivians seeking medical treatment as well as education and business opportunities in India. The visa deal will allow Maldivian businessmen and tourists to stay in India for 90
days without a visa. The agreement was reached during the visit of Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih to India last December.

- India has also extended 1.4 billion US dollars in the form of budgetary support to fulfill the socio-economic development programmes

**Tropical Cyclone Idai hits Mozambique**

- A category 3 Cyclone Idai, which is carrying heavy rains and winds of up to 177 km/h (106 mph), made landfall at the port city of Beira. The cyclone has now moved west towards Zimbabwe.
- Beira is the fourth-largest city in Mozambique and its port sits on the mouth of the Pungwe river, that runs to Zimbabwe. Mozambique has been struck by severe cyclones in the past, including Eline in 2000, when 350 people died and 650,000 were displaced across the wider region.

**High-Level Dialogue on Indo-Pacific cooperation held at Indonesia**

- The Government of Indonesia has hosted the first ever High-Level Dialogue on Indo-Pacific Cooperation (HLD-IPC) in its capital city Jakarta. The Dialogue themed "Towards a Peaceful, Prosperous, and Inclusive Region," was opened by Indonesia's Vice President Jusuf Kalla.
- The dialogue was divided into two sessions of general debate and thematic debate. The general debate was chaired by Marsudi, with all delegation heads conveying the position of their respective countries. The delegates participated in the thematic debate under three themes: sustainable development goals, maritime cooperation, and infrastructure and connectivity.

**India-funded educational campus inaugurated in Nepal**

- Educational campus constructed with Government of India's financial grant of 35.5 million Nepalese rupees was inaugurated in Nepal.
- The newly built Siddheshwar Education Public Campus will not only boost the learning environment of students but also enhance access to education to needy, poor and marginalized students of Ramechhap District and adjoining area. As part of the Development Partnership Programme, the Government of India is providing assistance to institutions at all levels from primary schools to universities in Nepal.

**Italy becomes first G7 nation to join China’s ‘Belt and Road’ Initiative**

- Italy become the first member of the Group of Seven (G7) major industrialised nations to join China’s ‘Belt and Road’ infrastructure project (BRI), which is inspired by historic, centuries-old trade routes. G7 nations consist of: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.
- BRI is a development strategy adopted by the Chinese government involving infrastructure development and investments in 152 countries and international organizations in Europe, Asia, Middle East, Latin America and Africa.

**World’s largest e-waste recycling hub opens in Dubai**

- The world's largest e-waste recycling facility has opened at the Dubai Industrial Park, the 280,000 square feet plant will process Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE), IT asset disposition (ITAD), refrigerant gas and specialised waste. The 120 million dirhams ($5 million) project is backed by the Swiss Government Export Finance Agency.

**Norway introduced the World’s First Wireless Electric Car Charging Stations**

- Oslo will be the world’s first city to install wireless charging stations for electric taxis, in a bid to make a zero-emission cab system by as early as 2023. Oslo Municipality is working with Finnish utilities firm Fortum to install charging plates in the road that connect to energy receivers in the vehicles themselves, making Norway the first country in this area.
• The goal is to make it as easy as possible to charge electric taxis, as doing so now is cumbersome, time-consuming, and expensive. Norway wants all new cars to be zero emission by 2025 whereas other nations, like Britain and France have similar goals for 2040.

Pakistan approves proposal to establish Sharada Peeth corridor
• The Pakistan government has approved a proposal to establish Sharada Peeth corridor that will allow pilgrims from India to visit the ancient Hindu temple in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (Pok).
• Sharda Peeth corridor, when opened, will be second religious tract after Kartarpur corridor (for Sikh pilgrims) in Pakistan-controlled territory that will connect the two neighbouring nations.

EU parliament approves ban on single use plastics
• An EU-wide ban on single-use plastic products such as the straws, cutlery and cotton buds that are clogging the world's oceans. It had already been approved in negotiations with member states and EU officials and it will now be rapidly approved into law. The ban comes into effect from 2021.
• The law sets a target that 90 per cent of plastic bottles will be gathered for recycling by 2029 and that they should be produced with 25 percent recycled material by 2025, 30 per cent by 2030. According to the EU Commission, the products prohibited under the law represent 70 percent of the waste that pours into the world's oceans, posing a threat to wildlife and fisheries.

Israel unveils world's longest salt cave
• Israeli researchers have discovered the world’s longest salt cave near the desert site. The total length of the cave is around 10 km (6.2 miles). Malham Cave is located under Mount Sodom (Israel’s largest mountain located southwest of the salty Dead Sea).
• The new discovery has taken away a 13-year record held by the Cave of the Three Nudes (3N Cave) since 2006. It is a 6.85 km (four miles) salt cave in Iran’s Qeshm Island.

Shanghai becomes world's first district with 5G coverage
• Shanghai's Hongkou has become the world's first district with 5G coverage and broadband gigabit network as China seeks to establish lead over the US and other countries in the race to develop next generation cellular mobile communications. It conducted trial runs of the 5G network, backed by telecom services provider China Mobile. 5G is the next generation of cellular technology with download speeds that are 10 to 100 times faster than 4G LTE networks.

According to IUCN the hump-backed mahseer is now 'critically endangered'
• The hump-backed mahseer—a large freshwater fish also called the tiger of the water and found only in the Cauvery river basin (including Kerala’s Pamban, Kabini and Bhavani rivers)—is now “Critically Endangered”, as per the International Union for Conservation of Nature’s Red List of Threatened Species. The fish is one of the 229 species added to the Red List last November.
• Five other species have also made it to threatened categories: two wild orchids, the Arabian scad (a marine fish) and two wild coffee species found only in a few localities in the Western Ghats. While 31 species that were already in the Red List have been down-listed, the threat status of 12 species has increased.

World Health Organization Issues First-Ever Screen Time Guidelines for Young Kids
• The World Health Organization has issued its first-ever guidance for how much screen time children under 5. The U.N. health agency said that kids under 5 should not spend more than one hour watching screens every day. That group recommends children younger than 18 months should avoid screens other than video chats.

Iran, Pakistan to set up joint border 'Reaction Force'
• Iranian President Hassan Rohani and Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan have agreed to set up a joint border "reaction force" to counter terrorism.
Both the nations have decided to collaborate to form the joint quick reaction force by increasing cooperation between border forces and intelligence agencies.

**Etihad becomes first major airline to fly plastic-free**
- The UAE’s flag carrier Etihad Airways has become the first airline in the Gulf region to operate a flight without any single-use plastics on board. The objective is to raise awareness about pollution.
- The milestone flight is part of Etihad’s pledge to reduce single-use plastic usage by 80 per cent not just in-flight, but across the entire organisation by the end of 2022.

**Japan reveals new imperial era name – Reiwa**
- Japan named its next imperial era Reiwa, or roughly ‘auspicious calm’, as the nation prepared for a once-in-a-generation transition in the world’s oldest continuous monarchy, with a new emperor set to ascend the Chrysanthemum Throne next month. The word ‘reiwa’ implies the people’s hearts coming together in beauty to create and develop culture.
- Emperor Akihito, 85, is preparing to step down at the end of the month, drawing the curtain on his three-decade reign. His eldest son, Crown Prince Naruhito, 59, will replace him May 1, marking the beginning of the new era.

**South Korea to launch world’s first national 5G networks**
- South Korea will launch the world's first fully-fledged 5G mobile networks on 5th April 2019. Until now, no mobile networks have offered nationwide 5G access. On April 05, 2019 all three of South Korea’s mobile networks namely KT, SK Telecom and LG UPlus will go live with their 5G services.
- Japan is expected to roll out a limited deployment in 2019 before full services start in time for next year's Tokyo Olympics.

**Over 113 mn people across 53 countries experienced acute hunger last year: UN**
- According to a new joint UN and European Union (EU) report, more than 113 million people across 53 countries experienced acute hunger last year, with conflict, climate-related disasters and economic turbulence mainly driving the food insecurity crisis.
- The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP) and EU ‘Global Report on Food Crises 2019’ shows that the number going chronically-hungry has remained well over 100 million over the past three years.
- Yemen, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Afghanistan and Syria were among the eight nations accounting for two-thirds of the total number of people worldwide exposed to the risk of famine, according to Food and Agriculture Organisation’s 2019 global report on food crises.
- There were 11 million fewer people believed to be in food crisis in 2018 compared with 2017.
- An additional 143 million people in another 42 countries are just one step away from acute hunger. Living in "stressed conditions".
- Short-term outlook of food insecurity for 2019 showed that “Yemen, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, the Syrian Arab Republic, Sudan, South Sudan and northern Nigeria are expected to remain among the world’s most severe food crises in 2019.”

**Karan Johar unveils his wax statue at Madame Tussauds Singapore**
- Bollywood filmmaker Karan Johar has unveiled his wax statue at Madame Tussauds in Singapore with his mother Hiroo Johar. He became India's first film-maker to have a wax statue at Madame Tussauds in Singapore.

Emirates Islamic becomes world’s first Islamic bank to launch banking via WhatsApp.
• Emirates Islamic has announced the launch of Chat Banking services for customers via WhatsApp, marking a global first in the Islamic banking sector. The bank’s customers will now be able to conduct daily banking activities via WhatsApp in a seamless and hassle-free manner.

• The Chat Banking solution, supported by Infobip, further enhances Emirates Islamic’s suite of digital banking channels and allows customers to use features such as checking account balances and temporarily blocking or unblocking of an existing card.

UK introduces world’s first online safety regulations
• The UK government has introduced the world’s first framework designed to hold internet companies accountable for the safety of those using their services, as well to tackle potential harm to users.

• Under the Online Harms whitepaper, which is a joint proposal from the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Home Office, social media and technology companies will need to take reasonable steps to protect their customers from threats stemming from their offerings.

London becomes first city to implement 24x7 pollution charge zone
• London became the first city in the world to implement a special Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) that would charge an entry fee for older vehicles if they do not meet the emission standards.

• The Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) will help address London’s toxic air health crisis that currently leads to thousands of premature deaths annually, and increases the risk of asthma, cancer and dementia.

• Motorists who drive into the zone in a vehicle that does not meet the new emission standard (petrol-run vehicles that do not meet Euro 4 standards and diesel-run vehicles that do not meet Euro 6) will have to pay a daily charge.

Google Launched First Drone Delivery Service in Australia
• Google’s parent company Alphabet was launched its first public drone delivery service in Canberra, Australia.

• Alphabet made its first delivery after getting approval from the country's civil aviation authority.

• Wing, the company's drone delivery arm, was testing drone delivery in Australia since 2014 and delivered medicines, chocolate to 3,000 homes in the last 18 months.

India builds maternity hospital in Nepal
• India has built a 25-bed maternity hospital in Nepal. The hospital has been built under the Government of India's Small Development Projects Scheme. Indian Ambassador to Nepal Manjeev Singh Puri inaugurated the Chandra Narayan Yadav Memorial Maternity Hospital in Siraha district.

• It will also help in reducing maternal and child mortality rate. Health is one of the core areas of cooperation between India and Nepal. Several health posts, nursing campuses maternity centres, eye hospitals, naturopathy hospitals have been undertaken under the Government of India’s Small Development Project scheme.

UK, European Union agree to extend Brexit until 31st October
• The UK and the European Union have agreed to extend Brexit until October 31.

• The decision was taken at an emergency meeting in Brussels where the EU leaders agreed to offer British Prime Minister Theresa May a six-month extension. In March, British Prime Minister Theresa May had requested the European Union to grant the United Kingdom a short term extension till June 30 to prevent the U.K. leaving the bloc without a deal, because the British Parliament has repeatedly failed to decide on the terms of the exit.

• If United Kingdom stays beyond May 22, it will have to take part in European Parliament elections in May 2019 or else leave the bloc on June 1 without deal. If the extension had not been agreed to, Britain would have left the bloc without a deal on April 12.
Hong Kong's stock market overtakes Japan to be world's third largest

- The city’s equity market has overtaken Japan to be the world’s third largest in value, behind only the U.S and mainland China, courtesy of a rebound in Hong Kong stocks after their worst year since 2011.
- Hong Kong’s market cap was $5.78 trillion as of Tuesday, compared with $5.76 trillion for Japan, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Google opens first Africa Artificial Intelligence lab in Ghana

- Tech giant Google is all set to exhibit itself as AI first company in front of the world by opening new research centers across the globe such as in Tokyo, Zurich, New York, and Paris. Following this idea, the company has opened its first center in Africa in Ghana capital city, Accra.
- Using Google’s AI machine app ‘TensorFlow’, farmers analyze the issue with their plants and boost their production. TensorFlow was outsourced by the company to help developers generate solutions to real-world problems.

Singapore’s Changi Airport touts the world’s tallest indoor waterfall

- Singapore’s Changi Airport has long been touted as the “best airport in the world,” when it will officially open a dazzling presecurity attraction known as Jewel. The Jewel Changi Airport is about $1.3 billion dollar project, connecting three of the four terminals at Changi Airport with the aim to increase the number of passengers coming to Singapore for visits and stopovers.
- Inside is a lush four-story tiered garden, more than 280 retail and dining outlets, a hotel, a multi-screen IMAX theater and its centerpiece: a 130-foot-tall Rain Vortex, which is the world’s tallest indoor waterfall.

Saudi government raises India's Haj quota to 2 lakh

- Saudi Arabia has issued a formal order increasing the Haj quota of India to two lakhs from one lakh seventy five-thousand. In February this year, the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced that Indian Haj quota would be increased by 25 thousand to two lakhs. This is the third hike in three consecutive years.
- As many as 2,340 Indian Muslim women will go for the pilgrimage without male companion or Mehram. This is the third hike in three consecutive years. In 2017, the quota was increased by 35,000 while last year, it was raised by 5,000 to take the number to 1,75,000

UAE adopts new national AI strategy aimed at becoming global leader

- The UAE’s Cabinet has adopted a new ‘National Artificial Intelligence Strategy 2031’ aimed at positioning the UAE as a global leader in AI. The strategy will also seek to develop an “integrated system that employs artificial intelligence in vital areas in the UAE.”
- The strategy includes eight objectives, including establishing an incubator for AI innovations, the employment of AI in customer service, attracting and training AI talent and research capabilities and providing a data-driven infrastructure to support AI experiments.

Foundation stone laying ceremony of 1st Hindu temple in UAE

- The Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony (Shilanyas Vidhi) of the first traditional Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi.
- Mahant Swami Maharaj, the sixth spiritual successor of Bhagwan Swaminarayan and the spiritual head of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, will also preside over the foundation stone laying ceremony of the BAPS Hindu Mandir in Abu Dhabi.
- The first traditional temple in Abu Dhabi will act as a catalyst for the flourishing of humanitarian values and harmony between the two countries. The temple will become a medium to represent India's identity.

World's first malaria vaccine launched in Malawi
The world's first malaria vaccine has been launched in Malawi after concerted efforts of over 30 years to protect children from the deadly disease that claims over 435,000 lives globally every year.

The launch of the first and only malaria vaccine, known as RTS,S makes Malawi the first of three countries in Africa where it will be made available to children up to 2 years of age. Ghana and Kenya will introduce the vaccine in the coming weeks.

**Indonesia releases Ramayana stamp**

- Indonesia released a special commemorative stamp on the theme of Ramayana to mark the 70th anniversary of diplomatic ties with India. The stamp, designed by renowned Indonesian sculptor Padmashri Bapak Nyoman Nuart, features a scene from Hindu epic Ramayana in which Jatayu valiantly fought to save Sita.
- India's Ambassador Pradeep Kumar Rawat and Indonesia's Deputy Foreign Minister Abdurrahman Mohammad Fachir jointly presided over the inaugural event organised to flag off the 70th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries.

**Israeli PM intends to name Golan Heights settlement after Donald Trump**

- Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu intends to name a new settlement in the Golan Heights after US President Donald Trump. This decision has been taken as an expression of gratitude towards Mr Trump for his historic decision to recognise Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.
- Israel captured the Golan from Syria in a 1967 war and annexed the territory in 1981, however, the move was not recognized internationally, until Trump signed a decree recognizing Israeli sovereignty over the strategic plateau.

**Russia successfully tests world's first floating nuclear power plant**

- Russia has successfully tested the world’s first floating nuclear power plant (NPP), Akademik Lomonosova subsidiary of Rosatom nuclear corporation.

**Beijing Hosts Second Belt and Road Forum**

- The second edition of Belt and Road Forum (BRF) was held in Beijing, China from April 25th to April 27th, 2019 in which 37 heads-of-state and 159 countries had participated along with United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and International Monetary Chief (IMF) Christine Lagarde. The theme of this event was “Belt and Road Cooperation: Shaping a Brighter Shared Future”.

### Important Appointments

#### January

**National Appointments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Pramod Kumar Singh</td>
<td>Competition Commission of India secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>V K Yadav</td>
<td>Chairman, Railway Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Justice AK Sikri</td>
<td>The Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Saurabh Kumar took</td>
<td>Chairman of the Ordnance Factory Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Hemant Bhargava</td>
<td>Interim Chairman of LIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Pankaj Sharma</td>
<td>RBL Bank Chief Operations Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Justice T B N Radhakrishnan</td>
<td>First Chief justice of Telangana High Court.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Vikram Misri</td>
<td>India’s new envoy to China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Kumar Rajesh Chandra</td>
<td>Director General of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Birendra Prasad Baishya</td>
<td>Chef de Mission for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sl.No</td>
<td>Person</td>
<td>Designation</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Ajit Mohan</td>
<td>Managing Director and Vice President, Facebook India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Brahm Dutt</td>
<td>Yes Bank non executive part time chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Daniel Hughes Callahan</td>
<td>Additional and Independent Director of TCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Mohammed Ali Qamar</td>
<td>Women’s Boxing Team Coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>B Sriram and Rama Bijapurkar</td>
<td>ICICI Bank independent director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Agyey Kumar Azad</td>
<td>Executive Director of Punjab National Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Piyush Goyal</td>
<td>Interim Finance and Corporate Affairs Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Ravneet Gill</td>
<td>MD and CEO of Yes Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Ronojoy Dutta</td>
<td>IndiGo CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Parthasarathi Mukherjee</td>
<td>Lakshmi Vilas Bank MD and CEO (Reappoint)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Vice Admiral G Ashok Kumar</td>
<td>Vice Chief of Navy Staff (VCNS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Dilip Sadarangani</td>
<td>part time Chairman of Federal Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Civil Aviation Secretary Rajiv Nayan Choubey</td>
<td>Member of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**International Appointments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Jair Bolsonaro</td>
<td>Brazil President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>David Norquist</td>
<td>US deputy defence secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Justice Asif Saeed Khan Khosa</td>
<td>Chief Justice of Pakistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Shri Pranav R Mehta</td>
<td>Global Solar Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Nicolas Maduro</td>
<td>Venezuelan President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Su Tseng-chang</td>
<td>Prime Minister of Taiwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Manu Sawhney</td>
<td>ICC CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Andry Rajoelina</td>
<td>President of Madagascar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah</td>
<td>Malaysia’s new king</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Poonam Khetrapal Singh</td>
<td>Director of World Health Organization South-East Asia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Sunjay Sudhir</td>
<td>India’s Ambassador to Maldives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Resignation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Madan B Lokur</td>
<td>Supreme Court judge (retired)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kevin Sweeney</td>
<td>US Department of Defence chief of staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Jim Yong Kim</td>
<td>World Bank President (from 1 February, 2019)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Harendra Singh</td>
<td>Indian men's hockey coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Ashok Chawla</td>
<td>Chairman of the National Stock Exchange of India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Stephen Constantine</td>
<td>Indian football team’s head coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>BK Divakara</td>
<td>Executive Director (ED) of Central Bank of India</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Malaysia’s King Muhammad V becoming first monarch to resign before completing tenure

- Malaysia’s King Muhammad V resigned, the first time a monarch has stepped down from the throne before completing their five year tenure.
• The resignation comes barely a week after the king resumed his duties after spending two months away on medical leave.

February
National Appointments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Lt Gen Rajeev Chopra</td>
<td>Director General of NCC (DGNCC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar P</td>
<td>Western Naval Command Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ajai Kumar</td>
<td>Interim MD-CEO of YES bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Rishi Kumar Shukla</td>
<td>CBI director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Pradeep Singh Kharola</td>
<td>Secretary of the Ministry of Civil Aviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Rahul Jain</td>
<td>General Manager of Integral Coach Factory (ICF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Shri Sailesh</td>
<td>Secretary, Ministry of Minority Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Ruchira Kamboj</td>
<td>Ambassador of India to Bhutan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Salil Gupte</td>
<td>Boeing India President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>DIPP secretary Ramesh Abhishek</td>
<td>Secretary, Civil Aviation Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>India’s boxing chief Ajay Singh</td>
<td>President of the Foundation Board for Better Boxing of AIBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Justice DK Jain</td>
<td>First Ombudsman for BCCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Tarun Sridhar</td>
<td>Secretary, Department of Fisheries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Sushil Chandra</td>
<td>Election Commissioner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>SN Ghormade</td>
<td>Chief of Staff, Eastern Naval Command</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Ashwani Lohani</td>
<td>Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of Air India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Derrick Pereira</td>
<td>Head coach of the Indian Under-23 football team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Pramod Chandra Mody</td>
<td>Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Sandeep Mohan Bhatnagar and Ashok Kumar Pandey</td>
<td>CBIC members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Anirban Mukherjee</td>
<td>PayU India CEO</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

International Appointments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Designation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sanjiv Ranjan</td>
<td>India’s Ambassador to the Republic of Colombia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Nirmal Acharya</td>
<td>Nepal's ambassador to India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi</td>
<td>Chairman of the African Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Ricky Ponting</td>
<td>Assistant coach of Australia's men's cricket team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Saudi Arabia’s Reema bint Bandar</td>
<td>First female ambassador to the United States.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sl.No</td>
<td>Person</td>
<td>Designation</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Indra Nooyi</td>
<td>Amazon board of directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Muhammadu Buhari</td>
<td>Re-elected as Nigerian President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>William Barr</td>
<td>US Attorney General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Resignation</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Mohammad Javad Zarif</td>
<td>Iranian Foreign Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Harshil Mehta</td>
<td>Dewan Housing Finance Corporation (DHFL) CEO</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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### March National Appointments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Designation</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Pranay Kumar Verma</td>
<td>Next Ambassador of India to Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ravneet Gill</td>
<td>MD &amp; CEO of YES Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Air Marshal Raghunath Nambiar</td>
<td>New chief of Western Air Command (WAC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Hasmukh Adhia</td>
<td>Non-executive chairman of Bank of Baroda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Muktesh Kumar Pardeshi</td>
<td>Next High Commissioner of India to New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Hemant Bhargava</td>
<td>Non-executive, Non-whole time chairman of IDBI Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Ajay Narayan Jha</td>
<td>Member of the 15th Finance Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Bhagwan Lal Sahni</td>
<td>Chairman - National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Kaushalendra Singh Patel, Sudha Yadav and Acharly Talloju</td>
<td>Members of NCBC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sanjeev Ranjan</td>
<td>Secretary, Ministry of Road Transport and Highways</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Anil Kumble</td>
<td>Chairman of the ICC Cricket Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Ajit Kumar Mohanty</td>
<td>Director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Dr. Ausaf Sayeed</td>
<td>Next ambassador of India to Saudi Arabia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Padma Lakshmi</td>
<td>UNDP’s newest Goodwill Ambassador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Jagdish Mukhi (Assam Governor)</td>
<td>Interim Governor of Mizoram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Subhash Chandra Garg</td>
<td>Finance Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Ashu Khullar</td>
<td>CEO of CITI India (from April 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Anup Kumar Dubey and Sushil Kumar</td>
<td>Special directors in the Enforcement Directorate (ED)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>C. Lalsawta</td>
<td>Chairman of Lokayukta in Mizoram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Position/Role</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Rakesh Makhija</td>
<td>Non-executive chairman of Axis Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Aditya Kumar Misra</td>
<td>Chairman - Agricultural Scientific Recruitment Board (ASRB)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>M Ravi Kanth</td>
<td>CMD- Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) Ltd, (6 Month extension)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>M R Kumar</td>
<td>Chairman of LIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>T C Suseel Kumar</td>
<td>Zonal Manager (in-charge), LIC South Central Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Vipin Anand</td>
<td>Zonal Manager (in-charge), LIC Western Zone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>P S Narasimha</td>
<td>Mediator to BCCI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Anurag Bhushan</td>
<td>High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Malawi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Padnaja</td>
<td>High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Fiji</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Santosh Jha</td>
<td>Ambassador of India to republic of Uzbekistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>KVS Manian and Gaurang Shah</td>
<td>Kotak Mahindra Bank board directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Former SC Judge Justice PC Ghose</td>
<td>India's first Lokpal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>BJP leader Pramod Sawant</td>
<td>Chief Minister of Goa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Gauri Sawant</td>
<td>First transgender election ambassador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Shailendra Handa</td>
<td>ECI - Special Expenditure Observers for Maharashtra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Madhu Mahajan</td>
<td>ECI - Special Expenditure Observers for Tamil Nadu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>Chacko Purackal Thomas</td>
<td>Tata Coffee MD and CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>Benedict Cumberbatch</td>
<td>Brand ambassador of MG Motor India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Tim Stone</td>
<td>CFO of Ford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>Vice Admiral Karambir Singh</td>
<td>Next Chief of Naval Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>Aamir Khan</td>
<td>PhonePe’s Brand Ambassador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>Sudarshan Ballal</td>
<td>The healthcare industry's apex body NATHEALTH president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>K. Govindaraj</td>
<td>Re-elected as president of the Basketball Federation of India (BFI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>Chander Mukhi Sharma</td>
<td>Re-elected secretary-general as the BFI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>N S Srinath</td>
<td>Non-executive chairman of Karur Vysya Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Veselin Matic</td>
<td>Head coach of the Indian men’s basketball team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>Justice DK Jain</td>
<td>BCCT's Ethics Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>Goa Tourism Minister Manohar Ajaonkar</td>
<td>Deputy CM of Goa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>Shri Abhay Thakur</td>
<td>Ambassador of India to Republic of Benin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49</td>
<td>Cricketer Virender Sehwag</td>
<td>Brand Ambassador of PolicyX.com</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### International Appointments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah</td>
<td>Re-elected as president of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kaja Kallas</td>
<td>First female Prime Minister of Estonia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Soumya Swaminathan</td>
<td>Chief Scientist of the World Health Organisation (WHO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Mohammad Shtayyeh</td>
<td>Palestinian Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Zinedine Zidane</td>
<td>Re-appointed as the coach football club Real Madrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Mohamed Moustahsane (head of African Boxing Confederation)</td>
<td>Interim President of AIBA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Former India hockey captain Sardar Singh</td>
<td>Athletes Standing Committee of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Azali Assoumani</td>
<td>Comoros President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Zuzana Caputova</td>
<td>Slovakia's first female president</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Resignation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Naresh Goyal</td>
<td>Jet Airways Chairman.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Kummanam Rajasekharan</td>
<td>Governor of Mizoram</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Juha Sipila</td>
<td>Finland Prime Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Rahul Bajaj</td>
<td>Bajaj Finserv chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Nursultan Nazarbayev</td>
<td>Kazakhstan President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Gafur Rahimov</td>
<td>AIBA President</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### April National Appointments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Designation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Air Marshal NS Dhillion</td>
<td>New Strategic Forces Command Chief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Satish Magar</td>
<td>President of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI), Managing Director of LIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Vipin Anand</td>
<td>Next High Commissioner of India to the Republic of Cameroon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Rakesh Malhotra</td>
<td>Google India industry head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Mayoori Kango (Former Bollywood actress)</td>
<td>Infrastructure Leasing &amp; Financial Services (IL&amp;FS) Managing Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>CS Rajan</td>
<td>Vice Chairman of Nasscom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Vikram Kirloskar</td>
<td>President of the Confédération of Indian Industry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Keshav Murugesh</td>
<td>Chairman of Nasscom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>UB Pravin Rao</td>
<td>Vice Chairman of Nasscom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sl.No</td>
<td>Person</td>
<td>Designation</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Sana Dua (Femina Miss India 2017 runner up)</td>
<td>Brand ambassador of Jammu and Kashmir for general polls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Justice Pradeep Nandrajog</td>
<td>New Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Vikramjit Singh Sahney</td>
<td>President of International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) - India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Kamran Sekar (MD and CEO of the Dena Bank)</td>
<td>MD and CEO of Indian Overseas Bank from July 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>R A Sankara Narayanan</td>
<td>MD and CEO of Canara Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Vikram Nath</td>
<td>First chief justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Murali Kartik</td>
<td>Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Shiv Das Meena</td>
<td>Secretary, Defence Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Gargi Kaul</td>
<td>Vice Chancellor of New Delhi’s Jamia Millia Islamia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>Najma Akhtar</td>
<td>Chief people officer of PwC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Actor Varun Dhawan</td>
<td>Brand Ambassador of Navratna Cool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>R. Mohan</td>
<td>City Union Bank part-time chairman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Rajesh Yaduvanshi</td>
<td>Executive Director of Punjab National Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Padma Chakravarty Pratap Singh</td>
<td>Managing Director of Twitter, India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Mithali Raj</td>
<td>Goodwill ambassador at the Street Child Cricket World Cup</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Mahendra Singh Dhoni</td>
<td>Brand ambassador of Redbus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Kaushik Shaparia</td>
<td>Deutsche Bank India CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Sairee Chahal</td>
<td>Paytm Payments Bank board of director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>Manish Maheshwari</td>
<td>First woman Zonal Manager of LIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.</td>
<td>Ravi Shastri</td>
<td>Ras Al Khaimah Economic Zone (RAKEZ) Corporate Ambassador</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.</td>
<td>Mini Ipe</td>
<td>Officer on Special Duty (OSD) in the office of Lokpal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31.</td>
<td>Dilip Kumar</td>
<td>New Technical Director of All India Football Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>Mr. Isac Doru</td>
<td>Vice Chief of Indian Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>Air Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadouria</td>
<td>Re-elected as President The Asian Football Confederation (AFC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>CEO of the International Cricket Council (ICC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Head of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Palestine Prime Minister</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Israel Prime Minister (5th Term)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Haiti's new prime minister</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Algeria’s interim president</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Geospatial advisory committee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

International Appointments

1. Lori Lightfoot - Chicago’s First Black Female Mayor
2. David Malpass - World Bank President
3. Praful Patel - Member of the FIFA Executive Council
4. Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa - Re-elected as President The Asian Football Confederation (AFC)
5. Manu Sawhney - CEO of the International Cricket Council (ICC)
6. Nicholas Kounjian - Head of the Independent Investigative Mechanism for Myanmar
7. Mohammed Ishtaye - Palestine Prime Minister
8. Benjamin Netanyahu - Israel Prime Minister (5th Term)
9. Jean-Michel Lapin - Haiti’s new prime minister
10. Abdelkader Ben Salah - Algeria’s interim president
11. Sanjay Kumar (Indian) - Geospatial advisory committee
12. Jaideep Sarkar  
India's next High Commissioner to South Africa

13. Gagandeep Kang  
First Indian woman to be elected Royal Society Fellow

14. Suhel Ajaz Khan  
Next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Lebanon

15. Ex-army chief Dalbir Singh Suhag  
India high commissioner to Seychelles

16. Volodymyr Zelensky  
Ukrainian president

17. Javier Perez-Tasso  
CEO of SWIFT

### Resignation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Person</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Abdelaziz Bouteflika</td>
<td>Algerian President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Rajan Anandan</td>
<td>Google India head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Soumeylou Boubeye Maiga</td>
<td>Prime Minister of Mali</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>U K Varma</td>
<td>Assocham Secretary General</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Important Awards and Honors

#### January

**French World Cup champions awarded Legion of Honour**

- The players in France's football team which last year won the World Cup have been awarded the Legion of Honour in the New Year’s honours list. The 23 players, including star strikers Kylian Mbappe and Antoine Griezmann, each received France's top medal for their part in beating Croatia in the World Cup final in Moscow.

- The French team that won the 1998 World Cup also received the Legion of Honour.

**IIT Professor Awarded For Contribution towards Development of Geo-Spatial Science**

- The Indian Society for Remote Sensing conferred the National Geospatial Award for Excellence to IIT professor Jayanta Kumar Ghosh for his contribution towards the development of geospatial science and applications. Mr Ghosh, a professor at the civil engineering department of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Roorkee, He was conferred the National Geospatial Award for Excellence-2017 (Life Time Achievement Award) at the Space Application Centre in Ahmedabad. The award comprised a citation, a medal and Rs. 1 lakh.

**India’s Arunima Sinha becomes world's first woman amputee to climb highest peak of Antarctica**

- Arunima Sinha, the first female amputee to have conquered Mt Everest, created another record as she became world's first woman amputee to climb highest peak of Antarctica. Her aim was to climb all the continents' highest peaks and hoist the national flag of India. She has already done six peaks: Everest in Asia, Kilimanjaro in Africa, Elbrus in Europe, Kosciuszko in Australia, Aconcagua in Argentina and Carstensz Pyramid (Puncak Jaya) in Indonesia.

**Low budget debut 'The Rider' as best picture of 2018**

- The National Society of Film Critics chose Chloe Zhao's low-budget debut feature, The Rider, as best picture of 2018. Director Alfonso Cuaron's "Roma" won the most awards as best picture runner up, best foreign language film and for best cinematography. Cuaron also got the award for best director. The film critics society was founded in 1966, electing its voting critics from newspapers and other major U.S. media outlet

**The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) pavilion received ‘Exhibitor of the Year Award’**
• DRDO pavilion received ‘Exhibitor of the Year Award’ at 106th Indian Science Congress held at Lovely Professional University (LPU), Phagwara, Punjab
• The DRDO Pavilion at the mega science expo was inaugurated by Governor of Punjab Shri VP Singh Badnore and Union Science and Technology Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan

India bags Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at New York Times Travel Show 2019

• India received the Award of Excellence for 'Best in Show' at the recently concluded New York Times Travel Show 2019. It is the largest travel show in North America which held in New York. The Ministry of Tourism participated as the ‘Presenting Partner’ in the New York Times Travel Show (NYTTS 2019)
• A high level delegation led by Tourism Ministry Secretary Yogendra Tripathi and a number of stakeholders from India's tourism industry participated in the Show

Tamil Nadu bags FSSAI award for Swasth Bharat Yatra

• Tamil Nadu was declared as the ‘Best State Overall’ for exemplary participation in the Swasth Bharat Yatra, Madurai and Sivakasi won the awards for the best performing districts, while the State also bagged 17 awards in various other categories. Swasth Bharat Yatra is 100 day consumer outreach programme organised by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), which was launched to amplify its Eat Right India initiative
• The Yatra, a cyclothon saw the involvement of 10 lakh participants and reached to around 2.5 crore people across various States and UTs
• Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra were adjudged the Best States with population above 3 crore
• Punjab, Goa and Delhi were recognised as the Best States having population less than 3 crore.
• Meghalaya, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttrakhand were given special awards for their participation despite their hilly and difficult terrain

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awards</th>
<th>Winners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Minister Devineni Umamaheswar Rao</td>
<td>Central Board of Irrigation and Power Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wahengbam Lamnganba (Manipur)</td>
<td>National Bravery Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polavaram project</td>
<td>Guinness Book of World Records</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mohamed Salah</td>
<td>African Football Player of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adi Godrej</td>
<td>ICSIs Lifetime Achievement Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namita Gokhale</td>
<td>Sushila Devi Literature Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese lawyer Yu Wensheng</td>
<td>European human rights award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prime Minister Narendra Modi</td>
<td>Philip Kotler Presidential award</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wrestler Vinesh Phogat</td>
<td>Laureus World Comeback of the Year Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India born Dr. Rattan Lal</td>
<td>Japan Prize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pranab Mukherjee, Nanaji Deshmukh, Bhupen Hazarika</td>
<td>Bharat Ratna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nari Shakti (women empowerment)</td>
<td>Hindi word of the year 2018 by Oxford Dictionaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dhirendra Nath Chakraborty</td>
<td>Assam Republic Day journalism award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tamil translation of The Life of an Unknown Man Book</td>
<td>Romain Rolland Book Prize for literary translation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
76th Golden Globe Awards 2019 complete list

Motion Picture Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Motion Picture Drama</th>
<th>Bohemian Rhapsody</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Motion Picture – Musical or</td>
<td>Green Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor – Drama</td>
<td>Rami Malek for “Bohemian</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actress – Drama</td>
<td>Glenn Close for “The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wife”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor – Musical or Comedy</td>
<td>Christian Bale for “Vice”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actress – Musical or Comedy</td>
<td>Olivia Colman for “The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Favourite”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Director</td>
<td>Alfonso Cuaron for “Roma”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Screenplay</td>
<td>Brian Hayes Currie,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Peter Farrelly and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nick Vallelonga for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Green Book”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Original Score</td>
<td>Justin Hurwitz for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“First Man”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Original Song</td>
<td>Shallow (A star is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Born)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Animated Feature Film</td>
<td>Spider-Man: Into the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spider –Verse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Foreign Language Film</td>
<td>Roma (Mexico)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Television Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Best Television Series, Drama</th>
<th>The Americans</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Television Series – Musical</td>
<td>The Kominsky Method</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comedy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actress in Television Series</td>
<td>Sandra Oh (Killing Eve)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Drama</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor in Television Series</td>
<td>Richard Madden (Bodyguard)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Drama</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actress in Television Series</td>
<td>Rachel Brosnahan (The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Musical/Comedy</td>
<td>Marvelous Mrs. Maisel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor in Television Series</td>
<td>Michael Douglas (The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>– Musical/Comedy</td>
<td>Kominsky Method)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Government conferred Gandhi Peace Prize for 2015-2018

The government announced the names of the winners of the Gandhi Peace Prize for 2015-2018, which were last conferred to the Indian Space Research Organisation in 2014.

- It is given to individuals and institutions for their contribution towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian methods.
- 2015 - Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari won the award for rural development and education
• 2016 - The award has been jointly given to Akshaya Patra Foundation for providing mid-day meals to children across the country and Sulabh International for its work towards emancipation of manual scavengers
• 2017 - The award will be given to Ekai Abhiyan Trust for its contribution to education for rural and tribal children
• 2018 - The award will be given to Nippon Foundation chairman Yohei Sasakawa for his role in leprosy eradication.

SAG - Screen Actors Guild Awards 2019

• “Black Panther” took home the top award for best performance by a cast in a motion picture at the 2019 Screen Actors Guild Awards
• On the TV front, “This Is Us” nabbed the ensemble award for drama,
• While “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” won the comedy prize.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Leading Role</td>
<td>Rami Malek, “Bohemian Rhapsody”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Leading Role</td>
<td>Glenn Close, “The Wife”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Supporting Role</td>
<td>Mahershala Ali, “Green Book”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Supporting Role</td>
<td>Emily Blunt, “A Quiet Place”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Motion Picture</td>
<td>“Black Panther”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries</td>
<td>Darren Criss, “Assassination of Gianni Versace”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Television Movie or Miniseries</td>
<td>Patricia Arquette, “Escape at Dannemora”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Outstanding Performance by a Male Actor in a Drama Series</td>
<td>Jason Bateman, “Ozark”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series</td>
<td>Sandra Oh, “Killing Eve”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Comedy Series</td>
<td>Rachel Brosnahan, “The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Outstanding Performance by an Ensemble in a Drama Series</td>
<td>“This Is Us”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Outstanding Action Performance by a Stunt Ensemble in a</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comedy or Drama Series:  
15. Outstanding Action Performance by a Stunt Ensemble in a Motion Picture  
   “Glow”  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Awards</th>
<th>Winners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>SBI's UK head Sanjiv Chadha</td>
<td>‘Freedom of the City of London' award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Playwright Mahesh Elkunchwar</td>
<td>Mahindra Excellence in Theatre Awards (META) lifetime Achievement Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>France - Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour)</td>
<td>Francois Laborde</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Allan Border medal (Australian cricket's highest individual honor)</td>
<td>Pat Cummins (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Belinda Clark award</td>
<td>Alyssa Healy (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>PETA Oscat Award (Best Director)</td>
<td>Bradley Cooper for ‘A Star Is Born’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Lifetime Achievement Award by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television</td>
<td>Indo-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>EY Entrepreneur of the Year 2018</td>
<td>Siddhartha Lal, MD and CEO, Eicher Motors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Israel's Dan David Prize</td>
<td>Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam (category of &quot;Past Time Dimension&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>2019 Martin Ennals Award</td>
<td>Abdul Aziz Muhammad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Football Ratna Award</td>
<td>Sunil Chhetri</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**February**

**Oscar Awards 2019**

- 91st Academy Awards (Oscars) has been announced at the Dolby Theatre in Hollywood & Highland Center, the USA.
- Rami Malek won the Best Actor for "Bohemian Rhapsody", Olivia Colman won Best Actress for ‘The Favourite’ and Filmmaker Alfonso Cuaron won the Best Director award for 'Roma' at the 91st Academy Awards in Los Angeles.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Picture</td>
<td>Green Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor in a Leading Role</td>
<td>Rami Malek for Bohemian Rhapsody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actress in a Leading Role</td>
<td>Olivia Colman for The Favourite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor in a Supporting Role</td>
<td>Mahershala Ali for Green Book</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actress in a Supporting Role</td>
<td>Regina King for If Beale Street Could Talk.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Animated Feature</td>
<td>Spiderman: Into the Spider Verse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Cinematography</td>
<td>Alfonso Cuarón for Roma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Costume Design</td>
<td>Ruth Carter for Black Panther</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Directing</td>
<td>Alfonso Cuarón for Roma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Documentary Feature</td>
<td>Free solo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### President Conferred 'Gandhi Peace Prize'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YEAR</th>
<th>Awardees</th>
<th>Located At</th>
<th>Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Vivekananda Kendra</td>
<td>Kanyakumari, TN</td>
<td>Rural Development, Education and Development of natural resources.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2016 | Akshaya Patra Foundation and Sulabh International | Bengaluru, Karnataka | 1. For Providing mid-day meals to millions of children across India  
2. Sulabh International for its contribution in improving the condition of sanitation in India and emancipation of manual scavengers |

### Oscar Award Winners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner 1</th>
<th>Winner 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Documentary Short</td>
<td>Rayka Zehtabchi and Melissa Berton for Period.</td>
<td>End of Sentence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Film Editing</td>
<td>John Ottman for Bohemian Rhapsody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Foreign Language</td>
<td>Roma (Mexico)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Makeup &amp; Hairstyling</td>
<td>Greg Cannom, Kate Biscoe and Patricia Dehaney</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Music Original Score</td>
<td>Ludwig Goransson for Black Panther</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Music Original Song</td>
<td>Lady Gaga, Mark Ronson, Anthony Rossomando and Andrew Wyatt for SHALLOW from A Star Is Born</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Production Design</td>
<td>Hannah Beachler (Production Design); Jay Hart (Set Decoration) for Black Panther</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Short Film Animated</td>
<td>Domee Shi and Becky Neiman-Cobb for Bao</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Short Film Live Action</td>
<td>Guy Nattiv and Jaime Ray Newman for Skin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Sound Editing</td>
<td>John Warhurst and Nina Hartstone for Bohemian Rhapsody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Sound Mixing</td>
<td>Paul Massey, Tim Cavagin and John Casali for Bohemian Rhapsody</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Visual Effects</td>
<td>Paul Lambert, Ian Hunter, Tristan Mykes and J.D. Schwalm for First Man</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Writing (Adapted Screenplay)</td>
<td>Charlie Wachtel &amp; David Rabinowitz and Kevin Willmott &amp; Spike Lee for Blackkklansman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Writing (Original Screenplay)</td>
<td>Nick Vallelonga, Brian Currie, Peter Farrelly for Green Book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Ekal Abhiyan Trust
KOLKATA, WEST BENGAL
For Providing Education for Rural and Tribal Children in remote areas pan India, Rural Empowerment, Gender and Social Equality

### Yohei Sasakawa
Japan
His contribution in Leprosy Eradication in India and across the world.

---

**BAFTA Awards 2019**

- **72nd edition** of the British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA) awards were presented.
- Legendary British actress Joanna Lumley hosted the show in London’s Royal Albert Hall.
- “The Favourite” took the most awards with seven, including both actress categories for Rachel Weisz and Olivia Colman and best original screenplay, though “Roma” nabbed the top prize for best film.
- The leading actor prize went to Rami Malek for “Bohemian Rhapsody” while favorite Mahershala Ali was lauded for “Green Book.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best film</td>
<td>Roma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Outstanding British film</td>
<td>The Favourite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actress</td>
<td>Olivia Colman (Bohemian Rhapsody)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor</td>
<td>Rami Malek (Bohemian Rhapsody)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Director</td>
<td>Alfonso Cuaran (Roma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Costume Design</td>
<td>Sandy Powell (The Favourite)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Film Not in the English Language</td>
<td>Roma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Special Visual Effects</td>
<td>Black Panther</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Outstanding Debut By A British Writer, Director or Producer</td>
<td>Beast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Cinematography</td>
<td>Alfonso Cuaran (Roma)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Supporting Actor</td>
<td>Mahershala Ali (Green Book)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Original Screenplay</td>
<td>The Favourite (Deborah Davis, Tony McNamara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Original Music</td>
<td>A Star is Born</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Adapted Screenplay</td>
<td>BlackKklansman (Spike Lee, David Rabinowitz, Charlie Wachtel, Kevin Willmott)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Rising Star</td>
<td>Letitia Wright</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Supporting Actress</td>
<td>Rachel Weisz (The Favourite)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Makeup and Hair</td>
<td>Nadia Stacey (The Favourite)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Editing</td>
<td>Hank Corwin (Vice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Sound</td>
<td>Bohemian Rhapsody</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best British Short Film</td>
<td>73 Cows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Production Design</td>
<td>The Favourite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Animated Film</td>
<td>Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Best British Short Animation | Roughhouse  
Best Special Visual Effects | Black Panther  
EE Rising Star Award | Letitia Wright  
Best Documentary | Free Solo  
BAFTA Fellowship | Thelma Schoonmaker

**Grammy Awards 2019**

- The 61st Annual Grammy Awards ceremony was held at Staples Center in Los Angeles.
- The show was hosted by Alicia Keys, She has won 15 Grammys in her career.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Album of the Year</td>
<td>Golden Hour, Kacey Musgraves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Record of the Year</td>
<td>Childish Gambino, &quot;This Is America&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Song of the Year</td>
<td>Childish Gambino, &quot;This Is America&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best New Artist</td>
<td>Dua Lipa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Music Film</td>
<td>&quot;Quincy&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music Video/Film</td>
<td>Childish Gambino, &quot;This Is America&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Producer of the Year, Non-Classical</td>
<td>Pharrell Williams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Pop Solo Performance</td>
<td>Lady Gaga, &quot;Joanne&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Pop Duo/Group Performance</td>
<td>Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper, &quot;Shallow&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Country Album</td>
<td>Kacey Musgraves, &quot;Golden Hour&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Pop Vocal Album</td>
<td>Ariana Grande, &quot;Sweetener&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Traditional Pop Vocal Album</td>
<td>Willie Nelson, &quot;My Way&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Rap/Sung Collaboration</td>
<td>Childish Gambino, &quot;This Is America&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Rap Song</td>
<td>Drake, &quot;God's Plan&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Rap Album</td>
<td>Cardi B, Invasion of Privacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Rock Performance</td>
<td>Chris Cornell, &quot;When Bad Does Good&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Rock Song</td>
<td>St. Vincent, &quot;Masseduction&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Rock Album</td>
<td>Greta Van Fleet, &quot;From the Fires&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Recording Package</td>
<td>St. Vincent, &quot;Masseduction&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Song Written for Visual Media</td>
<td>Lady Gaga &amp; Bradley Cooper - &quot;Shallow&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Score Soundtrack for Visual Media</td>
<td>Ludwig Göransson, &quot;Black Panther&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Compilation Soundtrack for Visual Media</td>
<td>&quot;The Greatest Showman&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Comedy Album</td>
<td>Dave Chappelle, &quot;Equanimity &amp; the Bird Revelation&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Dance/Electronic Album</td>
<td>Justice, &quot;Woman Worldwide&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Dance Recording</td>
<td>Silk City &amp; Dua Lipa, &quot;Electricity&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
De Goede and Van Doren won 2018 FIH world's best players award

- Netherlands' Eva de Goede and Arthur Van Doren of Belgium were named as the International Hockey Federation's (FIH) Players of the Year for 2018.
- De Goede, 29, was named the Female Player of the Year, world champions Belgium's Van Doren, 24, was picked up as the Male Player of the Year for a second consecutive time.

Other Awards

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vincent Vanash (Belgium)</td>
<td>Men’s Goalkeeper of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maddie Hinch (England)</td>
<td>Female Goalkeeper of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arthur de Sloover (Belgium)</td>
<td>Male Rising Star of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shane McLeod (Belgium)</td>
<td>Male Coach of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alyson Annan (Netherlands)</td>
<td>Female Coach of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michelle Meister (Germany)</td>
<td>Female Umpire of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcin Grochal (Poland)</td>
<td>Male Umpire of the Year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luciana Von Der (Argentina)</td>
<td>Emerging women player</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Laureus World Sports Awards 2019 Monaco

- The Laureus World Sports Awards is an annual award ceremony honouring individuals and teams from the world of sports along with sporting achievements throughout the year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Sports</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sportsman of the year</td>
<td>Novak Djokovic</td>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>Tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sportswoman of the year</td>
<td>Simone Biles</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Gymnastics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comeback of the year</td>
<td>Tiger Woods</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Golf</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breakthrough of the year</td>
<td>Naomi Osaka</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>Tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action sportsperson of the year</td>
<td>Chloe Kim</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Snowboarding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team of the year</td>
<td>France World Cup Team</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Football</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academy exceptional achievement award</td>
<td>Eliud Kipchoge</td>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>Running</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lifetime achievement award</td>
<td>Arsene Wenger</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>Football (Manager)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spirit for sport award</td>
<td>Lindsey Vonn</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>Skiing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sportsperson of the year with a disability</td>
<td>Henrieta Farkkasova</td>
<td>Slovakia</td>
<td>Skiing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jharkhand-based NGO Yuwa wins Laureus Sport for Good honour

- Jharkhand based NGO Yuwa won the Laureus Sport for Good award. Yuwa works for girl empowerment and became the third Indian entry to receive this honour. The NGO, was founded in rural Jharkhand in 2009 by Americans Franz Gastler and Rose Thomson Gastler, runs a football program in rural Jharkhand covering 450 girls.
- Laureus Awards for the first time in 2004 when the Indian cricket team and its Pakistani counterpart shared the Sport for Good honour for resuming bilateral ties despite tensions between the two countries.
- Magic Bus from India won the Laureus Sport for Good award in 2014.
Yes Bank wins 9th edition of Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018

- Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 announced YES BANK as winner in “Innovation in Data Science” category for their industry-first project “Yes EEE (Engage Enrich Excel)”. 9th edition of Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 hosted by Government of Goa at Entertainment Society of Goa, Panaji.
- Aegis Graham Bell Awards (AGBA) has been promoting innovations and entrepreneurship in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) domain. Yes-EEE is a customer engagement program for the Bank’s Relationship Mangers to give them the most relevant communication point for interaction with the customer.

Lifetime Achievement Award for G.R. Karthikeyan

- G.R. Karthikeyan, father of India’s first Formula One driver Narain Karthikeyan, was honoured with the Lifetime Achievement award and Raghu Rangasamy was named the Upcoming Motorsports Person of the Year and received the Raymond Gautam Singhania Trophy at the FMSCI Annual Awards in Mumbai.
- FIA president Jean Todt was the chief guest and handed over the awards.

NFDC to be felicitated by MSME ministry for promotion of SC/ST entrepreneurs

- The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) has been named a winner under the ‘miniratna’ category by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. This has been done as part of endeavour by Ministry of MSME to felicitate select CPSEs to recognize their exemplary work towards promotion of SC/ST entrepreneurs.
- National Film Development Corporation Ltd. (NFDC), incorporated in the year 1975, was formed by the Government of India with the primary objective of planning and promoting an organized, efficient, and integrated development of the Indian film industry.

PV Sindhu becomes first woman to co-pilot Made-In-India Tejas at Aero India 2019 in Bengaluru

- Ace shuttler PV Sindhu flew in the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft Tejas, at the Aero India 2019 air show in Bengaluru.
- Ms Sindhu, who is among the youngest to co-pilot the HAL-manufactured fighter jet, waved as she climbed into the two-seater trainer variant of the aircraft.

March

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL No</th>
<th>Winners</th>
<th>Awards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Tripura’s Tribal Musician Thanga Darlong</td>
<td>AB Vajpayee Life Time Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>The Central Zone Power Distribution Company (CZPDC), Bhopal West Zone Power Distribution Company (WZPDC) Indore</td>
<td>“Saubhagya Award” under Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Veteran Marathi writer and poet Vasant Abaji Dahake</td>
<td>‘Janasthan’ Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>TVS Motor Company</td>
<td>’Green Era Award for Sustainability’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>Indian Bank</td>
<td>Best Bank Award from the Tamil Nadu government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Abhinandhan</td>
<td>Bhagwan Mahavir Ahinsa Puraskar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Alastair Cook (England cricket)</td>
<td>Knighthood Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>Bharti AXA General Insurance</td>
<td>Non-Life Insurer of The Year Award 2019 by the Assocham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Arata Isozaki (Japanese architect)</td>
<td>Pritzker Architecture Prize 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Acko General Insurance (Mumbai)</td>
<td>Golden Peacock Innovative Product Award 2019 - under the Insurance Category</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Priyanka Dubey (BBC)</td>
<td>Chameli Devi Jain Award (Outstanding Woman Journalist for 2018)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Ministry of Tourism</td>
<td>International Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019 (TV cinema spot’ category)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Vice President Venkaiah Naidu</td>
<td>Doctor Honoris Causa from University of Peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Sona Yukti</td>
<td>Social Enterprise Network (SEN) sustainability award for education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Ved Rahi (Film director and novelist)</td>
<td>Kusumagraj national award for literature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Former RBI Governor Raghuaram Rajan</td>
<td>'Yashwantrao Chavan National Award 2018'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Kane Tanaka(116-year) (Japan)</td>
<td>Guinness World Records as the oldest living person in the world</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>Padmanaban Gopalan</td>
<td>Commonwealth Youth Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Kent RO Systems Pvt. Ltd</td>
<td>Best Domestic Water Purifier Award 2018-19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Swati Shingade</td>
<td>DD Mahila Kisan Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>Sociologist and political psychoanalyst Ashis Nandy</td>
<td>Hans Kilian Award 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Brazilian physicist Marcelo Gleiser</td>
<td>Templeton Prize 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Hindi writer Leeladhar Jagudi</td>
<td>Vyas Samman 2018</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Kenyan science teacher Peter Tabichi</td>
<td>$1m global teacher award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>President Ram Nath Kovind</td>
<td>Croatia's highest civilian award - the Grand Order of the King of Tomislav</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>Yoshua Bengio, Geoffrey Hinton, and Yann LeCun</td>
<td>Turing Award 2018 (Nobel prize for computing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>Amartya Sen And Novelist Kazuo Ishiguro</td>
<td>Oxford University's Bodley Medal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>Dr Rajendra Joshi</td>
<td>Pravasi Bhartiya Samman Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Alemba Yimchunger (forest guard of Nagaland)</td>
<td>Earth Day Network Star Award</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PM confers Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi conferred Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 in New Delhi. Several IITs combined won eight awards at the ceremony for the coveted Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for Science and Technology, in New Delhi. Close behind the IITs was the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru (IISc), which won seven prizes at the ceremony. Eleven scientists were given the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for 2016. The awardees include Dr Rishikesh Narayan of Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru and Dr Amalendu Krishna of Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbai. Among the ten scientists who got the prize for 2017 are Dr Deepak Gaur of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi and Dr S Suresh Babu of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre. There were thirteen prize winners for 2018. They include Dr Amit Kumar of IIT, Delhi and Dr Nitin Saxena, IIT, Kanpur.

President Kovind presents ‘Swachh Survekshhan 2019’ Awards
• Swachh Survekshan-2019 Awards were presented by President Ram Nath Kovind in New Delhi. Indore bagged award for cleanest city for third straight year in Swachh Survekshan. The second and third positions were grabbed by Ambikapur in Chhattisgarh and Mysuru in Karnataka, respectively.

• New Delhi Municipal Council area gets cleanest small city award while Uttarakhand’s Gauchar was adjudged Best Ganga Town in the survey. Top ranked cities received a statue of Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi as award for their work towards cleanliness.

• Swachh Survekshan 2019 covered all Urban Local Bodies in the country, making it the largest such cleanliness survey in the world.

Guinness World Record in yoga in Hong Kong made by over 1,000 people
• A Guinness World Record in Yoga was set by more than a thousand people who performed the Virabhrasana or the Warrior II Pose for 3 minutes, in Sun Yat Sen Memorial Park, Hong Kong. This initiative to promote yoga was taken by Overseas President of BJP for Hong Kong and China Sohan Goenka. The previous record was of 387 people.

Biju Patnaik International Airport wins the prestigious ASQ award
• The Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Bhubaneswar has won the 2018 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) award as the leading airport in size and region. The Airports Council International selected BPIA for the prestigious award.

• The BPIA won the ASQ award for being the best airport in terms of size and region (2-5 million passengers in Asia-Pacific)

• Chandigarh Airport, Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Airport in Indore, SM Badaruddin II Airport in Indonesia, SS Kasim II Airport in Indonesia and Yichang Sanxia Airport in China were also chosen for the award.

• The award is accorded on the basis of independent survey amongst passengers on various parameters of security, safety, experience, ambience, ease of availability and cleanliness.

• Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru has become the first airport in the world to clinch the Airports Council International’s Airport Service Quality Awards for both Arrivals and Departures.

• Cochin International Airport came second in the 5-15 million passenger category for ASQ Departure awards.

• Kempegowda International Airport is currently the busiest airport in south India and the third largest in the country.

• The Airport Service Quality (ASQ) programme is an airport passenger service and benchmarking programme for airports across the globe. The ASQ Departures programme measures passengers’ satisfaction across 34 key performance indicators.

President confers gallantry and distinguished service awards
• The President and Supreme Commander of the Indian Armed Forces Shri Ram Nath Kovind conferred three Kirti Chakras and fifteen Shaurya Chakras to Armed Forces Personnel for displaying conspicuous gallantry, indomitable courage and extreme devotion to duty at a solemn ceremony at the Rashtrapati Bhawan. Two Kirti Chakras and one Shaurya Chakra were given posthumously.

• The President also conferred fourteen Param Vishisht Seva Medals, one Uttam Yudh Seva Medals and twenty two Ati Vishisht Seva Medals to senior officers of the Armed Forces for distinguished service of an exceptional order.

6 Indians in WEF’s Young Global Leaders 2019 List
The World Economic Forum has recognized six Indians in its 2019 list of the Forum of Young Global Leaders.

• Nara Lokesh – Andhra Pradesh IT minister

• Poonam Mahajan – BJP MP
The 2019 list features 127 of the world’s ‘most promising social activists, business leaders, public servants, artists and technologists’ under the age of 40.

**Arun Jaitley gets Changemaker of the Year Award from ManMohan Singh for implementing GST**
- Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presented the BusinessLine Changemaker Of The Year award to Union Minister Arun Jaitley for successfully introducing the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- The awards were given in five categories: Social Transformation, Digital transformation, Young changemaker, Iconic changemaker, Changemaker of the year.

**Tata, Reliance and Airtel emerge best Indian brands of 2019**
- Tata, Reliance and Airtel emerged as the top three Indian brands of 2019 published by Interbrand, part of the Omnicom Media Group, an advertising and public relations conglomerate.
- Tata continued to hold the top position in the best Indian Brands ranking as its brand value grew by 6%, mainly due to Tata Consultancy Services (TCS).
- Knocking its competitor Airtel off from the second spot, Reliance’s brand value grew by 12%, bolstered by the success of Jio. This also explains the 13% degrowth in Airtel’s brand value.
- Following Airtel at number three, HDFC Bank, LIC, State Bank of India, Infosys, Mahindra, ICICI Bank and Godrej rounded off the top 10 list.

**Raghu Karnad’s ‘Indian story’ wins US Windham-Campbell Prize**
- Journalist and writer Raghu Karnad won the prestigious award for his debut book ‘The Farthest Field: An Indian Story of the Second World War’ in the non-fiction category on a ceremony which was held in London.
- Karnad became the second Indian to win the Windham-Campbell Prize; after Jerry Pinto who won the prize in 2016 for his novel ‘Em And the Big Hoom’.
- The Indian author is one of the eight winners who have been chosen across four categories this year. Each of the eight winners won $165,000 as prize money to support their writing. In terms of the award money, Windham-Campbell Prize is one of the richest literary awards worldwide.
- Apart from Karnad, the other winner in non-fiction category was American writer Rebecca Solnit.
- The Windham-Campbell Prize was established in 2013 by writer Donald Windham to honour his late partner Sandy Campbell. It is now co-presented by the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library at Yale University.

**Karen Uhlenbeck becomes first woman to win Abel Prize for Maths**
• An American professor Karen Uhlenbeck has become the first woman to win the Abel Prize for mathematics since it was first established in 2002.
• She has been awarded the 6 million Norwegian kroner ($700,000) prize for her work in the fields of gauge theory and geometric analysis, which have been credited with far-reaching impact in both mathematics and physics.
• She is also a role model and a strong advocate for gender equality in science and mathematics.
• The award was awarded by the Norwegian Academy of Science since 2003 to honour the 19th-century Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel. It is often referred to as the Nobel Prize for mathematics.

**Hinduja family tops Asian Rich List with £25.2 bn**
• Leading London-based NRI industrial tycoons, the Hinduja family top the Asian Rich List 2019 for the sixth successive year with an estimated net worth of 25.2 billion pounds, an increase of over 3 billion pounds over the previous year.
• According to the Asian Rich List 2019 released at the Asian Business Awards, Steel magnates Lakshmi Mittal and his son Aditya Mittal remained in second place, with 11.2 billion pounds—down 2.8 billion pounds. S P Lohia (Petrochemicals) took the third place with 5.8 billion pounds.

**64th Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Awards 2019: Complete winners' list**
• Members from all quarters of Bollywood got together to honour the best of Hindi cinema in 2018 at Jio Garden, Mumbai for the 64th Vimal Elaichi Filmfare Awards 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor In A Leading Role (Male)</td>
<td>Ranbir Kapoor for 'Sanju'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor In A Leading Role (Female)</td>
<td>Alia Bhatt for 'Raazi'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critics Best Actor in Leading Role (Male)</td>
<td>Ranveer Singh for 'Padmaavat' tied with Ayushmann Khurrana for 'Andhadhun'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critics Best Actor in Leading Role (Female)</td>
<td>Neena Gupta for 'Badhaai Ho'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Director</td>
<td>Meghna Gulzar for 'Raazi'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Film (Popular)</td>
<td>'Raazi'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critics Best Film</td>
<td>'Andhadhun'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Male)</td>
<td>Gajraj Rao for 'Badhaai Ho' tied with Vicky Kaushal for 'Sanju'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor In A Supporting Role (Female)</td>
<td>Surekha Sikri for 'Badhaai Ho'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Screenplay</td>
<td>Sriram Raghavan, Arijit Biswas, Pooja Ladha Surti, Yogesh Chandekar, Hemanth Rao for 'Andhadhun'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Dialogue</td>
<td>Akshat Ghildial for 'Badhaai Ho'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Original Story</td>
<td>Anubhav Sinha for 'Mulk'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Debut Actor (Male)</td>
<td>Ishaan Khatter</td>
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<tr>
<td>Best Debut Actor (Female)</td>
<td>Sara Ali Khan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Best Debut Director</td>
<td>Amar Kaushik for 'Stree'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Best Short Film (Popular Choice)</td>
<td>'Plus Minus'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor (Male) for Short Film</td>
<td>Hussain Dalal for 'Shameless'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Actor (Female) for Short Film</td>
<td>Kirti Kulhari for 'Maya'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Short Film (Fiction)</td>
<td>'Rogan Josh'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Best Short Film (Non-Fiction)</td>
<td>'The Soccer City'</td>
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<tr>
<td>Award Category</td>
<td>Winners</td>
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<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gulshan Kumar Award for Best Music Album</td>
<td>Sanjay Leela Bhansali for 'Padmaavat'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Lyrics</td>
<td>Gulzar for 'Ae Watan' from 'Raazi'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Playback Singer (Male)</td>
<td>Arijit Singh for 'Ae Watan' from 'Raazi'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Playback Singer (Female)</td>
<td>Shreya Ghoshal for 'Ghoomar' from 'Padmaavat'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RD Burman Award for New Music Talent</td>
<td>Niladri Kumar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Cinematography</td>
<td>Pankaj Kumar for 'Tumbbad'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best VFX</td>
<td>Red Chillies VFX for 'Zero'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Background Score</td>
<td>Daniel B. George for 'Andhadhun'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Action</td>
<td>Vikram Dahiya and Sunil Rodriguez for 'Mukkabaaz'</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Winners</th>
<th>Awards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Vikram Patel</td>
<td>John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Pawan Munjal</td>
<td>Asian Tour for contribution to golf in Asia</td>
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<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>PM Narendra Modi</td>
<td>UAE's highest civilian honour Zayed Medal</td>
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<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Tata Steel</td>
<td>'Global Slag Company of the Year'</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Telugu poet K Siva Reddy</td>
<td>Saraswati Samman Award 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Deepa Malik (Rio Paralympics silver medallist)</td>
<td>New Zealand Prime Minister’s Sir Edmund Hillary Fellowship for 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Eni Nuraeni</td>
<td>Best athletic coach in Asia for short-haul run category</td>
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<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Narendra Modi</td>
<td>The Order of Saint Andrew The Apostle (Russia’s highest state honour)</td>
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<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Alice G. Vaidyan (GIC India CMD)</td>
<td>ETPrime ‘Woman CEO of the Year’ award</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Scientist Dr A K Singh</td>
<td>Lifetime Achievement Award (4th APJ Abdul Kalam Innovation Conclave at Mohali)</td>
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<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>John Moore</td>
<td>World Press Photo of the Year award</td>
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<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Pieter Ten Hoopen</td>
<td>World Press Story of the Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>‘Dost Education’ an Indian startup</td>
<td>National Billion Edtech Prize 2019</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Fincare Small Finance Bank</td>
<td>Celent Model Bank 2019 Award in the category of Financial Inclusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Paytm Payments Bank</td>
<td>Celent Model Bank 2019 Award under Beyond Banking category</td>
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<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Yusuf Hamied (Cipla chairman)</td>
<td>UK Royal Society honour</td>
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<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Sree Sreenath (Indian-American Professor)</td>
<td>Cleveland International Hall of Fame</td>
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<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>IPR cell of Kerala Agricultural University (KAU)</td>
<td>National Intellectual Property Award 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Malayalam film Bhayanakam</td>
<td>Best cinematography at 2019 Beijing International Film Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Mike Budenholzer</td>
<td>National Basketball Coaches Association’s 2019 Coach of the Year</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Recognition/Award</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Sunil Kumar</td>
<td>&quot;Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant Award&quot; for the year 2018-19 for his book &quot;Samvidhan Kavya&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.</td>
<td>Benny Antony</td>
<td>National Intellectual Property Award for 2019 in the category of Top Individual for Patents and Commercialization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.</td>
<td>Rana Dasgupta</td>
<td>Rabindranath Tagore Literary Prize for his 2010 novel &quot;Solo&quot;, a tale of estrangement and the ultimate failure of material existence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>Jacques Kallis</td>
<td>Order of Ikhamanga in the Silver Division</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Batman to be first inductee into Comic-Con Museum's Character Hall of Fame**

- Batman, who turned 80 years old, got a birthday gift at WonderCon in Anaheim, with the fictional character being announced as the first entrant to the Comic-Con Museum's Character Hall of Fame.
- The ceremony will take place at the Federal Buiiking in San Diego's Balboa Park, the future site of the Comic-Con Museum, on July 17.
- Batman first appeared in the 'Detective Comics No. 27' published on March 30, 1939, created by Bob Kane and Bill Finger.

**London's Law University honours Shah Rukh Khan with a doctorate degree**

- The Badshah of Bollywood, Shah Rukh Khan, has added yet another feather to his cap. The actor was conferred an honorary doctorate in Philanthropy by The University of Law, London. Earlier, Shah Rukh Khan had received two honorary doctorates from The University of Edinburgh and The University of Bedfordshire.

**Dr. Sohini Sastri honoured with D. Litt**

- Indian Astrologer Dr Sohini Sastri has been honoured with 'D. Litt in Astrology' by National American University, USA. The announcement was made at an event held in Mumbai recently at Classique Club.
- Other prominent personalities who were also awarded Doctorates at the same event includes Bollywood singer Mohit Chauhan and choreographer Terence Lewis.
- Last year, Sohini was honoured with Doctorate in Astrology by Victoria Global University, USA for her immense knowledge and contribution towards Astrology. She is also a recipient of 'Champions of Change Award'.

**Tata Steel gets award at Global Slag Conference & Exhibition**

- Tata Steel has been named as the 'Global Slag Company of the Year' at the 14th Global Slag Conference and Exhibition 2019. The award was presented to Tata Steel for its innovative practices in development of new applications for Steel by-products (Slag).
- The conference, held recently in Aachen, Germany, was one of the largest global annual slag event, attended by major steelmakers, steel mill service providers & associated companies.

**Namami Gange gets global recognition at world summit**

- National Mission for Clean Ganga or Namami Gange was felicitated with the coveted 'Public Water Agency of the Year' award at the Global Water Summit in London. The coveted Global Water Awards are presented by the Global Water Intelligence at the Global Water Summit, the major business conference for the water industry worldwide.
• The Global Water Awards recognise excellence across the entire international water industry and reward those initiatives in the water, wastewater, and desalination sectors which bring remarkable improvements in the lives of people.

• The Namami Gange Mission aims at providing comprehensive and sustainable solutions for major pollution hot spots along the stretch of 97 towns and 4,465 villages on the Ganga stem. In Namami Gange programme, a total of 289 projects have so far been sanctioned at a cost of Rs 28,377 crore out of which 87 projects have been completed.

India to be Guest of Honour country at ADIBF 2019

• UAE has announced that India will be the Guest of Honour country at the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair, ADIBF 2019, to be held from 24th to 30th of this month.

• The fair aims to highlight the UAE’s rich heritage, showcasing its authenticity and modernity, as well as its cultural and literary output. India’s participation in the fair is expected to attract significant increase in the number of visitors with various events and activities which will be held throughout the entire duration of ADIBF. The Indian Pavilion will host Indian writers, authors and literary scholars who will serve as ambassadors for the literature and art of their country.

2 West Bengal government schemes win UN awards

• Two schemes of the West Bengal government for skill development and distribution of bi-cycles to students have won the prestigious World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) awards of the United Nations. The schemes are "Utkarsh Bangla" and "Sabooj Sathi".

• The "Utkarsh Bangla" project aims at creating a pool of skilled candidates who are industry ready, while under the "Sabooj Sathi" scheme, bi-cycles are distributed to students between class IX and XII studying in government run and government aided schools and madrashas of the state.

3 Indian teams win awards at NASA rover challenge

• Three Indian student teams won awards in NASA’s annual Human Exploration Rover Challenge at the US Space and Rocket Centre in Huntsville, Alabama.

• The team from KIET Group of Institutions in Ghaziabad won the "AIAA Neil Armstrong Best Design Award" in the college/university division. The Mukesh Patel School of Technology Management and Engineering from Mumbai won the "Frank Joe Sexton Memorial Pit Crew Award". Lovely Professional University from Phagwara, Punjab, won the STEM Engagement Award.

Indian peacekeepers awarded Medal of Honour under UNMISS

• A total of 150 Indian peacekeepers serving with the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) have received medals of honour for their dedicated service and sacrifice. India is one of the top troop contributing countries to UN peacekeeping missions. More than 200,000 military and police have served over the past 70 years and 168 Indian military personnel have lost their lives under the UN flag.

• India is the second largest contributor of peacekeepers to UNMISS with more than 2,400 military and police personnel currently deployed the mission.

• UNMISS stated that the Indian Horizontal Mobility Engineering Company serving with the mission completed the renovation of 145 km of roadway connecting Bentiu and Leer “easing the way for the delivery humanitarian aid, trade and inter-communal dialogue.”

Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards announces its 2019 winners list

• Winners in the sixth annual Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards, the awards programme to recognise innovation in business throughout the entire Asia-Pacific region.
Among the winners of the 2019 Asia-Pacific Stevie Awards are 18 organisations in India. In total, they’ll receive 43 Stevie Awards: 10 Gold Stevies, 19 Silver and 14 Bronze. This high number of Gold, Silver and Bronze Stevies is evidence of the great performance of organisations in India.

Among the top overall winners are PT Petrokimia Gresik (Indonesia) with eight Gold, nine Silver and 15 Bronze Stevie Awards and SM Supermalls (Philippines) with three Gold, 25 Silver and 20 Bronze Stevie wins.

All India Radio, Publication Division & Children's Film Society of India given Swacchta Pakhwada Awards-2019

All India Radio, Publication Division and Children's Film Society of India were given Swacchta Pakhwada Awards-2019 in New Delhi.

Secretary in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry Amit Khare gave away the awards. Director General of All India Radio F. Sheheryar and Director General (News) Ms. Ira Joshi received the Award for All India Radio.

LSE names a professorship after economist Amartya Sen

The London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) has announced the creation of the Amartya Sen Chair in Inequality Studies, named in honour of the India-born economist, philosopher and Nobel laureate, who was Professor of Economics at LSE from 1971-82.

Sen won the Nobel Prize in Economics in 1998 and National Humanities Medal in 2012, and is the recipient of many other honors. He works in welfare economics, development economics, social choice theory, economic theory, and political philosophy.

Helen, Salim Khan and Madhur Bhandarkar get Deenanath Mangeshkar award

National Award-winning filmmaker Madhur Bhandarkar, popular scriptwriter Salim Khan and yesteryears dancing diva Helen were honoured with the prestigious Master Deenanath Mangeshkar Award at a ceremony

1. For music and art - Classical dancer, Smt. Sucheta Bhide-Chapekar
2. Lifetime award (Jeevan Gaurav Puraskar) - Salim Khan
3. Special Award - Madhur Bhandarkar (for his contribution to Indian Cinema)
4. Special Award - Helen (for her contribution to Indian Cinema)
5. The Vagvilasini Award - Vasant Abaji Dahake (for Literature)
6. Mohan Wagh Award - Bhadrakali Productions “Soyare Sakal” (for Best Drama of the Year)
7. Anandmayee Puraskar - Pandit Suresh Talwalkar of Taalyogi Ashram (for espousing a social cause)

Neeraj, Sindhu picked for ESPN India Multi-Sport Awards

Olympic silver medallist P V Sindhu and star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra were named as female and male sportsperson of the year in the ESPN India Multi-Sport Awards for their achievements in 2018.

Sportsperson of the Year (Male) - Neeraj Chopra (athletics)
Sportsperson of the Year (Female) - P V Sindhu (badminton)
Comeback of the Year - Saina Nehwal (badminton)
Coach of the Year - Jaspal Rana (shooting)
Emerging Sportsperson of the Year - Saurabh Chaudhary (shooting)
Team of the Year - Women's team (table tennis)
Match of the Year - Amit Panghal vs Hasanboy Dusmatov (boxing)
Differently-abled athlete of the Year - Ekta Bhyan (para-athletics)
- Moment of the Year - Women's 4x400m relay
- Lifetime Achievement Award - Pradip Kumar Banerjee (football)

**Pulitzer Prize: 2019 Winners List**

- Pulitzer Prize is an award for achievements in newspaper, magazine and online journalism, literature, and musical composition in the United States.
- It was established in 1917 by provisions in the will of American (Hungarian-born) Joseph Pulitzer who had made his fortune as a newspaper publisher, and is administered by Columbia University in New York City.
- Prizes are awarded yearly in twenty-one categories. In twenty of the categories, each winner receives a certificate and a US$15,000 cash award.
- The winner in the public service category of the journalism competition is awarded a gold medal.

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<tr>
<th>SLNo</th>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Public service</td>
<td>South Florida Sun-Sentinel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Criticism</td>
<td>Carlos Lozada of The Washington Post</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Editorial Writing</td>
<td>Brent Staples of The New York Times</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Breaking News Reporting</td>
<td>staff of the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Investigative Reporting</td>
<td>Harriet Ryan, Matt Hamilton and Paul Pringle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Local Reporting</td>
<td>staff of The Advocate of Baton Rouge, Louisiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>National Reporting</td>
<td>staff of The Wall Street Journal</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Wa Lone, Kyaw Soe Oo and a team from Reuters |
| 10.  | Feature Writing         | Hannah Dreier of ProPublica                                           |
| 11.  | Commentary              | Tony Messenger                                                        |
| 12.  | Editorial Cartoons      | Darrin Bell                                                           |
| 13.  | Breaking News Photography| The photography staff of Reuters                                      |

**BOOKS, DRAMA, AND MUSIC**

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<tr>
<th>SLNo</th>
<th>Category</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>Fiction</td>
<td>The Overstory by Richard Powers</td>
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<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Fairview by Jackie Sibblies Drury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>General Nonfiction</td>
<td>Amity and Prosperity: One Family and the Fracturing of America by Eliza Griswold</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.</td>
<td>Drama</td>
<td>Fairview by Jackie Sibblies Drury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Frederick Douglass: Prophet of Freedom by David W. Blight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.</td>
<td>Autobiography or Biography</td>
<td>The New Negro: The Life of Alain Locke by Jeffrey C. Stewart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.</td>
<td>Poetry</td>
<td>Be With by Forrest Gander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Special Citation</td>
<td>Aretha Franklin</td>
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Important Committees

January

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Committee</th>
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<tr>
<td>Former Sebi chairman U.K. Sinha</td>
<td>Expert Committee on Micro, Small &amp; Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)</td>
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<tr>
<td>UIDAI's former Chairman Nandan Nilekani.</td>
<td>To boost digital payments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Sankar De</td>
<td>Research Advisory committee</td>
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<td>Nitin Patel (convener of the GoM)</td>
<td>To boost the real estate sector under the GST regime</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pravin Kutumbe</td>
<td>To identify systemically important insurers</td>
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EPFO’s central board of trustees notifies new committees

- Employees’ Provident Fund Organisation has notified new finance, investment and audit committee (FIAC), the pension and EDLI implementation committee (PEIC) and the exempted establishments’ committee (EEC)
- All the three committees will continue to have central government representatives as well as two representatives each of the employers and the employees and domain experts
- FIAC will oversee investments made by portfolio managers and ensure timely investment of PF kitty for optimum returns
- PEIC will review the function of the Employees’ Pension Scheme, 1995 and the Employees Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme, 1976 as well as consider amendments to the existing schemes
- The EEC will oversee the working of exempted establishments and move suggestions for CBT for improvement in the working of these exempted establishments

Madras HC Forms Committee to Weed out Invasive Plant Species

- The Madras High Court has set up an expert committee to find a solution to root out invasive species of plants from the Western Ghats, Committee will be headed by Cherukuri Raghavendra Babu, chairman of Expert Committee on Invasive Species, National Biodiversity Authority, Chennai
- It has also directed the panel to file a report on the ways to weed out such species within two months.

February

Punjab government sets up committee to boost dairy sector

- Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh announced a high-powered committee to prepare a comprehensive action plan to boost the dairy sector with the aim of supplementing the income of farmers in a result-oriented manner. The committee would consist of Chairman State Farmers Commission, Director Animal Husbandry, Director Dairy Development, a representative of Guru Angad Dev Veterinary and Animal Sciences University (GADVASU). It will suggest measures to promote diversification of agriculture with the aim of enhancing farmers’ income from allied sources.

Government sets up committee to explore prepaid payments by discoms to generator companies

- The government has constituted a committee under the Central Electricity Authority (CEA), On the recommendation of Cabinet Secretary P K Sinha, to explore prepaid payments by state electricity distribution companies to power plants. The formed committee consists of the chairman of distribution companies of Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra, and representatives from Union power ministry and power associations to look into problems of delayed payments from distribution companies to power generators.
RBI appoints five-member committee to deepen digital payments

- The central bank of the country has appointed 5-member committee under the chairmanship of Nandan Nilekani to further deepen digital payments and enhance financial inclusion through Fintech.
- This announcement made by Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das at the first event of Financial Technology (Fintech) Conclave, which was organized by NITI Aayog in New Delhi. The purpose of the event is to shape India’s predominance in FinTech, build the future strategy and policy to uplift the financial inclusion.

Government proposed 2 committees to probe complaints against Information Commissioners

- Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has proposed to constitute two bureaucratic committees to probe and decide on complaints against Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and Information Commissioners (ICs).
- It envisages setting up of two committees — one, to receive and decide on complaints against CIC and second one for complaints against ICs.
- **Committee for CIC**: It will comprise of Cabinet Secretary; DoPT Secretary and retired CIC.
- **Committee for ICs**: It will include Secretary (Coordination) in Cabinet Secretariat; DoPT Secretary, and retired IC.

**Important MOU**

IIT Bombay and public sector oil companies inked a MOU

- IIT Bombay and public sector oil companies inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for setting up Centre of Excellence in Oil, Gas and Energy. The MoU was signed by heads of Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Oil and Natural Gas Corp (ONGC), GAIL India Ltd, Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL), Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL), Oil India Ltd and Engineers India Ltd.

AAI signs MoU with SAMEER for boosting communication

- Airports Authority of India (AAI) signed MoU with Society for Applied Microwave Electronics Engineering and Research (SAMEER) for joint research programs in the field of Communication Navigation and Surveillance (CNS).
- AAI and SAMEER, an autonomous research and development (R and D) institute under MeitY have entered into an overarching MOU that will provide a platform for Collaborative Research for both the Organizations to work together.
- The MOU, on the one hand, will provide for the transfer of skill by SAMEER experts in the areas of Radio Frequency, Millimetre Wave and Antenna-related solutions to AAI domain experts, while on the other hand, it will pave way for exposure for the SAMEER researchers to the challenging Aviation field.

Indian Army signed MOU with Punjab National Bank

- A MoU was signed between the Indian Army and PNB on the Defence Salary Package. The signing ceremony was chaired by the Adjutant General, Lt Gen Ashwani Kumar and was attended by top dignitaries of PNB headed by Mr Naveen Kumar. Salient features of the improved and updated MoU are...
free ‘RAKSHAK PLUS’ Scheme for serving persons and veterans, overdraft facility range from Rs 0.75 to 3.0 lakhs, multicity ‘At Par’ cheques, instant credit of outstation cheques, preferential allotment of lockers at concessional AMC and free SMS alerts.

**NHAI to collaborate with Oil Marketing Companies for issuance of FASTags**

- Indian Highways Management Company Ltd. (IHMCL), a company promoted by NHAI, is signing MoUs with state-run Oil Marketing Companies (IOCL, BPC, and HPC). It will ensure availability of FASTags at petroleum outlets across India. In the first phase, the tags will be available across 50 Fuel Station in Delhi NCR, which will subsequently be expanded to outlets across India.
- IHMCL has been mandated to implement the National Electronic Toll Collection Program (NETC) in the country. The company launched the program under the brand name “FASTag” in April 2016. IHMCL is also planning the launch of two mobile applications MyFASTag and IHMCLPOS. These apps will enable customers to link the FASTags with their preferred bank account, recharge the FASTag via UPI platform, and also ensure that the tags are bank neutral.

**IRCTC offers free travel insurance for air travellers**

- The Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation has announced that passenger booking air ticket using its website irctc.co.in can avail free of cost travel insurance of Rs 50 lakh. IRCTC tied up with Bharti AXA General insurance company to provide free travel insurance. This facility will be available for passengers irrespective of the class of tickets and for both domestic and international flights. The insurance will provide them financial protection against accidental death and total or permanent disability. The premium for insurance will be borne by the IRCTC to secure its passengers from any untoward incident during the journey.

**BEE and CPWD signed MOU on promoting energy efficiency in buildings**

- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) and the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for cooperation in building energy efficiency. BEE and CPWD will cooperate on promoting designs and construction of Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) compliant new buildings, star rating of CPWD managed buildings across the country with no registration or renewal fee, awareness on energy efficiency in building sector and support for capacity building of CPWD officials in ECBC.
- In the first stage, approximately 150 buildings will be taken under a star rating scheme to promote energy efficiency in CPWD managed buildings, the Central Public Works Department under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA), the Bureau of Energy Efficiency is an agency of the Government of India, under the Ministry of Power created in March 2002 under the provisions of the nation's 2001 Energy Conservation Act.

**Ministry of Coal signs a MoU with Ministry of Energy, Republic of Poland**

- Ministry of Coal entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with Ministry of Energy, Republic of Poland.
  The MoU has been signed between Sh. Haribhai Parathibhai Chaudhary, Hon'ble Minister of State for Coal and Mines and Mr. Grzegorz Tobiszowski, Secretary of State, Ministry of Energy, Republic of Poland. The objective of this MoU is to foster relations in the field of coal mining and clean coal technologies through the already established Joint Coal Working Group as well as research institutes and academia between the two countries.
Indian Coast Guard signed MoU with AAI for maritime search and rescue
- Indian Coast Guard and the Airport Authority of India signed a Memorandum of Understanding, at Coast Guard Regional Headquarters in Port Blair, for coordination in the aeronautical and maritime search and rescue operations. MOU with Airport Authority of India (AAI) is aimed at strengthening mutual interactions, interoperability and validating procedures during conduct of search and rescue operations jointly by the Rescue Coordination Centre (RCC) Kolkata, Airport Authority of India (AAI) and Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC) in Port Blair.

BEL signs Teaming Agreement with Hughes India for Helicopter SATCOM solutions
- Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL) and Hughes India entered into a Teaming Agreement for design, development, supply, installation, integration and commissioning of Satellite Communication solutions for helicopters.
- Hughes India is a majority owned subsidiary of Hughes Network Systems, LLC, USA. Hughes India is the largest satellite service operator in India providing a comprehensive range of broadband networking technologies, solutions, and services for businesses and governments.

India, Sri Lanka signed MoU to establish business centre for ICT incubators in Jaffna
- India and Sri Lanka signed a Memorandum of Understanding to establish a business centre for ICT incubators in Jaffna, Sri Lanka, through grant of 25 crore Sri Lankan rupees from India.
- The MoU was signed by High Commissioner of India to Sri Lanka Mr. Taranjit Singh Sandhu, and Secretary, Ministry of Development Strategies and International Trade Mr. S. T. Kodikara in Colombo. The centre will provide opportunities and enhance the enabling environment for Information Communication Technology (ICT) and other professional services in the Northern region inhabited by minority Tamils.

MoUs signed between India and South Korea
- MoU on release of commemorative postal stamp on Queen Hur (Suriratna)
- MoU on Start-up Cooperation
- MoU between Korean National Police Agency and MHA on Combating Transnational Crime And Developing Police Cooperation
- MoU between Korean Broadcasting System (KBS) and Prasar Bharti on Cooperation in Broadcasting
- MoU between National Highways Authority of India and Korea Expressway Corporation

IIT-M ties up with THSTI to address public health issues
- IIT-Madras has entered into an agreement with Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) to address public health issues and predict adverse pregnancy outcomes using technology.
- A research collaboration agreement was signed during a conclave held here on 'Transforming Maternal and Child Healthcare Using Data Science'. The objective is to apply advanced analytical approach for prediction of adverse pregnancy outcomes, evaluate maternal and childhood consequences of exposure to environmental pollutants, among others.

FAGMIL signed MoU with Himachal Pradesh Government to establish White cement Plant Project
- FCI Aravali Gypsum and Minerals India Limited (FAGMIL) signed MoU with Himachal Pradesh Government to establish a white cement plant near village NohraDhar in Sirmour district, Himachal Pradesh, at a project cost of approximately Rs. 605 crores. It will be the 4th white cement plant in the country. The installed capacity of the plant would be 0.3 million tonnes per annum and it will generate the direct employment of approximately 150 persons. The plant is expected to be commenced by the year 2022.
• FAGMIL is a Government of India Undertaking, under the administrative control of Department of Fertilizers, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Government of India. It is engaged in mining and marketing of mineral gypsum in Rajasthan.

**GeM and CCI signed MOU to enable a fair and competitive environment in the e-Marketplace**

• Government e Marketplace (GeM) and Competition Commission of India (CCI) entered into a Memorandum of Understanding to enable a fair and competitive environment in the e-Marketplace. GeM is a state-of-the-art national public procurement platform of Ministry of Commerce and Industries, which has used technology to remove entry barriers for bonafide sellers and has created a vibrant e-marketplace with a wide range of goods and services.

• Competition Commission of India is a statutory body of the Government of India, responsible for enforcing the Competition Act, 2002 throughout India and to prevent activities that have an adverse effect on competition.

**India and Bangladesh signed MOU for training 1800 Bangladesh civil servants**

• India and Bangladesh have signed an MOU for training 1800 Bangladesh Civil Servants at the National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) an institute under the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DAR&PG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Government of India, over the next 6 years.

• The MOU was signed between the NCGG and the Ministry of Public Administration, Government of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh during the visit of the Foreign Minister of Bangladesh. The NCGG is planning to conduct 15 training programs in 2019 each of 2 weeks duration. The trainee officers will undergo training at the NCGG Mussoorie centre.

**ICAI signs pact with Invest India to promote foreign investment**

• The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has signed a pact with Invest India to promote foreign investments in the country and Indian investments abroad. Invest India is a government agency that promotes and facilitates investment in the country. The memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed by ICAI President Naveen N D Gupta and Invest India MD and CEO Deepak Bagla.

**EIL and Mongolia signed MOU for Project Management Consultancy for oil refinery**

• Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between Engineers India Ltd and Mongolia for Project Management Consultancy for oil refinery. Engineers India Ltd, a PSU under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

• The MOU was signed on the sidelines of PETROTECH-2019 event at Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The MoU is for Project Management Consultancy services for construction of an oil refinery plant in Mongolia by EIL.

• Government of Mongolia is in process to set-up 1.5 MMTPA greenfield crude oil refinery in Sainshand province, under Line of Credit (LoC) extended by Government of India

**NTPC signed a pact with SBI for Rs. 5000 crore term loan**

• State-owned power giant NTPC has signed a term loan agreement for Rs. 5,000 crore with State Bank of India

• The loan facility is extended at an interest rate linked to 3-Month MCLR of the Bank. This loan has a door to door tenure of 15 years and will be utilised to part finance the capital expenditure of NTPC

**NITI Aayog signed Statement of Intent with the MSDF to document systemic transformation in education**

• NITI Aayog signed a Statement of Intent with the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation (MSDF) to codify, document and share best practices to improve learning outcomes in public school education through systemic reforms, based on their collective experiences of working with various state governments in India.
- The SOI was signed in the presence of NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, by Alok Kumar, Adviser (HRD), NITI Aayog and Barun Mohanty, Managing Director (International), MSDF.

**India signed a legal agreements with the World Bank**

- The Shimla Water Supply and Sewerage Service Delivery Reform Programmatic Development Policy Loan is expected to improve water supply and sanitation (WSS) services in and around the iconic hill city of Shimla. The $40 Million Loan from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), has a 4-year grace period and a maturity of 15.5 years.

**GS1 India signed MoU with Government eMarketplace**

- GeM and GS1 India Sign MoU to Empower Buyers to Make Informed Choice
- This MoU will enable GeM's buyers and vendors to access accurate and standardised information on attributes of thousands of products across categories, empowering them to make more informed decisions. GS1 India, a standards organisation set up by the commerce and industry ministry. GeM will access product data from GS1 India’s DataKart, the National repository of information on attributes of millions of retail products in the country.

**Indian Oil Corporation signed USD 1.5 billion deal to buy US crude oil**

- Indian Oil Corporation (IOC) has signed an annual deal worth USD 1.5 billion to import 3 million tonnes of crude oil in the fiscal year beginning April 1. This is the first time Indian refiner has signed an annual contract since the country in 2017 began importing crude oil from the US. India first imported US crude oil in October 2017, and since then oil firms have been buying oil from that country on a tender basis.

**India, Paraguay agree to promote bilateral investment, explore new areas of collaboration**

- India and Paraguay have agreed to identify sectors of mutual interest to promote bilateral investment and decided to explore new areas of collaboration, including Information and Communication Technology, space and biotechnology.
- The decisions were taken as Vice President Venkaiah Naidu ongoing visit to the Latin American country. During the visit Naidu had meetings with Paraguay's President Mario Abdo Benítez, Vice President Hugo Velazquez and President of the National Congress (Senate) Silvio Ovelar.
- Both sides agreed to jointly celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. India welcomed the issuance of a commemorative postal stamp in Paraguay.

**National Centre for Good Governance inks pact with Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs**

- The National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) and Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA) have signed an MoU. To ensure better utilisation of infrastructure facilities during training programme.
- NCGG aims to promote good governance through capacity building on public policy and governance both at national and international level and carrying out studies research on issues relating to governance.
- National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG) has been set up by the Government of India (GoI) under the Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions. The IICA, registered as a society, is under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs with the primary objective of establishing, managing, maintaining and running a world class institute.

**Korea Exim Bank to give Rs. 4,100 crore loan for Vizag Metro**

- The Export-Import Bank of Korea (KEXIM) has come forward to extend a loan of Rs. 4,100 crore for the Visakhapatnam metro rail project.
• A team of officials from Korea EXIM Bank called on Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary A.C. Punetha and discussed the loan proposal and related issues. The state government had earlier sent a proposal in this regard to the Central government, which in turn forwarded it to Korea Exim Bank.

• The three-corridor Vizag Metro would be built over a stretch of 42.55 km at a cost of Rs. 8,300 crore.

Ministries of WCD & Skill Development sign MoU to improve women livelihood

• Women and Child Development Ministry and Skill Development Ministry signed an MoU for improving women livelihood and empowering them through skill development. The MoU was signed in the presence of Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Sanjay Gandhi and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister Dharmendra Pradhan.

• Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) and the National Skill Development Council (NSDC) will be the implementing partners on behalf of the Ministry of Women and Child Development and Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship respectively.

• Skill Development ministry of Women and Child Development through Rashtriya Mahila Kosh will identify the types of skill which are suitable for enhancing livelihood of women through self-employment.

India Signs USD 3 Billion Deal with Russia to Lease Nuclear Submarine

• The Government of India has signed a USD 3 billion deal with Russian Government for the lease of a nuclear-powered attack submarine for the Indian Navy for a period of 10 years. Russia will deliver its Akula class 1 submarine to the Indian Navy by 2025. This submarine will be known as Chakra III. It will be the third Russian submarine to be leased to the Indian Navy. The first Russian nuclear powered submarine - christened INS Chakra was taken in 1988 under a three year lease. A second INS Chakra was taken on lease in 2012 for a period of 10 years.

India and Costa Rica signed two documents

• India and Costa Rica signed two documents during Vice President Venkaiah Naidu’s first visit to the Central American nation.

• The two documents based on waiving visa requirements for Diplomatic and Official passport holders and the signing of the Letter of Intent to collaborate in the field of Biotechnology.

HP signs MoU with AP government to set up additive manufacturing centre

• HP India has signed an MoU with Andhra Pradesh Innovation Society (APIS) and Andhra Pradesh Economic Development Board (APEDB) to build a Center of Excellence (CoE) for additive manufacturing powered by HP’s 3D printing technology.

• The CoE is part of the state government’s vision to accelerate adoption of 3D printing in various industry sectors such as automotive, aerospace, defence, consumer goods, healthcare, apparel and construction.

• The CoE will give Small and Medium Businesses (SMBs) and Start-ups in Andhra Pradesh the opportunity to learn more about the benefits of additive manufacturing, and how they can make use of 3D printing to digitally transform their own operations or to grow their business.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board inks cooperation agreement with IFC

• The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has signed a Cooperation Agreement with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the World Bank Group (WBG). The agreement was signed by K. R. Saji Kumar, Executive Director, IBBI and Jun Zhang, Country Manager, IFC India, in the presence of Injeti Srinivas, Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, and M. S. Sahoo, Chairperson, IBBI.

• The agreement will enable IFC to assist IBBI to further build the capacity of insolvency professionals, and insolvency professional agencies for the purposes of the Code.
ISRO, French space agency seal agreement on maritime security

- The French space agency, National Centre for Space Studies (CNES), has signed an agreement with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to set up a maritime surveillance centre in India. K. Sivan, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation, and Jean-Yves Le Gall, President of CNES of France, signed the agreement in Bengaluru.
- The two nations will explore putting up a constellation of low-Earth orbiting satellites that will identify and track movement of ships globally — and in particular those moving in the Indian Ocean region where France has its Reunion Islands.

Microsoft’s Project accelerates India’s Swachh Bharat e-learning portal

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) has partnered with Microsoft India to use the platform ProjectSangam of Microsoft on its Swachh Bharat e-Learning Portal. With this partnership, the MoHUA has increased the features on the Swachh Bharat e-Learning Portal. With this now MoHUA has now trained more than 110,000 municipal functionaries on best sanitation practices across 4,000 plus cities in India.
- The Sangam platform was designed to train municipal functionaries of state sanitation missions, city managers - engineers, administrators, field supervisors and sanitation workers with an aim to equip, assess, measure and accredit training of these officers. It also provided video-based learning for users who have low-bandwidth supporting offline learning for the Swachh Bharat e-Learning Portal.

Japan announces Rs. 22 lakh for Kolkata museum

- The Japanese government announced a donation of some Rs. 22 lakh ($31,800) to the Rabindra Bharati Museum, in a bid to strengthen historical and cultural ties with India. To refurbish the Japan Gallery of the museum, a MoU will be signed between the Consul General of Japan in Kolkata, Masayuki Taga, and the Vice Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University, Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury. Tagore, Asia’s first Nobel Prize recipient, visited Japan in 1916, 1924 and 1929, renewing relations between the countries as India’s leading cultural ambassador.

India extends USD 250 mn to Nepal for reconstruction of infrastructures post earthquake

- India has extended a grant assistance of up to USD 250 million to Nepal for the reconstruction of infrastructures in the areas of housing, education, health and cultural heritage that was destroyed during the devastating April 2015 earthquake.
- During the India-Nepal Joint Project Monitoring Committee meeting held on March 12th in Kathmandu officials from the two countries reviewed the progress of post-earthquake reconstruction projects. Earlier India stated that it will reconstruct 72 education facilities in Nepal that were damaged during the earthquake.

GoDaddy partners with ICC as official sponsor for Cricket World Cup 2019

- Website hosting company GoDaddy announced its partnership with International Cricket Council (ICC) as official sponsor for the upcoming men's cricket World Cup. The 2019 World Cup will be held in the UK from May 30 to July 14. This time they are engaging with ICC for men's World Cup 2019 which is expected to reach out to around 700 million people in India and 1.5 billion people globally," GoDaddy India MD and Vice President Nikhil Arora.
- Under the partnership, GoDaddy will get visibility on ground, perimeter of the boundary, side screen, placards during the matches. MS Dhoni was brand ambassador of GoDaddy.

PFC to lend Rs. 30,000 crore to Telangana irrigation schemes

- State-owned public sector undertaking Power Finance Corporation has agreed to extend another credit line of Rs. 30,000 crore to Telangana to help complete some of the major ongoing irrigation projects, including Kaleshwaram, Sita Rama and Palamuru-Rangareddy schemes. PFC has extended loans of over Rs. 40,000
crore to ongoing power and irrigation projects in Telangana. The break-up shows Rs. 23,000 crore has been extended for various power projects, including Yadadri and Rs. 17,000 crore for electro-mechanical works of irrigation projects.

IIT Roorkee collaborates with ISRO to set up Space Technology Cell
- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee in Uttarakhand tied up with the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to set up a Space Technology Cell at its campus. The need to strengthen their institutional interactions and thereby enhance the scope of the activities pursued under STC commensurate with the programmatic goals of ISRO.
- The activities of STC shall be directed to maximise the use of the research potential, infrastructure, expertise and experience that already exist in ISRO and IIT Roorkee. IIT Roorkee will be responsible for overall management of Space Technology Cell by providing required infrastructure, administrative and other support.

FeFA Girls Initiative - A New Collaborative Project with ICRISAT partnered with Telangana Govt
- FeFA (Iron for Adolescent Girls), a new initiative to address malnutrition among adolescents was launched.
- Through this project, ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) will work in partnership with the Government of Telangana to address these important issues. FeFA Girls includes two components: i) to establish diet-based approaches for improvement in haemoglobin and iron status in adolescent girls, and ii) to generate scientific evidence on nutritional benefits of groundnut and pearl millet (ICRISAT mandate crops) on human health. The initiative will target girls in the age group of 16 to 19 years from social welfare hostels in Telangana.

IIT KGP is getting India’s first-of-its-kind supercomputer
- The IIT Kharagpur has signed a MoU with Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) to set up a Petaflop high performance computing facility and data center funded under the National Supercomputing Mission.
- The department of science and technology (DST), along with experts from Niti Ayog, DRDO and IISc, will help IIT Kharagpur develop this supercomputer. A Petaflops is a unit of computing speed equal to 1,000 million million (1015) floating-point operations per second. PetaFlop is the measurement of computing power based on the frequency of mathematical calculations that can be done per second.
- The development of Centre for 1.3 PetaFlop High-Performance Computing facility will aid research in niche areas like healthcare, smart cities, geoscience, new material etc among others.

India & Afghanistan signed a MoU on digital education initiatives
- The Ministry of Human Resource Development has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Afghanistan government to work on digital education initiatives, which include many prominent programs developed by Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs). The MoU was signed at IIT-Madras.
- This collaboration hopes to contribute to bilateral relations and beget mutual benefits for the two countries.
- One of the main objectives of the MoU is to facilitate students and faculty from Afghanistan to enrol and learn from the courses offered on Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM), which is an online education platform developed by Government of India.

Maldives sign agreement with Exim Bank to finance new government’s infrastructure projects
- Maldives finance ministry has signed an agreement with India’s Export-Import bank (EXIM) for line of credit (LOC) of 800 million US dollars to finance the new government’s infrastructure projects. The LOC is part of 1.4 billion US dollars finance assistance announced by Indian government during President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih’s state visit in December. The EXIM Bank loans come with a 1.75 percent interest rate and
a 15-year repayment period after five years of moratorium. The agreement was signed in presence of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj who was on a 2-day visit to Male.

**Ola signs MoU with Telangana government to implement smart traffic solutions in Hyderabad**

- Ola, one of the world’s largest ride-hailing platforms, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Telangana, to support their efforts towards strengthening the traffic infrastructure in Hyderabad city.
- Under the partnership, Ola share intelligent insights that enable the Government to implement smart solutions to enhance the mobility experience in the city. The first pilot project proposed to be implemented is the dynamic mapping of the ride quality of major roads in Hyderabad through Ola vehicles.

**WhatsApp partners with NASSCOM to Impart Digital Literacy**

- WhatsApp and NASSCOM Foundation came together to impart digital literacy training to curb fake news during the general elections. As part of the partnership, WhatsApp and NASSCOM Foundation will train nearly 1,00,000 Indians to spot false information and provide tips and tricks to stay safe on WhatsApp.

**SBI inks pact with Bank of China for business opportunities**

- The country’s largest lender SBI stated that it has signed a pact with the Bank of China to boost business opportunities. Both SBI and BoC will gain direct access to their respective markets of operation.
- SBI has a branch in Shanghai and BOC is opening its branch in Mumbai. This MoU will facilitate the clients of both the banks to access banking products and services of each other, which will lead to a mutually beneficial relationship.

**Exim Bank gives $83 mn line of credit to Congo**

- Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) has, on behalf of the government, extended three lines of credit (LOC) aggregating $83.11 million to the government of Congo to finance three solar power projects in the central African country. The loan will be utilised for financing three solar photovoltaic power projects with a total capacity of 35 megawatt in the three provinces -- Karawa, Mbandaka and Lusambo.
- The LOC agreements were exchanged between Ambassador of Congo to India Mossi Nyamale Rosette and Exim Bank Managing Director David Rasquinha during the 14th CII-Exim Conclave 2019 which was held at New Delhi.
- Exim Bank, till date, has extended 10 LOC to the government of Congo on behalf of government of India, taking the total value of LOCs extended to $578.05 million. With this line of credit, Exim Bank has now put in place 244 LOCs covering 63 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the CIS with credit commitments of around $23.43 billion available for financing exports from India.

**IBBI signs MoU with SEBI for better implementation of IBC**

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for effective implementation of the new bankruptcy law.
- The IBBI and the SEBI seek effective implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code) and its allied rules and regulations, which have redefined the debt-equity relationship and aims to promote entrepreneurship and debt market.
- They have agreed under the MoU to assist and co-operate with each other for the effective implementation of the Code, subject to limitations imposed by the applicable laws.

**Pakistan to receive $ 2.1 billion loan from China**

- Pakistan will receive a loan worth 15 billion yuan ($ 2.1 billion) from China by next week.
- The loan facility will further strengthen foreign exchange reserves and ensure balance of payment stability. Pakistan has already secured a bailout package worth $6 billion from Saudi Arabia.
Japan gives $69m to UN World Food Programme

- Japan has donated 69 million dollars to the United Nations World Food Programme to provide vital aid to 28 countries in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia, with the biggest shares of the money earmarked for Yemen and Iraq.

- Japan is one of WFP's top donors and has so far contributed $958 million to UN-WFP y since 2014.

PFC signs pact to acquire majority stake in REC for Rs 14,500 crore

- State-owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC) has signed a share purchase agreement to acquire all 52.63 per cent shares of the government in Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) for about Rs 14,500 crore.

- Under this agreement, PFC will acquire 103.94 crore equity shares of Rs 10 of REC from President constituting 52.63% of paid-up share capital. With this PFC is now slated to become a promoter and the holding company of REC.

- The acquisition will enable increased efficiencies in lending processes and policies across both institutions, and create public value by offering better loan products to the power sector.

ESPNcricinfo in partnership with IIT Madras launches data science based ‘Superstats’

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Madras has launched data science-based ‘Superstats,’ to analyse Cricket games.

- Launched in association with ESPNcricinfo, Superstats is a combination of stats metrics - Luck Index, Forecaster and Smart Stats that uses data science for the first time to give a context to every event in a game and also venture into new territories such as luck and forecasting. Researchers from IIT Madras along with its incubated company Gyan Data acquired ball-by-ball database that has more than ten years of detailed data, and scientific methods, processes and complex algorithms based on machine learning (ML). The work was led by Raghunathan Rengaswamy and Mahesh Panchagnula.

Oman signs agreement allowing United States military to use its ports

- Oman has signed an agreement with the United States that allow American ships and warplanes to take advantage of his ports and airports. The agreement will allow the US forces to take advantage from the facilities offered at some of the Sultanate’s ports and airports during visits of the US military vessels and aircraft, particularly in the port of Duqm. Duqm port is located in southern Oman on the Arabian Sea and around 500 kilometres from the Strait of Hormuz.

eBay adds Google Pay to its managed payments program

- eBay announced adding Google Pay to its suite of payment options as part of its move to intermediate end-to-end payments on its marketplace. With the integration, Google Pay users will be able to complete purchases on eBay via the app, mobile web and on desktop from sellers participating in eBay’s managed payments program, while shoppers using the Google Pay digital wallet will be able to complete purchases on desktop.

- eBay's new managed payments approach to payments after it decided to cut ties with long-standing partner and former subsidiary PayPal. Dutch fintech company Adyen is set to become eBay's primary payments processor after the current PayPal deal expires in mid-2020. Earlier, eBay added Apple Pay as a payment method under its managed payments programme.

Apple partners with Goldman Sachs and Mastercard for Apple Card

- Apple card is a virtual credit card that can be integrated into the Wallet app of the iPhone. The company has partnered with Goldman Sachs and Mastercard for payment handling and processing.

- The idea behind the launch of this new service is to replace the traditional credit card with a new, smarter and secure payment method across online and offline stores.
• There is also a physical titanium credit card which does not have any other information apart from the Apple Logo and the card holder’s name below it. This also means that there is no CVV, credit card number, expiration date, and signature that are usually found on traditional cards. All this information is stored in a special security chip used by Apple Pay called Secure Element.

India-African Union sign MoU on strengthening cooperation in healthcare sector
• An agreement has been signed between India and the African Union to establish an India-Africa health sciences collaborative platform.
• The MoU will pave the way for cooperation in research and development, capacity building, health services, pharmaceutical trade and manufacturing capabilities for drugs and diagnostics.

India, US ink pact to check tax evasion by MNCs
• India and the US signed an agreement for exchange of country-by-country (CbC) report
• The move that is expected to give a huge relief to subsidiaries of US headquartered companies in taxation-related matter. The agreement was signed by PC Mody, Chairman, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), and Kenneth I Juster, US Ambassador to India.
• This agreement for exchange of CbC reports, along with the Bilateral Competent Authority Arrangement, will enable both the countries to automatically exchange CbC reports filed by the ultimate parent entities of multinational enterprises (MNEs) in the respective jurisdictions, pertaining to the years commencing on or after January 1, 2016

Infosys, Roland-Garros team up for digital innovation
• Infosys and Roland-Garros Grand Slam tennis tournament, also called the French Open, announced a three-year strategic technology partnership. The partnership aims to re-imagine the tennis experience for the fans and the players globally

PFC completes REC acquisition pays Rs 14,500 crore to government
• State-owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC) completed the acquisition of majority stake in (REC) Rural Electrification Corporation Ltd by transferring Rs. 14,500 crore to the government.
• The transaction has helped the government meet its disinvestment target of Rs 80,000 crore for the current financial year. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs had approved the strategic sale of the government’s 52.63 percent shareholding in REC to PFC, along with the transfer of management control in December 2018.
• PFC has raised money from Bank of Baroda, Life Insurance Corporation and State Bank of India, among others, to make the payment.

IIT-Kharagpur partnered with Wipro for advanced research in 5G and AI
• IT services major Wipro has partnered with IIT Kharagpur to collaborate on industry-focused applied research in the areas of 5G and artificial intelligence (AI). The two organisations will focus on AI research applicable in the healthcare, education and retail sectors as well as in domains such as climate change and cybersecurity.
• In addition, subject matter experts from Wipro and IIT-Kharagpur will promote knowledge sharing through guest lectures, workshops and seminars on 5G and AI.
• Wipro and IIT Kharagpur will jointly take up applied research projects on industry challenges related to the design, planning and operations of 5G networks and cognitive information processing for the automation of these processes and 5G use cases.

India, US renew triangular development cooperation in Asia and Africa
India and the United States signed the First Amendment to the Statement of Guiding Principles (SGP) on Triangular Cooperation for Global Development, mainly focused on Asia and Africa. It renews SGP agreement, which was signed by both countries in November 2014.

It extends its validity up to 2021. It also expands scope of capacity building activities undertaken jointly by India and US under this framework. India and US will continue to offer capacity building assistance to partner countries in multiple sectors, focusing primarily on agriculture, trade and investments, nutrition, health, water, sanitation, education, women empowerment, regional connectivity, clean and renewable energy, disaster preparedness and institution building.

It will help to fulfil India-US joint commitment to work together and leverage their combined capacities to provide demand-driven development partnership.

**UNICEF, NITI Aayog tie up for children empowerment**

- NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and UNICEF India signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to provide an open platform to promote participation, skilling and empowerment among young children across different communities.
- As per a release, the plan will be implemented through Atal Tinkering Lab initiative to orient the burgeoning innovation ecosystem towards achieving Sustainable Development Goals with a focus on child rights.

**Indian Army signs MoU with NHPC for construction of tunnels on China, Pakistan borders**

- Indian Army signed an MoU with National Hydroelectric Power Corporation Limited (NHPC) to construct tunnels on borders with China and Pakistan for storage of ammunition and other war-related equipment.
- Under the pilot project, three tunnels will be built on China border while one will be built along the Line of Control with Pakistan.
- It is difficult to move heavy equipment in the mountainous region bordering China due to lack of infrastructure development, the tunnel will strengthen the defensive capabilities of the Army as well as protect the ammunition and other stored equipment from the air-strikes and detection by the enemy satellite.

**India offers USD 100 Million LOC to Bolivia, inks multiple agreements**

- Under the framework of South-South Cooperation, India has offered $100 million Line of Credit to Bolivia for financing development projects. Accompanied by a 100-member strong official delegation, President Ramnath Kovind had wide ranging discussions with his counterpart President Evo Morales of Bolivia.
- The discussions focussed on political, economic and cultural issues including space, mining, IT, pharmaceutical and traditional medicines.

**Reliance Mutual Fund customers partners with Google to launch voice-based transactions**

- Customers of Reliance Mutual Fund can now carry out voice-based financial transactions, with Reliance Nippon Life Asset Management (RNAM) partnering with internet major Google.
- With this, **RNAM becomes the first company in India**, to provide conversational interface that would help customers regarding funds transactions.
- In the first phase, the functionality would be launched in **Reliance Simply Save app** for the customers.
- RNAM is a joint venture between Anil Ambani-led Reliance Capital and Japan's Nippon Life Insurance Co Ltd.

**India and Chile exchange three MoUs for cooperation**

- India and Chile signed three MoUs in the fields of mining, culture and empowerment of persons with disabilities.
President Kovind arrived in Chile on a three-day visit is on the last leg of his three-nation tour that included Bolivia and Croatia. Chile announced that it will allow visa-free entry to Indian nationals holding a valid visa of the United States of America.

In addition, both India and Chile agreed to explore opportunities for other cooperation in the defence, space research and explorations.

**India inks an agreement with a development bank for setting up Institute of Agriculture & Rural Development in Malawi**

- India signed an agreement with a development bank for setting up India-Africa Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development (IAIARD) in Malawi. The ministry of External affairs signed the MoU with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Consultancy Service (NABCONS).
- The agreement was signed as a part of India's efforts to enhance capacity in the areas of agro-financing and entrepreneurship development for African countries.

**ICC to join hands with Interpol to tackle corruption in sport**

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) has sought closer working relations with the Interpol to widen the scope of its fight against corruption in the sport. The idea is to ensure that players are better educated about the corruptors and Interpol's vast network would be helpful in this.

**Tata Power, Indraprastha Gas ink pact for rooftop solar projects**

- Tata Power has signed a pact with Indraprastha Gas Limited (IGL) for setting up rooftop solar projects in the country. Tata Power is India's largest integrated power utility, IGL is country's largest CNG distribution company.
- The pact signed between Tata Power and IGL is for green energy solutions including rooftop solar projects, various integrated services including setting up of commercial scale EV charging/battery swapping stations.

**18 Advance Pricing Agreements signed in March by CBDT**

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has entered into 18 Advance Pricing Agreements (APAs) in March this year, including three bilateral APAs. The three bilateral APAs were signed with Australia, Netherlands and the US. The BAPAs and Unilateral APAs (UAPAs) pertain to various sectors and sub-sectors of the economy like anti-friction bearings, risk management solutions platforms, BPO, IT/ITeS, ATMs, industrial and institutional cleaning and hygiene products.
- With the signing of these APAs, the total number of APAs entered into by the CBDT in the year 2018-19 stands at 52, which includes 11 bilateral APAs. The total number of APAs entered into by the CBDT as of now stands at 271, which includes 31 bilateral APAs.

**Bureau of Indian Standards inks an MoU with IIT, Delhi**

- The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) has inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Indian Institute of Technology in Delhi to collaborate in the field of standardisation and conformity assessment.
- The MoU was signed by IIT Delhi Director Professor V Ramgopal Rao and Director General of BIS Surina Rajan.
- According to the MoU, IIT Delhi will provide infrastructure support for research and development projects of relevance to standardisation and BIS will provide financial support to IIT Delhi for projects.

**BSE, India INX become first Indian exchanges to sign MoU with Moscow Exchange**

- BSE (earlier known as Bombay Stock Exchange) and India International Exchange (India INX) have signed a memorandum of understanding with Moscow Exchange (MOEX) to connect investor community and companies in both countries besides allowing a capital formation platform.
- With this, BSE and India INX has become the first Indian Exchanges to enter into the MoU with Moscow exchange and will facilitate the development of channels of communication. The MoU will help to boost...
professional intermediaries in both markets to share their know-how and expand their client network in their home market and abroad.

**Saudi Arabia's King Salman grants Iraq $1 billion to build sport city**
- Saudi Arabia will fund the construction of a $1 billion sports city in Iraq as well as open four consulates.
- Riyadh has been courting Baghdad in efforts to boost economic and trade ties and fend off Tehran’s influence in the region. The sports city would be located in Baghdad. There are 13 agreements which are ready to be signed.

**NTPC signs Rs. 2,000 cr term loan pact with Canara Bank**
- State-run power giant NTPC has inked a term-loan agreement with Canara Bank to raise Rs. 2,000 crore, which would be used to part finance its capital expenditure. The loan facility is extended at an interest rate linked to 3-Month MCLR of the Bank.
- In February this year, NTPC had signed a term loan agreement for Rs. 5,000 crore with State Bank of India. The loan facility from SBI was also aimed at part financing the company's capital expenditure.

**NIIF, ROADIS to create a platform to invest $2 billion in road projects**
- National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and PSP Investment owned ROADIS will together create a platform to invest $2 billion in road projects.
- The platform will invest up to $2 billion of equity to target Toll Operate Transfer (TOT) models, acquisitions of existing road concessions and investment opportunities in the road sector with the aim of creating a large roads platform in the country

**BSE, HDFC Bank tie up to strengthen startup platform**
- The BSE has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with HDFC Bank with an objective to strengthen the BSE Startups platform. The exchange had launched the startup platform on December 22, with an aim to encourage entrepreneurs to get listed and raise equity capital for their growth and expansion.
- BSE is the first exchange to have launched the Start Up platform. The idea was to help entrepreneurs look beyond the conventional channels of raising capital and enable them to list on the stock exchange to further enhance the credibility of the firm.

**PFS partners USICEF for financing solar projects**
- Infrastructure finance company PFS has joined hands with the US-India Clean Energy Finance (USICEF) to leverage funds for solar projects in India.
- It is an innovative facility which presents PFS with an opportunity to finance and deploy high-impact development projects which can contribute in achieving India’s distributed energy target of 40 GW by 2022.
- PFS has sanctioned 3 distributed solar power projects with a total debt of Rs. 242 crore.
- Climate Policy Initiative (CPI) manages USICEF that was founded in partnership with the Indian Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, OPIC (Overseas Private Investment Corporation), IREDA (Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Ltd.) and leading U.S. Foundations in 2017.

**India gets its first ‘Cold Spray’ SMART lab with IIT Madras-GE collaboration**
- IIT Madras in collaboration with General Electric (GE) established India’s first ‘Cold Spray’ SMART (Surface Modification and Additive Research Technologies) Laboratory. With this, IIT Madras is now the only academic institution in India, which has a first-of-its-kind High-Pressure Cold Spray (HPCS) facility.
• The lab has been set up with the Government of India’s support under its ‘Uchchatar Avishkar Yojana’ (UYAY).

Google Pay users can now buy gold from app in partnership with MMTC-PAMP India
• Aiming to make Google Pay more useful for Indian users, Google announced its partnership with MMTC-PAMP India for buying and selling of gold through the application.
• MMTC-PAMP India Pvt. Ltd is an internationally recognised metal and mining service provider.
• Google Pay users can purchase gold for any value that will be stored in secure vaults on their behalf by MMTC-PAMP. The users can buy and sell the gold any time at the latest price, refreshed every few minutes, as displayed on the Google Pay app.

India, Sweden ink pact to collaborate on solutions for smart cities, clean tech
• India and Sweden launched a joint programme that will work towards addressing a range of challenges around smart cities and clean technologies among others.
• The programme was co-funded by Indian Department of Science and Technology (DST) and Swedish agency Vinnova.
• Vinnova will provide funding to Swedish participants up to 2,500,000 Swedish Krona (around Rs 1.87 crore) as grant. On the Indian side, conditional grant of up to 50 per cent (with a limit of Rs 1.5 crore) per project will be provided to the Indian partners.

RBL Bank ties up with CreditVidya for improving customer experience
• RBL Bank has partnered with credit profiler CreditVidya to improve the lender's customer experience.
• Through this partnership, the private sector lender will be able to gain significant insights into its customer base.
• This in turn will allow it to improve user experience and build customised offerings for over 15 lakh customers.
• The bank had first partnered with CreditVidya in 2018 for instant and automated verification of employment details of salaried card applicants.

AITA signs MoU with Serbian Tennis Federation to train junior players
• The All India Tennis Association (AITA) has signed an MoU with Serbian Tennis Federation (STF) to train Indian junior players under world renowned Serbian coaches, at the RK Khanna Stadium.
• The two federations expressed their intention to cooperate within the scope of mandates and sphere of competence to work towards the development of junior tennis players in India.
• Both the federations have also agreed to work on the education of officials, coaches and physical trainers and their exchange for tournaments.

SBI and PAISALO Digital Limited enable MSME segment with income generation loans
• PAISALO Digital Limited signed the first co-origination loan agreement with State Bank of India, the first agreement of its kind in the country that State Bank of India has signed. Introducing a platform for the last mile customer, the loan ticket is designed at Rs 10,000 to 2 lakh. The company expects to disburse 200,000 loan applications in FY20.
• PAISALO Digital Limited is a leading systemically important non-deposit taking NBFC registered with the Reserve Bank of India, in operations since 1992. The agreement was signed with a vision of empowering the AGRI, MSME segment and small businesses.

Airtel merger with TTSL
• Bharti Airtel has confirmed that it has received in-principal approval from the telecom department for merger with Tata Teleservices (TTSL), subject to the condition that Sunil Mittal firm provides bank guarantees of about Rs. 7,200 crore.
• Manoj Sinha, telecom minister has conditionally approved the merger and that letters mentioning the guarantees were sent to Tata Teleservices Limited and its listed unit Tata Teleservices Maharashtra (TTML).

CMFRI, ISRO ink MoU to protect smaller wetlands
• A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the CMFRI and the Space Applications Centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). As per the MoU, the two institutes aim to identify and demarcate wetlands, and restore the degraded wetlands through suitable livelihood options like coastal aquaculture.
• The app will be used for real-time monitoring of the wetlands and giving advisories to stakeholders and coastal people. The collaborative move was part of a national framework for fisheries and wetlands recently developed by the National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) project of CMFRI.

India to partner with Japan and UAE to set up two projects in Africa
• India is joining hands with Japan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to implement two projects in Africa as it seeks to extend its footprint on the continent where strategic rival China has made deep inroads.
• While India will build a cancer hospital in Kenya in collaboration with Japan, it will partner with the UAE to set up an information and communications technology (ICT) centre in Ethiopia.
• Through this partnership, India has undertaken many projects like the ambitious Pan African e-network project on tele-education and tele-medicine which provides “integrated” satellite, fiber optics and wireless network between educational and medical institutes in Africa and India.

ICC partners with UNICEF to deliver ‘One Day for Children’ at Men’s Cricket World Cup 2019
• ICC Cricket for Good, in partnership with UNICEF, announced ‘One Day for Children’ bringing together cricket’s one billion fans to help build a better world for every child.
• #OneDay4Children will use the power and reach of the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup 2019 to help children learn play and be healthy. The money raised will support UNICEF’s work for children in cricket playing nations across the world
• The campaign will conclude at the England v India game at Edgbaston on 30 June.

BoM joins M1Xchange TReDS platform for MSME bill discounting
• Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) has partnered with M1Xchange Trade Receivables Discounting System (TReDS) platform for MSME bill discounting. TReDS is a digital platform to support micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to get their bills financed at a competitive rate through an auction where multiple registered financiers can participate.
• Mynd Solutions is a technology management firm which runs the TReDS platform of M1Xchange.
• The cost of funds will be reduced for MSMEs as banks will be bidding based on the risk rating of a corporate.

IIT Hyderabad to set up drone development centre for India
• IIT Hyderabad has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Japanese firm Terra Drone Corporation and its Indian subsidiary to set up a first-of-its-kind Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, or drones. Terra Drone India
• It will help IIT Hyderabad in organising workshops, seminars, lectures and joint projects. It plans to offer internship programmes to students.

Airtel Payments Bank ties up with Bharti AXA for two wheeler insurance
• Airtel Payments Bank has tied up with Bharti AXA General Insurance to offer two-wheeler insurance to its customers across India. This insurance will be available on My Airtel app and at over 40,000 Airtel Payments Bank - banking points, with presence even in rural India.
TCS modernises 1.5 lakh post offices under multi-year deal with India Post

- India's largest IT services company Tata Consultancy Services has deployed an integrated solution for India Post that has helped modernise a network of more than 1.5 lakh post offices in the country.
- The partnership was aimed at equipping India Post with modern technologies and systems to enable it to offer more services to the customers in an effective manner. In 2013, the Mumbai-based company had announced receiving an over Rs 1,100-crore multi-year contract from the Department of Posts (DoP) for an end-to-end IT modernisation programme.

BSE ties up with Network Intelligence to provide security services

- BSE, India’s largest stock exchange has entered a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Network Intelligence, a global cybersecurity services provider to provide cybersecurity services to its members in line with the cybersecurity framework set by SEBI.
- Network Intelligence will be using its own developed platform – BlueScope to offer 24x7 cyber security operations to the members. Earlier, BSE had associated with John Chambers’ backed Lucideus to secure stock brokers as per SEBI guidelines using SAFE.
- BSE (formerly Bombay Stock Exchange) established in 1875, is Asia's first & now the world's fastest Stock Exchange with a speed of 6 microseconds.

Ministry of AYUSH in MoU with CSIR

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Ministry of AYUSH and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) for cooperation in research and education in areas of traditional systems of medicine and its integration with modern science.
- Under the MoU, both the organisations will jointly pursue R&D covering fundamental research; AYUSH specific diagnostic tools; linking microbiome, gene expression and prakriti; multi-ingredient herbal formulations, including their standardisation; exploring modern scientific methods for integration with traditional Indian Systems of Medicine (ISM); linking disease signatures; preserving and protecting traditional knowledge related to the Indian systems of healthcare through the existing TKDL platform; and, Development of international standardised terminologies (disease-morbidity codes) in Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani (ASU), Database on Medicinal plants, Foods, etc.

BEMl ties-up with Syndicate Bank for financing of equipment

- Syndicate Bank and BEML have signed a MoU for financing Earth Moving & Construction Equipment manufactured by BEML. Under the MOU, BEML will nominate Syndicate Bank as a preferred financer for financing its customers.
- The customers under the tie-up arrangement will be provided loans in the range of Rs. 20 lakh to Rs. 3 crore and preferential pricing by Syndicate Bank. Financing Equipment of BEML will be covered under 'SPECIAL' scheme of the Bank. Syndicate Bank and BEML expect to book business worth Rs.100 crore by March 2020.

Huawei, Infosys ink partnership pact for cloud computing business

- Chinese telecom company Huawei’s business arm, Huawei Cloud, and IT firm, Infosys, signed a memorandum on strategic cooperation to jointly develop solutions around cloud computing services for business organisations.
- The cloud computing system helps entities use software, store data and other IT related work without the need to buy complete software or hardware that they may need for computing purposes.

Wirecard Expands Partnership with India's RBL Bank to Further Drive Financial Inclusion
The new services are powered by India’s Aadhaar Enabled Payment Services (AEPS) to enable customer identification at the point-of-sale. Wirecard, the global innovation leader in digital financial technology, announced an expanded partnership with RBL Bank to promote financial inclusion in India.

This partnership will make digital payment and banking transactions more readily accessible to all Indian citizens, including those living in remote areas. In partnership with RBL, Wirecard will empower its retail agents, who serve as customer service representatives in various areas across the country, to enable the financially underserved to access basic payment and banking services. These include cash withdrawals and deposits as well as balance enquiries.

**Aegon Life and MobiKwik launch a smart digital insurance product**

- Aegon Life Insurance, pioneer of digital insurance in India and MobiKwik, India’s leading FinTech Company, have joined hands to launch an Rs. 20 smart digital insurance product.
- The strategic partners have announced the launch of an assorted insurance product called the Aegon Life Group Term Plus Plan with both death and accidental disability benefit, available exclusively on MobiKwik App.
- One can purchase this plan by paying as little as Rs. 20 in premium for a sum assured of Rs 2 lakhs which includes term insurance and accidental disability.

**Important Summit & Conference**

**PM Modi to inaugurate 106th Indian Science Congress in Jalandhar**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 106th Indian Science Congress at Lovely Professional University in Phagwara near Jalandhar, Punjab. The theme of this five-day mega event is ‘Future India: Science and Technology’. Three Nobel laureates will participate in this conference.

**Kochi to host Advertising Association global summit in February**

- The International Advertising Association (IAA) will host the IAA World Congress at will be held at the Lulu International Convention Centre in Kochi from February 20 to 22, 2019. The world congress is held every alternate year. This is the first time an Indian city is hosting the summit.

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**First Global Aviation Summit to be held in Mumbai on Jan 15**

- The first ever two-day Global Aviation Summit 2019 with the theme of ‘Flying For All’ will open on January 15, 2019 in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The summit organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation along with FICCI, the first GAS-2019 will discuss how to ride this strong tailwind of growth and pave the way forward for the aviation sector.
- The summit is supported by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Federal Aviation Administration of US (FAA), International Air Transport Association (IATA), Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation (CANSO), Airports Council International (ACI) and Association of Asia Pacific Airlines (AAPA).

**4th Raisina Dialogue inaugurated in Delhi**

- The fourth edition of the Raisina Dialogue inaugurated in New Delhi. Norway Prime Minister Erna Solberg delivered inaugural address in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj. Ministry of External Affairs in partnership with Observer Research Foundation is organizing the flagship annual geopolitical and geostrategic conference.
• The theme of the Dialogue this year is "A World Reorder: New Geometries; Fluid Partnerships; Uncertain Outcomes".
• The Dialogue will bring together over 600 delegates from 93 countries, including influential political leaders, strategic thinkers, policy practitioners, technology innovators, business representatives and academics.

National Consultation on Child Protection' held in New Delhi

• The First ‘National Consultation on Child Protection’ for 2019 was held at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi under the Chairmanship of the Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development.
• The meeting was organized to follow up on the exercise of monitoring of the CCIs by States/UTs, to deliberate upon various aspects of child protection and to take stock of the efforts made by States/UTs regarding improvements in the Child Care Institutions.

6th ‘Women of India Organic Festival’ Inaugurated in Chandigarh

• The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development is organising the sixth edition of the festival.
• Three-day ‘Women of India Organic Festival’ will begin at Leisure Valley in Sector-10 here on Saturday to celebrate and promote women farmers and entrepreneurs in the organic sector from the remotest parts of India, the Women of India Organic Festival has been held annually in New Delhi since 2015, and makes its debut in Chandigarh this year, through this festival, the Ministry aims to educate people about its various initiatives and schemes relating to women and children.

Global Skill Summit 2019 held in Ranchi, Jharkhand

• To mark employment generation for 1.06 lakh youths in a year, Government of Jharkhand organized Global Skill Summit - 2019 in Ranchi during which appointment letters were given to all the candidates, Jharkhand is the only state in the country where three global summits were organized in a row merely in four years
• Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas, & Skill Development and Entrepreneurship today attended the summit

29th Indian Paint Conference - 2019 inaugurated in Agra

• 29th Indian Paint Conference - 2019 inaugurated in Agra, Uttar Pradesh, this would be the largest trade show of the estimated INR 500 billion (50,000 Crore) Indian Paints & Coatings industry.
• The theme of the Conference is ‘Paints Pe Charcha – Naye Aayaam’.
• Apex body of the country’s paint industry - Indian Paint Association (IPA)

4th meeting of the Council for Trade Development and Promotion (CTDP) in New Delhi

• Union Minister for Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, chaired the 4th meeting of the Council for Trade Development and Promotion (CTDP) in New Delhi
• Suresh Prabhu informed that the Government of India has formulated an Agricultural Export Policy for the first time with a focused plan to boost India’s agricultural exports to USD 60 billion by 2022.
• CTDP was constituted in July 2015, to ensure a continues dialogue with State Governments/UTs on measures for providing International Trade enabling environments. It also seeks to create a framework for making States/UTs active partners in boosting India’s export.
9th International Micro irrigation conference inaugurated in Aurangabad

- Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, is organised the 9th International Micro Irrigation Conference at Aurangabad in Maharashtra. The conference is held in association with International Commission on Irrigation and Drainage (ICID), Indian National Committee on Surface Water (INCSW) and WAPCOS Limited, a CPSE under the Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.
- The theme of the conference is “Micro Irrigation and Modern Agriculture”.

Global Aviation Summit 2019 inaugurated in Mumbai

- The Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu on January 15, 2019 inaugurated the Global Aviation Summit 2019 in Mumbai, Maharashtra. The theme of the Global Aviation Summit 2019 is 'Flying for all' especially the next 6 Billion'. The two-day summit is being organised by the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation, Airport Authority of India (AAI) in association with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)

BES EXPO 2019 inaugurated in New Delhi

- Information and Broadcasting Secretary Amit Khare and TRAI Chairman RS Sharma inaugurated the 25th International conference and exhibition on terrestrial and satellite broadcasting, BES EXPO 2019 in New Delhi. Nearly 300 companies from 25 countries are displaying their products at the Expo

World Economic Forum held in Davos

- The annual meet of World Economic Forum (WEF) begin in Davos. World leaders from across the globe will flock to the ski resort town on the Swiss Alps for five days to discuss what's ailing the world amid fears of the global economy sleepwalking into a crisis. Those expected to attend include German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Swiss President Ueli Maurer, Japan's Shinzo Abe, Italy's Giuseppe Conte and Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu among more than 30 heads of states/government, as also CEOs of global corporations, central bankers, economists, civil society leaders, media heads, celebrities and heads of international organisations like IMF, WTO, OECD and World Bank, among more than 3,000 participants. More than 100 CEOs from India are expected to participate in the meet. Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi and filmmaker Karan Johar are also going to be a part of session which would be open for public.

13th International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition ‘PETROTECH-2019’ to be organised from 10th to 12th February, 2019

- PETROTECH-2019, the 13th International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition, being organised under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India, is all set to be inaugurated on February 10, 2019
- Over 95 Energy Ministers from partner countries have been invited by the Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas to participate in the Conference
- The three day mega event will showcase the recent market and investor friendly developments that have taken place in the India’s oil and gas sector. Along with the Conference, the event will have a concurrent Exhibition spread over 20,000 square meters at India Expo Mart, Greater Noida

'ICT Academy Bridge 2019' conference inaugurated in Chennai

- Dr. M. Manikandan, Minister for Information Technology, Government of Tamil Nadu, inaugurated 'ICT Academy Bridge 2019' conference. The 37th edition of the conference is the largest Industry-Institute Interaction Event of Asia, Organized by ICT Academy. Theme of the event - "Fostering India for Industry 4.0", 

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International Spice Conference 2019 held in Hyderabad
- International Spice Conference 2019 held in Hyderabad. The International Spice Conference aims to provide a platform for all stakeholders of the industry including the business houses, the spice associations, the policymakers, the farmers and the end users, to address and interact. Theme of the conference is “Challenges of Change: Redefining the Value Chain”

67th Annual Armed Forces Medical Conference organised by AFMC, Pune
- Armed Forces Medical College, Pune organised the 67th Annual Armed Forces Medical Conference. The conference was inaugurated by Lt Gen Bipin Puri, Director General, Armed Forces Medical Services. The four-day conference will be organised under the overall supervision of Surg Vice Admiral Ravi Kalra NM, VSM, director and commandant. The conference is the largest gathering of armed forces medical personnel and the only multi-speciality conference of its kind in the country. A highlight of the conference will be a special session on innovations and creativity in health care practice and delivery within the Armed Forces.

WLPGA 2019 ASIA LPG summit held in New Delhi
- Union Minister for petroleum and natural gas Shri Dharmendra Pradhan, inaugurated the 2019 Asia LPG Summit in New Delhi. The summit is being organized by the World LPG Association (WLPGA) in association with major Indian public-sector oil companies (OMCs) Indian Oil, Hindustan Petroleum, and Bharat Petroleum
- The two-day ‘WLPGA Asia LPG Summit’, focusing on ‘LPG – Energy for Life’
- India is the 2nd largest consumer of liquified natural gas (LPG) in the world.

BPRD organized 2nd National Conference of Micro Missions of National Police Mission
- The two day Conference, inaugurated by former governor of Jammu and Kashmir N. N. Vohra, discuss the issues of Skills and Competence at the grass-root level, Attitudinal Changes in Police, Gender Sensitization, harnessing technology and Community Policing

NITI Aayog organized the conference on Future of Indian Banking
- Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, inaugurated the Future of Indian Banking conference with the Foundation for Economic Growth and Welfare (EGROW Foundation).
- The conference aims to increase and elevate the discourse on the banking sector in India, and help develop insights to inform the continued evolution of the Indian banking sector for optimally supporting the growing credit needs of the Indian economy.

Health Minister inaugurated 4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit
- Health Minister JP Nadda inaugurated the 4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit in New Delhi
- The global intergovernmental meeting on digital health is being hosted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP).
- The summit will provide an opportunity to support governments and health system reformers to improve the health and well being of their citizens through digital technologies

American members of US-India CEO Forum announced
- The first meeting of the US-India CEO forum will be held in New Delhi on February 14. US Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross has announced the names of the American private sector members of the US-India CEO Forum among whom are MasterCard CEO Ajay Banga and Qualcomm CEO Steve Mollenkopf. The US CEOs serve two-year terms and are selected from respondents to a Federal
Register Notice calling for CEO-level applicants to the US Section of the Forum. It will be co-chaired by Ross and Minister of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu. James Taiclet, chairman, president, and CEO, American Tower Corporation will be the US private sector co-chair of the forum.

‘Parmanu Tech 2019’ conference held in New Delhi
- Parmanu Tech 2019’ conference held in New Delhi. The conference was organised by the Ministry of External Affairs and Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) to discuss issues related to Nuclear Energy and Radiation Technologies.
- The Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh delivered the keynote address at the ‘Parmanu Tech 2019’ conference

India to host 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS)
- The 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS) is going to be hosted by India during 15th to 22nd February, 2020 at Gandhinagar in Gujarat. CMS an environmental treaty under the aegis of United Nations Environment Programme. India has been a Party to the CMS since 1983. The Conference of Parties (COP) is the decision-making organ of this convention. The Union Environment Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated the Logo and Mascot (GIBI) along with website for the international event, in New Delhi

7th session of World Government Summit held in Dubai
- Seventh session of World Government Summit held in Dubai with the participation of more than 4,000 people from 140 countries. The World Government Summit is a neutral, non-profit organization at the intersection of government and innovation. The World Government Summit is a global platform dedicated to shaping the future of governments worldwide. Each year, the Summit sets the agenda for the next generation of governments

Third Indo-German Environment Forum held in New Delhi
- Under the chairmanship of Honourable Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Government of India, Dr. Harsh Vardhan and his German counterpart Federal Environment Minister Svenja Schulze, The third Indo-German Environment Forum was held in New Delhi. The theme of the forum is "Cleaner Air, Greener Economy". The one-day event through panel discussions and parallel sessions focuses on challenges, solutions and necessary framework conditions of air pollution control, waste management and circular economy as well as implementation of NDCs and SDGs based on Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 of UN respectively.
- Around 250 representatives of ministries, business and science as well as non-governmental organizations participated in the forum,

First Annual Conference of Media Units under I&B Ministry organized in New Delhi
- The First Annual Conference of Media Units working under Information & Broadcasting Ministry was organized at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. Union Minister of State (IC) for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore chaired the Conference. The focus of the Conference was on ensuring synergy between the Media Units in their day to day functioning. The participants also discussed the ways of using Social Media to reach target audience groups and push the boundaries of communication outreach in terms of geographical and cultural barriers.

First LAWASIA Human Rights conference 2019 was held in New Delhi
- LAWASIA, in association with the Bar Association of India hosted its 1st LAWASIA Human Rights Conference in New Delhi with a motive to explore a broad range of human rights issues of relevance in the Asia Pacific region
• The theme of the conference was “State Power, Business and Human Rights: Contemporary Challenges”.
• The conference was aimed at providing unique opportunity for lawyers and associated professional members to exchange insights and expertise on topics of significant importance to all.

CREDAI YouthCon- 19 annual Youth Conclave held in New Delhi
• PM Modi addressed the CREDAI’s YouthCon – 19 event at Talkatora Stadium, New Delhi. The event is organized by the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India (CREDAI).
• CREDAI YouthCon is the annual Youth Conclave of CREDAI, held to bring together the future of the real estate Industry in India. The CREDAI Youth Wing or CYW was formed to bring together the next generation of real estate builders and developers in order to nurture them to become better professionals.
• CREDAI, Established in 1999, is the apex body representing real-estate developers from over 200 cities in India.

Fifth International Dam Safety Conference to be Held in Bhubaneswar, Odisha
• The 5th International Dam Safety Conference 2019 is held in Bhubaneswar as a joint initiative of the Government of India, Government of Odisha and the World Bank under aegis of the ongoing World Bank assisted Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) as a part of institutional strengthening.
• Dam Safety Conferences are being organized as an annual event in different DRIP States in collaboration with the Implementing Agencies and leading academic institutes to provide a common platform for all stakeholders including non-DRIP States. Globally India ranks third after China and the USA in terms of the number of large dams with 5264 large dams in operation and 437 large dams under construction.

National Conference on Unani Medicine Concluded in New Delhi
• The conference was inaugurated by Dr. Najma Heptulla, Governor of Manipur in the presence of Shri Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Union Minister for Minority Affairs. The two-day National Conference on Unani Medicine organized by the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM) as a part of 3rd Unani Day Celebration concluded in New Delhi. Theme of the conference was ‘Unani Medicine for Public Health’.
• The conference witnessed exchange of MoU for scientific collaboration in Unani Medicine between the CCRUM and Jamia Hamdard, New Delhi.

Asia’s largest early Childhood Conference - Early Ed Asia 2019 held in Jaipur
• Early Ed Asia 2019 the two day educational event was held at the City Palace in Jaipur, Rajasthan.
• This was the first time such a conference was held in India with over 6000 eminent early childhood educators, policy-makers, researchers and other stakeholders from India and foreign countries. The motto of the conference was ‘Our Children. Our Future’. The conference will bring together the brightest minds in Early Childhood Education on to discuss the latest trends in teaching and research to provide a stronger foundation to children.

World Sustainable Development Summit 2019 held in New Delhi
• The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is the annual flagship event of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) was inaugurated by vice president Venkaiah Naidu at New Delhi.
• Theme of the summit was 'Attaining the 2030 Agenda: delivering on our promise'. Prime Minister of Fiji Frank Bainimarama was honoured with the Sustainable Development Leadership Award 2019 for his outstanding contributions towards sustainable development in Fiji.

ASCEND Kerala 2019 conference held in Kochi
• Kerala government inaugurated the Ascend 2019 conference in Kochi.
• 'ASCEND KERALA 2019' is an event planned to showcase the various initiatives undertaken by the Government of Kerala as part of the Ease of Doing Business reforms. The initiatives would make the state a
top investment destination and empower entrepreneurs to launch their enterprises in a speedy and hassle-free manner

- Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan released the ‘Invest Kerala Guide’ at the inaugural session of the event. Union minister of commerce & industries and civil aviation Suresh Prabhu was the chief guest at the opening ceremony.
- The government also launched the two software applications, K-swift (Kerala single window interface for fast, transparent clearances) and intelligent building plan management system (IBPMS). K-swift an online clearance mechanism has been developed to simplify and speed up issuance of clearances from departments or agencies for launching enterprises in the state.

4th Agri Leadership Summit held at Sonipat in Haryana

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare Radha Mohan Singh inaugurated the 4th Agri Leadership Summit at the proposed International Fruit and Vegetable Terminus in Ganaur, district Sonipat in Haryana
- The theme of the summit is “Entrepreneurship & Agri Business; Agri Allied – A Promising Sector and Agri Service- Direct Marketing”. The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind addressed the closing ceremony of the Summit. He also presented the Haryana Kisan Ratna Puraskar and the Haryana Krishi Ratna Puraskar.

President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the International Conference & Exhibition on Energy and Environment

- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the International Conference and Exhibition on Energy and Environment – Challenges and Opportunities (ENCO-2019) in New Delhi. This conference was organized by CSIR-Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research, Dhanbad
- The 3 day conference aims to deliberate and identify the R&D needs to innovate new techniques, technologies and applications for clean, safe, symbiotic sustenance of society, environment, energy and industries

One Health India Conference Inaugurated in New Delhi

- Union Science & Technology Minister, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated the One Health India Conference 2019 in New Delhi. The conference plans to launch India's new One Health Initiative - an intersectoral approach to tackling the most urgent health threats in India as well as in low and middle income countries across South and South East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa. The main objective of the conference is to formulate a roadmap for the response, preparedness, and management of current regional, national and global health challenges using a One Health collaborative approach.

4th India-ASEAN Expo summit begins in New Delhi

- The 4th India-ASEAN Expo and Summit inaugurated in New Delhi
- This is a flagship event of Department of Commerce, being organised with FICCI to carry forward the momentum and to further strengthen India-ASEAN relations under the Act-East Policy. The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) comprises of Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Myanmar, Malaysia, Lao PDR, Indonesia, Cambodia and Brunei. Trade Ministers of ASEAN Countries, Secretary General of ASEAN and business delegations will participate in the New Delhi Expo and Summit.

Eighth World CSR Congress 2019 held in Mumbai

- Eighth World Corporate Social Responsibility Congress 2019 held in Mumbai
- World Corporate Social Responsibility Congress (World CSR Congress 2019) popular meeting about Entrepreneurship, Social Responsibility, Sustainability and Social Development. Dr. Soumitro
Chakraborty, Chief Executive Officer, Innovative Financial Advisors Pvt. Ltd. (Fiinovation) was honoured with ‘CEO of the year’ award

- This congress witnessed participation from 33 countries and recognized the efforts of individuals and organizations

**International Vision Zero Conference held in Mumbai**

- Heeralal Samaria, Secretary, Ministry of Labour and Employment inaugurated the three days Conference on the VISION ZERO to promote occupational safety and health in Mumbai. The conference provides a forum for promoting safety and health at work by exchanging knowledge, practices and experience.
- The Conference has been organized by Directorate General Factory Advice and Labour Institutes (DGFASLI), Ministry of Labour and Employment, German Social Accident Insurance (DGUV)

**Rising India Summit 2019 held in New Delhi**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed News-18 Network Rising India Summit, held in New Delhi and laid out his vision for a ‘NewIndia’. The theme of the summit was, 'Beyond Politics: Defining National Priorities'.

**Airports Authority of India organised the Startup Conclave "Innovate for Airports"**

- Airports Authority of India organised the Startup Conclave under the Startup initiative "Innovate for Airports" at the Airports Authority of India Officer’s Institute. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) launched its Start-up policy to lay down the guidelines to help AAI as well as startups in relevant domains interact with one another. During the event 8 Startups were awarded the "Letter of Consent" under this initiative

**International Digital Health Symposium’ Inaugurated In New Delhi**

- Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Smt. Anupriya Patel inaugurated the ‘International Digital Health Symposium in New Delhi. She also inaugurated the exhibition on Digital Health as part of the Symposium
- Participant countries along with various Government Ministries, states and other stakeholders showcased key innovations, implementation experiences and innovative Digital Health Interventions. The Digital Health Symposium follows the two-day Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP) summit and allows wide engagement with innovators, clinical leaders, academia, researchers, healthcare establishments, government representatives, international and national technical experts, entrepreneurs and the research community

**NITI Aayog partners with Adobe to boost digital literacy, creativity skills**

- Software firm Adobe has partnered with Niti Aayog’s Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) to collaborate on enhancing digital literacy and creativity skills. The two parties have signed a statement of intent (SOI) to collectively drive the charter of developing creative skills and spreading digital literacy across all Atal Tinkering Labs in India
- 100 schools under Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) initiative will be adopted by Adobe and it will be implementing its Digital Disha Program in ATLs. The Atal Tinkering Lab is based on the philosophy to identify and nurture innovation in young students across the country

**India, Brunei signed pact to exchange information on tax and banking matters**

- India and Brunei signed an agreement for exchange of information in tax matters to curb tax evasion and tax avoidance. The Tax Information and Exchange Agreement (TIEA) was signed by Pramod Chandra Mody, Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, and Dato Paduka Haji Sidek Ali, Brunei’s High Commissioner to India
• The agreement also provides for mutual assistance in collection of tax revenue claims between both countries.

7th RCEP Intersessional Ministerial Meeting held in Cambodia
• The 7th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) Intersessional Ministerial Meeting was organized in Siem Reap, Cambodia. It was headed by Chutima Bunyapraphasara, Acting Minister of Commerce of Thailand and saw participation of ministers from the 16 RCEP Participating Countries (RPCs).
• It was also attended by Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation- Suresh Prabhu.

PM Modi to inaugurated Construction Technology India-2019 Expo-cum-Conference
• Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Construction Technology India-2019 Expo-cum-Conference in New Delhi. The conference will identify proven, innovative and globally established technologies for use in the Indian context.
• Technology providers, researchers, start-ups, developers, academia, public sector agencies and other domain experts are participating in the two day event. Proven technologies which are identified during CTI-2019 will be further invited to design and build lighthouse projects of nearly one thousand housing units each at six States in the country.
• These States are Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Summit on Innovation and Governance held in New Delhi
• Vice President Shri M Venkaiah Naidu presented Kalam Innovation in Governance Award 2019, at the third edition of Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Summit on Innovation and Governance held in New Delhi.
• He also started 75 new Kalam Digital Libraries spread across the country, which will be serving as centers for no-cost digital based learning in schools.

34th edition of AAHAR - International Food and Hospitality fair-begins in New Delhi
• The 34th edition of AAHAR - the International Food and Hospitality fair - begins at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi. Minister for Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu inaugurated the fair.
• The fair will feature a wide range of food products, machinery, hospitality and Decoration and Confectionery items from over 560 participants from India and abroad. Around 20 countries, including US, Russia, China, UK, Germany, Italy and Singapore will participate in the five-day fair.
• The fair which will showcase new trends in food and beverage, hospitality, culinary technology, retail and new innovations.

CII-EXIM Bank conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships to be held in New Delhi
• Commerce and Industry Ministry will be organising the 14th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships, in association with Confederation of Indian Industry and EXIM Bank of India from March 17-19 in New Delhi. The event will mark the deepening of India-Africa economic and business ties and pave the way for a whole range of cross-border project partnerships. Since its inception in 2005, the annual conclave brings senior ministers, policy makers, officials, business leaders, bankers, technologists, start-up entrepreneurs and other professionals on a common platform.

Internet of Things India Congress 2019 to be held in Bengaluru
• The 4th Internet of Things (IoT) India Congress, an event which will see digital technology leaders converge to discuss and explore business opportunities in mainstreaming IoT, will be held in Bengaluru on August 22-23, 2019.
• The IoT India Congress 2019 will include tracks on segments such as healthcare, manufacturing, telecom, smart cities, energy, retail, cyber security, skills and development, IoT Standards, legal and regulatory, and
agriculture. A new addition at the event ‘Future Tech Spotlight’, will provide a glimpse of technology trends in the next 5 to 10 years.

**First BRICS Sherpa meeting under Presidency of Brazil held in Curitiba**

- The first BRICS Sherpa meeting under the Presidency of Brazil concluded at Curitiba in Brazil. Secretary, Economic Relations in the Ministry of External Affairs, T S Tirumurti led the Indian delegation.
- India conveyed its support for the priority areas set out by Brazil, particularly to take forward BRICS cooperation on counter terrorism in a meaningful and concrete manner with BRICS member countries. BRICS countries - Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

**3rd edition of Namaste Thailand festival held in New Delhi**

- 3rd edition of Namaste Thailand festival, aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and increasing cultural exchange between India and Thailand, held in New Delhi. The three-day festival was organised by the Royal Thai Embassy.
- The festival will feature stage performances by Thai artistes including the much popular Thai folk-jazz band Asia-7.

**NITI Aayog’s FinTech Conclave held in New Delhi**

- NITI Aayog has organised one day FinTech Conclave at Dr. Ambedkar International Center, New Delhi.
- The Conclave was inaugurated by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das.
- The objective of the conference is to shape India’s continued ascendency in FinTech, build the narrative for future strategy and policy efforts, and to deliberate steps for comprehensive financial inclusion.

**International seminar on ‘Sanskrit: a common treasure for India & Nepal’ held in Kathmandu**

- An international seminar on ‘Sanskrit: a common treasure for India and Nepal’ held at Kathmandu, Nepal.
- The three-day seminar is culmination of a month-long Festival of India in Nepal which is being organized by the Embassy of India and Ministry of Culture. A panel of 10 world renowned Sanskrit scholars from India and 35 senior Sanskrit professors from various parts of Nepal will present their research papers on different topics including Sanskrit language, literature, Ayurveda and Yoga during the seminar.

**Nepal Investment Summit to be organised on March 29-30 in Kathmandu**

- The Government of Nepal is organizing 3rd edition of ‘Nepal Investment Summit 2019’ on March 29 -30 in Kathmandu. The main objective of the event is to project Nepal as a favourable investment destination.
- Summit will unveil potential opportunities for investment in various sectors in Nepal including Hydropower, Tourism, Infrastructure, Industry, Transport, Agriculture and Information and Communication Technology. About 600 foreign delegates and investors from 40 countries are participating in the Summit with maximum participation from China and India.

**Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman holds bilateral meet with her Chinese counterpart**

- Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman held a bilateral meeting with her Chinese counterpart, General Wei Fenghe at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, SCO Defence Ministers’ Meet at Bishkek in Kyrgyzstan.
- India is also keen on deepening its security-related cooperation with SCO and its Regional Anti-Terrorism Structure (RATS) which specifically deals with issues relating to security and defence.

**India to organize NuGen Mobility summit 2019 in November**
India's International center for Automotive Technology (ICAT) will organize a NuGen Mobility summit 2019 in November. The summit would be held at Manesar, falling in the national capital region (NCR) of Indian capital - New Delhi from November 27 to 29.

The objective of the summit is to share new ideas, learnings, global experiences, innovations and future technology trends for faster adoption, assimilation and development of advanced automotive technologies for a smarter and greener future. This event will help in building a platform for bringing together all stakeholders in the automotive industry to understand global advancements in technologies.

4th Session of India-Ukraine working group on Trade and Economic Cooperation held in New Delhi

The 4th Meeting of India-Ukraine Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation (IU-WGTEC), under the India-Ukraine Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technical, Industrial and Cultural Cooperation was held in New Delhi.

- Cooperation in Enhancing the Bilateral Trade
- Cooperation in the field of Small and Medium Entrepreneurship
- Cooperation in Leather, Tobacco, Gems and Jewellery and Tea Sectors
- Cooperation in the field of Technical Regulation (Standardization, Metrology, Certification, Conformity Assessment)
- Cooperation in the field of Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and Investment
- Granting Ukraine Market Economy Status within the framework of anti-dumping investigations
- Cooperation in the field of Energy Sector
- Cooperation in the field of Finance and Banking
- Cooperation in Tourism

7th Foreign Office consultations between India and Italy held in Delhi

The 7th Foreign Office consultations between India and Italy were held in New Delhi.

- These consultations provided an opportunity to review the follow-up actions taken after the visit of Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte in October last year as well as the entire range of bilateral relations, including political, defence, scientific, economic and commercial ties.
- They also exchanged views on regional and multilateral issues, including cooperation in the United Nations and other international organizations

3-day National Cardiology Conference held at Lucknow

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated the National Cardiology Conference 2019 being held at Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of medical sciences.
- The 3-day conference organised by Dept of Cardiology in which leading national and international experts from Europe, USA, Japan, Singapore South Korea, Indonesia and Australia will deliberate on the latest topics of Interventional cardiology and cutting edge technology.
- The conference being held for the first time in Uttar Pradesh offers an opportunity to showcase newer innovations in Cardiology that can help deliver cost-effective cardiology care to patients.

World Economic Forum Mena 2019

- The World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa is being held at the Dead Sea. It is the tenth such meeting in Jordan and the 17th in the region.
- The Dead Sea meeting will highlight long-term responses to encouraging economic growth, humanitarian crises, sustainability, health care, energy, water, gender equality, the future of jobs and cybersecurity.
21st ASEAN-India Senior Officials Meeting held at New Delhi

- The 21st ASEAN-India Senior Officials' Meeting (SOM) was held from 11-12 April 2019 at New Delhi. India congratulated Thailand on its assuming the Chairmanship of ASEAN for 2019 and welcomed its role as Country Coordinator of the ASEAN-India dialogue partnership for the period 2018-2021.
- The Meeting decided to impart urgency to Cooperation in Renewable Energy and hold an ASEAN-India Conference on Renewable Energy in 2019. The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE) would be the co-partners for this project.
- The ASEAN-India partnership is being implemented through the ‘Plan of Action (2016-20) to implement the ASEAN-India Partnership for Peace, Progress and Shared Prosperity’.

Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group

- The Spring Meeting 2019 of the Boards of Governors of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) was held between April 8-14, 2019 in Washington DC, US.
- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg represented India in the meeting.

UAE to host world’s foremost Artificial Intelligence Summit

- UAE is set to host the world’s foremost Artificial Intelligence, AI Summit to empower global dialogue on the future of government, business and society. The inaugural ‘AI Everything’, AIE will take place at the Dubai World Trade Centre, between 30th of this month and 1st of next month.
- The two day event will be hosted by the UAE National Programme for Artificial Intelligence, with the support of International Telecommunication Union (ITU), and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), and in strategic partnership with Smart Dubai.

4th Resilient Cities Asia-Pacific (RCAP) congress 2019

- Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu addresses at the 4th Resilient Cities Asia-Pacific Congress 2019, organised by the International Council for Local Environmental Initiatives, in New Delhi.
- The RCAP 2019 is a platform for discussing the opportunities and mechanisms of executing the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Home Expo India 2019 begins in Greater Noida

- The 8th edition of Home Expo India 2019 began at India Expo Centre and Mart in Greater Noida.
- It covers sectors with maximum thrust and growth potential in home decor, furnishing, furniture, flooring and textiles. About 500 companies in permanent marts will be exhibiting their collection under these categories. The three-day exhibition has been organized by the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts.
- Handicrafts exports during the year 2018-19 was to the tune of 26 thousand 590 crore rupees registering a growth of 15.46 per cent over the previous year.

India nominated as Guest of Honour at 29th Abu Dhabi International Book Fair

- India has been nominated as the “Guest of Honour” country at the 29th edition of the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair (ADIBF). India's selection as the guest of honour reflects the strong relations between the leadership and the people of the UAE and India.
- Indian Ambassador to the UAE, Navdeep Singh Suri added that 30 publishing houses from India will take part in the fair.
- Books on the life and struggle of Mahatma Gandhi will be on display as part of the 150th birth anniversary celebrations. An annual fair is a major event in the publishing sector in the Middle East and North Africa. It will conclude on the 30th of this month.

ABU Media Summit on Climate Action and Disaster Preparedness began in Kathmandu
• 5th Asia Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) Media Summit on Climate Action and Disaster Preparedness began in Kathmandu. The theme of the two-day summit is “Media Solutions for Sustainable Future: Saving Lives, Building Resilient Communities”.

• Nepal’s Minister for Communication and Information Technology Gokul Prasad Baskota inaugurated the summit. The basic aim of the summit is to address the issue of fully utilizing media’s potential of accelerating climate action and disaster preparedness and connect stakeholders to media professionals for collaboration and joint practical projects.

Important Mobile App and Web Portal

Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App launched by North Central Railway

• The North Central Railway (NCR) has launched a mobile application to help people navigate through Prayagraj city during Kumbh Mela starting from January 15, 2019. 'Rail Kumbh Seva Mobile App' will provide information regarding all the ‘Mela special’ trains that will be run during the period. The app will provide a link to the user to buy both unreserved and reserved train tickets. A photo gallery, containing pictures of previous Kumbh Melas can also be accessed through the app.

Police-E-Eye’ app Launched

• The Coimbatore city traffic police launched a mobile application ‘Police-E-Eye’ for the public to report traffic violation. The application will enable public to take pictures of traffic rule violators and upload them for the police to view and take actions. The app was developed by a seven-member team of Aveon Infotech

Roshni an Android Mobile app developed by IIT Ropar helps the visually impaired recognise Indian currency notes

• The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Ropar, has developed an app to help the Visually Impaired recognise currency notes. “Roshni” was the first Android app that worked successfully with new INR currency notes

• The app can recognise both old and new notes and gives audio information as to which note you are holding in your hands. The user has to bring the currency note in front of phone camera and the app would provide audio notification intimating the currency notes denomination to the user. The app, developed by Dr Puneet Goyal, assistant professor and his students Mandhatya Singh, Joohi Chauhan and R Ram

National Testing Agency (NTA) launched mobile application for mock tests

• The National Testing Agency (NTA) has launched a mobile application through which students can practice or take mock tests on their smartphones. The candidates who are appearing for JEE Main, NEET or NTA NET exams will be able to practice for these competitive exams using an official app. National Testing Agency, the newly formed organisation which conducts Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) main for undergraduate engineering admissions and National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for medical admissions. The NTA recently conducted two competitive examinations under its supervision, the first edition of JEE Main 2019 in January and National Eligibility Test (NET) in December last year

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana App launched on Google play store

• The world’s largest cashless health insurance scheme Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), popularly known as the Ayushman Bharat is now active on Google Playstore to access scheme details. Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Scheme, which will cover over 10 crore poor and
vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) providing coverage up to 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.

Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya run by Yojana National Health Authority (NHA)

Chennai city Police Launched Mobile App ‘Digicop’

- Tamil film actor Vijay Sethupathi launched the mobile App ‘DigiCop’ of the Chennai police department. The application was developed by Nasscom. Using the App, people can track the status of stolen two-wheelers and cell phones. The details of 18,000 stolen mobile phones are stored in the App. So next time someone is buying a phone from a second hand shop they can verify if the phone is stolen or genuine. Using DigiCop App, people can verify IMEI, report lost two-wheelers and phones, know the nearest police station, police news and traffic alerts.

IWAI launched a new portal LADIS for real-time information

- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) launched a new portal LADIS (Least Available Depth Information System) for real-time information on available depth on stretches of National Waterways
- LADIS will ensure that real-time data on least available depths (LADs) is disseminated for ship, barge and cargo owners so that they can undertake transportation on national waterways (NWs) in a more planned way.

Hardip Singh Puri launched the PMAY-U Mobile Application

- Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Hardeep S Puri launched the PMAY (U) Mobile Application
- The Mobile Application will allow beneficiaries to capture and upload high resolution photographs of completed houses along with their families and a 30 – 60 seconds video clip where beneficiaries share their stories of owning a house under PMAY (U). The PMAY (U) mission was launched on 25th June 2015 with the aim to provide houses to every eligible urban household in India by the year 2022

Infosys launched learning app ‘InfyTQ’ for engineering students

- Infosys the country’s 2nd largest IT firm has launched its next-generation digital platform called ‘InfyTQ’ that aims to offer learning and engagement experiences for engineering students
- InfyTQ is a free platform open to all engineering students in their third and fourth year across India
- This platform available on both mobile and desktop includes content, courses, and news as well as online assessments and certification.

Department of Justice launched tele-law Mobile Application

- Union Minister for Law and Justice and IT Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad launched a tele-law mobile application that is integrated with a dashboard and an application called Nyaya Bandhu.
- The application will benefit 73,000 PLVs of National Legal Service Authority and State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA) in the country who will be associated under the tele-law service. This mobile application is integrated with a Dashboard created to confirm and register the pre-registered cases, to enable online interface between the beneficiary and the panel lawyer through video conferencing and telephone facility

PM Modi launched Khelo India APP

- Prime Minister Narendra launched Sports Authority of India’s (SAI) first-of-its-kind mobile application, ‘Khelo India App’ in order to create awareness about sports and fitness in the country.
- The application has three unique features that will make it convenient for youngsters to take up sport and also help to identify potential champions among children, across the country
• The application is available both in hindi and english and once downloaded can be used even when the parent or teacher does not have connectivity to the internet

**Delhi government launched app to track bus, metro services**

- Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot has launched a common mobility app named 'One Delhi' that provides information on public transport systems including buses and the metro.
- It shows bus or metro routes, nearest bus stops, fares and gives arrival information in real time.

**Google unveils Bolo app to teach kids to read English and Hindi**

- Google unveiled speech-based 'Bolo' app aimed at rural children, to teach them how to read in English and Hindi.
- The app is aimed at bridging learning gap in education and is available on Google play store in India. The app, which uses Google's speech recognition and text-to-speech technology and features an animated character 'Diya'. It is a free-to-use app first available in India. It is designed to be work even in offline.

**Minister Hardeep Singh Puri launched e-Dharti App**

- Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri launched e-Dharti app where all the three modules- Conversion, Substitution and Mutation related to properties have been made online.
- The public can now submit their applications online by visiting the L&DO website and are not required to visit this office for submission of them and for follow up of their applications
- He also launched e-Dharti GeoPortal, through which the lessee of the property will be able to see the basic details of property along with map showing its location.

**Google shuts down its messaging app ‘Allo’**

- Google has stopped all the services of its messaging app ‘Allo’ from March 12, 2019 and shut down the app.
- The ‘Allo’ messaging app from Google could not achieve popularity like its other product and hence Google has stopped the operation of Allo. It was launched in 2016.

**Election Commission introduces mobile app for observers**

- The Election Commission has for the first time started using a mobile application that will help poll observers to submit reports. This is for the first time, election commission has launched a special mobile application for more than 1,800 special election observers appointed by it. They will get all the important notifications, alerts, and urgent messages through the ‘Observer App’. It will help them get their deployment status, download the ID card and update their profile.
- As the observers will be closely involved in real-time disposal of Model Code of Conduct and expenditure violation cases received through another mobile application ‘cVIGIL’, those details will also be available on the ‘Observer App’. The observers can make a written observation after the flying squads have investigated the matter.

**Mobile Application ‘Conquer Exam, Be a Warrior.’ developed by IIPHG**

- Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar, Gujarat, (IIPHG) joined hands with National Mental Health Program, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Gujarat for developed a mobile application called as ‘Conquer Exam, Be a Warrior’ to reduce the exam pressure for the student.
- This Application to create awareness and help students and parents to analyse and overcome exam pressure.

**Xiaomi launches Mi Pay wallet in India with ICICI Bank**

- Xiaomi has rolled out its own UPI payment solution app, Mi Pay, for its users in India, enabling them to send money to any UPI address and bank account in the country. The company will use the National Payment Corporation of India’s UPI and Bharat Bill payment network for its core functionality. The company has tied up with ICICI Bank for the back-end solution.
• This is a closed payments app, and only Xiaomi users can download it from the Mi Apps store. Being a closed app, only Xiaomi users can transfer money between each other, using Mi Pay app.

CBSE launched new ‘Shiksha Vani’ app
• The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) launched a new podcast app ‘Shiksha Vani’ to upload podcast on Class 10, 12 exam evaluation process. This app will disseminate crucial information to students and parents in a timely manner. Its first episode, on the evaluation process of Class 10 and 12 board examinations, has been released on the platform.
• This episode is helpful for all the students, as when the examinations proceed, the episode helps students understand how their completed papers will be evaluated.

Hyper local connectivity app ‘Bhonga’ launched by Linkus Infratech
• The launch of hyper-local connectivity app titled ‘Bhonga’. The app is an initiative by Linkus Infratech Private Limited. The app is designed keeping in mind the connect beyond family and friends. It is designed to connect people within the same locality without worrying about whether they know each other or not.
• Bhonga is a simple app which once downloaded allows the user send a message to all those who have this app in the 1 km radius. The user can use the app to reach out to everyone around for posting messages which may be an emergency, an offer, a query or even an opinion or information which he believes may be of help to people around him. Bhonga is a Marathi word which means megaphone or loudspeaker.

Sahulat App Launched To Facilitate Elderly Voters in Rajouri
• Sahulat’, a mobile app aimed to facilitate voting by elders has been launched in Jammu and Kashmir’s Rajouri district. District Election Officer Mohammad Aijaz Asad launched the Android-based application to reach out to the voters who are 90 years old or above. Rajouri district, which is part of the Jammu parliamentary constituency, goes to polls along with Baramulla constituency in the first phase on April 11.
• The voters can request for the facilities like the provision of wheelchair, vehicle for transportation and any helper who will assist them during casting of vote.

Airtel, FLO launch ‘My Circle’ app for women’s safety
• Bharti Airtel in collaboration with FICCI Ladies Organisation launched a mobile app, My Circle, to help women in case they face any problem or a panic situation. The application is carrier agnostic which would work on phones with any telecom service network, both Airtel and non-Airtel.
• "My Circle app enables women to send SOS alerts to any five of their family or friends in 13 languages including English, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, Punjabi, Bangla, Urdu, Assamese, Oriya, and Gujarati”.

Election Commission launched Voter Turnout app
• The Election Commission of India (ECI) has launched a new mobile app for the voters across the country to see the realtime availability of voter turnout during the election season in the country.
• The beta version of the ECI’s Voter Turnout app is available for download on the Google Play Store and as of now it has been downloaded over 5,000 times.

France launched government only chat app ‘Tchap’
• France made good on its promise to launch a secure government-only chat app although it almost didn’t turn out that way. The country has introduced a beta version of Tchap, a messaging app that helps officials communicate with each other through Android, iOS and the web with reportedly greater security.
• All private conversations are encrypted end-to-end, antivirus software screens all attachments and all data is stored in France. You only need a French government email address to sign up, though, and that’s where the security issue resided.
Important Defence News

Defence industries received Rs 1.21 cr FDI during 2014-18

- India’s defence sector received Rs 1.21 crore foreign direct investments during 2014-18. Minister of State for Commerce and Industry C R Chaudhary stated that, FDI equity inflow of Rs 12,146,180 has been reported in the sector namely 'Defence Industries' during the period 2014-2018.
- As per the current policy, in defence sector, foreign investment beyond 49 percent has been permitted through approval route.

Indian Navy set new navy base in Port Blair

- Indian Navy's new airbase INS Kohasa, set to boost Andaman archipelago defence, 100 miles north of Port Blair in the strategically located Andaman and Nicobar islands. The facility was earlier known as INS Shivpur and has been renamed as INS Kohasa after the extension of facilities at the base. This will be India’s fourth air base and the third naval air facility in the archipelago. The base will initially operate choppers and Dornier short-range surveillance aircraft.

Army Tech Seminar (ARTECH 2019) held in New Delhi

- Indian Army organised the Army Technology Seminar-2019 in New Delhi.
- Theme of the seminar is “Disruptive Impact of Emerging Technologies on Land Warfare”
- The seminar was aimed to bring together stakeholders in the military, academia and industry to provide perspective on the available and emerging technologies, the event was attended by Dr Subhash Bhamre, Raksha Rajya Mantri, Gen Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Army Staff, Shri Ajay Kumar, Secretary Department of Defence Production and other dignitaries from Ministry of Defence.

India - Myanmar joint training exercise inaugurated in Chandimandir

- The second edition of the India-Myanmar bilateral army exercise, IMBEX 2018-19, commenced at Chandimandir Military Station, headquarters of the Western Command. The aim of this joint training programme, spread over six days, is to train the Myanmar delegation for participation in United Nations peace keeping operations under the UN flag. The exercise includes participation of 15 officers from Myanmar Army and 15 officers from the Indian Army.

Army plans to buy over 3,000 anti-tank guided missiles from France

- The Indian Army is planning to purchase over 3,000 Milan 2T anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) from France in a deal worth over Rs. 1,000 crore. The decision to procure Milan 2T ATGMs is a stopgap arrangement while the Army gets its own homegrown third-generation ATGM in its arsenal. Milan 2T has a range of over two kilometres.
- Indian Army has a requirement of around 70,000 anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) of various types and around 850 launchers of different types even as it is looking for third-generation ATGMs with a longer range than that of its existing Milan-2T and Konkurs ATGMs. India had last year scrapped a programme to buy the Spike ATGM from Israel in view of the indigenous developments in this direction.

Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba commissions new Naval Air Base INS Kohassa

- Navy Chief Admiral Sunil Lanba commissioned the new Naval Air Base ‘INS Kohassa’ at Diglipur in Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The new Naval Air Base will enhance our maritime capability along with keeping the northern part of Andaman sea and the area under surveillance. Commander-in-Chief, Andaman & Nicobar Command (CINCAN) Vice Admiral Bimal Verma was also present on the occasion. The new
airbase, named ‘INS Kohassa’ at Diglipur, will be used to handle operations of helicopters and small aircraft like the Dornier. The airport at Diglipur will be utilised for both Defence and civil aircraft.

**DRDO successfully test-fires Barak 8 LRSAM missile**

- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test-fired Barak 8 LRSAM (Long Range Surface-to-Air Missile) from naval warship INS Chennai off the coast of Odisha. The missile (directly) hit a low flying aerial target. The Barak 8 LRSAM missile defence system has been jointly developed by DRDO and Israel Aerospace Industries.

**Ministry of Defence Launched ‘RDP INDIA 2019’ Mobile App**

- As a new initiative in sync with the Digital India campaign of the Government, Ministry of Defence had launched a mobile app ‘RDP India 2019’ on the Republic Day. With the intent of making available the highlights of the Republic Day event, not only to the spectators at Rajpath, but also to the general public all over the world. This app contains information about the Parade on Rajpath, New Delhi, including Order of the March, details of the tableaux presented by different States and Ministries, children cultural performances, fly past and names of recipients of Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar 2019.

**DAC approved indigenous construction of 6 submarines worth Rs. 40,000 crore**

- The Defence Acquisitions Council, DAC chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman approved indigenous construction of six submarines worth 40,000 crore rupees. It is the second project under the Ministry's ambitious strategic partnership model aiming to boost the government's Make in India' program.
- The first project to get the government's nod for implementation under the new model was the acquisition of 111 utility helicopters for the Navy at a cost of over 21,000 crore rupees in August last year.
- Defence Acquisitions Council has also approved the acquisition of about five thousand MILAN Anti Tank Guided Missiles for the Army.

**Israel Aerospace Industries announced agreement worth $93 million with Indian Navy and Cochin Shipyard**

- Israel Aerospace Industries announced entering into agreements worth $93 million for providing Naval MRSAM (Medium Range Surface to Air Missile) systems to India. The contracts for the air defence system were entered with the Indian Navy and the Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL).
- They involve follow up orders for a range of maintenance and other services for various sub-systems of IAI’s advanced MSRAM ADS.

**Pakistan Successfully Test-Fires Short-Range Ballistic Missile Nasr**

- Pakistan Army successfully test-fired the short range surface-to-surface ballistic missile "Nasr" with a strike range of about 70 km.
- Nasr is a high precision, shoot and scoot weapon system with the ability of in-flight maneuverability.

**Defence Ministry approves procurement of 73,000 assault rifles from US**

- The Defence Ministry has cleared a long-pending proposal of the Army to procure around 73,000 assault rifles from the US under fast track mode. Defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman approved procurement of the Sig Sauer rifles which will be used by troops deployed along the nearly 3,600-km border with China. The US-manufactured rifles will replace the Insas rifles.

**DAC approved acquisition of defence equipment worth Rs. 2700 crore**

- The Defence Acquisition Council has approved the acquisition of defence equipment for about 2700 Crores rupees. The Defence Acquisition Council, is the highest decision-making body for defence purchase, was chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The Council granted approval for
procurement of three cadet training ships for the Indian Navy which would be utilised to provide basic sea training for officer cadets including women officer under trainees. The ships would be capable of undertaking hospital ship duties, providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, undertaking search and rescue (SAR) missions.

**US approved sale of two missile defence systems for Air India One**
- The Trump administrations approved purchase of the two systems known as Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCAM) and Self-Protection Suites (SPS) for an estimated cost of $190 million. that will enhance the security of planes flying the prime minister and the president. The purpose of the LAIRCM programme is to protect large aircraft from man-portable missiles. Once installed, the LAIRCAM system increases crew-warning time, decreases false alarm rates and automatically counters advanced intermediate range missile systems.
- SPS will facilitate a more robust capability into areas of increased missile threats.

**INS Trikand participated in multinational training exercise “Cutclass Express 2019”**
- INS Trikand, a front-line warship of the Indian Navy, participated in a multinational training exercise ‘CUTCLASS EXPRESS – 19’. The aim of the exercise was to improve law enforcement capacity, promote regional security and progress inter-operability between the armed forces of the participating nations for the purpose of interdicting illegal maritime activity in the Western Indian Ocean.
- Naval Coast Guard and Marine Police personnel from a number of East African countries were jointly trained by mentors from USA, India, and Netherlands, with support of international organisations like the International Maritime Organisation (IMO), Combined Maritime Force (CMF) and European Naval Forces (EUNAVFOR).
- The exercise was conducted in two phases. The first, called the Command Post Exercise (CPX) was conducted from Jan 27 to Feb 2. The second phase called the Final Training Exercise (FTX) was conducted from Feb 3-5. The closing ceremony of the event was held at the Djibouti Naval Base.

**Indigenously developed "Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)" missile system was successfully flight tested in Odisha**
- The second indigenously developed ‘Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR)’ propulsion-based missile system was successfully flight tested in Odisha by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- Unlike conventional rockets that carry propellant and oxidizer, Ramjet uses the air as an oxidizer just like a jet engine. Therefore the weight of the fuel required is eliminated.
- The first flight of SFDR, developed under a joint Indo-Russian R&D project, was tested in 2018. It had achieved the speed of Mach 3.

**Hina Jaiswal becomes IAF’s First Woman Flight Engineer**
- Hina Jaiswal from Chandigarh, became the first Indian Woman Flight Engineer of the Indian Air Force. Hina was commissioned in the Indian Air Force’s engineering branch in 2015. She completed a six-month Flight Engineer course from 112 helicopter unit, Air Force Station, Yelahanka, Bengaluru.
- A flight engineer is the member of an aircraft’s flight crew who monitors and operates its complex aircraft systems requiring a specialised skill set.

**OFB gets nod for producing long-range artillery gun 'Dhanush'**
- The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) has received clearance from the Indian Army and the Ministry of Defence for production of 114 ‘Dhanush’ long range artillery guns. ‘Dhanush’ is the first long-range artillery gun to be produced in India. It is the product of joint efforts by the OFB and the Army with contributions from the DRDO, DGQA, Bharat Electronics Limited, SAIL and several private enterprises.

**PM Modi inaugurated Asia’s biggest air show ‘Aero India- 2019’ in Bengaluru**
- 12th edition of Asia’s premier Air show ‘Aero India-2019’ begins at Yelahanka air force station, Bengaluru.
The five-day long biennial event Aero India-2019, will showcase India's air defence prowess, and also act as a platform for aviation companies, the defence sector and government to forge new alliances and contracts.

Sixty-one aircraft would be on display and 403 exhibitors are participating in the aero India show. Over 600 companies, including 295 Indian and 328 foreign ones, are participating in the exhibition.

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US, South Korea Call off Foal Eagle and Key Resolve Exercises, Announces New Exercise

- The United States and South Korea announced the inauguration of a new exercise known as Dong Maeng (or “alliance”).
- The exercise was announced as a modification of the springtime exercises the allies have held in recent years known as Key Resolve and Foal Eagle.
- The Dong Maeng exercise will run from March 4 to March 12 and focus primarily on “strategic, operational, and tactical aspects of general military operations on the Korean Peninsula.”

Pinaka guided weapon system successfully test fired

- Defence Research and Development organisation, (DRDO) successfully test fired the PINAKA guided weapon rocket system from Pokhran range in Rajasthan. The weapon system is equipped with state-of-the-art guidance kit comprising of an advanced navigation and control system. The weapon systems impacted the intended targets with high precision and achieved desired accuracies. The indigenously developed Guided PINAKA by DRDO will significantly boost the capability of the artillery to make precision hits.

U.S. special forces hold exercise with NSG in Hyderabad

- As a part of US-India security partnership, a special force of the US military forces and the Indian National Security Guard (NSG) involved in a joint exercise in Hyderabad. The US forces are from the 1st Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) stationed out of Okinawa in Japan. The Hyderabad-exercise would help build interoperability and comradeship between the two forces and was designed to enhance the capabilities of both Indian and U.S.

DRDO Successfully tested MP-ATGM

- The indigenously developed, low weight, fire and forget ‘Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile’ (MPATGM) was successfully test fired by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in the ranges of Rajasthan desert. The missile is incorporated with advanced features including state-of-the-art Imaging Infrared Radar (IIR) Seeker with integrated avionics.
- This was the second successful testing of the missile. The first test was conducted on March 13, 2019. It was developed by Defence Research and Development Laboratory (DRDL), Hyderabad with support from other DRDO laboratories.
'Vijit' becomes the first Indian Coast Guard ship to visit Indonesia

- Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Vijit' became the first-ever Coast Guard ship to visit Sabang, Indonesia to highlight the proximity between the two countries and the strengthening cooperation in maritime security and safety,
- Crew of Vijit will hold interaction with officials of Bakamla (Indonesian Coast Guard), Indonesian Armed Forces and the civil administration at Sabang. Fastest in its category with a designed speed of 26 knots at a displacement of 2393 tons, this new generation ship is equipped with the advanced Navigational and Communication equipment
- This visit of the coast guard ship follows from the first-ever-visit of Naval Ship INS Sumitra to Sabang in July 2018.

Indian Navy to provide humanitarian aid to cyclone-hit Mozambique

- Three Indian Naval Ships namely INS Sujatha, INS Shardul & INS Sarathi have reached the port city of Beira in Mozambique to provide immediate Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) to Central and Northern part of Mozambique affected by tropical cyclone ‘IDAI’
- Cyclone 'IDAI' made landfall at Beira, causing widespread damage and loss of human life in the Central and Northern provinces. The IN ships are likely to set up medical camps and provide food, water, blankets and other necessary relief items, as required by the local authorities

Government clears procurement of 10 lakh hand grenades for Indian Army

- Ministry of Defence (MoD) has cleared the proposal to procure 10 lakh hand grenades for the Indian Army under its Make in India programme. The new hand grenades will replace the existing inventory, HE-36 grenades manufactured by the Ordnance Factory Board. The multi-mode grenades have been developed by the DRDO
- The project worth more than Rs. 500 crore. Recently, the government also signed a contract worth Rs 700 crore for procurement of 70,000 Sig Sauer assault rifles with a US manufacturer. A JV has also been formed with Russia to manufacture AK-203 assault rifles

IAF inducts first four heavy-lift Chinook helicopters

- Indian Air Force (IAF) formally inducted the four heavy-lift Chinook helicopters. Air Chief Marshal BS Dhanoa announced the induction at a ceremony held at Air Force base in Chandigarh. Chinook helicopters will be deployed at Chandigarh’s Air Force Station 12 Wing.
- The second batch of Chinooks will be stationed in Assam’s Dinjan. India bought 15 CH-47F (I) Chinook helicopters in September 2015 from Boeing (United States) at a cost of $1.5 billion.
- The entire fleet of 15 Chinooks is expected to be inducted in the air force by March 2020. These choppers will be used for various military purposes such as deploying of troops and machinery at high-altitude locations along the India-Pakistan border to support country’s current and future security goals.

Indian Navy nuclear, biological, chemical training facility launched

- The Indian Navy's Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Training Facility (NBCTF) was inaugurated at INS Shivaji in Lonavala by Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba
- The NBCTF, christened "Abhedya", impenetrable in Sanskrit, will help train personnel of naval ships fitted with nuclear, biological and chemical detection and protection systems. INS Shivaji is celebrating its platinum jubilee year in 2019-20 and Admiral Lanba released the platinum jubilee logo, with the theme "Propelling the Indian Navy since 1945". The Goa Shipyard Limited had signed the contract with the Indian Navy for the construction of the facility in March 2016.

First Indian Army mountaineering expedition to Mt Makalu flagged off
• First Indian Army Mountaineering Expedition to Mt Makalu (8485m) comprising five Officers, two JCOs and eleven OR was flagged off by Director General Military Training. In furtherance of the objective of summing all challenging peaks above 8000M, Indian Army is launching its maiden expedition to Mt Makalu in Mar-May 2019.

• Mt Makalu is considered amongst the most dangerous peaks and summing the peak is considered extremely challenging due to inclement weather conditions and freezing temperatures.

• Makalu is the fifth highest mountain in the world at 8,485 metres (27,838 ft). It is located in the Mahalangur Himalayas 19 km southeast of Mount Everest.

Tata Power SED bags Rs 1,200 crore contract from defence ministry
• Tata Power Strategic Engineering Division (SED) has bagged a Rs. 1,200 crore contract from the defence ministry
• Tata Power SED has signed a deal with the Ministry of Defence to supply 23 ship-borne 3D Air Surveillance Radars to the Indian Navy over the next 10 years. The contract was signed under the Buy & Make (India) category of the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) 2013
• The contract will be executed by Tata Power SED as the prime contractor with foreign OEM (Original Equipment Manufacturer) partner Indra Sistemas, Spain.

Second joint logistics node become operational in Mumbai
• The second joint logistics node of tri-services has become operational at Naval base in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
• It will provide logistical support to all three defence services and improve utilisation of resources, manpower and remove duplication. The first JLN consisting of the three services was set up at Andaman and Nicobar Islands in 2018. The third logistic node is in process and is likely to come up in Guwahati, Assam and it will only be among Indian Army and Air Force.

Indian Navy gets combat management system for INS Vikrant
• It is the first CMS to be developed by private industry for Indian Navy and for indigenous aircraft carrier. Indian Navy has received Combat Management System (CMS) for first indigenous aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant.
• It has been privately co-developed by Tata Power Strategic Engineering Division and Electronics System Engineering Establishment and MARS of Russia. It is India’s first indigenously-built largest aircraft carrier. It is also called IAC-1. It is in its third and final phase of construction at Kochi shipyard and the sea trials are expected to begin by mid-2020.

GRSE becomes first in India to build 100 warships
• Garden Reach Ship Builders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) became the ‘first Indian shipyard’ to build and deliver 100 warships. GRSE Chairman and Managing Director, V K Saxena, formally handed over the 100th warship ‘IN LCU L-56’ to the Indian Navy. It had handed over its 99th warship, 'ICGS Priyadarshini', an advanced 'Fast Patrol Vessel' to the Indian Coast Guard.
• The 100th warship, a Landing Craft Utility (LCU), is the sixth of an order of eight such vessels from the Navy.

ISRO opened its first visitor’s gallery to watch rocket launches
• In a first, ISRO opened a visitors’ gallery with 5,000 capacity at Andhra Pradesh’s Sriharikota island.
• The gallery has a clear line of sight to two launch pads and large screens to explain launcher and satellite features.
• This comes as ISRO is launching defence satellite EMISAT along with 28 foreign satellites.
ISRO successfully launched India’s latest EMISAT defence satellite

- The Indian Space Research Organization, ISRO, launched India’s latest satellite EMISAT and 28 other smaller satellites was launched from the Sriharikota spaceport
- PSLV-C45 successfully injected EMISAT in a 748-km orbit and 28 other satellites in a 504-km orbit
- The rocket PSLV C45 flew in a new configuration called “QL.” In this configuration, the rocket is fitted with four longer versions of strap-on motors that provide the vehicle the required additional thrust. Earlier, the rocket used to be in “XL” version with six strap-on motors or two with no strap-on motors known as core alone configuration
- The other 28 international satellites are 25 3U type, two 6U type and one 2U type nano satellites. They are from Lithuania (two), Spain (1), Switzerland (1) and the United States (24).

Army constructs Maitri Bridge on Indus river to link villages in Leh

- The bridge is constructed over the Indus river at Choglamsar in Leh and is the longest suspension bridge over the Indus river.
- The Army undertook the task of building the Maitri Bridge on Indus river following requests received from the civil administration to help the locals of Choglamsar, Stok and Chuchot villages (largest villages of Ladakh region).
- The 260 feet cable suspension bridge, which has been built using innovative engineering methods, is the longest suspension bridge over the Indus river.
- It was constructed by the Combat Engineers (Sahas aur Yogyata Regiment) of the Fire & Fury Corps in a record time of 40 days, ferrying almost 500 tonnes of bridging equipment and construction material.

US approves sale of 24 MH-60 Romeo Seahawk helicopters to India for $2.4 bn

- The US has approved the sale of 24 multi-role MH-60R Seahawk maritime helicopters to India at an estimated cost of USD 2.6 billion. These choppers are considered as the world’s most advanced maritime helicopter.
- It will provide the Indian defence forces with the capability to perform anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare missions. MH-60 Romeo Seahawk helicopters have been designed and manufactured by Lockheed Martin for hunting submarines as well as knocking out ships and conducting search-and-rescue operations at sea.

India's first indigenously built Dhanush howitzer inducted in Army

- Country’s first indigenously designed and developed first batch of six Dhanush artillery gun was inducted in the Indian Army during a ceremony held at Gun Carriage Factory (GCF), Jabalpur.
- Dhanush is a 155 mm, 45-calibre towed artillery gun with a range of 36 km and has demonstrated a range of 38 km with specialised ammunition
- The Dhanush gun system is based on the designs of the Bofors howitzer. Dhanush is the third type of artillery gun to be inducted into the force after the K-9 Vajra and the M-777 ultra-light howitzers.

ITBP organises first National Sky Running Championship

- Border guarding force Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) along with Sky Running Association of India organised the National Sky Running Championship at Mountaineering and Skiing Institute of ITBP at Auli in Uttarakhand.
- This is the first time such championship was organised at a high altitude of up to 4000 metres. The high altitude marathon was organised for both junior and senior categories.
- Various athletes from ITBP, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Uttarakhand participated in the championship.
• Mayank Dimri of Uttarakhand won the race while ITBP's constables Vinod Singh and Padna Tundup finished at second and third places.
• In the women's category, ITBP's Babita and Rakhi got the first and second positions while Tripti Dimri of Uttarakhand finished at the third spot.

**INS Kolkata, INS Shakti to take part in Chinese Navy's anniversary celebrations**
• Two Indian naval ships — INS 'Kolkata' and 'Shakti' — would take part in the Chinese Navy's 70th anniversary of celebrations
• The two ships are scheduled to visit Chinese port of Qingdao from 21 to 26 April to participate in an International Fleet Review to celebrate the 70th anniversary of PLA Navy
• INS Kolkata is the lead ship of the Kolkata-class stealth guided-missile destroyers of the Indian Navy.
• INS Shakti is tanker and supply ship.

**VRC launched to boost indigenous warship design capabilities**
• A new state-of-the-art, Virtual Reality Centre (VRC) to provide a major boost to indigenous warship design capabilities of the Navy was inaugurated by Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba in New Delhi.
• The VRC at the the Directorate of Naval Design (Surface Ship Group), seeks to also provide impetus to ‘self-reliance and greater fillip’ to warship construction under the 'Make in India' initiative of the Indian government.

**China develops world's first armed amphibious drone boat**
• China has successfully tested the world's first armed amphibious drone boat which the Chinese military analysts claimed could be used in land assault operations and is capable of forming a combat triad with aerial drones and other drone ships.
• Built by Wuchang Shipbuilding Industry Group under China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC), the drone ship, named Marine Lizard, successfully passed delivery checks and left factory on April 8 in Wuhan, capital of Central China's Hubei Province. Having a maximum operation range of 1,200 km, the Marine Lizard can be remotely controlled via satellites,
• The 12-meter-long Marine Lizard is a trimaran propelled by a diesel-powered hydrojet and can reach a maximum speed of 50 knots while maintaining stealth

**Commissioning of Off Shore Patrol Vessel (OPV) ICGS Veera**
• Indian Coast Guard Ship Veera, the third in the series of 98 metre Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) was commissioned at Visakhapatnam by General Bipin Rawat in the presence of Director General Rajendra Singh, PTM, TM, Director General Indian Coast Guard and senior dignitaries of the central and state government.
• “Veera” meaning “Audacious Brave Courageous” is a projection of Indian Coast Guard’s will and commitment ‘To Serve and Protect’ the maritime interest of the nation. This is indigenously designed and built by Larsen & Toubro Ltd. at its shipbuilding facility at Kattupali in Chennai.
• The 98 metre long, 15 metre wide patrol vessel has a 3.6 metre draft and a range of 5,000 nautical miles. The vessel is fitted with a 30mm naval gun and will be fitted with 12.7mm Gun with FCS.

**Navy chief launches new guided missile destroyer 'INS Imphal'**
• Navy chief Admiral Sunil Lanba launched the third ship of Project 15B, a guided missile destroyer Imphal, at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders, Mumbai.
• The launch marks yet another significant milestone in the annals of the indigenous warship design and construction programme of India. With a launch weight of 3,037 tonnes, the vessel made its first contact with water with full fanfare during the launching ceremony.
INS Kolkata, Shakti to participate in IFR in China

- The Indian Navy ships Kolkata and Shakti are scheduled to arrive at Qingdao in China on April 21 to participate in the International Fleet Review (IFR) as a part of the 70th anniversary celebrations of People Liberation's Army (PLA-Navy). International Fleet Review (IFR) is a parade of naval ships, aircraft, and submarines, and is organised by nations to promote goodwill, strengthen cooperation and showcase their organisational capabilities.
- The Indian Navy would be represented in the Chinese IFR by indigenously built stealth guided missile destroyer INS Kolkata and fleet support ship INS Shakti.

India hands over 100 motorized wheelchairs to Afghan National Army

- Indian Ambassador Vinay Kumar presented 100 motorized wheelchairs to the Afghan National Army (ANA).
- India also remains committed to extending medical relief and assistance to the ANA personnel.
- Till date, Indian Army has also trained 4880 ANA personnel in various professional, educational and military training programs, including training ANA doctors and medical technicians.

Army starts process to induct women as jawans in military police

- Opening up a new avenue for females, the Indian Army kicked off the process of inducting women as jawans by starting their online registration for recruitment in the corps of military police.
- This is being seen as a major breakthrough for women in armed forces as so far, they were being inducted only as officers and this is the first time they would be taken in as soldiers.
- Women will be inducted in a graded manner to eventually comprise 20 per cent of total Corps of Military Police and their role would range from probing crime cases to assisting the Army in field operations wherever required.

EXERCISES

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'Mainamati Maitree Exercise 2019' held in Tripura

- Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) concluded a three-day joint exercise organised as part of the confidence building measures in Tripura.
- The main objective of this exercise was to plan and conduct anti-smuggling and anti-criminal activity related operations with an aim to achieve better joint operational efficiency and border management in the area.
The exercise was named 'Mainamati Maitree Exercise 2019' after the Mainamati hill range, dotted with ancient Buddhist settlements, near Comilla town in Bangladesh.

**Indo-Bangladesh joint military exercise Sampriti – 2019 concluded**

- Exercise Sampriti-VIII, a joint Indo-Bangladesh military exercise which witnessed participation of a company group of 9th Battalion the Rajputana Rifles from the Indian Army and the Company of 36 East Bengal Battalion, Bangladesh Army concluded at Tangail, Bangladesh.
- The exercise was the 8th edition in the Sampriti series, which started in 2009. Exercise Sampriti strengthens and broadens interoperability and cooperation between the Indian and Bangladesh Armies.
- Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Riva Ganguly Das was the chief guest of closing ceremony.

**India – Africa Joint Field Training Exercise AFINDEX-19 to be held in Pune**

- The India-Africa Joint Field Training Exercise (AFINDEX-19) will be held between the Indian Army and 16 African nations in Pune from March 18 to 27.
- The 10-day long joint exercise will be held in two locations in Pune. They are Foreign Training Node at Aundh Military Station and College of Military Engineering in Kirkee.
- Indian Army will be represented by the personnel of Maratha Light Infantry.
- Besides, the personnel from the participating nations of African continent, officers from Rwanda, Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar would also attend the exercise as Observers.
- The aim of the exercise is to train the participating contingents in Humanitarian Mine Assistance (HMA) and Peace Keeping Operations (PKO) under the United Nations Charter.

**SCO members to hold joint anti-terrorism exercise 'Sary-Arka-Antiterror 2019'**

- India, Pakistan and the other members states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will take part in a joint anti-terrorism exercise to be held this year. The decision to hold the joint exercise 'Sary-Arka-Antiterror 2019' was announced during the 34th meeting of the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) council held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.
- RATS is a permanent organ of the SCO which serves to promote cooperation of member states against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism. It is headquartered in Tashkent. The next meeting of the Council of the RATS SCO is scheduled to be held in Russia in September 2019.
- SCO Member States: China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Russia, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India and Pakistan.

**33rd Edition of IND-INDO CORPAT begins at Port Blair**

- 33rd edition of the India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) will be held from 19 March to 4th April 2019. During the opening ceremony in Port Blair, various activities such as sporting fixtures, ship visits and professional interactions have been planned.
- The ship and aircraft from both the countries would undertake patrolling on the respective sides of 236 nautical miles long International Maritime Boundary line and also participate in the 2nd Bilateral Maritime Exercise in the Andaman Sea. The opening ceremony was held at Port Blair. The closing ceremony will be held at Belawan, Indonesia on 04 April 2019. Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Sultan Thaha Syaifuddin and Maritime Patrol Aircraft CN-235, led by Cmde Daft Santoso, will participate in this exercise.

**Indo-Sri Lanka joint Exercise Mitra shakti-VI to be held in Sri Lanka**

- Exercise MITRA SHAKTI is conducted annually as part of military diplomacy and interaction between armies of India & Sri Lanka. The joint exercise for the year 2018-19 will be conducted from 26 March to 08 April 2019 in Sri Lanka. Troops from 1st Battalion the BIHAR Regiment of the Indian Army and Gemunu Watch Battalion of Sri Lankan Army would be jointly undertaking the exercise.
The aim of the exercise is to build and promote close relations between armies of both the countries and to enhance the ability of joint exercise commander to take military contingents of both nations under command. The exercise will involve tactical level operations in an international counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism environment under United Nations mandate.

**Bilateral joint exercise between India, Oman to begin from Mar 12**
- The third edition of the bilateral joint exercise between India and Oman, Al Nagah 2019 will begin from 12th of this month at Jabel Al Akhdar Mountains in Oman.
- The aim of this exercise is to enhance interoperability in counter terrorist operations in semi urban mountainous terrain.
- The exercise will enhancing understanding of capabilities and strengthening camaraderie between both the Armies.

**Terror camps on India-Myanmar border destroyed – Operation Sun Rise**
- Indian and Myanmar armies carried out a military operation named ‘Operation Sunrise’ to wipe out insurgent camps who were planning to hit the Indian workers at the Kaladan Transit project. The Kaladan Multimodal Transit Transport Project aims to connect seaports from India to Myanmar. The Joint operation was conducted from mid-February till mid-March.
- The target of these operations carried out by the armies of both countries was the Arakan Army, an insurgent group trained by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA), and reportedly trained by China.

**Indian Air Force to participate in LIMA 2019**
- Indian Air Force will participate in Langkawi International Maritime Aero Expo (LIMA 2019) scheduled to be held in Langkawi, Malaysia from March 26 to 30th 2019. This will be for first time, IAF is participating in LIMA expo and will showcase its indigenously developed LCA Tejas fighter aircraft.
- IAF contingent will be represented by two LCA, one C-130J and one IL-76 aircrafts along with 27 officers, 42 air-warriors and 11 HAL personnel. Participation of IAF in LIMA-2019 will provide an opportunity to air-warriors to interact with their Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) counterparts and foster close relationship between the two services.

**India-Australia Naval Exercise AUSINDEX 2019 to be held in April 2019**
- India and Australia will conduct AUSINDEX 2019 bilateral naval exercise off the coast of Vishakhapatnam in Bay of Bengal from April 2 to 16, 2019. Overall it will be third installment (edition) of bilateral naval exercise between Indian Navy and Royal Australian Navy.
- It will see participation of over 1,000 Australian defence personnel, four Royal Australian Navy ships. It includes HMAS (Her Majesty’s Australian Ship) Canberra, HMAS Success, HMAS Newcastle, and HMAS Parramatta. Both countries will also deploy P-8I aircraft and P-8A aircraft, which are long-range anti-surface warfare, anti-submarine.

**INS Kolkata and INS Shakti Reached South Korea to Participate in ADMM-Plus Maritime Security Exercise**
- Two warships of the Indian Navy have reached the South Korean port city of Busan after participating at an international maritime parade off the coast of Qingdao in China. INS Kolkata and INS Shakti are in Busan as part of a deployment of the eastern fleet to the South China Sea.
- In a demonstration of India’s Act East policy and the Indian Navy’s increasing footprint and operational reach, Indian naval ships Kolkata and Shakti have arrived at Busan, South Korea on a three-day visit as part of deployment of the Eastern Fleet to the South China Sea on April 28.
- The Navy said the two ships will participate in the ADMM-Plus Maritime Security Field Training Exercise (FTX) at Busan.
The Indian and Vietnamese Navies Conclude Bilateral Exercise (IN – VPN BILAT EX)

- The Indian Navy undertook the second edition of the bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Vietnam People Navy at/ off Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam from 13 to 16 Apr 19. The maiden edition was conducted from 21 to 26 May 18 at Da Nang, Vietnam.
- The exercise was undertaken as a part of the ongoing Overseas Deployment of Eastern Fleet ships to South East Asian countries. IN Ships Kolkata under the command of Capt Aditya Hara and Shakti under the command of Capt Sridam Amur participated in the exercise, comprising a harbour and a sea phase.

India, Singapore joint military exercise Bold Kurukshetra-2019 kicks off in Babina

- The three-day exercise is aimed at bolstering cooperation against terrorism, developing defence technology and improving maritime security.

Srilanka Army to hold Exercise ‘Western Shield’ in July

- The biggest-ever military exercise organised by the Sri Lanka Army - Exercise Western Shield - with the largest-ever contingent of infantrymen is scheduled to begin on July 1, with the support of other service regiments and Navy and Air Force troops.
- In which 5,000 infantrymen, three General Officers Commanding, nine Brigade Commanders, 15 Commanding Officers and other supportive Army personnel are expected to take part.
- Exercise Western Shield will extend from Mannar to Puttalam, including Kalpitiya, Wilpattu National Park, Mavillu and Thabbowa Forest Reserves and the Western coastal belt and provide the opportunity for Army trainees to march through those areas which are not usually accessible, except to Forest Conservation authorities.

Morocco-US joint military exercise ‘African Lion 2019’ starts In Morocco

- The Morocco-US sponsored exercise “African Lion 2019” takes place from March 16 to April 7, 2019, in Morocco.
- The annual exercise involves various types of training including command, maneuvering, peace-keeping and aerial refueling. The drills also include training on counter-terrorism operations, land and air exercises as well as a tactical simulation.

25th CARAT Exercise Series Kicks Off with Sri Lanka in Indian Ocean

- 25th annual Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) exercise series between the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps and the armed forces of partner nations held on April 19, 2019 at Hambantota Port in Sri Lanka.
- CARAT, the U.S. Navy’s oldest and longest continually-running regional exercise in South Asia and Southeast Asia, strengthens partnerships between regional navies and enhances maritime security cooperation throughout the Indo-Pacific.

India and France to hold largest ever ‘Varuna’ naval exercise off Goa coast

- India and France will conduct their largest ever naval exercise ‘Varuna’ in May 2019. The objective of this exercise is to expand the strategic partnership between India and France in the Indian Ocean region (IOR).
- Varuna Naval Exercise will take place off Goa and Karwar from 1 May 2019.
Important Science and Technology

ISRO becomes first agency to use fourth stage of rocket as orbital platform

- The fourth and final stage of the rocket normally turns into debris after ejecting a satellite. This time, the workhorse PSLV DL’s fourth stage, with a satellite built by school students strapped to its back, will continue orbiting the earth at a distance of 450km above it for six months. The latest Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) take off from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh a mission to help India notch up one more first in space technology. It will make use of the final stage of rocket as orbital platform for a satellite.

ISRO launches student-made satellite Kalamsat-V2 into space

- ISRO’s rocket was mainly to put into orbit a 740 kg satellite named Microsat-R that will be used to take high-resolution photographs of the earth. This satellite will be used by the Indian Defence research team.

- The satellite was launched using the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) and was successfully placed into orbit. Onboard the PSLV was the world’s lightest satellite that was built by Indian students. This satellite weighs just 1.2Kgs and is named Kalamsat v2. The satellite cost the student team around Rs. 12 Lakhs, but ISRO launched it into orbit for free. The 1.2Kg Kalamsat v2 was prepared in 6 days, and was under development since the last 6 years. The 20+ team of students at Space Kidz India were headed by Srimathy Kesan.

ISRO set to launch GSAT-31 from French Guiana

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has planned to launch the GSAT-31 communication satellite, from the French Guiana on 6th February, to replace INSAT-4CR. The satellite will be used for high-speed internet, telecommunication services and broadcasting.

- The 2,600 KG-satellite GSAT-31 will be launched in the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-MK III)

Scientists create AI based system that translates thoughts into speech

- Scientists have created an artificial intelligence (AI) based system that directly translates thoughts into intelligible, recognisable speech. The technology developed by researchers from Columbia University in the United States. The research will help people who cannot speak regain their ability to communicate with the outside world.

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated India’s first humanoid police robot KP-BOT

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated KP-BOT, first humanoid police robot in India, in Thiruvananthapuram. The robot ranked as Sub-Inspector and it will perform duties of the front office of police headquarters. It’ll receive the visitors, issue identity cards and allot time for them and direct them to different places according to their needs. KP-Bot has been developed by State Police Cyberdome in cooperation with Asimov Robotics, a Kochi-based startup firm.

SpaceX launches world’s 1st private Moon lander for Israel

- Elon Musk-led aerospace startup SpaceX deployed Israel’s first Moon lander mission aboard its Falcon 9 rocket, making it the world’s first such fully-private mission. ‘Beresheet’ (Hebrew for 'in the beginning') is set to land on the Moon on April 11. If successful, Israel will become only the fourth nation to have achieved a controlled touchdown on the Moon.

NASA launches website to check daily weather on Mars

- NASA has launched a website to share the daily weather report of Mars with its temperature, atmospheric pressure and wind speed collected by the InSight lander.

- Temperature on Mars regularly drops below -90°C and rarely rises above -9°C, the data revealed.

ISRO to launch defence satellite 'Emisat' in March for DRDO
• Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch an electronic intelligence satellite 'Emisat' for the DRDO in March.
• ISRO will also launch 28 third-party satellites and will demonstrate its new technologies like three different orbits with a new variant of 'Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle' rocket in March.

Israel to launch its first moon mission
• Israel is to launch its first moon mission, sending an unmanned spacecraft to collect data to be shared with NASA.
• The 585-kilogram Beresheet spacecraft is to lift off atop a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida. Mission control will be in Yehud, near Tel Aviv. The $100-million project will measure the lunar magnetic field to help understanding of the moon's formation.

Signalchip launched India’s first indigenous semiconductor chips for 4G LTE, 5G NR modes
• Bengaluru-based Signalchip launched India’s first semiconductor chips for 4G LTE and 5G NR modems.
• The company launched four chips as part of its SCBM34XX and SCRF34XX/45XX series, code-named ‘Agumbe’.
• These chips also support positioning using India’s own satellite navigation system, NAVIC.
• Founder and CEO of SIGNALCHIP Himanshu Khasnis.

BHEL installed first solar electric vehicle charging station
• Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has set up its first solar electric vehicle charger on the Delhi-Chandigarh Highway. The first in a series of charging stations on the entire 250 kilometer stretch was inaugurated by A R Sihag, secretary, Department of Heavy Industry (DHI) in the presence of BHEL Chairman Atul Sobti in Sonepat, Haryana.
• The project is covered under the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid) & Electric Vehicles in India (FAME) scheme of Department of Heavy Industry (DHI).
• Recently the Cabinet government approved FAME II scheme with an outlay of Rs. 10,000 crore over a period of three years. To be implemented from April 1, 2019, the scheme envisages setting up of about 2700 charging stations across the country so that at least one charging station is available in a grid of 3×3 km2.

ISRO launched Yuva Vigyani Karyakram for school children
• Indian Space Research Organisation has launched “Yuva Vigyani Karyakram”, a “Young Scientist Programme” for the School Children to be studying in the ninth standard. The programme aims at imparting basic knowledge on space technology, space science and space applications to the younger ones with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of space activities.
• “Catch them young” residential training programme will be of around two weeks duration during summer holidays with a proposal to select 3 students from each State and Union Territory, covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus.

People in Japan temple unveiled a robot ‘Goddess’
• A 400-year-old Kyoto-based temple has unveiled a robotic avatar of the Buddhist Goddess of Mercy, Kannon, in an attempt to keep the younger generation connected with Buddhism.
• The robot named 'Mindar', can join its hands and move its eyes and torso while delivering 25-minute-long sermons to worshippers.

NASA announced world’s first all-female spacewalk
• NASA announced Two NASA astronauts Anne McClain and Christina Koch are scheduled to carry out the first ever all female spacewalk in history on March 29.
• Both will walk outside the International Space Station (ISS) as members of Expedition 59, on a mission to replace batteries installed last summer. 35 years after the first woman performed a spacewalk. They will receive ground support from flight director Mary Lawrence and Kristen Facciol of the Canadian Space Agency in NASA's Johnson Space Center in Texas.

China launches new communications satellite 'ChinaSat 6C', marks 300th mission
• China sent a new communications satellite into orbit from the Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest China's Sichuan Province. The "ChinaSat 6C" satellite was launched by a Long March-3B carrier rocket. It will provide high-quality radio and TV transmission services.
• The satellite was developed by the China Academy of Space Technology, and will be operated by the China Satellite Communications Co, Ltd. The launch marks the 300th mission of the Long March carrier rocket series developed by the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation.

IIT Madras developed ‘NERO’ for generating potable water from air
• The Indian Institute of Technology-Madras (IIT-M) will develop a device called ‘NERO’ to generate potable water from atmospheric air. For this project, IIT Madras has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Teerthaa, a private sustainable technology company. The solar thermal energy powered device will produce about 4 to 5 litres of potable water per day.

IIT Kharagpur students created an mobile app to detect fake currency notes
• Students from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur have developed an image processing application which can detect counterfeit currency. The application, which can be installed on smartphones, can be used by people at various touch points thus reducing chances of fraud. The app would then perform verification of its authenticity with the help of 25 features that have been extracted from both the sides of the note.

IBM creates Blockchain-based global payment network
• Information Technology (IT) major IBM has created a Blockchain-based global payment network that transmits monetary value in the form of digital assets, commonly known as cryptocurrencies or 'stable coins'.
• The payment network called World Wire uses the Stellar protocol that reduces intermediaries and allows users to accelerate settlement time. World Wire has already enabled payment locations in 72 countries, with 47 currencies and 44 banking endpoints.

SAIL launched Smart Garbage bins made of steel
• Steel Authority of India Ltd (SAIL) has launched smart garbage bins made of stainless steel. These smart garbage bins will be able to send a signal to the garbage collection vehicle about the ‘fill-up’ position of the bin, aiding better cleaning and lower human intervention.
• The environment-friendly garbage bins will be made of SAIL SALEM stainless steel. These will be installed in underground Reinforced Cement Concrete (RCC) pits at the Smart Garbage Station. This will help prevent the spread of stink and diseases.

Flipkart introduces robot-based sortation technology
• Flipkart has introduced a robot-based sortation technology — Automated Guided Vehicles (AGVs) at its Soukya sortation center in Bengaluru. The Soukya set-up involves over 100 self-guided bots that automatically sort packages to the right customer pincodes by identifying encoded information on each package.
• It can process up to 4,500 shipments in an hour and can be scaled over five times with minimal changes. The AGVs will help Flipkart meet ever-growing customer and scale demands, ensuring faster delivery and an enhanced experience for online shoppers.
Vega Rocket Launches Earth-Watching PRISMA Satellite for Italy

- Italy’s new Earth-observation satellite named PRISMA (Precursore Iperspettrale della Missione Applicativa) launched from the Guiana Space Centre by 98 foot (30 meters) tall Vega rocket which was developed by the joint venture of Italian Space Agency and the European Space Agency.

- PRISMA (an Italian acronym for Hyperspectral Precursor of the Application Mission) is designed to provide information about environmental monitoring, resources management, pollution and crop health.

- The satellite includes a medium resolution camera that can view across all visual wavelengths, as well as a hyperspectral imager that can capture a wider range of wavelengths between 400 and 2500 nanometers.

ISRO to launch 29 satellites including EMISAT on first of April

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) will launch 29 satellites including the primary payload EMISAT, on the first of April. Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, PSLV-C45 will take off from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

- EMISAT has been developed for monitoring radar network by India. EMISAT, weighing 436 kg, is intended for electromagnetic spectrum measurement. It will be placed in an orbit of about 753 km altitude. Indian Institute of Space Science (IISc) and the Radio Amateur Satellite Corporation are the other two institutions that will have their devices on the experimental platform.

India successfully conducts A-SAT missile test under ‘Mission Shakti’

- Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO successfully conducted an Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) missile test, under Mission Shakti from Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha. A DRDO-developed Ballistic Missile, Defence Interceptor Missile successfully engaged an Indian orbiting target satellite in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) in a Hit to Kill mode.

- The missile travelled a distance of almost 300 km from earth and hit the target within three minutes of its launch. With this achievement, India has now become the only fourth nation after US, Russia and China to have such capability.

Facebook launches tools to boost election engagement

- Social-networking site Facebook launched two new India-specific tools ‘Candidate Connect’ and ‘Share You Voted’ to boost civic engagement on its platform during the general elections that commence in April.

- While ‘Candidate Connect’ will help people learn more about candidates, the ‘Share You Voted’ will provide people with polling information and enable them to announce and celebrate their vote.

IIT-Delhi researchers develop AI-based detector for malaria, TB, cervical cancer

- Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) here have developed an artificial intelligence (AI)-based low-power electronic hardware system that can help in detecting malaria, tuberculosis, intestinal parasite and cervical cancer in a few milliseconds.

- The research focuses on building a neuromorphic system which can be used for healthcare access in resource-constrained areas with limited access to human specialists. The portable device is trained to detect microorganisms in the biological samples. It was built on Raspberry Pi, a tiny computer attached to an infrared-sensitive camera.

IIT Madras converts petroleum waste toluene into useful product

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has successfully converted petroleum waste-product toluene into benzoic acid. Benzoic acid is used as a food preservative (E210) and medicine for fungal/bacterial infection.

- Toluene is converted into benzoic acid through selective and controlled oxidation in the presence of a catalyst — binaphthyl-stabilised platinum nanoparticles (Pt-BNP).

Tesla builds its 'largest energy storage system in Asia'
• Tesla has developed its ‘largest power storage system in Asia’ at Osaka train station in Japan to reduce energy demand and provide emergency backup power to trains in Japan.
• It has installed a bank of 42 Powerpacks at a train station in Japan's Osaka that can provide sufficient backup power to safely move a train and its passengers to the nearest station in the event of a power outage.

GAIL, BHEL tie up for development of solar power projects
• Maharatna public sector units GAIL India Ltd and Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) have inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for cooperation in the development of solar power projects.
• The MoU is aimed at building a closer strategic partnership between the two state-owned companies for jointly pursuing commercial solar power projects through participation in tariff and viability gap funding based competitive bidding process.
• India has set a target to achieve 100 GW of solar power by 2022 so that all citizens can have round-the-clock access to uninterrupted electricity.

China launches new data relay satellite
• China launched the first of its new-generation data relay satellites as part of the preparatory work for the nation's next manned space missions. The Tianlian II-01 was lifted off at a Long March 3B carrier rocket at the Xichang Satellite Launch Center in Sichuan province.
• The spacecraft is the first in China's second generation of data relay satellite, adding its entry into service will substantially improve the country's space-based data relay capability.
• The satellite is developed by the China Academy of Space Technology under the China Aerospace Science and Technology Corporation. The launch marks the 301st mission of the Long March carrier rocket series.

Google Unveils Hybrid Cloud Platform Anthos
• Google launched Anthos, a new open platform from Google Cloud, that lets users run applications from anywhere.
• Anthos allows users to run applications, unmodified, on existing on-premise hardware or on the public cloud, and is based on the Cloud Services Platform that Google announced last year.

First-ever real image of a black hole released
• Scientists have captured the first direct image of a black hole, using Event Horizon Telescope observations of the center of the galaxy M87 (Messier 87), 55 million light-years from the Earth.
• The image which has been captured by a network of eight telescopes across the world
• The image shows the event horizon, a bright ring formed as light bends in the intense gravity around the black hole that is 6.5 billion times more massive than the Sun.

Stratolaunch Flies World's Largest Plane for the First Time
• Stratolaunch, the private launch company founded by the late billionaire Paul Allen, has just flown the world's largest aircraft for the first time. The massive airplane, which has a wingspan bigger than a football field and is designed to launch rockets from the air, took off on its maiden test flight from the Mojave Air and Space Port in Mojave, California.

India’s sub-sonic cruise missile ‘Nirbhay’ successfully test fired from Odisha
• India successfully test-fired its first indigenously designed and developed long-range sub-sonic cruise missile ‘Nirbhay’ from a test range in Odisha. The missile is equipped with a Ring Laser Gyroscope (RLG) based guidance, control and navigation system. It is also armed with a MEMS-based Inertial Navigation System (INS) and the GPS system. The Nirbhay missile also has capability of striking a multiple targets at a time.
• The missile is nuclear capable, can be equipped with 300kg warhead. It has an ability to reach speed of 0.6-0.7 Mach and can be deployed from multiple platforms. The missile weighs 1,500 kg, width of 0.52 meters and has a wingspan of 2.7 metre.

Nepal successfully launches its 1st satellite NepaliSat-1 into space
• Nepal successfully launched its first satellite NepaliSat-1 into space from Virginia in the United States. The satellite, developed by two Nepalis — Abhas Maskey and Hariram Shrestha — at Japan's Kyushu Institute of Technology. NepaliSat-1 is a low orbit satellite. It will be stationed at the International Space Station for a month and then it will be sent to orbit the earth.
• The satellite will take photographs on a regular basis to gather geographical information of the country. It weighs 1.3 kilograms, making it a small satellite with limited capability.

Sri Lanka’s 1st satellite ‘Raavana-1’ launched into space
• Sri Lanka’s first satellite ‘Raavana-1’ was launched into space from NASA’s Flight Facility on Virginia’s east shore. ‘Raavana 1’ weights around 1.05 kg and the lifespan of the satellite is around one and a half years.
• The satellite was designed and built at the Kyushu Institute of Technology in Japan by two Sri Lankan research engineers.

NASA astronaut to set record for longest spaceflight by a woman
• NASA astronaut Christina Koch is going to have her mission on the International Space Station (ISS) extended to 328 days. This would set a record for the longest single spaceflight by a woman. Koch arrived at the space station on March 14 and now is scheduled to remain in orbit until February 2020. She will eclipse the record of 288 days set by former NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson in 2016-17
• The longest single spaceflight by a NASA astronaut is 340 days, set by former NASA astronaut Scott Kelly during his one-year mission in 2015-16.

First Marsquake detected by NASA’s InSight mission
• The American space agency's InSight lander appears to have detected its first seismic event on Mars.
• It is the first seismic signal detected on the surface of a planetary body other than the Earth and its Moon.
• "Marsquake" could either be movement in a crack inside the planet or the shaking from a meteorite impact.
• It aims to identify multiple quakes, to help build a clearer picture of Mars’ interior structure.

Japan creates first artificial crater on asteroid
• Japanese scientists have succeeded in creating what they called the first-ever artificial crater on an asteroid, a step towards shedding light on how the solar system evolved.
• The announcement comes after the Hayabusa2 probe fired an explosive device at the Ryugu asteroid early this month to blast a crater in the surface and scoop up material, aiming to reveal more about the origins of life on Earth.

Important Ranking and Indexes

India to grow by 7.5% in 2019; Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)
• A settled goods and services tax (GST), improving credit availability and capacity expansion from increasing investment in infrastructure are among seven key drivers that will help Indian economy grow 7.5% next year.
• Growth Outlook for 2019’, CII stated that amid growing global vulnerabilities of trade wars and US monetary tightening, India shines as the fastest growing major economy with robust gross domestic product (GDP) in 2018 that is expected to continue to expand in 2019.
Andhra Pradesh tops ACI's Ease of Doing Business index

- Andhra Pradesh has topped the survey of Asia Competitiveness Institute (ACI), Singapore's 2018 Ease of Doing Business (EDB) Index ABC Rankings for economies of 21 states of India, while Maharashtra and Delhi came in second and third place respectively. Andhra Pradesh rose from the 5th rank in 2016 to the top spot in 2018.
- Ease of Doing Business (EDB) index is based upon three parameters called ABC, Attractiveness to Investors, Business Friendliness and Competitiveness Policies.

Indian economy is expected to grow at 7.2% in 2018-19: CSO

- First advance estimates of national income released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). Indian economy is expected to grow at 7.2% in 2018-19, higher from 6.7% in the previous fiscal, mainly due to improvement in the performance of agriculture and manufacturing sectors. The income earned by an average Indian doubled in seven years, from Rs 63,642 per year in 2011-12 to Rs 1.25 lakh in 2018-19.

India is set to become world's third largest consumer market: World Economic Forum

- India is set to become the world's third largest consumer market behind only USA and China by 2030. The report titled 'Future of Consumption in Fast-Growth Consumer Market - India' also noted that growth of the middle class will lift nearly 25 million households out of poverty. Consumer spending in India is expected to grow from 1.5 trillion US dollar at present to six trillion US dollar by 2030. The report stated that, with the annual GDP growth rate of 7.5 percent, India is currently the world's sixth largest economy.

India Ranks 79th, Japan Tops List of Most Powerful Passports

- Henley Passport Index periodically measures the access each country's travel document affords, India jumped two positions from 81st in 2018 to 79th this year, Japan retained its top spot as the world's most travel-friendly passport due to the document's access to 190 countries.
- The ranking is based on the extensive and exclusive data collected from the International Air Transportation Association (IATA) which maintains the world's largest and most accurate database of travel information, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal ranked further low at 104, 102 and 94 respectively.

Economist Intelligence Unit 2018 Democracy Index

- Norway topped and India has ranked at 41st place on the Economist Intelligence Unit's annual Global Democracy Index, The EIU Democracy Index provides a snapshot of the state of world democracy for 165 independent states and two territories.
- The Democracy Index is based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. Based on their scores on 60 indicators within these categories, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime: full democracy; flawed democracy; hybrid regime; and authoritarian regime.

India among the most trusted nations globally: Report

- India is among the most trusted nations globally when it comes to government, business, NGOs and media. The 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer report, which was released, ahead of the World Economic Forum meet in Davos, noted that the Global Trust Index witnessed a marginal increase of 3 points to 52. China topped the Trust Index among both the informed public and the general population segments. India was at the second place in the informed public category and third place in the general population category.

JNPT becomes India's only port to be ranked among world's top 30
• The Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) has become India's only port to get listed among the top 30 global container ports. The JNPT, India's premiere container port got listed amongst the top 30 container ports globally, as per the latest Lloyds Report. JNPT notched up five spots, to be 28th on the list, compared to its previous ranking.

• This is a validation of all the efforts and strategic initiatives being implemented at JNPT in order to enhance overall port efficiency

**India ranks sixth in GDPR readiness index: Cisco**

• Around 65 per cent of Indian businesses and organisations are better prepared for the European Union’s (EU) General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), making India the sixth best prepared nation to deal with the new data privacy regulation which all organizations operating within the European Union and European Economic Area are mandated to comply with. The rankings were part of the ‘Data Privacy Benchmark Study’ for 2019 put out by technology giant Cisco. As per the report 59% of organizations across the world reported meeting all requirements or most of the requirements, 29% expect to do so within a year while 9% will take more than a year.

**India replaces Japan as second largest steel producer**

• According to World Steel Association (worldsteel) India has replaced Japan as world’s second largest steel producing country. **China is the largest producer** of crude steel accounting for more than 51 per cent of production

• “India’s crude steel production in 2018 was at 106.5 MT, up by 4.9 per cent from 101.5 MT in 2017. Japan produced 104.3 MT in 2018, down 0.3 per cent compared to 2017

**Global Corruption Index: India 78th Rank**

• According to the annual index by global watchdog Transparency International, India has improved its ranking on a global corruption index in 2018 by three points and moved to 78th position with a score of 41

• In the list of 180 countries, China and Pakistan lagged far behind at 87th and 117th position, respectively

• Denmark is the least corrupt country followed by New Zealand. Somalia, Syria and South Sudan are the most corrupt countries in the world

• Transparency International Headquarters - Berlin, Germany

• Managing Director -- Patricia Moreira

**India's unemployment rate hit four decade high of 6.1% in 2017-18**

• As per the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) periodic labour force survey (PLFS) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, India's unemployment rate hit a 45 year high of 6.1 per cent in 2017-18. It is highest level since 1972-73

• The report further stated that unemployment was higher in urban areas 7.8% as compared to 5.3% in rural areas of the country

• For educated rural females, the unemployment rate ranged between 9.7% to 15.2% between 2004-05 to 2011-12, which rose to 17.3 per cent in 2017-18,

• In case of rural educated males, the joblessness rate surged to 10.5 per cent in 2017-18 from 3.5 - 4.4% between 2004-05 to 2011-12
World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2019 report released by ILO

- The International Labour Organization released World Employment and Social Outlook Trends 2019 report. According to the report, unemployment rates will fall to 4.9% in 2019 and remain steady in 2020. Global unemployment among young people (between 15-24) stood at 11.8 per cent, higher than other age groups.
- In the global labour market 2 billion out of 3.3 billion people worked keeping their economic security at risk in informal employment. The unemployment rate increased from 5 to 5.6% between 2008-09.

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<td>‘Inclusive Internet Index 2019’ by the ‘Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) for Facebook</td>
<td>India 47th</td>
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Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport 12th busiest in the world

- The nation's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) has now become the world's 12th busiest airport, moving up four places from the 16th spot in 2017. According to the preliminary world airport traffic rankings for 2018 released by the Airports Council International (ACI), it overtook mega-hubs like Frankfurt, Dallas Forth Worth, Guangzhou and Istanbul Ataturk airports.
- The four airports above the IGI Airport are Amsterdam Schiphol, Paris-Charles de Gaulle, Shanghai Pudong and Hong Kong, managing over 46 lakh passengers more than IGIA. India became the world's third-largest aviation market in terms of passenger throughput, behind the US and China, in 2018.

India ranks 76th on WEF’s global Energy Transition index

- India has moved up two places to rank 76th on a global energy transition index. The index has ranked 115 economies on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability. Sweden remains on the top on this annual list compiled by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF) and is followed by Switzerland and Norway in the top three.
- The WEF stated that energy systems have globally become less affordable and less environmentally sustainable than they were five years ago, though access to energy has improved with less than 1 billion now living without access to electricity. Among major economies, the UK is ranked 7th, Singapore 13th, Germany 17th, Japan 18th and the US 27th.

Samsung tops consumer-focused brands in India list

- Samsung, Tata Motors, Apple, Hero MotoCorp and Nike are the top-five consumer-focused brands in the country, according to TRA.
- 'India's Most Consumer-Focused Brands 2019', measures brands on their increase in buying propensity index over the previous year. HDFC is the top amongst Banks in the list and is at the 8th spot. While for Top PSU Bank, SBI is the leader at 12th position overall.

Delhi topped the list of most polluted cities in Greenpeace report

- According to a Greenpeace report, Delhi has been ranked the most polluted capital in the world, while Gurugram is the most polluted city. According to the latest data compiled in the IQ Air Visual 2018 World Air Quality Report and interactive world’s most polluted cities ranking, which is prepared in collaboration with Greenpeace Southeast Asia in order to reveal the state of particulate matter (PM2.5) pollution in 2018.
- Delhi had an average yearly PM2.5 concentration at 113.5 micrograms per cubic metre. The city-based rankings differ, with Delhi taking the 11th spot as the most polluted city and Gurugram at top, with an
annual average PM2.5 reading of 135.8 micrograms per cubic metre. According to the National Ambient Air Quality Standards, the annual permissible limit for PM2.5 is 40ug/m³. The annual permissible limits prescribed by the World Health Organization is 10ug/m³.

**India offers world’s cheapest mobile data packs: UK report**

- According to a new report Price comparison site Cable.co.uk, India is home to the cheapest mobile data plans in the world, with one gigabyte (1GB) of data costing an average of $0.26, compared to USD 6.66 in the UK.
- The cheapest mobile data in Western Europe was found in Finland with an average price of $1.16 for 1GB of data. Denmark, Monaco and Italy all offer packages below $2. There were 15 countries in Western Europe which had cheaper prices than the UK, Cable found in its study. In Eastern Europe, Poland is the cheapest at $1.32 per GB, followed by Romania ($1.89) and Slovenia ($2.21).
- The most expensive place in the world to buy mobile data is Zimbabwe, where the average cost of 1GB is $75.20 - 289 times as much as in India.
- The US had one of the most expensive rates, with an average cost of $12.37 for the same amount of data. The global average came in at $8.53 for 1GB in the study, which compared mobile data pricing in 230 countries around the world.

**Mumbai is 16th most expensive prime residential property market in the world**

- According to Knight Frank report- Mumbai, the financial capital of the country, is the 16th most expensive prime residential market in the world. Globally Monaco topped the list.
- Mumbai ranked 12th in terms of wealth on the index tracking global ranking of cities bettering its previous position of 18th in 2017. Mumbai is the only Indian city to feature in the global top 20 list of expensive prime residential markets recorded in The Wealth Report 2019.
- Knight Frank Prime International Residential Index (PIRI 100) report - Mumbai (67 PIRI rank), which has the most expensive real estate in India.

**Women in India earn 19% less than men: Monster Salary Index**

- Women in India earn 19 per cent less than men according to a report prepared by monster.com.
- The disparity was found in the survey conducted for the year 2018 and it stood just 1 per cent lower than the 20 per cent pay gap in 2017. The survey titled ‘Women of India Inc’, mentioned that the median gross hourly salary for men was Rs. 242.49 earned Rs. 46.19 more in comparison to women who earned Rs.196.3 in 2018.
- MSI is an initiative by Monster India in collaboration with Paycheck.in (managed by WageIndicator Foundation) and IIM-Ahmedabad as a research partner.

**India is world’s second largest arms importer: SIPRI Report**

- India is the second largest importer of weapons in the world, as per the annual report ‘Trends in International Arms Transfers-2018’ released by the think tank Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).
- Saudi Arabia has now become the largest importer of arms in the world.
- For more than the last eight years, India was the largest arms importer in the international market.
- According to the report, Saudi Arabia, India, Egypt, Australia and Algeria as the five top arms importing countries and the United States, Russia, France, Germany and China as the five top arms exporting nations. India accounted for 9.5 percent of the global total imports during 2014-18, while Saudi Arabia accounted for 12 percent of the total imports during the period. The US and Russia remain the largest exporters by far, accounting for 36 percent and 21 percent of the total global trade, respectively.

**India ranks 11th in gold holding**
India, which is the world’s largest consumer of gold, has the 11th largest gold reserve, with the current holding pegged at 607 tonnes, as per the latest report by the World Gold Council (WGC). The US (8133.5 tonnes) is on top, followed by Germany on Second. Whereas, International Monetary Fund (IMF) is included and is third on the list with total gold reserves of 2,814 tonnes. Pakistan, with its gold reserves of 64.6 tonnes, occupies the 45th position.

India ranks 16th in terms of highest number of impacted species in hotspots

- India was ranked 16th in the world in terms of highest number of impacted species in biodiversity-rich zones (hotspots) due to human actions. In India, 35 species affected on an average in in biodiversity-rich zones.
- On average number of species impacted in South Western Ghats montane rainforests is 60 and in Himalayan subtropical broadleaf forests it is 53. Malaysia ranks first among the countries with the highest number of impacted species (125). A recent study published in PLOS Biology an international journal dedicated to biological science.
- Southeast Asian tropical forests — including India’s biodiversity-rich Western Ghats, Himalaya and north-east — also fall in this category.

Vienna to Top Spot in List of Most Liveable Cities for 10th Consecutive Year

- The 2019 Quality of Living Rankings was released by the global consulting firm Mercer.
- The Survey ranks 231 cities based on 39 factors and are based on the analysis done between September and November 2018. The Austria capital Vienna topped the ranking for the 10th year in a row for having the highest quality of living. It was followed by Zurich at second while Auckland, Munich and Vancouver shared jointly third. The Indian city in the list includes Chennai (105), Bengaluru (149), Mumbai (154) and New Delhi (162).

Climate Vulnerability Index highest for Assam and Mizoram

- The Department of Science and Technology (DST) commissioned a study to assess the climate risks faced by States in India. This follows an assessment of the global warming risks faced by 12 Himalayan States. On a scale ranging 0-1, 1 indicating the highest possible level of vulnerability, at the top of the scale were Assam with a score of 0.72 and Mizoram at 0.71,
- Whereas Sikkim, with an index score of 0.42 was relatively less vulnerable.

Mukesh Ambani tops Forbes’s The World’s Richest Sports Team Owners 2019 ranking

- The Reliance Industries Chairman, Mukesh Ambani has topped Forbes’ The World’s Richest Sports Team Owners 2019 list. The total net worth of Ambani is $50 billion. He bought the IPL team Mumbai Indians for over $100 million in 2008 through a RIL subsidiary. The former CEO of Microsoft, Steve Ballmer (Net worth: $41.2 billion) is placed second. He bought the NBA team Los Angeles Clippers for $2 billion in 2014.
- The third place is secured by the co-founder of Red Bull energy drink company, Dietrich Mateschitz (Net worth: $18.9 billion), who is the owner of Auto racing team Red Bull Toro Rosso Honda, Formula One team Red Bull Racing and MLS club New York Red Bulls.
Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi among world’s cheapest cities to live in: Economist survey report

- According to the latest Economist survey report, Bengaluru (129th rank) has the lowest cost of living among the 133 cities surveyed across the world, more affordable than Karachi, Delhi and Chennai.
- Only Caracas (Venezuela), Damascus (Syria), Tashkent (Uzbekistan) and Almaty (Kazakhstan) had lower costs of living than Bengaluru. Chennai and New Delhi were the ninth and tenth most affordable cities in the world respectively.
- Also for the first time in the survey’s history, three cities - Singapore, Hong Kong and Paris - share the title of the world’s most expensive city.

Indian Railways ICF becomes largest rail coaches maker in the world

- The Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai has manufactured as many as 301 coaches in the month of February, taking the total for this fiscal to 2,919. This puts the factory among the largest railcar builders in the world, beating top Chinese manufacturers who produce around 2,600 coaches a year. The ICF is now eyeing ending the financial year with over 3,200 coaches. The ICF has also churned out the newly launched country’s fastest train Vande Bharat Express between the April-February period. Indian Railways-owned Modern Coach Factory (MCF) in Rae Bareli, Uttar Pradesh.

Finland ranked happiest country for second year

- Finland has topped a global happiness ranking for the second year in a row.
- It beat Nordic peers Denmark, Norway and Iceland in a ranking of 156 countries by the United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network. The ranking saw the US drop one place, to 19th, while people in South Sudan were the least happy. India dropped seven ranks to the 140th place.

Piyush Goyal, Harsh Vardhan in ‘World’s 100 Most Influential People in Climate Policy for 2019’

- Union Ministers Piyush Goyal and Dr Harsh Vardhan are among the seven Indians who have been named in the ‘World’s 100 Most Influential People in Climate Policy for 2019’ for taking steps in order to combat climate change.
- Union Minister for Railways and Coal Piyush Goyal has led the fast track electrification of nearly 18,000 unelectrified villages, and been critical in the rollout of a drastic power sector reform and the world’s largest LED bulb distribution programme, according to his profile on the website. Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Dr Harsh Vardhan has focused on motivating scientists to develop new technologies that address social and environmental problems.
- Other five persons are Mukta Tilak (Pune Mayor), Jyoti Kirit Parikh (executive director of Integrated Research and Action for Development), Sunita Narain, (environmentalist and political activist), Vandana Shiva (environmental activist) and Upendra Tripathy (director general of the International Solar Alliance).

Adani becomes first Indian port operator to record 200 MMT cargo movement

- Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) has recorded cargo movement of more than 200 million metric tonnes (MMT) at nine ports along the east and west coasts, becoming the first Indian port operator to achieve the milestone.
- Their projections were to reach this milestone by 2020 but they could achieve it ahead of schedule. APSEZ plans to double the growth up to 400 MMT by 2025.
Skytrax World Airport Awards announced Singapore’s Changi Airport named best, New Delhi’s IGI at 59th

- Singapore’s Changi Airport has been crowned the world’s best aviation hub for the seventh time in a row, while New Delhi’s Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport featured at number 59, according to the Skytrax World Airport Awards.
- At number two on the list is Tokyo International Airport (Haneda), up one place from 2018. This hub also won World’s Best Domestic Airport and World’s Cleanest Airport.
- Breaching the top three is Incheon International Airport, down one place from its second-place spot in 2018. Incheon remains a stalwart of the airport rankings, also nabbing an award for World’s Best Transit Airport.
- New Delhi’s IGI Airport was eight points up this year after featuring at the 66th spot in 2018.
- The other Indian airports in the list were Mumbai’s Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport at 64, down one point from the previous year, the Rajiv Gandhi Hyderabad International Airport at 66, up 10 points and Bengaluru’s Kempegowda International Airport at 69, down five points.

Vijayawada Railway Station Gets ‘Gold Rating’ For Green Measures

- Vijayawada railway station, one of the busiest railway junctions in the country, has received Gold Rating by the Indian Green Building Council. The IGBC-CII, with the support of the Environment Directorate of Indian Railways, developed the Green Railway Stations Rating System to facilitate adoption of green concepts, thereby reduce the adverse environmental impact due to station operation and maintenance and also enhance the overall commuter experience.
- Vijayawada Railway Station was ranked fourth in the Indian Railways for cleanliness among A-1 category stations.
- The station boasts of 100 per cent LED lighting, five star rated fans, pumps and motors and solar water heating systems.

Jharkhand’s Dhanbad tops 4G availability list in India

- According to report ‘OpenSignal’s Hottest city for 4G Availability’ released by OpenSignal, Dhanbad, which is also known as the coal capital of India has the highest 4G availability of 95.3%, followed by Ranchi which has 95% of 4G Availability. The report revealed 4G Availability across the top 50 Indian cities.
- Both Ranchi and Dhanbad are two cities in Jharkhand and they are the only two cities to have over 95% of 4G coverage. Srinagar is one of the remote areas in the country stood third on the list with 4G Availability score of 94.9%.

IIT Madras tops NIRF ranking 2019, Miranda House best college

- The National Institutional Rankings Framework list for the best institutes of 2019 has been released by the Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has topped the list of higher education institutes. IISc Bengaluru has come in second and IIT-Delhi has been ranked third in the HRD ministry’s national ranking of higher institutes.
- Among the colleges, Delhi University’s Miranda House has topped the national ranking of colleges while St. Stephens has been ranked fourth.
- The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi came out as the foremost medical sciences institute in the country. The National Law School-Bengaluru has topped the law list. Among the pharmacy institutes, Jamia Hamdard has come out as the leader, with IIM-Bengaluru being ranked the top most institute among management institutes.
Guwahati Railway Station first in India to get ISO certification

- The Guwahati Railway Station has become the first ever railway station in the Indian Railways to get an ISO certification from the National Green Tribunal (NGT) for providing passenger amenities in a clean and green environment. The station also has amenities such as High-class reserve (VIP) lounge, waiting rooms, AC and non-AC retiring rooms, food courts and sanitation facilities.
- ISO stands for “International Organisation for Standardisation” that is responsible for establishing the standard in different areas of activities.

India tops remittances list, received $79 billion in 2018

- According to the latest edition of the World Bank report, India has retained its top spot on remittances.
- India was followed by China ($67 billion), Mexico ($36 billion), the Philippines ($34 billion), and Egypt ($29 billion). Remittances grew by more than 14 percent in India.

India’s population grew at 1.2% average annual rate between 2010 and 2019

- India’s population grew at an average annual rate of 1.2 per cent between 2010 and 2019 to 1.36 billion, more than double the annual growth rate of China, according to a report by the United Nations Population Fund.
- India’s population in 2019 stood at 1.36 billion, growing from 942.2 million in 1994 and 541.5 million in 1969.
- India’s population grew at average annual rate of 1.2 per cent between 2010 and 2019, the UN sexual and reproductive health agency said in the State of World Population 2019 report.
- According to the report, in India, total fertility rate per woman was 5.6 in 1969, dropping to 3.7 in 1994 and 2.3 in 2019.
- India’s population composition in 2019, the report said 27 per cent of the country’s population was in the age bracket of 0-14 years and 10-24 years each, while 67 per cent of the country’s population was in the 15-64 age bracket.
- Six per cent of the country’s population was of the age 65 and above.
- The report noted that Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) in the country dropped from 488 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1994 to 174 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2015.

HDFC Bank ranked No. 1 in India by Forbes

- HDFC Bank has been at the forefront in leveraging technology to give its 43 million customers a superior banking experience.
- Apart from HDFC Bank, it was another private-owned lender ICICI Bank which took the second spot in Forbes list for India. At third rank was DBS, followed by Kotak Mahindra Bank and IDFC Bank taking fourth and fifth spot.
- Banks like Syndicate Bank, PNB, Allahabad Bank, Vijaya Bank and Axis Bank were also in top 10.

As per Air Quality in India 2014-2019’ report, Kanpur ranked 1st as the most polluted city

- The quality of air in Varanasi, Prime Minister Modi’s 2014 Lok Sabha constituency, is positioned 3rd on the WHO’s (World Health Organisation) list of 15 most polluted cities in the world, by the ‘Political Leaders Position and Action on Air Quality in India 2014-2019’ report, released by Climate Trends. Kanpur (in Uttar Pradesh) is the most polluted city in the world and is positioned 1 on the list.
- 14 of the 15 most polluted cities in the world (mentioned by World Health Organisation (WHO) are in India. Out of them, 4 are in Uttar Pradesh.
- WHO’s report states that Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh is witnessing a rise in the number of people suffering from allergies and respiratory problems due to huge amount of construction in the city. Faridabad in Haryana is in 2nd position after Kanpur.
Mukesh Ambani, Arundhati Katju, Menaka Guruswamy among TIME's list of 100 most influential people

- Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani and public-interest litigators Arundhati Katju and Menaka Guruswamy, who spearheaded a historic legal battle for LGBTQ rights in India, are among the Indians who have been named by TIME magazine in its prestigious list of the 100 most influential people in the world.
- The list includes Indian-American comedian and TV host Hasan Minhaj, US President Donald Trump, Pope Francis, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, iconic golfer Tiger Woods and Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.
- The illustrious list also includes US Open winner Naomi Osaka, actor Mahershala Ali, Oscar-winning actor Rami Malek, former first lady Michelle Obama, South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, Oscar-winning singer and actor Lady Gaga, Abu Dhabi's Crown Prince Mohamed bin Zayed, Special counsel Robert Mueller and Speaker Nancy Pelosi.

India ranked 140 in World Press Freedom Index 2019

- India has dropped two places on a global press freedom index to be ranked 140th out of 180 countries in the annual report released by Reporters Without Borders. The World Press Freedom Index 2019 topped by Norway
- Paris-based Reporters Sans Frontieres (RSF), or Reporters Without Borders, is a non-profit organisation that works to document and combat attacks on journalists around the world.
- At the bottom of the Index, both Vietnam (176th) and China (177th) have fallen one place and Turkmenistan (down two at 180th) is now last, replacing North Korea (up one at 179th).

India Rises to 17th Spot from 37th in StartupBlink’s Startup Ecosystem Ranking

- India ranked 17 among 100 countries, based on the strength of its startup ecosystem.
- Top three spots remained unchanged with the United States, United Kingdom and Canada.
- Bangalore, New Delhi and Mumbai were the top cities in the Indian startup ecosystem

India ranks 19th in Index of Cancer Preparedness

- India was ranked at 19 out of 28 countries in Index of Cancer Preparedness (ICP) released by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).
- It was released as part of the report titled “Cancer preparedness around the world: National readiness for a global epidemic”
- Top 3 countries are: Australia (1st), Netherlands (2nd) and Germany (3rd).
- Bottom three are: Saudi Arabia (28th), Romania (27th) and Egypt (26th)

The ICP explores the issue of cancer preparedness through three broad domains:

- policy and planning;
- care delivery;
- Health systems and governance.

India and ICP: Its overall rank was 19th with a score of 64.9. India ranked 17th in cancer policy and planning.

- India has relatively high score of 80.8 and it largely stems from its strong cancer research and tobacco control measures.
- India ranked first for research and third for tobacco control. It ranks 23rd for its national cancer control plan.
- India’s healthcare system was ranked 25th in the index. In its delivery of cancer care, it was ranked 20th with a score of 61.3.
India’s healthcare infrastructure is the second worst among these countries. It has high standard of clinical guidelines category where it is ranked first. But it falls short on immunization, screening and early detection

Arunachalam Muruganantham, the maker of low-cost sanitary napkins, in Fortune's list of world's greatest leaders

- Arunachalam Muruganantham known as the maker of low-cost sanitary napkins in India with his invention of cellulose-based pads, has made it to Fortune magazine’s 2019 list of the world's greatest leaders.
- He ranks 45th in the list released by the American publication.
- Bill and Melinda Gates top the list for the work of their charitable organisation Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, who earned much acclaim for her response to Christchurch mosque shootings in February, ranked second while the US special counsel Robert Mueller, who recently submitted his findings of the Donald Trump campaign's collusion with Russia, rounded off the top three.

Important Schemes and Programs

Global Report on Trafficking in Persons Launched

- UN office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released a latest Global Report on “Trafficking in Persons”.
- According to the latest Global Report on Trafficking in Persons, The number of human trafficking victims is on the rise, while armed groups and terrorists are trafficking women and children to generate funds and recruit,
- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is a United Nations office that was established in 1997, as the Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention by combining the United Nations International Drug Control Program (UNDCP) and the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Division in the United Nations Office.

Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurates UNNATI of ISRO in Bengaluru

- Minister of State in Department of Space Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated UNNATI programme of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) in Bengaluru. UNNATI, a capacity building programme on Nanosatellite development, is an initiative by ISRO to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the first United Nations conference on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space (UNISPACE-50)
- UNNATI - Unispace Nanosatellite Assembly and Training programme

Assam government launched scheme for ex-militants

- Government launched a scheme to for making former militants explore self employment avenues.
- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal ceremonially distributed sanction letters for disbursal of loan by nationalized banks along with government subsidy to surrendered cadres of different insurgent groups of the state under ‘Swabalamban’ scheme. The financial assistance is provided to promote self-employment and will benefit 508 surrendered cadres.

Odisha government announced financial assistance for craftsmen

- Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik launched the scheme ‘Mukhyamantri Karigar Sahayata’ for financial assistance to craftsmen
- Craftsmen with over 10 years of experience and annual income below Rs. 1 lakh would become eligible to get an assistance of Rs. 800 a month. Those above 80 years of age, would get Rs 1,000 monthly allowance

HRD ministry launched STARS scheme
• The Union Human Resource Minister Prakash Javadekar launched the STARS scheme on National Science Day.
• STARS is an acronym for Scheme for Translational and Advanced Research in Science to fund Science projects.
• The scheme will be implemented at a cost of 250 crores will be used for around 500 science projects. IISC will be the coordinator of the scheme.

Mamata Banerjee launched Yuvashree Arpan scheme
• West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee launched a new scheme called Yuvashree Plan II or YuvashreeArpan under which 50,000 youths will receive financial assistance of Rs. 1 lakh for setting up an their own business initiatives.
• Youths who have passed out of ITI or other polytechnic institutes will be eligible to get financial support from the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) department.
• The Yuvashree I scheme is implemented by the state labour department launched in 2013, the state provides unemployment allowance of Rs. 1,500 per month to 1,00,000 unemployed youth.
• The state government had already provided cars to 24,000 unemployed youths under the ‘Gatidhara’scheme, where the state enables youths to be car-owners and earn through driving it.
• The Chief Minister also laid foundation stone of various developmental projects including the first Hindi university in West Bengal in Arupara, Howrah district and Rs.1,488 crore drinking water project at PurbaMedinipur.
• Foundation stone of projects worth Rs 1,071 crore including drinking water project that would benefit more than 8 lakh people inaugurated Bankura.

Uttarakhand Government launched “Mukhyamantri Anchal Amrit Yojana” a free milk scheme
• Chief Minister of Uttarakhand Trivendra Singh Rawat has launched a scheme named “Mukhyamantri Anchal Amrit Yojana” for providing free milk to children of Anganwadi Centers.
• Under the “Mukhyamantri Anchal Amrit Yojana” 2.5 lakh children at 20,000 Anganwadi kendras in the state will be given 100 ml milk twice a week for free. As many as 18,000 children suffer from malnutrition in the state of Uttarakhand, So this is a step to fight against malnutrition.

Maharashtra government launched 'Atal Aahar Yojana' to provide cheap hygienic food for construction workers
• The Maharashtra government has launched the “Atal Aahar Yojana” for construction workers in the state that will provide good quality and hygienic food to construction workers at a highly subsidised rate.
• In the 1st phase, the target is to cover 20,000 workers and provide them with good quality food at a nominal cost of Rs. 5.
• Under the Shramev Jayate Yojana, a pension of Rs. 3,000 is given to construction workers above the age of 60 years.

Aviva Life Insurance launched Wings to empower women at the workplace
• Aviva Life Insurance has announced the launch of ‘Wings’, a specially designed mentorship program to empower the female workforce. The WINGS program is an initiative of the SHE division of Aviva Life Insurance for mentoring all the women employees. SHE was conceptualised in 2016 by Aviva India’s Women Network.
• Aviva Life Insurance is a joint venture between Dabur Invest and Aviva International Holdings, a UK-based insurance group. Dabur is the majority stakeholder with 74 percent stake in Aviva Life Insurance Company India Limited, while Aviva PLC holds 26 percent share.
Amitabh Kant to head transformative mobility panel

- Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant will head the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage, which is being set up to promote clean and sustainable mobility initiatives in the country. The Union Cabinet on March 7 had approved setting up of the National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage.
- The terms of reference of mission includes ensuring implementation and compliance of the decisions and recommendations of the steering committee. The panel will also propose and recommend policy guidelines and government interventions and possible strategies for holistic, sustainable and transformative mobility and energy storage in India.

ISRO launched the ‘Young Scientist Programme’ YUVIKA for school children

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) had announced a new initiative aiming at school children called ‘Young Scientist Programme’ or ‘YUva Vlgyani KArakram’ (YUVIKA)
- The Program aims at imparting basic knowledge on space technology, space science and space applications to young school goers with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of space activities.
- The Young Scientist Programme will be conducted for a duration of two weeks across four centres of ISRO during the second half of May 2019. 3 students from each State or Union Territory will be selected to participate in this programme covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus. The selection of the students would be based

Important Books and Authors

Rajya Sabha Vice Chairman launched 'A Crusade Against Corruption' book

- Vice-Chairman of Rajya Sabha, Harivansh Narayan Singh launched Manohar Manoj’s book ‘A Crusade Against Corruption’ in New Delhi.

Malala Yousafzai pens new book on refugee girls

- Nobel Peace Prize winner and Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai pens a new book, titled ‘We Are Displaced: My Journey and Stories from Refugee Girls Around the World.'

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Arun Jaitley released a book titled 'Mann Ki Baat - A Social Revolution on Radio'

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley was released a book titled, 'Mann Ki Baat - A Social Revolution on Radio' in New Delhi.
- The book is a compendium encompassing 50 editions of the 'Mann Ki Baat' programme by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on All India Radio. The book contains a comprehensive, qualitative and academic analysis of ‘Mann Ki Baat’ – the themes, the choice of topics, the salient features.

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### Important Sports News

**Cricket**

**Jasprit Bumrah Becomes Highest International Wicket-Taker in 2018**

- India pacer Jasprit Bumrah finished 2018 as the highest wicket-taker across all formats in the calendar year. He has picked up 78 wickets across all formats in 2018.
- The South African Bowler Kagiso Rabada, has taken 77 wickets in 2018.

**USA Cricket becomes ICC's 105th member**

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) Tuesday announced USA Cricket as its 105th member.
- As a Member of the ICC, USA Cricket is now eligible to receive funding in accordance with the ICC Development Funding Policy and can sanction domestic and international cricket in the United States.
- The International Cricket Council (ICC) is the global governing body of cricket. It was founded as the Imperial Cricket Conference in 1909 by representatives from Australia, England and South Africa. It was renamed as the International Cricket Conference in 1965, and again renamed as International Cricket Council (ICC) in 1989.

**Albie Morkel announced retirement from all formats of cricket**

- South African allrounder Albie Morkel announced his retirement from all forms of cricket, putting an end to nearly 20-year of professional cricketing career.
- Morkel played one Test, 58 ODIs and 50 T20Is for his country, scoring 1412 runs and picking up 77 wickets across formats.
Bengal's Satyarup Siddhanta Becomes World's Youngest Mountaineer to Climb 7 Peaks,
7 Volcano Summits

- Mountaineer Satyarup Siddhanta climbed Antarctica's highest point, Mount Sidley, to become the youngest man in the world to have climbed the seven highest volcanic peaks, Mr Siddhanta hails from Haridevpur in South Kolkata and is a software engineer by profession. He holds the record of conquering several summits such as Mt Kilimanjaro in Africa, Mt Elbrus in Europe, Mt Denali in Alaska and Mt Monc Blanc in France.

Kohli became first player to win all three top ICC awards in single year

- Virat Kohli has become the first player to win all three major annual ICC awards in a single year for his performances in 2018. Kohli was named Men's Test Player of the Year for the first time, while he also won Cricketer and ODI Player of Year awards. He was also named captain of Test and ODI teams of 2018

21-yr-old Rishabh Pant named ICC Men's Emerging Cricketer of 2018

- India's 21-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman Rishabh Pant has been named the ICC Men's Emerging Cricketer of the Year 2018. Last year, Pant became the first Indian wicketkeeper to score a Test hundred in England and equalled the record for most catches taken in a Test, with 11 in Adelaide in December. Pant is the third Indian to be honoured with this award.

Mohammed Shami is the fastest Indian bowler to reach 100 ODI wickets

- Mohammed Shami became the fastest Indian bowler to claim 100 ODI wickets, during the first one-dayer against New Zealand at Napier. Shami reached the milestone in his 56th match, with the wicket of opener Martin Guptill.
- The Indian record was previously held by Irfan Pathan, who got there in his 59th match, against Pakistan in Abu Dhabi in 2006. The world record is currently held by Afghanistan leg-spinner Rashid Khan, who needed only 44 games to reach the mark. Some of the other Indians in the list include Zaheer Khan (65 matches), Ajit Agarkar (67 matches) and Javagal Srinath (68 matches).

Shikhar Dhawan becomes second quickest Indian to 5000 ODI runs

- India’s opening batsman Shikhar Dhawan became the second fastest Indian to 5000 ODI runs in the first ODI between India and New Zealand at McLean Park in Napier. He also became the fifth fastest overall while joining legendary left-hander Brian Lara in the list. Dhawan surpassed the likes of Sourav Ganguly and Graeme Smith while matching Lara to become the joint-fastest left-handed batsman. Earlier, Dhawan had become the second fastest Indian, behind Kohli, and sixth quickest overall to reach 4000 ODI runs during an ODI series at home against Sri Lanka in 2017. Dhawan had brought up 4000 runs in the 94th innings of his ODI career.

Botha announces immediate retirement from all forms of Cricket

- Former South Africa all-rounder Johan Botha has announced his immediate retirement from all forms of Cricket. Botha played for South Africa in five test matches, 78 one-day internationals and 40 T20 Internationals from 2005 to 2012. Botha captained the Proteas in 10 ODIs and took the team to the No. 1 ranking after they defeated Australia 4-1 in Australia in 2009.

Wasim Jaffer becomes 1st player to score 1,000 runs in a Ranji season twice

- Wasim Jaffer went past 1000 runs this season for Vidarbha a decade after scoring 1260 runs for Mumbai. He is the first batsman in Ranji Trophy history to score over 1000 runs in a season twice. In 2008-09, Wasim Jaffer had scored 1260 runs for Mumbai in the Ranji Trophy. This season, Jaffer has scored over...
1000 runs for Vidarbha. Jaffer is the only Asian batsman to score 2 first-class double hundreds after turning 40.

West Indies captain Holder 3rd player to hit Test double ton batting at no. 8

- Windies captain Jason Holder slammed 202*(229) in the second innings of the first Test against England, becoming only the third batsman in Test cricket history to score a double ton batting at number eight.
- Pakistan's Wasim Akram (257* against Zimbabwe, 1996) and Intiaz Ahmed (209 against New Zealand, 1955) are the other two batsmen to have achieved the feat.

ICC announced a five year global partnership with Coca-Cola

- The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced a five year global partnership deal with beverage manufacturer Coca-Cola Company. Coca-Cola the exclusive non-alcoholic beverage partners of the ICC until 2023.
- The five-year agreement includes the upcoming ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup 2019 in England and Wales, the ICC men’s and women’s T20 World Cups in Australia in 2020, the ICC Women’s World Cup 2021 in New Zealand and the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup in India in 2023, among other tournaments.

Mithali Raj becomes first woman cricketer to play 200 ODIs

- Mithali Raj, India's One-day International (ODI) captain becoming the first female cricketer to play 200 ODIs. The Indian captain also holds the record for most runs scored in ODIs with 6,622 runs including 7 centuries and 52 half centuries. She already holds the record for the most-capped women's cricketer in the history of the game. Mithali Raj had achieved the milestone when she played her 192 ODI of the career.

India’s Smriti Mandhana becomes number 1 in latest ICC women's ODI rankings

- Indian opener Smriti Mandhana has climbed three spots in the batters' list to become number one in the latest ICC women's ODI rankings. Ellyse Perry is second in the rankings, while another Aussie Meg Lanning is third. Indian ODI skipper Mithali Raj has slipped to the fifth position. In the ODI Bowler's rankings, veteran pacer Jhulan Goswami is fourth, with Poonam Yadav at eighth, and fellow spinner Deepti Sharma at ninth.
- Deepti is fourth in the All-rounders standings and is the sole Indian in the top-10.

Ishan Kishan becomes first Indian wicketkeeper-captain to score T20 century

- Jharkhand batsman Ishan Kishan became the first Indian wicketkeeper-captain to score a century in T20 format.
- The left-handed batsman achieved the milestone in Jharkhand’s 2nd Syed Mushtaq Ali fixture against Jammu and Kashmir.

Sri Lanka first ever Asian team to win Test series in South Africa

- Sri Lanka became the first Asian side to win a Test series in South Africa.
- Chasing a target of 197, Sri Lanka had a 137-run deficit to deal with at the start of Day 3 with eight wickets in hand.
- Kusal Mendis and Oshada Fernando ensured that the visitors don’t lose any more wickets.
- They won the Test by eight wickets and thus sealed the series 2-0. It also ended South Africa’s run of seven consecutive series wins at home.

Pakistan’s Sana Mir becomes first Asian woman to play hundred T20Is

- Former captain of the Pakistan women team Sana Mir has become the first Asian woman to play hundred T20Is. Sana Mir is one of Pakistan’s most senior women cricketers and has been representing the country since 2005. The 33-year-old reached the milestone when she walked into the field for the
ongoing third and final T20I against West Indies in Karachi. Mir is the only sixth woman from around the world to play 100 T20Is. West Indian Deandra Dottin leads the list with 109 T20Is

21-year-old Mayank Markande becomes India's 79th T20I cricketer
- Leg-spinner Mayank Markande became the 79th cricketer to represent India in T20I cricket, achieving the feat against Australia in the first T20I at Visakhapatnam.
- Markande, who plays for Punjab in domestic circuit and Mumbai Indians in IPL, has taken 99 wickets in 47 professional matches across formats.
- Meanwhile, wicketkeeper-batsman Peter Handscomb is making his T20I debut for Australia.

Sanath Jayasuriya banned from cricket for two years
- Former Sri Lanka captain and World Cup winner Sanath Jayasuriya was handed a two-year ban from all forms of cricket by the International Cricket Council’s (ICC) anti-corruption code.
- This was after Jayasuriya refused to co-operate with investigations surrounding corruption activities in Sri Lanka.

Gayle 1st batsman in the world to smash 500 sixes in int'l cricket
- Windies' 39-year-old opener Chris Gayle has become the first ever batsman to smash 500 sixes in international cricket and the second batsman to slam 300 ODI sixes.
- Gayle smashed 14 sixes during his 97-ball 162-run knock against England in fourth ODI to reach 506 international sixes. He has hit 98 sixes in Tests, 305 in ODIs and 103 in T20Is.

Vidarbha lift their second consecutive Ranji Trophy
- Vidarbha lifted the Ranji Trophy for the second time in a row, defeating Saurashtra by 78 runs at Nagpur.
- Vidarbha became the sixth team to win back to back Ranji Trophy titles. Left arm spinner, Sarwate was adjudged man of the match.

Ranji champion Vidarbha beat Rest of India to retain Irani Cup
- Ranji champions Vidarbha beat Rest of India at the Jamtha Stadium in Nagpur to retain the Irani Cup.
- Vidarbha has now become the third team after Mumbai and Karnataka to clinch two Irani Cup titles in a row.
- Vidarbha captain - Faiz Fazal

Chris Gayle announced retirement from One-day Internationals
- West Indian batsman Chris Gayle has announced retirement from One-day Internationals after the ICC World Cup 2019. The 39-year old left-hander has scored 9,727 ODI runs, second only to the legendary Brian Lara among West Indians in 284 matches. He needs 677 more runs to surpass Lara as the West Indies’ all-time record ODI run scorer. The World Cup will be held in England and Wales from 30th May to 14th July 2019.

Imran Tahir to quit ODIs cricket after World Cup
- South African spinner Imran Tahir has announced that he will quit ODI cricket after the ICC World Cup 2019.
- However he would like to continue playing for South Africa in Twenty20 internationals.
- 2019 Cricket World Cup is the 12th edition of the Cricket World Cup, scheduled to be hosted by England and Wales from 30 May to 14 July 2019

Goswami reclaims No.1 position in ICC women’s ODI bowler rankings
Indian bowler Jhulan Goswami reclaimed the world number one position in the ICC Women's ODI bowler rankings after her performances in India's 2-1 home series win over England in the ICC Women's Championship.

Goswami, who last held the top spot in February 2017, finished with eight wickets in the series, helping India reach the second position in the eight-team championship.

India's Shikha Pandey leapt 12 places to claim the fifth spot and a career-best points tally of 688, courtesy her eight scalps against England. Katherine Brunt and Ellyse Perry rose by one spot each to settle at No.6 and No.9 respectively.

**Duminy to retire from ODIs after ICC World Cup 2019**

- South African all-rounder JP Duminy announced that he would retire from ODIs after the ICC World Cup in England.
- Duminy will continue to be available for South Africa in T20 internationals. This would be his third World Cup after 2011 and 2015.

**Sri Lanka's Lasith Malinga to retire from international cricket after Twenty20 World Cup**

- Sri Lankan limited overs captain Lasith Malinga will retire from international cricket after next year's Twenty20 World Cup to be held in Australia. He would also quit one-day internationals after the 2019 World Cup in England and Wales.
- He made his ODI debut in 2004, becoming the first to clinch two World Cup hat-tricks and the first to take three ODI hat-tricks.

**India win ICC Test C'ship mace for 3rd straight year, get $1 million**

- India has won ICC Test Championship mace for the third year in a row after finishing at the top of ICC Test team rankings. India have also been awarded $1-million cash prize. New Zealand, who are ranked second, won $500,000 prize money after finishing with 108 points, eight behind India.

**Virat Kohli, Smriti Mandhana Named Wisden's Leading Cricketers Of 2018**

- Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli and women's cricketer Smriti Mandhana were named the Leading Cricketers in the World in the 2019 edition of the Wisden Cricketers.
- Kohli has won the honour for an unprecedented third year in a row while it's the first time Smriti has won the honour. Afghanistan spinner Rashid Khan was named the Leading T20 cricketer for the second year in a row.
- Kohli was also named as one of Wisden's Five Cricketers of the Year alongside English cricketers Jos Buttler, Sam Curran, Rory Burns and Tammy Beaumont.
- Wisden has been awarding cricketers since 1889 and it is considered one of the most prestigious honours in the sport.

**Jhulan Goswami wins CSJS award for best sportsperson of 2018**

- Jhulan Goswami, world's leading wicket-taker in women's one-day internationals, was awarded the 'Best Sportsperson' award by the Calcutta Sports Journalists’ Club.
- The CSJS also honoured Bengal’s Ranji Trophy winning captain and former national selector Sambaran Banerjee and former India winder Sukumar Samajpati with the ‘Lifetime Achievement’ awards.
- Awardees: Best Sportsperson: Jhulan Goswami; Lifetime Achievement awards: Sambaran Banerjee and Sukumar Samajpati; Special award (bridge): Shibnath De Sarkar and Pranab Bardhan; Special award (kabaddi): Payel Chowdhury; Promising Sportsperson of the Year: Neelash Saha.

**Australia's Claire Polosak set to become first woman umpire to stand in men's ODI**

- Australia's Claire Polosak will create history as the first woman umpire ever to stand in a men's One-Day International when she takes the field in the final of the ICC World Cricket League Division 2.
• She has also performed well in ICC events, standing in the semifinal of the ICC Women’s T20 World Cup 2018 between England and India and four matches at the ICC Women’s World Cup 2017, reflecting her rapid rise to success.

Football

Egypt to host 2019 Africa Cup of Nations
• Egypt will host the 2019 Africa Cup of Nations, the Confederation of African Football (CAF) has announced. It will be the fifth time Egypt to host the African Cup of Nations. Egypt beat South Africa, the only other nation to bid, by 16 votes. Original host nation Cameroon was stripped of staging duties because of slow preparations.
• Egypt will use eight stadiums during the tournament, hosting in five different cities: Alexandria, Ismailia, Port Said, Suez and the capital Cairo.

Qatar defeat Japan to secure first ever Asian Cup Football
• Qatar won its first soccer title by beating four-time champion Japan 3–1 in the Asian Cup final. Qatar’s Almoez Ali became the first player to score nine goals at a single Asian Cup. This was the first time that Japan lost in an Asian Cup final.

India to host U-17 Women’s Football World Cup in 2020
• India will host the Under-17 Women's Football World Cup in 2020. This was announced by the President of International Football Federation (FIFA), Gianni Infantino. 2020 FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup will be the seventh edition of the biennial tournament. This will be the second FIFA tournament India will be hosting, after the U-17 Men's World Cup in 2017.

India defeats Nepal to win SAFF Women’s Championship for fifth time
• In football, India has clinched the SAFF (South Asian Football Federation) Women's Championship for the fifth time in a row, defeating hosts Nepal 3–1 in the final at Biratnagar. This was India's 23rd straight victory in the championship since its inception in 2010.
• In this match, for India goals were scored by Dalmia Chhibber (26th minute), Grace Dengmei (63rd minute) and Anju Tamang (76th minute). For Nepal single goal was scored by Sabitra Bhandari at 33rd minute.

Ex-Ecuador football chief Chiriboga receives life ban
• FIFA slapped a lifetime ban on the disgraced former head of Ecuador's football federation, Luis Chiriboga, after finding him guilty of taking bribes. Chiriboga was one of the executives arrested in 2015 amid a massive US-led crackdown on corruption in world football.
• After finding him guilty, FIFA's ethics judges banned Chiriboga from all football-related activities for life and fined him 1 million Swiss francs. Chiriboga led Ecuador's football federation for 18 years before his arrest.

Indian Football team climbs two places to 101; Belgium maintains top spot in FIFA Rankings
• Indian Football Team climbed two places to move to 101 rank in the FIFA rankings.
• Iran continued to top the Asian rankings at 21, followed by Japan (26), South Korea (37), Australia (41) and Qatar (55). The top three positions are unchanged. Belgium remained on top with 1737 points and World Cup winners France(1734) in the second spot ahead of Brazil (1676), in third.

Former Brazil football president Marin given life ban by FIFA
• Former Brazilian Football Confederation (CBF) president Jose Maria Marin has been banned for life from all football activities by FIFA. He was found to have taken bribes in exchange for the media and marketing rights to various tournaments, including the Copa America.
Marin, who has been informed of FIFA's decision, has also been ordered to pay a CHF 1 million fine (£760,000).

International Hockey Federation imposes fine on Pakistan
- The International Hockey Federation (FIH) has imposed a hefty fine of one lakh seventy-six thousand Euros on Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) for not honouring the Pro League commitments.
- PHF was fined for not sending the national team for the Pro League matches in Argentina, Australia and New Zealand.

Stéphanie Frappart to become first female referee in France’s top football league
- Stephanie Frappart will become the first woman to referee a French Ligue 1 football match when Amiens host Strasbourg on Sunday (April 28). Stephanie Frappart, selected by FIFA for the Women’s World Cup in France, has been appointed by the FFF Refereeing Direction for the match on the 34th day of Ligue 1 between Amiens SC and RC Strasbourg.
- She will also be the only referee from France who will be officiating at the Women’s World Cup to be held there this June.

Lionel Messi Becomes 1st Barcelona Player to Win 10 La Liga Titles
- Barcelona successfully defended its Spanish La Liga crown after beating Levante 1-0, courtesy of the magical Lionel Messi. It's the fourth title Barcelona has won in the past five years and it kept alive hopes of a prestigious treble this season.

Hockey
South Korea defeats India in Sultan Azlan Shah cup
- India has lost to South Korea in the final of Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey tournament at Ipoh in Malaysia.
- The host Malaysia has secured the 3rd place. Manpreet Singh was the captain of Indian Hockey Team.
- Asian games Gold medalist Japan stood at 5th place

80th National Table Tennis Championship begins in Cuttack
- The 80th National Table Tennis Championship began at Jawaharlal Nehru Indoor Stadium in Cuttack, Odisha. As many as 35 teams, including 550 players from different parts of the country are participating in the mega championship. Odisha State Table Tennis Association (OSTTA) is hosting the championships after a gap of 18 years.

Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic won the Hopman Cup for the second time
- Switzerland’s Roger Federer and Belinda Bencic secured a 2-1 victory over Germany's Angelique Kerber and Alexander Zverev to win the Hopman Cup for the second year in a row. In a rerun of 2018 final, Federer beat Zverev to give the Swiss an early 1-0 lead. Wimbledon champion Kerber then overcame Bencic to level the tie. However, the Swiss claimed a tight win in the mixed doubles to claim their fourth Hopman Cup title.
- Twenty time Grand Slam champion Federer is the first player to win three Hopman Cups - twice with Bencic and once with Martina Hingis, in 2001.

Second edition of Khelo India Youth Games inaugurated in Pune
- The second edition of Khelo India Youth Games officially inaugurated in Pune, Maharashtra. More than 9000 players from different states will participate in 18 different games at Khelo India Youth Games. Khelo
India Youth Games is a part Khelo India which is the revamped national programme for development of sports in India.

- Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG), formerly Khelo India School Games (KISG), held annually in January or February.

**Sydney and Brisbane Chosen to Host ATP Cup In 2020**

- The debut of the ATP Cup will take place in January 2020.
- Australian cities Sydney and Brisbane have been announced as the first two host locations for the newest team event in men's tennis.
- With more than 100 players from 24 nations vying for $15 million in prize money and 750 ATP Ranking points.

**Mary Kom attained number one position in AIBA rankings**

- M C Mary Kom has attained number one position in the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) latest world rankings. Mary Kom is placed top of the charts in the 48kg weight division with 1700 points.
- The 36-year-old will have to jump to 51kg in pursuit of her 2020 Olympic dream as 48kg is not yet included in the Games roster.

**Maharashtra tops the medal tally with 37 golds at the Khelo India Youth Games in Pune**

- Maharashtra had 111 medals in its kitty with 37 gold, 31 silver and 43 bronze. Delhi continues to follow second with 35 gold and Haryana too maintains its third position with 29 gold.
- Ten year old Abhinav Shaw became the youngest gold medallist in shooting. He teamed up with Mehuli Ghosh to help West Bengal win the 10m air rifle mixed team event.

**Bengaluru Raptors clinch PBL title**

- Bengaluru Raptors beat Mumbai Rockets 4-3 in the final of the Premier Badminton League (PBL) at the Kanteerava Indoor Stadium in Bengaluru to win their maiden title.
- Kidambi Srikanth, Vu Ji Trang (Trump match) and men's doubles pair of Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Satriawan won their matches for Bengaluru Raptors.

**8 year old Kartik Singh becomes youngest to win Junior World title in golf**

- Gurgaon’s 8-year-old Kartik Singh has won the under 8 category at the Kids' Golf World Championship organised by US kids Golf in Malaysia, which makes him the youngest Indian to win the title.
- He finished 8th at the US kids junior world championship 2017, Pinehurst, the USA in 7 year category.

**Shakil Ahmed sets world record in Indoor rowing**

- Asian Cup Gold medallist Shakil Ahmed set up a world record in indoor rowing by completing 1,00,000 (one lakh) metres in above 40 years category.
- Shakil began his record setting indoor rowing feat in Salt Lake stadium complex and achieved the milestone of covering 1,00,000 metres of simulated distance in 10 hours.

**1st National EMRS National Sports Meet, 2019 Began at Hyderabad**

- The 1st National Level Sports Meet for the students of Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) was inaugurated by Shri Jaswantsinh Sumanbhai Bhabhor, Minister of State for Tribal Affairs at G.M.C Balayogi Stadium, Hyderabad.
- The Minister also launched an app ‘EMRS Sports Meet’ dedicated on the occasion. The event has a participation of 1777 students comprising of 975 boys and 802 girls representing 20 States of the country.
- Government has decided to establish EMRS in every block with more than 50% or more tribal population and 20,000 or more tribal persons by the year 2022 thereby around 462 schools will be set up in addition to the 288 EMRSs already sanctioned.

Ex-captain Sardar Singh named in Hockey India selection committee

- Former captain Sardar Singh has been included in a 13-member Hockey India selection committee.
- The team will be headed by BP Govinda, a member of the 1975 World Cup-winning team.

Ankita Raina wins ITF's tournament in Singapore

- India's Ankita Raina has won the International Tennis Federation's 25,000-dollar Women's tournament in Singapore, Ankita defeated top seed and world number 122 Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands, 6-3, 6-2.
- She toppled four seeded players in the tournament to win her first title of the season and eighth overall.
- Ankita came into the tournament after competing at the Qualifiers of the ongoing Australian Open. She will play two more tournaments before gearing up for the Fed Cup, starting in the first week of next month at Astana, Kazakhstan.

Sam Stosur and Zhang Shuai win Australian Open women's doubles title

- Former US Open women's singles winner Sam Stosur teamed up with Zhang Shuai to overcome defending champions Timea Babos and Kristina Mladenovic to claim the Australian Open women's doubles title.
- This was the 34-year-old Australian's first Grand Slam title on home soil since 2005. Notably, this was Zhang's first Grand Slam title of any kind.

Novak Djokovic beats Rafael Nadal to win his 7th Australian Open title

- Novak Djokovic defeated Rafael Nadal to win his 7th Australian Open Men's Singles title at Melbourne. World No.1 outplayed the second-ranked Nadal 6-3, 6-2, 6-3 in a largely one sided match.
- In Women's Singles, Japan's Naomi Osaka clinched her maiden Australian Open Grand Slam Singles title in Melbourne. Osaka defeated Petra Kvitova of Czech Republic 7-6, 5-7, 6-4 in the summit clash.

Saina wins Indonesia Masters after injured Marin limps out of final

- Ace shuttler Saina Nehwal won her first Indonesia Masters title after three-time world champion Carolina Marin limped out of the final due to a leg injury.
- The Spaniard was leading 10-4 in the first game, after she retired with injury.

Kartik Sharma wins New South Wales Men's Amateur Golf Champion

- India's Kartik Sharma won the New South Wales men's Amateur Golf Championship in Australia. Kartik notched up a magnificent win over Australia's Nathan Barberie in the scheduled 36 hole final to emerge as champion.
- The Gurgaon golfer has been playing for India since the age of 10 as part of the National Squad. Kartik had also won the Indian golf union western India amateur golf championship 2018.

73 year old Frenchman wins solo round the world sailing race

- Frenchman Jean-Luc van den Heede won the round-the-world Golden Globe race without the help of modern technology after 211 days at sea.
- Jean-Luc Van Den Heede arrived Les Sables d'Olonne in western France in his 35 foot yacht Matmut, the first boat to finish the 30,000 mile Golden Globe race.
Vani Kapoor becomes first Indian to grab Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA)

- Vani Kapoor became the first Indian to earn a card for the Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA) after coming through its first-ever Qualifying Tournament at the Ballarat Golf Club in Ballarat, Australia. Vani Kapoor finished tied-12th in the first-ever Australian LPGA Qualifying Tournament. The top-20 from a field of 81 earned playing rights on the Australian LPGA.

INS Dronachary wins Kochi area boat pulling regatta trophy

- The Boat Pulling Regatta is one of the most prestigious and traditional naval sporting activities conducted by the Navy. The boats had to cover a distance of 1.6 km in the Ernakulam Channel.
- The INS Dronacharya team won the Regatta trophy in the Kochi Area Pulling Regatta 2019 of the Southern Naval Command (SNC) held in Ernakulam. Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) School & Diving School secured the runners-up position. The boats used in the regatta are 27 feet long 'whalers' a type of seaboat each having a crew of five 'pullers' (rowers) and one coxswain (helm).

Haryana Hammers beat defending champions Punjab Royals to lift PWL 4 title

- Haryana Hammers won the fourth edition of the Pro Wrestling League (PWL) as they outclassed Punjab Royals 6-3 in the summit clash at the Gautam Buddha University indoor stadium
- Riding on Aleksander Khotsianivski, Ali Shabanov, Kiran, Ravi Kumar and Anastasia Nichita's dominating performance, the runners-up in the last three editions, Haryana Hammers, turned the tables on the defending champions Punjab Royals winning all the first five bouts of the evening to clinch the title.

India’s Ramit Tandon wins Seattle Open

- Indian squash player Ramit Tandon defeated Egyptian Mohamed El Sherbini in the finals to win the Seattle Open, a Professional Squash Association challenger squash Tour event
- The Indian won 11-4, 11-7, 2-11, 11-2 for his first PSA title in 2019 and fourth title overall in his career.

Manpreet Pawar named Player of the Year 2018 by Asia Hockey

- Indian hockey player Manpreet Pawar was named as the Male Player of the Year 2018 by the Asian Hockey Federation. The Indian women’s team striker Lalremsiami bagged the Rising Player of The Year prize.
- The Indian men’s team was awarded the Best Performance of The Year after being the only Asian side to reach the World Cup's top-eight in Bhubaneswar.

Abhijeet Gupta wins Cannes International Open trophy

- Indian Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta finished with 7.5 points to win the Cannes International Open
- He took an easy draw with Pier Luigi Basso of Italy in the ninth and final round. This was gupta’s first solo International tournament victory. Abhijeet had also tied for the first place at the Delhi International open in January.

Prajnesh Gunneswaran reached career best 94th Rank

- India's Prajnesh Gunneswaran achieved his career-best ranking, rising three places to 94th in the latest list.
- Ramkumar Ramanathan dropped nine spots to 137, while Yuki Bhambri further slipped to 171.
- In Doubles rankings, Rohan Bopanna remained at 38th and Divij Sharan at 39th, while Leander Paes rose two spots to 73rd.
- In the Women's rankings, Ankita Raina continued to be the top-placed Indian at 164, followed by Karman Thandi at 207 and Pranjala Yadlapalli at 293.

Hungary's Veronika Major wins gold medal at ISSF World Cup

- Hungary's Veronika Major won a gold medal at the ongoing ISSF World Cup in New Delhi.
- She bagged the medal in 10-metre air pistol event.
Taipei's Chia Ying Wu won a silver medal, with 238.4 points. Korean Bomi Kim came third, with 218.3 points.

**Mirabai Chanu won gold at EGAT Cup in Thailand**
- World champion Indian weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu notched up a gold medal at the EGAT Cup in Thailand. Chanu won the 48kg category gold with an effort of 192 kg in the silver level Olympic qualifying event.
- The 24-year-old Manipuri lifted 82 kg in snatch and 110 kg in clean and jerk to finish on top of the podium.

**9th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2019 Begins In Hisar, Haryana**
- The 9th Hockey India Senior Women National Championship 2019 begins in Hisar's Astroturf International Hockey Stadium, Haryana Agricultural University.
- RSPB will begin their campaign against Hockey Rajasthan in the Pool A opening match during the 11-day domestic extravaganza.

**Corentin Moutet clinched Chennai Open ATP Challenger title**
- France's Corentin Moutet has clinched the Chennai Open ATP Challenger tournament title after beating Andrew Harris of Australia 6-3, 6-3 in the singles final.
- It was the second Challenger title for Moutet, who received $7,200 and 80 ATP points.

**RSPB lift Senior National Men's Hockey title**
- Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) lifted the 9th Senior National Men's Hockey Championship crown at Gwalior. RSPB beat defending champion Punjab 3-2 and claim the gold medal.
- Petroleum Sports Promotion Board (PSPB) beat Punjab & Sind Bank 4-1 to clinch the bronze medal.

**Senior National Badminton Championships begin in Guwahati**
- The 83rd edition of Senior National Badminton Championships begin in the Assamese city of Guwahati.
- Defending champion Saina Nehwal and last edition's runner-up PV Sindhu will be the biggest attractions in Women's Singles. The Men's Singles will be without defending champion HS Prannoy and runners-up Kidambi Srikanth who are suffering from injuries. This is the first time the Nationals is returning to the North-East since Guwahati last hosted it in 2010.

**Jamie Chadwick became the first female driver to win the MRF championship**
- Jamie Chadwick from England made history by becoming the first female driver to win the MRF challenge after scoring a triple win in the final round of the season in Chennai.
- Chadwick ended the championship with 280 points, including two bonus points for the fastest lap in the last race.
- Chadwick became the first woman to win a British F3 race in August.

**Clouded Leopard will be mascot for National Games 2022 in Meghalaya**
- Meghalaya's state animal Clouded Leopard will be the mascot for the National Games 2022.
- This decision was taken at the first National Games 2022 executive committee meeting chaired by Meghalaya Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Banteidor Lyngdoh. Meghalaya will be the third northeastern state after Manipur (1999) and Assam (2007) hosted the National Games.

**Prajnesh Gunneswaran 3rd Indian to reach top-100 in ATP rankings**
- Prajnesh Gunneswaran broke into men’s singles top-100 for the first time in his career with a jump of six places to 97th Rank. He is only third Indian player to break into the top-100 in the past decade after Somdev Devvarman and Yuki Bhambri.
- In the doubles, Rohan Bopanna stayed put at 37 and was followed by his partner Divij Sharan at 39.
83rd Senior Badminton Nationals:

Saina wins Women's singles Title, Sourabh Verma bags Men's singles Title

- Saina Nehwal beats PV Sindhu in the women’s final of the 83rd Yonex Sunrise Senior Badminton National Championship, claiming her second successive and fourth overall (2006, 2007, 2018, 2019) Nationals title, in Guwahati. In men’s single, Sourabh Verma completed a hat-trick of titles, claiming the men's singles crown after defeating young Lakshya Sen in straight games of 21-18, 21-13. The singles winners were awarded prize money of Rs. 3.25 lakhs while the runners-up got Rs. 1.7 lakhs. Each of the singles semi-finalists and the quarter-finalists got richer by Rs. 62500 and Rs. 27500 respectively.

Mary Kom named as brand ambassador of PUMA

- Six-time world women boxing champion MC Mary Kom was named as a brand ambassador for global sportswear giant PUMA for a two-year period. Mary Kom is now PUMA India’s new ambassador for their women’s training category and will be representing the brand in marketing campaigns.
- She will lead PUMA’s #DoYou conversation that aims to motivate women across the nation to be strong and accomplish their goals.

At Makran Cup One gold, five silver medals for India:

- National champion Deepak Singh was the lone Indian boxer to notch up gold while five others claimed silver medals in the Makran Cup in Chabahar, Iran. P Lalitha Prasad (52kg), Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Manish Kaushik (60kg), Duryodhan Singh Negi (69kg), Sanjeet (91kg) and Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Satish Kumar (91kg) they were finishing second on the podium.
- Rohit Tokas (64kg) and Manjeet Singh Panghal (75kg) settled down with bronze medal.

ISSF World Cup: Manu, Saurabh clinch 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team gold

- In shooting, the duo of Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker claimed a gold medal for India in 10-metre air pistol mixed team event at the ISSF World Cup in New Delhi.
- The Chinese duo of Ranxin Jiang and Bowen Zhang won silver.
- Bronze went to the Korean pair of Minjung Kim and Daehun Park.

Kyrgios beat Zverev to win Mexico open title

- Australian tennis player Nick Kyrgios beat world number three Alexander Zverev in the final to win the Mexico Open title.
- Kyrgios will regain his place in the world's top 50 rankings, had earlier beaten Rafael Nadal in the tournament.

Wrestler Bajrang Punia wins gold in Bulgaria

- India's star wrestler Bajrang Punia has won a gold medal in 65 kilogram freestyle in Bulgaria. The tournament, Dan Kolov-Nikola Petrov was held in Ruse. This was Punia's 10th medal in as many international tournaments since the 2017 World Championships in Paris.
- Pooja Dhanda won gold in 59 kg women’s freestyle category.
- Sakshi Malik settled for a silver medal in the 65 kg category.
- Sandeep Tomar claimed silver medal in the Men’s 61kg category. Vinesh Phogat claimed silver medal in the Women’s 53kg

Manpreet Singh named captain of Indian hockey team for Sultan Azlan Shah Cup

- Manpreet Singh was named captain of the 18-member Indian hockey team to play in the upcoming 28th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup. The prestigious tournament will be held in Ipoh, Malaysia from the 23rd of this month. Surender Kumar will be the Vice-Captain of the team.
Apart from India and hosts Malaysia, the other participating nations in the tournament are Canada, Korea, South Africa, Asian Games gold medallist Japan. India, will start its campaign against Japan on the opening day itself.

**Roger Federer claims 100th ATP title of his career**

- Roger Federer has claimed the 100th ATP title of his career with after beating 20-year-old Greek Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 6-4 in the final of the Dubai Tennis Championships.
- The 20-time grand slam champion is the second man, after American Jimmy Connors to claim 100 titles.
- Federer will have to win 10 more titles to beat Connors' men's record of 109, while Martina Navratilova holds the all-time record having won 167 women's singles crowns during her career.

**Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports recognises Kudo International Federation India as National Sport Federation**

- Kudo International Federation India (KIFI) has been provisionally recognised as National Sport Federation by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- The recognition shall be granted if it complies with the provisions of National Sports Development Code of India, 2011 and displays information on the website according to the ministerial guidelines.
- Kudo is an official Japanese Cultural Budô sport under the same category as Judo, Aikido and Kendo. Kudo is recognized by over 10 national Olympic committees and has over 50 member countries.

**Iniyan becomes India's 61st Grandmaster**

- P. Iniyan, the 16-year-old boy from the Erode district of Tamil Nadu has become the 61st Grandmaster of India after crossing 2,500 points in the Elo Ratings at the ongoing Noisiel Open in France.
- Iniyan needed 2.7 points to achieve the Grandmaster Title and achieved the feat by winning a game against Ukrainian GM Sergey Fedorchuk. Viswanathan Anand is India’s first Chess Grandmaster and he achieved the norm way back in 1987.

**Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports recognises All India Carrom Federation as National Sports Federation**

- Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has granted provisional recognition to All India Carrom Federation (AICF) as National Sport Federation with immediate effect till up to 31st March, 2019. The recognition means granting a major role to AICF for development of the Carrom sport in India.
- The recognition can be reviewed by the government in case Memorandum of Association (MoA) of the All India Carrom Federation or its practices come into conflict with the government guidelines as amended from time to time.
- The Carrom sport is placed in the ‘Others’ category.

**Kavinder fetches gold, 4 silver medals for India at Finland boxing tourney**

- Kavinder Singh Bisht (56kg) struck gold while Shiva Thapa (60kg) and three others claimed silver medals to end a fine Indian campaign at the 38th GeeBee Boxing Tournament in Helsinki, Finland.
- Signing off with silver medals were three-time Asian medallist Shiva Thapa (60kg), rookie Govind Sahani (49kg), Commonwealth Games bronze-medallist Mohammed Hussamuddin (56kg) and Dinesh Dagar (69kg).

**WWE Kurt Angle announced his retirement from wrestling**

- WWE Hall of Fame inductee Kurt Angle announced his retirement from wrestling, saying that his match at the WrestleMania 35 will be his last. Angle made his comeback to the WWE after almost 11 years when he was inducted into the Hall of Fame in 2017. Following his return Angle was subsequently named the General Manager of WWE Raw.
Olympic champion Liu Hong breaks 50km race walk world record

- Rio Olympics race walk champion Liu Hong broke the 50km world record and became the first woman to dip under the four-hour mark at an event in Huangshan.
- Liu, who won the Olympic distance 20km gold in Rio, clocked three hours, 59 minutes and 15 seconds for the longer race, clipping more than five minutes off the previous record (4:04:36) set by compatriot Liang Rui in Taicang last year. She also won the 20km gold at the 2011 and 2015 World Championships.

Upamanyu Dutta clinches bronze medal in Asian Open Laser Sailing Championship

- Young sailor Upamanyu Dutta bagged the bronze medal in the Laser Standard race for men in the Asian Open Laser Sailing Championship which concluded in Singapore.
- Nethra Kumanan of Chennai achieved a creditable 4th position in the Laser Radial event for women.
- Dutta aggregated a total of 56 points to finish behind Thailand’s Keerati Bualong (28 points) and Nicholas Bezy (47 points) of Hong Kong.

Gymnast Dipa Karmakar was selected as Barbie role model

- Dipa Karmakar was selected as Barbie role model & was presented with a one-of-a-kind doll by Barbie as the company celebrates its 60th anniversary. Barbie decided to honour 20 different role models across 18 different countries, and celebrate their unique achievements and capabilities.
- Women like the first Indian gymnast to compete at the Olympics, Dipa Karmakar. The first Japanese tennis player to win a Grand Slam, Naomi Osaka. Italian chef Rosanna Marziale who pioneered techniques that earned her the nickname, ‘queen of mozzarella’. From fire fighters to pilots, Barbie has represented various professions and thus inspired young girls to believe that they can be whoever they want to be

Special Olympics World Games 2019 begin at Abu Dhabi in UAE

- Special Olympics World Games 2019, begin at Abu Dhabi in UAE, made history by welcoming a record-breaking 200 nations at the Games. Of the 200 nations, 195 will compete in the Games and five will observe.
- The event held in the West Asia for the first time, 7,500 athletes will take part in 24 Olympic-style sports over seven days. With the highest number of women taking part and the largest number of Unified teammates on board, the World Games will capture the attention of the globe.
- More than 2,500 women will fly the flag for their nation, with almost half of them performing in athletics competitions. Saudi Arabia will send female athletes for the first time, with 14 women participating.

India bags 368 medals in Special Olympics Games

- India returned with 368 medals, including 85 gold, at the Special Olympics World Summer Games, held at Abu Dhabi, UAE. The Indian team of 284 athletes also clinched 154 silver and 129 bronze medals in its highly successful campaign at the prestigious event.
- Medals are won in Judo, Athletics, Cycling, Aquatics, Powerlifting, Basketball Traditional, Table Tennis, Roller skating, Badminton, Handball Traditional and Football 7 Side Female competitions in the game.
- From the roller skating event, the country won 49 medals - 13 gold, 20 silver, and 16 bronze medals.
- Indian powerlifters bagged the maximum number of medals 20 gold, 33 silver and 43 bronze.
- India participated in Judo and Futsal for the first time. The next Special Olympic Games are set to take place in Sweden in 2021

Kamalpreet Kaur wins gold in women's discus throw event

- In Athletics, Kamalpreet Kaur grabbed the gold medal in the women's discus throw event.
- Kaur also qualified for the Asian Championships in the process on the opening day of Federation Cup in Patiala. Shivpal Singh also booked a berth in the next month's Asian Championships in Doha in men's javelin throw by crossing the qualifying standard set by Athletics Federation of India.
India bags five medals, including two gold in Asian Youth Athletics Championships

- India bagged five medals, including two gold in the Asian Youth Athletics Championships in Hong Kong on the first day. Philip Maheswaran Thabitha grabbed the first gold for India by winning the boys' 110 metres hurdles in 12.86 seconds. Vipin Kumar added the second gold metal for India in the boys' hammer throw with an effort of 69.63 metres. India's Harshita Sherawat clinched a silver in the girls' hammer throw with an effort of 61.93 metres. Deepak Yadav added a bronze in pole vault by clearing 4.70 metres while Ajay bagged a medal of the same colour in the boys' 1500 metres race with a timing of three minutes and 57.25 seconds.

Diksha Dagar becomes second Indian to win Ladies European Tour title

- Eighteen-year-old Diksha Dagar became the second Indian women golfer to win an event on Ladies European Tour after clinching South African Women's Open in Cape Town. Aditi Ashok was the first Indian to win the Ladies European Tour after clinching Hero Women's Indian Open in Gurugram in 2016. Dagar won silver at the 2017 Summer Deaflympics. She also had a stellar Amateur career during which she represented India at the 2018 Asian Games and won the 2018 Singapore Amateur title. She also won a Pro event on the Indian domestic Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour, before turning pro at the start of this year.

Finland's Valtteri Bottas wins Australian GP

- Mercedes' Valtteri Bottas beat his world champion teammate Lewis Hamilton to clinch the season-opening Australian Formula One Grand Prix. Bottas, who claimed his first race win since Abu Dhabi in 2017, also claimed the extra point for the fastest lap in the race. Hamilton finished the race in the second spot, while Red Bull's Max Verstappen finished third.

Sai Praneeth Finishes With Silver at Swiss Open

- India's B Sai Praneeth lost to Shi Yuqi of China in the men's single final clash of Swiss Open Badminton tournament in Basel. Top seeded and world number two Shi Yuqi has lifted the title defeating Praneeth. Earlier, Praneeth won the first game and gave tough fight in the second one, but lost in the third game.

K T Irfan becomes first Indian athlete to qualify for Tokyo Olympics

- K T Irfan became the first Indian from athletics to qualify for the next year's Olympics while finishing fourth in the 20 km event of the Asian Race Walking Championships in Nomi, Japan. Irfan also holds a national record of 1:20:21 when he finished 10th in the 2012 Olympics. He also qualified for this year's World Championships (September 27-October 6) in Doha, Qatar.

Prajnesh Gunneswaran rises to career-best 84th position

- In Tennis, the breakthrough run at the Indian Wells has propelled India's Prajnesh Gunneswaran to career-high rank of 84 in the latest men's rankings of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP).
- In the Women's Tennis Association rankings, Ankita Raina continues to be India's top-ranked player at 168. She was followed by Karman Kaur Thandi, who jumped seven places to 203.

Bengaluru FC crowned ISL champions for first time

- Bengaluru FC clinched their maiden Indian Super League title as Rahul Bheke found a championship-winning header in the dying minutes of the final against FC Goa in Mumbai.
- The two teams were locked 0-0 after 90 minutes. Even the first extra time saw no goals but Bengaluru got better of a 10-men Goan team 1-0, four minutes from the end of the second extra half.

Lakshya and Riya into top-100 in BWF badminton rankings
• Young Indian shuttlers Lakshya Sen and Riya Mookerjee broke into the top-100 among Men’s and Women’s singles players in the latest World Badminton Rankings.
• Making a massive jump of 28 places, Lakshya Sen is placed 76th. Riya Mookerjee climbed up 19 spots to be placed 94th.
• In the women's singles rankings, P V Sindhu and Saina Nehwal are static with Sindhu at sixth and Saina at ninth position.
• Among men, B Sai Praneeth also moved up three places to 19th. Kidambi Srikanth remains static and is the best placed Indian in the men's rankings at seventh.
• He is followed by Sameer Verma (14th), H S Prannoy (24th), Subhankar Dey (43rd), Parupalli Kashyap (48th), Ajay Jayram (52nd) and Sourav Verma (53rd).
• Japan's Kento Momota is leading the men's chart while Chinese Taipei's Tai Tzu Ying is topping the women's singles list.

India Loses Hosting Rights for the Junior Asian Championship 2019

• United World Wrestling (UWW) has taken away the hosting rights from India to host junior Asian Championship which was to be held in July 2019. India had agreed to host the re-scheduled junior Championship in July after original hosts Lebanon withdrew. UWW has shifted the new venue for the junior Asian championship from India to Thailand.
• In the wake of the Pulwama terror attack, India had not issued visas to a three-member shooting contingent from Pakistan for the shooting World Cup in Delhi. UWW has also asked all its affiliated federations to suspend all communication with Wrestling Federation of India (WFI).

Abu Dhabi to host T10 League for next five years

• The magnificent Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi will host the T10 League for the next five years, starting with the 2019 season. Abu Dhabi Cricket, in partnership with Abu Dhabi Sports Council (ADSC) and the Department of Culture and Tourism - Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi), has signed a five-year agreement with the organisers of the T10 League. The first match of the T10 League 2019 will be held on October 23. The T10 format was first introduced to the UAE in 2017

Saina bags Sportsperson of the Year award

• London Olympics bronze medallist Saina Nehwal was named ‘Sportsperson of The Year’ at the annual Telangana Sports Journalists Association awards function.
• Rio Olympics silver medallist PV Sindhu was named ‘Outstanding Performer’ in women’s section while, Pullela Gopichand was presented the ‘Coach of The Year’ award and the Indian badminton team was the ‘Team of The Year’ and the Badminton Association of Telangana was awarded the ‘Association of the Year’.

China crowned Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships winners

• China defeated Japan 3-2 to win the 2019 Badminton Asia Mixed Team Championships. This was the second edition of the tournament. 11 teams including India was part of this tournament that was held in Queen Elizabeth Stadium in Hong Kong. The event was also known as the Tong Yun Kai Cup 2019 named after the president of the Hong Kong badminton association.
• In the mixed doubles, Chinese pair He Jiting and Du Yue has defeated aapanese pair Yuta Watanabe and Arisa Higashino. In the men’s doubles, Yugo Kobayashi and Takuro Hoki of China beat Han Chengkai and Zhou Haodong of Japan. In the women’s doubles, Li Yinhui and Du Yue won for China by beating Ayako Sakuramoto and Yukiko Takahata.

Manu Bhaker-Saurabh Chaudhary wins senior gold in Asian Airgun C’ship
• India had a successful start to the 12th Asian Airgun Championship in Taoyuan, Taipei with two gold medals.
• India won both 10m air pistol mixed team gold in both juniors and seniors. After winning an International Shooting Sport Federation World Cup stage gold, the pair of stars Bhaker and Chaudhary won senior gold together.
• National champion Esha Singh and Vijayveer Sidhu won the gold in juniors.

31-year-old Hopman Cup replaced by new ATP Cup
• The city of Perth in Western Australia (WA) will no longer play host to the Hopman Cup, Tennis Australia confirmed.
• The 31st edition of the tournament was the last edition of the game and ended in January 2019.
• Instead, the mixed tournament format will be replaced with an all men's event called the ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) Cup. Played across three cities, Perth will join Sydney and Brisbane as the hosts of the new competition which is set to feature 100 of the world's top male players.

Breakdancing and three other makes next move to Olympic status at Paris 2024
• The Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has recommended adding breakdancing, skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games.
• This decision was taken by the IOC’s executive board in the meeting held in Lausanne, Switzerland. Final Decision will be taken after the end of 2020.

Aeronutrix’s Fast&Up Ropes in Cricketer Mayank Agarwal as Brand Ambassador
• Indian Test Cricketer, Mayank Agarwal, appointed as Brand Ambassador of Aeronutrix’s Fast&Up Rope for the growth of the fast-moving healthcare goods business in India.
• Fast&Up is the flagship sports nutrition brand of Aeronutrix Sports Products Private Limited. Backed by innovative Swiss technology.

Australia’s Graham Reid to be appointed as India men’s hockey coach
• Australian Graham Reid is set to be named as the Indian men’s hockey team chief coach till the 2022 World Cup after the national federation. The Indian men’s team is without a chief coach after the unceremonious sacking of Harendra Singh in January following a less-than-impressive quarterfinal exit at the World Cup in Bhubaneswar last year.
• A veteran of 130 international matches, Reid was a member of the Australian team that won the silver medal in the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. He was Australia’s coach at the 2016 Rio Olympics but quit after the Kookaburras failed to finish on the podium.

Australia legend Tim Cahill retires from all forms of football
• Australia’s all-time top goalscorer Tim Cahill announced his retirement, bringing an end to one of the country’s greatest football careers.
• The 39-year-old who scored 50 goals in 108 appearances for the Socceroos and played in four World Cups.

India Open 2019 Winners List
• The 2019 India Open was held at K. D. Jadhav Indoor Hall in India.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Runner Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Single</td>
<td>Viktor Axelsen</td>
<td>Srikant Kidambi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Single</td>
<td>Ratchanok Intanon</td>
<td>He Bingjiao</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Doubles</td>
<td>Lee Yang and Wang Chi-lin</td>
<td>Ricky Karanda Suwardi and Angga Pratama</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
India secures second position in the medal tally in Asian Youth Athletics Championships

- The third edition of the Asian Youth Athletics Championships 2019 was held at the Tseung Kwan O Sports Ground in Hong Kong from 15 to 17 March.
- It is a biennial, continental athletics competition for Asian athletes aged from 15 to 17 years.
- China topped the medal tally with 31 medals
- India secured second position in the medal table by winning 26 medals including 8 gold, 9 silver and 9 bronze.

List of Gold winners from India

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Winners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s 400 metres</td>
<td>Abdul Razak Cheramkulangara Rasheed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Medley relay</td>
<td>Indian Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s 10,000 m walk</td>
<td>Vishvendra Singh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Hammer throw</td>
<td>Vipin Kumar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Decathlon</td>
<td>Usaid Khan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s 100 metres</td>
<td>Avantika Santosh Narale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s 100 metres hurdles</td>
<td>Thabitha Philip Maheswaran</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Long jump</td>
<td>Thabitha Philip Maheswaran</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Momota 1st Japanese man to win title in All England Badminton Championships

- Japan’s reigning world champion Kento Momota won a maiden All England Open Badminton Championships title as Chinese Taipei’s Tai Tzu-ying failed with her bid to win three in a row.
- Momota is the first male Japanese winner ever, with the men’s singles stretching back to 1900.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Events</th>
<th>Winners</th>
<th>Runners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Singles</td>
<td>Kento Momota</td>
<td>Viktor Axelsen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Singles</td>
<td>Chen Yufei</td>
<td>Tai Tzu Ying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Doubles</td>
<td>Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan</td>
<td>Aaron Chia and Soh Woo Yik</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Doubles</td>
<td>Chen Qing Chen and Jia Yifan</td>
<td>Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dubai Tennis Championship 2019

- Dubai Tennis Championship 2019 commonly known as Dubai Duty Free Tennis Championship concluded in Dubai, UAE. It was the 27th edition of men and 19th of women.
- Prize money of ATP (Association of Tennis Professionals) is $2887895 and for WTA (Women Tennis Association) is $2828000.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Runner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Singles</td>
<td>Roger Federer (Switzerland)</td>
<td>Stefanos Tsitsipas (Greece)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Singles</td>
<td>Belinda Bencic (Switzerland)</td>
<td>Petra Kvitova (Czech Republic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Doubles</td>
<td>Rajeev Ram (USA) and Joe Salisbury (UK)</td>
<td>Ben McLachlan (New Zealand) and Jan-Lennard Struff (Germany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Doubles</td>
<td>Hsieh Su-wei (Chinese Taipei) and Barbora Strycova (Czech Republic)</td>
<td>Lucie Hradecka (Czech Republic) and Ekaterina Makarova (Russia)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**YONEX Swiss Open 2019 badminton tournament**

- The YONEX Swiss Open 2019 badminton tournament was held at St. Jakobshalle in Basel, Switzerland from 12 to 17 March 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Runner Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Single</td>
<td>Shi Yuqi (China)</td>
<td>Sai Praneeth (India)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Single</td>
<td>Chen Yufei (China)</td>
<td>Saena Kawakami (Japan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Double</td>
<td>Lee Yang and Wang Chi-lin (Taiwan)</td>
<td>Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Double</td>
<td>Nami Matsuyama and Chihiro Shida (Japan)</td>
<td>Chang Ye-na and Jung Kyung-eun (South Korea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Double</td>
<td>Mathias Bay-Smidt and Rikke Soby Hansen (Denmark)</td>
<td>Rinov Rivaldy and Pitha Haningtyas Mentari (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Indian Wells Masters Tennis tournament winners complete list**

- The Indian Wells Masters Tennis tournament held in California United States has come to an end. The list of winners is given below. Indian Wells Masters Tennis tournament is also known by the name BNP Paribas Open.
- Austrian tennis player Dominic Thiem registered a comeback victory over 20-time Grand Slam champion Roger Federer to win the Indian Wells Masters. It was Thiem's maiden ATP Masters 1000 title in three attempts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Runner Up</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Singles</td>
<td>Dominic Thiem (Austria)</td>
<td>Roger Federer (Switzerland)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s singles</td>
<td>Bianca Andreescu (Canada)</td>
<td>Angelique Kerber (Germany)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Doubles</td>
<td>Nikola Mektic and Horacio Zeballos</td>
<td>Lukasz Kubot and Marcelo Melo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Doubles</td>
<td>Elise Mertens and Aryna Sabalenka</td>
<td>Barbora Krejcikova and Katerina Siniakova</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lingshui China Masters Badminton Tournament 2019 – Complete winner list**

- The 2019 Lingshui China Masters was a badminton tournament held at Agile Stadium in China from 12 to 17 March 2019.
- The tournament was the first Super 100 tournament of the 2019 BWF World Tour.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Women Singles</th>
<th>Kim Ga-eun (South Korea)</th>
<th>Zhang Yiman (China)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Doubles</td>
<td>Lee Jhe-huei and Yang Po-hsuan (Chinese Taipei)</td>
<td>Ou Xunyi and Ren Xiangyu (China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Doubles</td>
<td>Baek Ha-na and Kim Hye-rin (South Korea)</td>
<td>Liu Xuanxuan and Xiayuting (China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Doubles</td>
<td>Tang Chun Man and Ng Tsz Yau (Hong Kong)</td>
<td>Guo Xinwaa and Liu Xuanxuan (China)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Lewis Hamilton wins Bahrain Grand Prix**
- Five times world champion Lewis Hamilton won the Bahrain Grand Prix
- Valtteri Bottas, winner of the opener in Australia, took second place to stay top of the championship standings by a point from teammate Hamilton.

**Roger Federer lifts his 4th ATP Miami Open title**
- Roger Federer lifted his fourth ATP Miami Open title with an emphatic 6-1, 6-4 win over defending champion John Isner. It was his 28th Masters title and the 101st overall and he also won 20 Grand Slam singles titles.
- Federer is now behind only America's Jimmy Connors with 109 career singles titles.

**India finish with 16 gold medals at Asian Airgun C'ships**
- India finished with 16 gold, five silver and four bronze in 12th Asian Airgun Championships to sign off with a total of 25 medals in Taoyuan, Taipei. Yash Vardhan and Shreya Agrawal bagged three gold medals each.
- Throughout the championship, both the senior and junior teams showed extraordinary performance to win 16 out of 18 gold medals on offer during the tournament.

**India's first professional Kho Kho league launched**
- The Kho Kho Federation of India (KKFI), along with eminent industrialist Amit Burman has launched the country's first franchise-based league for the sport – Ultimate Kho Kho. KKFI has partnered with Dabur India for this event. Eight teams will participate in the event. CEO of the Ultimate Kho-Kho league: Tenzing Niyogi (former sports advisory leader at Ernst and Young)
- Chairman of the Ultimate Kho-Kho league: Rajeev Mehta

**Ghosal 1st Indian male to enter top-10 in PSA world rankings**
- Saurav Ghosal became the first Indian male squash player to enter the top 10 in the PSA world rankings.
- Indian women squash players, Joshna Chinappa and Dipika Pallikal, had earlier reached the top-10 in the women's world rankings. Ghosal has moved up two places to a career-high ranking of tenth.
- Egypt's world champion Ali Farag, meanwhile, maintains his position at the top of the ladder.

**China wins both singles title at Asian Cup Table Tennis Tournament 2019**
- The 2019 ITTF-ATTU Asian Cup was the 32nd edition of the table tennis competition held from 5–7 April in Yokohama, Japan. The tournament had Men’s singles and women’s singles events only, both of which were dominated by China. Fan Zhendong (China) and Zhu Yuling (China) won the Gold medal in Men’s and women's single category respectively.

**India clinch 7 gold, 3 silver, 2 bronze in Ghana Junior & Cadet Open**
- In table tennis, India's young paddlers clinched seven gold, three silver and two bronze medals in the Ghana Junior & Cadet Open, a ITTF Junior circuit event. Ananya Chande and Diya Chitale, both from Maharashtra won seven gold, one silver and one bronze. Ananya also cornered a silver in the junior doubles along with Ruby Chan of England and a bronze in the junior girl's singles.
• Mainak Nistala and Arnav Manoj Karnavar added to the rich tally, combining to win two silver medals in the cadet boy's doubles.

**Shot putter Manpreet Kaur banned for 4 years for dope flunk**

• Asian champion shot putter Manpreet Kaur has been banned for four years by the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) for flunking four dope tests in 2017. The period of suspension would begin from July 20, 2017, the date of her provisional suspension, according to an order of the anti-doping disciplinary panel (ADDP) of the NADA.

• Manpreet tested positive four times in 2017. The first was at the Asian Grand Prix at Jinhua, China on April 24, followed by Federation Cup in Patiala (June 1), Asian Athletics Championships in Bhubaneswar (July 6) and the Inter-State Championships in Guntur (July 16). She won gold in all these meets.

**Lewis Hamilton wins the 2019 Chinese Grand Prix**

• Lewis Hamilton won the Chinese Grand Prix to seize the overall lead from his Mercedes team mate Valtteri Bottas in Formula One's 1,000th world championship. The win was the 75th of Hamilton's career, second in a row after his lucky triumph in Bahrain and sixth in China.

**Meena Kumari Maisnam clinches gold in Boxing World Cup**

• India finished with 5 medals in the Boxing World Cup which concluded at Cologne, Germany. Meena Kumari Maisnam continued her fine run to win gold in the 54 kg.

• Reigning youth world champion Sakshi (57 kg) and India Open champion Pwilao Basumetary (64 kg) settled for the silver. Pinki Rani (51 kg) and Parveen (60 kg) won bronze.

**FC Goa pip Chennaiyin FC to win 2019 Super Cup**

• The 2019 Super Cup was the second edition of the Super Cup, the main club knockout football competition in India. The competition is sponsored by Hero MotoCorp and is officially known as the Hero Super Cup.

• FC Goa emerged as champions of the 2019 Super Cup as they pipped Chennaiyin FC 2-1 in a tense affair at the Kalinga Stadium, Odisha.

**Tiger Woods bags fifth Masters at Augusta**


**Harsheel Dani clinches Dutch International badminton title**

• India's recovered from a game down to get the better of Denmark's **Mads Christoffersen** to clinch the Dutch International badminton title in Wateringen, The Netherlands.

• The 22 year old won the Ghana international crown in 2018 second Karvy All India junior-ranking badminton tournament in 2012.

**Garin becomes first Chilean ATP champion in a decade**

• Chilean professional tennis player **Christian Garin (22)** won his first ATP title in 10 years in the final of the US Men's Clay Court Championships in Houston. He beat Norway's **Casper Ruud**.

**Ethiopian runners Gelete Burka and Abrha Milaw win 2019 Paris Marathon race**

• Ethiopian athletes Gelete Burka (women’s race) and Abrha Milaw (men’s race) won the 43rd edition of the Paris Marathon. Milaw won the men's race with a time of 2 hours :07 minutes and :50 seconds.

• Burka was the fastest woman with 2 hours :22 minutes and :48 seconds. Kenyan Paul Lonyangata, a two-time Paris Marathon winner, was the third-fastest man.
**Bajrang regains top spot in world wrestling rankings**
- India's Bajrang Punia has regained the world number one spot in the men's 65-kilogram freestyle category rankings.
- The rankings were released by United World Wrestling. He won Gold in the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games as well as a silver in the World Championships last year, secured 58 points ahead of Akhmed Chakaev of Russia.

**Chandigarh to host Asian Billiards, Snooker C'ships**
- Chandigarh will host the 18th Asian Billiards, the 20th Under-21 Asian Snooker Championship and the 3rd Ladies Asian Snooker Championship from April 27 to May 3. Internationally renowned players from around 15 Asian countries will be participating in this championship.
- The participating countries include India, China, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, Qatar, Syria, Korea, Japan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Iran and others.

**Services lift Santosh Trophy title over Punjab**
- Services won their sixth Santosh Trophy title with a 1-0 victory over home side Punjab, thanks to a second-half strike by Bikash Thapa at the Guru Nanak Stadium. This was the 73rd edition of the game.

**Kenyan Asbel Kiprop handed four-year doping ban**
- The International Association of Athletics Federation Disciplinary Tribunal has banned former Olympic and World 1,500m champion Asbel Kiprop for four years.
- Kiprop, the 2008 Beijing Olympics 1500m champion, was tentatively suspended by IAAF’s Athletes Integrity Unit (AIU) in May last year after having tested positive to blood boosting Erythropoietin (EPO) in an out-of-competition test in Iten in November 2017.

**Fognini Beats Lajovic to Win Monte-Carlo Title**
- Fabio Fognini became the first Italian to win an ATP Masters 1000 title at the Rolex Monte-Carlo Masters, defeating Dusan Lajovic.
- Fognini earns 1000 ATP Rankings points and receives €958,055 in prize money. Lajovic gains 600 points and €484,950 for his run to the championship match. Fognini is the eighth player to win his first Masters 1000 title over the past 17 events at the elite level.

**India’s Bajrang Punia wins Gold in Asian Wrestling C'ship**
- India clinched one gold, one silver and bronze at the Asian Wrestling Championship in China's Xian.
- World number one Bajrang Punia logged 10 points in a row in the gold medal bout to reclaim his Asian Championship crown. He defeated Kazakhstan's Sayatbek Okassov.
- Another Indian Parveen Rana, lost to Bahman Mohammad Teymouri of Iran in the final 0-3 in 79kg category securing a silver medal. In 97 Kg category Satywart Kadian, picked a bronze medal defeating Haobin Gao of China by 8-2.

**Badminton Asia Championships begins at Wuhan in China**
- The Badminton Asia Championships began at Wuhan in China.
- The Indian contingent comprises PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal in Women's Singles, and Kidambi Srikanth and Sameer Verma in Men's Singles.
- Dinesh Khanna had become the Men's Singles champion in 1965. Last year, Saina and HS Prannoy had won bronze medals.

**Advani wins inaugural Asian Snooker Tour title**
- India’s ace cueist Pankaj Advani defeated Ehsan Heydari Nezhad of Iran 6-4 to claim the inaugural Asian Snooker Tour title. Advani had earlier won the second leg of the Tour in China.
• The Tour was held in three parts and played in Doha (Qatar), Jinan (China) and Bengaluru (India).

Valterri Bottas wins F1 Azerbaijan Grand Prix
• Valterri Bottas won the Azerbaijan Grand Prix to retake the Formula One world championship lead from teammate Lewis Hamilton after a stunning fourth successive one-two finish for Mercedes held at Baku.
• Sebastian Vettel in his Ferrari was a distant third.

Bhullar wins outstanding achievement as player award
• Arjuna awardee and star Indian golfer Gaganjeet Bhullar won the outstanding achievement as a player award at the fourth edition of the annual India Golf Industry Association (GIA) awards at the Delhi Golf Club.
• The GIA awards were held along with the 8th India Golf & Turf Expo (IGTE), South Asia's largest golf trade show.
• Vijay Divecha and Nonita Lal Qureshi were awarded for their contribution to golf coaching.

ISSF World Cup: Abhishek Verma Wins Gold In 10m Air Pistol
• India topped the standings at the International Shooting Sport Federation, ISSF World Cup on the final day in Beijing, bagging four medals comprising 3 Gold and a Silver.
• Indian shooter Abhishek Verma on Saturday won the gold medal in the 10m Air Pistol event at the ISSF World Cup being held in Beijing.
• Abhishek Verma's brilliant performance in the Shooting World Cup Final also secured a fifth Olympic quota for India. Anjum Moudgil and Apurvi Chandela (10m air rifle women), Saurabh Choudhary and Divyansh Panwar had earlier secured India four Olympic spots.
• Abhishek Verma topped the charts in the final.

Bajrang Punia to become first Indian wrestler to fight at New York’s iconic Madison Square Garden
• Bajrang Punia is set to become the first wrestler from India to fight at the iconic Madison Square Garden in New York. The 25-year-old, who won the gold medal in the 65-kg category at the ongoing Asian Wrestling Championships earlier this week, is the first Indian wrestler to be invited by the American governing body.
• Bajrang Punia will take part in the "Grapple at the Garden -- Beat the Streets" fight night, scheduled to be held on May 6. He is currently the World No.1 in the 65-kg weight category.

Dominic Thiem defeats Medvedev to win Barcelona Open
• Dominic Thiem overpowered Daniil Medvedev to win the Barcelona Open title, boosting his credentials as a potential Roland Garros champion. He is also the first Austrian to take the Barcelona title since Thomas Muster in 1996.

Petra Kvitova Beats Anett Kontaveit to Win Porsche Grand Prix
• Petra Kvitova beat No. 8 Anett Kontaveit 6-3, 7-6 (2) to win the Porsche Grand Prix at Stuttgart, Germany.
• The 29-year-old Czech clinched her second title of the year after winning Sydney in January.

Sharath Kamal wins sportsperson of year award
• Ace table tennis player A Sharath Kamal was honoured with the Sportsperson of the Year Award at the annual awards and scholarships function organised by the Tamil Nadu Sports Journalists' Association (TNSJA) and the India Cements.
• Legendary Indian tennis player Vijay Amritraj, former India leg-spinner V V Kumar and Asian Games gold medallist (200m) R Gnanasekaran were felicitated with the India Cements-TNSJA Lifetime Achievement awards.
• Coach of the year: R B RAMESH (chess coach)
• India Cements - TNSJA Team of the year 2018-19: Tamil Nadu Women’s Football team.
• India Cements - TNSJA Young Achiever of the year 2018-19: P M Tabitha (athlete)
• India Cements - TNSJA Young Achiever of the year 2018-19: D. Gukesh (world’s second youngest Grand Master).

23rd Asian Athletics Championship 2019
• The 23rd edition of the Asian Athletics Championship concluded in Doha, Qatar.
• India ended at the fourth spot in the medals tally with 3 Gold, 7 Silver and 7 Bronze. Bahrain topped the table with 11 Gold, 7 Silver and 4 Bronze. China was second with 10 Gold, 13 Silver and 7 Bronze.
• The four-day event saw participation from 63 nations across the world.

Gold winners
Tejinder Pal Singh Toor- Men’s Shot put
Gomathi Marimuthu- Women’s 800 m
P. U. Chitra- Women’s 1500 m

2019 Singapore Open Complete Winners List
The 2019 Singapore Open, was a badminton tournament which took place at Singapore Indoor Stadium in Singapore from 9 to 14 April 2019.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CATEGORIES</th>
<th>WINNERS</th>
<th>RUNNER UP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Single</td>
<td>Kento Momota (Japan)</td>
<td>Anthony Sinisuka Ginting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Single</td>
<td>Tai Tzu-ying (Taiwan)</td>
<td>Nozomi Okuhara (Japan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Double</td>
<td>Takeshi Kamura and</td>
<td>Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Keigo Sonoda (Japan)</td>
<td>Setiawan (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Double</td>
<td>Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana</td>
<td>Kim Hye-jeong and Kong Hee-yong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nagahara (Japan)</td>
<td>(South Korea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Double</td>
<td>Dechapol Puavaranukroh and</td>
<td>Tan Kian Meng and Lai Pei Jing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sapsiree Taerattanachai (Thailand)</td>
<td>(Malaysia)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Complete Winners list of Malaysia Open 2019
• The 2019 Malaysia Open, officially the CELCOM AXIATA Malaysia Open 2019, is a badminton tournament which takes place at Axiata Arena in Malaysia from 2 to 7 April 2019 and has a total purse of $700,000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winner</th>
<th>Runner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s Single</td>
<td>Lin Dan (China)</td>
<td>Chen Long (China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s Single</td>
<td>Tai Tzu-Ying (Taiwan)</td>
<td>Akane Yamaguchi (Japan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s doubles</td>
<td>Li Junhui and Liu Yuchen</td>
<td>Takeshi Kamura and Keigo Sonoda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s doubles</td>
<td>Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan</td>
<td>Du Yue and Li Yinhue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed doubles</td>
<td>Zheng Siwei and Huang Yaqiong</td>
<td>Wang Yilu and Huang Dongping</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2019 Badminton Asia Championships
• The 2019 Badminton Asia Championships was held at Wuhan Sports Center Gymnasium in China from 23 to 28 April 2019.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Winners</th>
<th>Runners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Men’s singles</td>
<td>Kento Momota (Japan)</td>
<td>Shi Yuqi (China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s singles</td>
<td>Akane Yamaguchi (Japan)</td>
<td>He Bingjiao (China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Men’s doubles</td>
<td>Hiroyuki Endo and Yuta Watanabe</td>
<td>Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Japan)</td>
<td>Sukamuljo (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women’s doubles</td>
<td>Chen Qingchen and Jia Yifan</td>
<td>Mayu Matsumoto and Wakana Nagahara (Japan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(China)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed doubles</td>
<td>Wang Yilü and Huang Dongping</td>
<td>He Jiting and Du Yue (China)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(China)</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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### Important Obituaries

#### January

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl.No</th>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Field</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kader Khan</td>
<td>An Afghan-born Indian-Canadian film actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Larry Roberts</td>
<td>ARPAnet lead, early internet pioneer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>C H Loknath</td>
<td>Kannada actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ramakant Achrekar</td>
<td>Cricket coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dibyendu Palit</td>
<td>Bengali writer and Sahitya Akademi awardee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Harold Brown</td>
<td>Former U.S. Defence Secretary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lenin Rajendran</td>
<td>Veteran Malayalam filmmaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Sir Michael Atiyah</td>
<td>British mathematician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Raghbir Singh Bhol</td>
<td>Former India hockey player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Bhanu Prakash Singh</td>
<td>Former Union minister, ex-Goa Governor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Krishna Sobti</td>
<td>Hindi writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Michel Legrand</td>
<td>French composer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>George Fernandes</td>
<td>Former Defence Minister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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#### February

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Field</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiten Bhaya</td>
<td>Former Planning Commission member and ex-director of IIMC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramesh Bhatkar</td>
<td>Marathi actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priyanath Dey</td>
<td>freedom fighter and former Odisha MLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haridar Karan</td>
<td>Senior Congress leader and former minister of Odisha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ladu Kishore Swain</td>
<td>Odisha MP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Dingell</td>
<td>US congressman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albert Finney</td>
<td>Oscar nominee and British actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahesh Anand</td>
<td>Bollywood Actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former England football team</td>
<td>Gordon Banks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goalkeeper</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chemistry Nobel Prize Winner</td>
<td>Manfred Eigen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raj Kumar Barjatya</td>
<td>Bollywood film producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pratik Choudhury</td>
<td>Bengali singer and music composer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Nationality and Occupation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rajendran</td>
<td>Tamil Nadu, sitting Lok Sabha member from AIADMK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kodi Ramakrishna</td>
<td>Veteran Telugu film director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis D'Souza</td>
<td>Former deputy chief minister of Goa and BJP MLA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Andrea Levy</td>
<td>British author</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruno Ganz</td>
<td>Swiss actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sibghatullah Mojaddedi</td>
<td>Former Afghan interim president and ex-Jihadi leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namvar Singh</td>
<td>Hindi writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William E. Butterworth III</td>
<td>American military veteran and novelist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wallace Smith Broecker</td>
<td>Climate scientist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**March**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
<th>Field</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Andre Previn</td>
<td>Legendary composer and pianist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bharat Mohan Adhikari</td>
<td>Former Deputy Prime Minister of Nepal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bill Playle</td>
<td>Former New Zealand batsman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke Perry</td>
<td>American actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virendra Kataria</td>
<td>Former lieutenant governor of Puducherry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Rudisha(Kenya)</td>
<td>Olympian and Athletics coach</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelly Catlin</td>
<td>American cyclist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinod Kashyap</td>
<td>Veteran Hindi Newsreader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir John Richardson</td>
<td>Eminent British art historian and critic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maate Mahadevi</td>
<td>First woman Lingayat 'jagadguru'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy</td>
<td>Andhra Pradesh state Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WS Merwin</td>
<td>Pulitzer Prize winner and former US poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darryl D'Monte</td>
<td>Senior journalist and environmental activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manohar Parrikar</td>
<td>Goa Chief Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinnoy Roy</td>
<td>Veteran Bengali Actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Krueger</td>
<td>Former White House economist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S B Sinha</td>
<td>Former SC Judge Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L V Sharada Rao</td>
<td>Veteran Kannada actress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larry Cohen</td>
<td>Cult-horror writer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinjamuri Anasuya</td>
<td>Noted folk artist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghulam Nabi Rather</td>
<td>Social activist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shahnaz Rahmatullah</td>
<td>Bangladeshi singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scott Walker</td>
<td>Songwriter and producer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashita</td>
<td>Malayalam writer and poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bruce Yardley</td>
<td>Former Australian cricketer, coach and commentator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Valery Bykovsky</td>
<td>Russian cosmonaut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prafulla Rajguru</td>
<td>Veteran Journalist</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Person</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J. Mahendran</td>
<td>Noted Tamil film director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kartik Chandra Rath</td>
<td>Noted Odia theatre personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Padma Shri Dr. Viharidas Gopakdas Patel</td>
<td>Noted economist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arie Irawan</td>
<td>Malaysian golfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ehiesa Theunissen-Fourie</td>
<td>Former South African Women cricket all-rounder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sydney Brenner</td>
<td>Nobel Prize-winning biologist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silamboli Su. Chellappan</td>
<td>Noted Tamil Scholar and orator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Nadja Regin</strong></td>
<td><strong>Serbian actress</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K M Mani</td>
<td>Former Kerala Finance Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Francis</td>
<td>Indian motorsport photographer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Navtej Hundal</td>
<td>Actor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pradeep Choubey</td>
<td>Renowned Hindi poet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr SK Shivakumar</td>
<td>Space scientist and Padma-Shri awardee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jerrie Cobb</td>
<td>America's first female astronaut candidate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alan Garcia</td>
<td>Ex-president of Peru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Con de Lange</td>
<td>Scotland all-rounder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rama Sengupta Paul</td>
<td>Mountaineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amar Pal</td>
<td>Bengali folk singer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S. Muthiah</td>
<td>Writer, journalist and teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terry Rawling</td>
<td>British film and sound editor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negasso Gidada</td>
<td>Former Ethiopian president</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pungam Kannan</td>
<td>'Pele of Asia' Former Indian footballer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chaudhary Vidyasagar</td>
<td>Former Himachal Pradesh minister</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>