

MANTHAN

Current Affairs Supplement

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Preface

Dear Readers,

The 'Current Affairs' section is an integral part of any examination. This edition of Manthan has been developed by our team to help you cover all the important events of the month for the upcoming exams like Banking, Insurance, CLAT, MBA etc. This comprehensive bulletin will help you prepare the section in a vivid manner. We hope that our sincere efforts will serve you in a better way to fulfil aspirations.

Happy Reading!

Best Wishes

Team CL

Contents

1.	POLITY AND GOVERNANCE	1–23
	• National	
	• International	
2.	ECONOMY AND FINANCE.....	24–38
	• Economy News	
	• Banks in News	
	• Firms in News	
3.	SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	39–48
	• Inventions/Discoveries	
	• Health/ Disease	
4.	ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT.....	49–50
5.	SPORTS.....	51–55
Á	• Sports Personalities in News	
	• Sport Events	
6.	AWARDS.....	56–60
7.	PERSONS IN NEWS	61–63Á
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	64–71Á
9.	IMPORTANT DAYS	72–74Á
10.	QUESTIONNAIRE.....	75–114
	• Questions	
	• Answer Key & Explanation	

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

National



Bhagwan Lal Sahni assumed charge as the chairman of the newly constituted NCBC

- **Á Bhagwan Lal Sahni**, a BJP leader from Bihar's Muzaffarpur, has assumed charge as the chairman of the newly constituted **National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)**, according to sources in the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry.
- **Á** BJP leader and former Varanasi mayor **Kaushalendra Singh Patel**, BJP national secretary and former MP **Sudha Yadav from Haryana**, and Telangana BJP general secretary **Achary Talloju** have been appointed as members of the commission.

National Commission for Backward Classes is a **Constitutional body** (123rd constitutional amendment bill 2018 and 102nd amendment in constitution to make it constitutional body) (**Article 338B of the Indian Constitution**) under India's Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment **established on 14 August 1993**. It was constituted pursuant to the provisions of the National Commission for Backward Classes Act, 1993. National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) is dissolved to **create the National Commission for Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (NCSEBC) as a constitutional body**. The NCBC Bill inserted the **Article 338B** into the **Constitution after Articles 338 and 338A** which deal with the **National Commission for Scheduled Castes (SC)** and **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (ST)** respectively.

M. Venkaiah Naidu becomes the first Vice President to visit Paraguay and Costa Rica

- **Á The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu** visited the **Republic of Paraguay** from 5-7 March 2019 and the **Republic of Costa Rica** from 7-9 March 2019.
- **Á** This was the **first high-level visit from India** to both these countries. Vice President **Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu** becomes the **first high level dignitary to visit Paraguay and Costa Rica**.
- **Á** The Vice President met with the President of the Republic of Paraguay, **Mr. Mario Abdo Benítez**, the Vice President, **Mr. Hugo Velázquez**. The Vice President met the President of Costa Rica, **Mr. Carlos Alvarado Quesada** and held Delegation level talks with him which was followed by a joint press statement.
- **Á Paraguay joined India** in remembering the contributions of **Mahatma Gandhi** on the occasion of the **150th Birth Anniversary** of the Mahatma. Shri Naidu along with the Vice President of Paraguay, **Mr. Hugo Velazquez** jointly unveiled a special commemorative postage stamp on **Mahatma Gandhi**.

Muppavarapu Venkaiah Naidu is the **current Vice-President of India**, in office since 11 August 2017. Previously, he served as the **Minister of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation, Urban Development and Information and Broadcasting** in the Modi Cabinet. He also served as **national president of Bharatiya Janata Party** from 2002 to 2004. Earlier, he was the **Union Cabinet Minister for Rural Development** in the **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** government. On 11 August 2017, he was sworn in as the **15th Vice-President of India**, thus becoming the **13th person to hold the office**.

Plastic free India anthem released in 7 languages by Environment Minister

- **Union Minister Harsh Vardhan launched an anthem as a part of a campaign to make India plastic-free by 2022 and stressed on strengthening plastic waste management and recycling ecosystem in the country.**
- **The 'Plastic Waste-Free India' anthem has been produced by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Smriti Manch (PDUSM), a non-profit organisation which claims to be working on various social and environmental issues. Currently, the anthem is launched in seven languages -- Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telegu, Malyalam and Kannada.**

In a report published by CPCB in 2015, Indian cities generate 15,000 tonnes of plastic waste which is enough to fill 1500 trucks a day across the Indian cities. About 94 per cent of this comprises thermoplastic, such as PET (polyethylene terephthalate) and PVC (polyvinyl chloride), which is recyclable. As per a 2018 report by dntoeearth, India's four metros generate more than 1760 tonnes of plastic every day, which is over 40 per cent of the plastic waste produced in India's major cities.

India's first 'National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation' to establish at Sehore

- **The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved in partial modification of the establishment of National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation (NIMHR) in Sehore District (Bhopal-Sehore highway) instead of Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh.**
- **NIMHR will be the first of its kind in the country in the area of mental health rehabilitation. It will serve as an institution of excellence for capacity building in human resource and research in the area of mental health rehabilitation. The Central Government has approved an outlay of Rs 180 crore for this project for an initial period of three years.**

Electronic surveillance system inaugurated along the Indo-Bangladesh border in Assam

- **Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated an advanced electronic surveillance system along the 61-km India-Bangladesh border in Dhubri district of Assam to tackle cross-border crimes and provide respite to BSF personnel from round-the-clock patrolling.**
- **The project, called BOLD-QIT (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique), under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) will cover the entire span of river Brahmaputra in Dhubri with data network generated by microwave communication, OFC cables, day and night surveillance cameras and intrusion-detection system.**

India shares its' longest international border with Bangladesh with approximately 4,096-kilometer, including 262 km (163 mi) in Assam, 856 km (532 mi) in Tripura, 180 km (110 mi) in Mizoram, 443 km (275 mi) in Meghalaya, and 2,217 km (1,378 mi) in West Bengal and it is the fifth-longest land border in the world.

Assam's Hailakandi top aspirational district: Niti Aayog study

- **Assam's Hailakandi district has shot up to number one from the 52nd position, among the aspirational districts of the country, a new report released by the Niti Aayog.**
- **Hailakandi ranked first among the 112 aspirational districts of India on the basis of its performance during November-December 2018 and January 2019. During the June-October 2018 ranking, Hailakandi district was placed at the bottom of the rung of aspirational districts.**

The NITI Aayog has ranked 112 districts on the basis of the improvements in five developmental areas that they have made from November-December 2018 and January 2019. The Transformation of Aspirational Districts Programme was launched by the Prime Minister that aims to develop some of the most underdeveloped districts of the country.

Ex-Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court Becomes Odisha's First Lokayukta

- **Former Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court Justice Ajit Singh** has been appointed as the first Lokayukta of Odisha.
- **Governor Ganeshi Lal approved his name** following the recommendation of the state government's selection committee last month. **Justice Singh held the post of Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court from March 5, 2016**, till his retirement on September 5 last year.
- **Odisha claims to be the first state in the country** to have passed the Lokayukta Bill in the State Assembly on February 14, 2014. It got the presidential assent in January 2015.

Maharashtra was the first state to introduce the institution of Lokayukta through The Lokayukta and Upa-Lokayuktas Act in 1971. The Lokayukta (Lok Ayukta) is an anti-corruption ombudsman organization in the Indian states. Once appointed, Lokayukta cannot be dismissed nor transferred by the government, and can only be removed by passing an impeachment motion by the state assembly. The Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC) headed by Morarji Desai submitted a special interim report on "Problems of Redressal of Citizen's Grievances" in 1966. In this report, the ARC recommended the setting up of two special authorities designated as 'Lokpal' and 'Lokayukta' for the redressal of citizens' grievances.

Fifteen of the 20 most polluted cities in the world are in India

- **Fifteen of the top 20 most polluted cities in the world are located in India**, with Gurgaon, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Noida and Bhiwadi in the top six, according to a new study.
- **Gurugram, in Haryana, topped the list** with an average annual particulate matter (PM 2.5) quality of 135 micrograms/cubic metre, in 2018. **Delhi — a frequent fixture on global pollution hotspots — was only the 11th most noxious city behind Lahore, Pakistan (10th) and Hotan, China (8th).**
- The other cities in India that made the list of 20 were Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Bhiwadi, Noida, Patna, Lucknow, Jodhpur, Muzaffarpur, Varanasi, Moradabad, Agra, Gaya and Jind.

The latest data compiled in the IQAir AirVisual 2018 World Air Quality Report and interactive world's most polluted cities ranking, prepared in collaboration with Greenpeace Southeast Asia, and reveals the state of particulate matter (PM2.5) pollution last year.

India, Russia sign deal on nuclear submarine

- **India sealed a \$3-billion deal with Russia** for leasing a nuclear-powered attack submarine for the Indian Navy for a period of 10 years.
- **Under the pact, Russia will have to deliver the Akula class submarine**, to be known as Chakra III, to the Indian Navy by 2025. It will be the third Russian submarine to be leased to the Navy.

Pension scheme for workers launched

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan (PM-SYM) Yojana.** The national pension scheme for workers and labourers of the unorganised sector was announced in the interim Budget in February this year.
- It provides for a **monthly pension of Rs. 3,000** to the employees of the unorganised sector after 60 years of age.

During the national launch from Ahmedabad, Mr. Modi also distributed the PM-SYM pension cards to select beneficiaries and claimed that for the first time in independent India, workers of the unorganised sector would be entitled to monthly pension. According to the Prime Minister, 42 crore workers from the unorganised sector are eligible for this pension by contributing Rs.55 to Rs.200 monthly under this scheme.

Indore bags cleanest city award for 3rd straight year under Swachh Survekshan

- **Indore** has bagged the cleanest city award for third straight year under Swachh Survekshan, 2019. President Ram Nath Kovind presented Swachh Survekshan-2019 Awards in New Delhi.
- **New Delhi Municipal Council** area got the cleanest small city award. Uttarakhand's Gauchar was adjudged the Best Ganga Town in the survey.

Swachh Survekshan 2019 covered all Urban Local Bodies in the country, making it the largest such cleanliness survey in the world. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation was awarded Best Capital City in the Solid Waste Management in the Swachh Survekshan 2018 rankings. According to a press release, the Swachh Survekshan survey ranks cities on various sanitation parameters. The GHMC was also at the 27th place among 4,041 cities.

Rajasthan cuts Lokayukta tenure to five years

- The **Rajasthan** government has amended the Lokayukta Act to reduce the Lokayukta's tenure from eight years to five years.
- The decision abruptly ends the term of the present Lokayukta, Justice Sajjan Singh Kothari, who has completed six years in office.

Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh get new NCLT benches

- The Government has approved establishment of two new benches of National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), one at Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh and the other at Indore in Madhya Pradesh. This step has been taken keeping in view the increasing case load, especially under the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code 2016.
- Presently, 14 numbers of NCLT Benches have been established, including the Principal Bench in New Delhi, and three recently set up benches at Jaipur, Kochi and Cuttack.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India was set up on 1st October 2016 under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code). It has regulatory oversight over the Insolvency Professionals, Insolvency Professional Agencies and Information Utilities. Dr. M. S. Sahoo is currently serves as Chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India.

India Cooling Action Plan Launched

- **India** is one of the first countries in the world to develop a comprehensive Cooling Action plan which has a long term vision to address the cooling requirement across sectors and lists out actions which can help reduce the cooling demand.
- The **Union environment ministry** announced the India Cooling Action Plan—a 20 year road map (2018 to 2038) to address the cooling requirements for all sectors such as buildings, cold chain, transport and refrigeration.

Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue – 2019

- In continuation of the process of engaging the global strategic community in an annual review of **India's opportunities and challenges in the Indo-Pacific region**, the second edition of Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) - 2019 was held on 05 and 06 March 2019 at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi.
- The aim is to focus attention on the Indo-Pacific, as a maritime geographical-entity, while deliberating aspects of great relevance to regional geopolitics.

The idea of an Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) was first conceptualised and conducted in 2018, as the apex level conference of the Indian Navy, organised by the National Maritime Foundation as the Navy's Knowledge Partner. The permanent theme of this annual dialogue is a review of India's opportunities and challenges in the Indo-Pacific region.

C Lalsawta was sworn-in as the first Lokayukta of Mizoram

- Retired IAS officer C Lalsawta was sworn-in as the first Chairman of the newly-constituted Lokayukta in Mizoram. He becomes the first Lokayukta of Mizoram.
- State governor Jagdish Mukhi administered the oath of office to Lalsawta. Chief Minister Zoramthanga, other ministers, Mizoram Assembly Speaker Lalrinliana Sailo, legislators and senior officials were present.

Lalsawta is a 1981 batch Bihar cadre IAS officer. He was the principal secretary of finance department in the state from 2008 to 2011. After returning to Bihar, he was made the vigilance commissioner of the state and he retired in 2015.

Election Commission for the first time 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.
- The electoral body held a meeting with over 1,800 IAS, IPS and IRS officials, besides some others from the Central services, who are to be deployed as observers in the Lok Sabha and Assembly elections. They will get all the important notifications and alerts through the 'Observer App'.

Election Commission of India operates under the authority of Constitution per Article 324. The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country. Chief Election Commissioner of India is usually a member of the Indian Civil Service and mostly from the Indian Administrative Service. It is very difficult to remove the authority of the Chief Election Commissioner once appointed by the president, as two-thirds of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha need to vote against him for disorderly conduct or improper actions. Sukumar Sen was the first Chief Election Commissioner of India, serving from 21 March 1950 to 19 December 1958.

India, US to conduct first tri-service drill towards year-end

- India and the United States are likely to conduct their first exercise involving their armies, navies and air forces towards the end of the year.
- The tri-service exercise was discussed last September during the inaugural '2+2' dialogue between the foreign and defence ministers of the two countries. The two sides are about to begin the groundwork for the maiden exercise.

The existing military exercises between India and the US are army-to-army, navy-to-navy and air force-to-air force. Russia is the only country with which India holds a joint tri-service exercise — the first of these was held in Vladivostok in October 2017.

Indian Sundarban accorded the status of 'Wetland of International Importance'

- Indian Sundarban was accorded the status of 'Wetland of International Importance' under the Ramsar Convention.
- The Sundarbans comprises hundreds of islands and a network of rivers, tributaries and creeks in the delta of the Ganga and the Brahmaputra at the mouth of the Bay of Bengal in India and Bangladesh.
- Located on the southwestern part of the delta, the Indian Sundarban constitutes over 60% of the country's total mangrove forest area. It is the 27th Ramsar Site in India, and with an area of 4, 23,000 hectares is now the largest protected wetland in the country.

The Convention on Wetlands, called the Ramsar Convention, is the intergovernmental treaty that provides the framework for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources. The Convention was adopted in the Iranian city of Ramsar in 1971 and came into force in 1975. Since then, almost 90% of UN member states, from all the world's geographic regions, have acceded to become "Contracting Parties".

India and Pakistan agreed to work on operationalizing the Kartarpur Corridor

- **India and Pakistan** have agreed to work expeditiously on operationalizing the Kartarpur 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 meeting is held in keeping with Government's decision to operationalise the Kartarpur Corridor on the occasion of the **550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev** in November this year.
- 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**.

EC appoints three special observers for Jammu and Kashmir

- The Election Commission (EC) has formed a committee comprising three "eminent" members to assess the situation on the ground in **Jammu and Kashmir** before it takes a decision about holding the Assembly elections.
- The three members of the committee are two retired IAS officers **Noor Mohammed** and **Vinod Zutshi** and a retired IPS officer, **A.S. Gill**.

President Kovind inaugurates Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

- **President Ramnath Kovind** inaugurated the Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Grambharti near Gandhinagar in Gujarat.
- He also presented the **10th Biennial National Grassroots Innovation Awards** on this occasion.

Indo-Bangladesh joint Military Exercise Sampriti – 2019

- **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 was concluded at Tangail, Bangladesh.
- The exercise is aimed to strengthen and broaden the aspects of interoperability and cooperation between the Indian and Bangladesh Armies. The exercise involved tactical level operations in a counter insurgency and counter terrorism environment under the UN mandate.

The military exercise 'Sampriti' started for the first time in 2009 as a platoon-level exercise and graduated to a company-level exercise in 2015 onwards. During the exercise, both sides will jointly train, plan and execute a series of well-developed tactical drills for neutralization of likely threats that may be encountered during simulated UN peace keeping operations. The 7th edition of exercise in SAMPRITI 2017 was culminated at Counter Insurgency & Jungle Warfare School, Vairengte in Mizoram.

Erode turmeric gets GI tag

- After an eight-year-long process, **Erode turmeric** finally got a Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the Geographical Indication Registry.
- The **Erode Manjal Vanigargal Matrum Kidangu Urimaiyalargal Sangham** applied for the GI tag on **January 4, 2011**, at the office of the Deputy Registrar of GI Registry in Chennai. **Erode turmeric** is a rhizome, both finger and bulb obtained from the **Erode local cultivar**.

A geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g. a town, region, or country). India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15 September 2003. Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India, in 2004-05, since then by oct 2018, 321 had been added to the list. Madhya Pradesh was recently granted GI tag for the Kadaknath chicken breed on 30th July 2018.

Madhya Pradesh government issues ordinance to give 27% quota to OBCs

- In Madhya Pradesh, the state government has issued an ordinance raising reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) to 27 per cent from the present 14 per cent.
- The ordinance could be issued before the Lok Sabha poll model code of conduct comes into effect. With this, Madhya Pradesh is possibly the only state in the country to have 27 per cent quota for OBCs.

Madhya Pradesh (meaning Central Province) is a state in central India. Its capital is Bhopal. Nicknamed the "Heart of India" due to its geographical location in India. Madhya Pradesh is the second-largest state in the country by area after Rajasthan. This state was the largest in India by area until 2000, when its southeastern Chhattisgarh region was made as a separate state. MP has the largest reserves of diamond and copper in India. Kamal Nath is the current & 18th Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. Anandiben Patel is the current Governor of Madhya Pradesh.

Arecanut gets its first GI tag for 'Sirsi Supari'

- For the first time in the arecanut sector, 'Sirsi Supari' grown in Uttara Kannada has received the Geographic Indication (GI) tag. It is cultivated in Yellapura, Siddapura and Sirsi taluks
- The arecanut grown in these taluks have unique features like a round and flattened coin shape, particular texture, size, cross-sectional views, taste, etc. These features are not seen in arecanut grown in any other regions. Its average dry weight is 7.5 g and average thickness is 16 mm.

GI tag for Coorg Arabica 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.
- According to the GI application, Coorg Arabica Coffee is grown specifically in Kodagu district in Karnataka.

As per the GI application for 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, as per the application petitions. 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.

Former Supreme Court judge PC Ghose appointed as India's first Lokpal

- Former Supreme Court judge and current member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Pinaki Chandra Ghose, is the India's first anti-corruption ombudsman, or Lokpal, after his name was cleared and recommended by the high-level selection committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose has been appointed as the country's first Lokpal. According to a communique issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan, President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed the Chairman of the Lokpal along with other members of the anti-corruption watchdog.

- **Á** The Lokpal will have four judicial and four non-judicial members. Former Chief Justices - **Dilip B. Bhosale, Pradip Kumar Mohanty, and Abhilasha Kumari** and sitting Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court **Ajay Kumar Tripathi** - have been appointed as judicial members.
- **Á** The non-judicial members are: former first woman Chief of Sashastra Seema Bal **Archana Ramasundaram**, ex-Maharashtra Chief Secretary **Dinesh Kumar Jain**, former IRS officer **Mahender Singh** and ex-IAS officer **Indrajeet Prasad Gautam**. 66-year old **Justice Ghose** retired as Supreme Court judge in May, 2017. He is a member of the National Human Rights Commission since 29th June, 2017.

The term "Lokpal" was coined by Dr. L.M.Singhvi in 1963. The concept of a constitutional ombudsman was first proposed in parliament by Law Minister Ashoke Kumar Sen in the early 1960s. Lokpal Bill was, for the first time, presented during the fourth Lok Sabha in 1968. The Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act was passed in 2013 with amendments in parliament, following the Jan Lokpal movement led by Anna Hazare in 2011. The Lokpal is responsible for enquiring into corruption charges at the national level while the Lokayukta performs the same function at the state level.

Madhya Pradesh appoints its First Transgender Government Officer

- **Á** In a first in Madhya Pradesh, the state has appointed a transgender government officer. **Sanjana Singh** recently joined as the personal secretary of the director of social justice and disabled persons welfare.
- **Á** Before her present posting, **Sanjana** had become the first para-legal volunteer of District Legal Services Tribunal and was also a nominated member of the Lok Adalat of the tribunal and used to hear cases in the company of several judges.

India now has 2,293 political parties

- **Á** The Election Commission's latest data on political parties, registered till March 9, a day before the Lok Sabha elections were announced, reveal that the country has a total of 2,293 political parties.
- **Á** These include seven "recognised national" and 59 "recognised state" parties. In fact, 149 political parties were registered with the poll panel between February and March on the eve of the announcement of the poll schedule.

With its demand to get power to deregister a party being pending with the Law Ministry, the Election Commission had used its powers under Article 324 of the Constitution to "unlist" parties for being dormant and not contesting elections for a long time.

Pramod Sawant takes oath as Goa chief minister

- **Á** **Pramod Sawant** was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Goa, capping a day of hectic parleys between the saffron party and its allies to put a new government in place in the state.
- **Á** Goa Forward Party chief **Vijai Sardesai** and Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party's **Sudin Dhavalikar** were made deputy chief ministers.
- **Á** **Manohar Parrikar** served as Chief Minister of Goa from 14 March 2017 until his death. Previously, he was the chief minister of Goa from 2000 to 2005 and from 2012 to 2014 and from 2014 to 2017; he served as the Minister of Defence.

Goa is a state in India within the coastal region known as the Konkan, in Western India. It is India's smallest state by area and the fourth smallest by population. Panaji is the state's capital, while Vasco da Gama is its largest city. Mridula Sinha is the current Governor of Goa. Goa is a former Portuguese province; the Portuguese overseas territory of Portuguese India existed for about 450 years until it was annexed by India in 1961.

India's deepest shaft cave discovered in Meghalaya

- A five-member team of cavers of the **Meghalaya Adventurers' Association (MAA)** have **discovered India's deepest shaft** at Krem Um Ladaw.
- The discovery was made during the 28th edition of the annual 'Caving in the Abode of the Clouds Expedition' that took place between February 3 and 28.
- **Krem Puri**, which at 24,583 metres, is acknowledged as the **longest sandstone cave in the world**, has now been further extended by another **459 m** to top the cave at **25,042 metres**.

Mumbai social worker Gauri Sawant becomes first transgender election ambassador

- The **Election Commission of India** has **appointed transgender social activist Gauri Sawant**, as one of the **12 election ambassadors** from Maharashtra. During 2004 and 2009 Lok Sabha elections there was **no record of transgender voters**.
- Following the Supreme Court order, **transgenders got the right to vote for the first time in 2014**. In 2014, **918 voters were registered in this third category**. This number has doubled in five years and now it is **2,086**.
- **Gauri Sawant** would visit every transgender and inspire them about the need for voting.

EC appoints Shailendra Handa & Madhu Mahajan as Special Expenditure Observers

- **Election Commission** has **appointed two eminent former Civil Servants Shailendra Handa and Ms. Madhu Mahajan as Special Expenditure Observers** for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections. **Shailendra Handa** has been **deployed in Maharashtra** and **Madhu Mahajan** has been **deployed in Tamil Nadu**.
- An official release said, **both these officers have rich experience of working in Investigation Wing of I.T Department** and have supervised many successful search and seizure actions unearthing tax evasion in complicated cases. The Special Observers will supervise and monitor the work being done by the electoral machinery.

The poll body appointed former member of CBDT, Gopal Mukherjee as special expenditure observer for Andhra Pradesh and Telangana while former Director General I-T (Investigation), D D Goel has been deployed in Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland.

Indian-origin Jagmeet creates history, enters Canada parliament

- **Indian-origin Jagmeet Singh** has created history in Canada when he made his debut in the House of Commons as the first non-white leader of a major opposition party in the country.
- Singh, the leader of the New Democratic Party, was elected in federal by-elections held on February 25.

Piyush Goyal among 7 Indians 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.
- The list, unveiled on the late evening of March 20, came on the official site of Apolitical, a global network for government helping public servants find the ideas, people and partners they need to solve the hardest challenges.
- **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.

Piyush Goyal was **Minister of State with Independent Charge for Power, Coal, New and Renewable Energy in the Government of India**. He is currently a Member of Rajya Sabha from Maharashtra. Piyush Vedprakash Goyal has served as the Finance Ministry for brief period in the absence of Arun Jaitley.

India's first forest-certification scheme gets global recognition

- **India** now has a **globally recognised forest-certification scheme developed specifically for Indian forests**. Recently, a **Geneva-based non-profit** decided to endorse the Certification Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) developed by **Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF)**, an Indian non-profit.
- **The council of Programme for Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC)**, the international non-profit that provides independent third-party certification for sustainable forest management, took this decision through a postal ballot.
- The NCCF was set up in 2015 by representatives of forest-based industries, non-profits, forest auditors and government forest departments with an aim to set standards for certifying India's forests, their products and their sustainable management.

Forest certification, a **global movement initiated in 1990s after Rio Earth Summit**, is a market-based non-regulatory conservation tool designed to promote sustainable management of forests and trees outside forests by an independent third party.

Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport 12th busiest in the world

- The nation capital'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 Fort 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's move towards a more liberalised aviation market and the nation's strengthening economic fundamentals have helped it become one of the fastest-growing markets with its traffic growing rapidly in a relatively short time," read a statement by ACI.

The ACI-- Founded in 1991-- is the trade association of the world's airports, currently serving 641 members operating from 1,953 airports across 176 countries. As per the rankings released by the ACI, **Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport** has been the world's busiest airport every year since 2000. Only Seoul's Incheon International with 10 per cent point growth was close to Delhi in terms of passenger growth. The Incheon International airport has secured the 16th place in 2018.

Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru on their death anniversary, observed as Martyrs' Day or Shaheed Diwas

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to **Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru on their death anniversary, observed as Martyrs' Day or Shaheed Diwas**. The story of their sacrifice for the nation will continue to inspire generations.
- On March 23, 1931, **Bhagat Singh along with his associates Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru were hanged to death for the killing 21-year-old British police officer John Saunders**. They mistook Saunders for Superintendent James Scott, who was responsible for leading a lathi charge against Lala Lajpat Rai, who along with his followers was protesting against the Simon Commission.
- **Lala Rajpat Rai died a few days later. A police constable was also shot in the Saunder's Murder Case by Chandra Shekhar Azad** who was trying to catch the trio.

In India, there are five days declared as Martyrs' Day (at national level also known as **Sarvodaya day**). They are named in honour of those who are recognised as martyrs for the nation. **30 January is the date observed** in the national level. The **date was chosen as it marks the assassination of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi Ji in 1948**, by Nathuram Godse. **The anniversary of the deaths of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru on 23 March 1931, in Lahore (Pakistan), is declared to be Martyr's Day.** The **birthday of Rani Lakshmibai, 19 November 1828**, queen of the Maratha-ruled princely state of Jhansi, is **observed as Martyrs' Day in the region**, and honours those who gave their lives in the **rebellion of 1857**, of which she was a leading figure.

All eight members of Lokpal take oath of office

- **The first Chairperson of the anti-corruption ombudsman (Lokpal) Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose administered the oath of office to all the eight members of Lokpal.** Besides Chairperson, the **President Ram Nath Kovind** had appointed four judicial members and four Non-Judicial members as Lokpal.
- **Former Chief Justices - Dilip B. Bhosale, Pradip Kumar Mohanty, and Abhilasha Kumari** and sitting Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court **Ajay Kumar Tripathi** are the **judicial members who took the oath.**
- **The non-judicial members are former first woman Chief of Sashastra Seema Bal Archana Ramasundaram, ex-Maharashtra Chief Secretary Dinesh Kumar Jain, former IRS officer Mahender Singh and ex-IAS officer Indrajeet Prasad Gautam.**

Five varieties of Indian coffee awarded GI certification

- **Five varieties of Indian coffee** have been awarded the **Geographical Indication (GI) tag**, a move that will enhance their visibility globally and allow growers to get the right value. According to the GI application, **Coorg Arabica Coffee is grown specifically in Kodagu district in Karnataka.**
- **As per the GI application for 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, as per the application petitions.
- **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.

Kolkata's Durga Puja nominated for UNESCO list

- **Kolkata's Durga Puja is India's official nomination for UNESCO's 2020 list of cultural institutions** from around the world that require protection and preservation, according to Sangeet Natak Akademi, an autonomous body under the Union ministry of culture that is the nodal agency for this purpose.
- **India currently has 13 cultural traditions under the UNESCO list.** While yoga was added to the list in 2016, **Kumbh Mela became part of world heritage in 2017.** **"Sowa-Rigpa"** commonly known as Tibetan system of medicine, was **nominated for this year's list.**
- **From India the Intangible Cultural Heritages added into this list include:** Tradition of Vedic chanting, Ramlila, Kutiyattam, Ramman, Mudi yettu, Kalbelia, Chhau dance, Buddhist chanting of Ladakh, Sankirtana, Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab, Yoga, Nawrouz and Kumbh Mela.

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) based in Paris. **Audrey Azoulay** appointed as the **Director-general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)**, becoming the **second female leader of the organization.**

Indian Navy's first nuclear, biological and chemical training facility inaugurated

- **Á** The nuclear, biological and chemical training facility 'Abhedya' at INS Shivaji has special significance for the Indian Navy because now we will be able to provide holistic training in all three disciplines to our personnel on board a ship," said Admiral Sunil Lanba, chief of Naval staff.
- **Á** Abhedya, a one of its kind training facility in Asia, means 'impenetrable' and symbolises the protective cover that is provided on naval ships fitted with nuclear, biological and chemical detection and protection systems.
- **Á** The facility, initiated in 2016 and executed by the Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) will provide realistic training to naval personnel in detection, protection against and decontamination of nuclear, biological and chemical agents.

IAF inducts first four heavy-lift Chinook helicopters

- **Á** 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.
- **Á** A multi-mission heavy-left transport helicopter, Chinook will be used to move troops, artillery, ammunition, supplies and equipment on the battlefield. Once inducted, the choppers will also help to help to lift M-777 ultra-light howitzers of the Indian armed forces.

Chinook is an American twin-engined, tandem rotor, heavy-lift helicopter developed by American rotorcraft company Vertol and manufactured by Boeing Vertol (later known as Boeing Rotorcraft Systems). Its name, Chinook, is from the Native American Chinook people of modern-day Washington State.

At 15,256 ft, Tashigang in Himachal Pradesh is world's highest polling station

- **Á** Tucked away deep in trans-Himalayas, Tashigang, a small Himachal Pradesh village at an altitude of 15,256 feet, is now the highest polling station in the world.
- **Á** The polling station falls in Buddhist-dominated Lahaul-Spiti, one of the 17 assembly segments that form the Mandi Lok Sabha seat, the second largest constituency in India. The sleepy hamlet of Tashigang also holds the title of highest village in Spiti valley.

Earlier, the non-descript tiny settlement of Hikkim, positioned at an altitude of about 14,400 ft, was the highest polling station in the country. Situated at about 29 km from the India-China border, the polling station covers two villages— Tashigang and Gete. As per the revised electoral rolls, the two villages have 48 voters, of which 30 are men and 18 women.

India and US renew Triangular Development Cooperation in Asia and Africa

- **Á** India and the United States signed the First Amendment to the Statement of Guiding Principles (SGP) on Triangular Cooperation for Global Development. The Amendment was signed by Dr. Devyani Khobragade, Joint Secretary, Development Partnership Administration -II Division, Ministry of External Affairs of India and Mr. Mark Anthony White, Mission Director for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in India.
- **Á** India and the US renewed a pact that provides a framework for promoting bilateral cooperation to meet the developmental aspirations of partner countries, particularly in Asia and Africa.
- **Á** The SGP agreement, signed in November 2014, underscores the contribution of the India-US partnership to global stability and prosperity.

The First Amendment to the SGP Agreement, signed, extends the validity of the SGP Agreement up-to 2021. It expands the scope of capacity building activities undertaken jointly by India and the United States under this framework and also provides a consultative mechanism for joint biannual monitoring and review of activities undertaken under the SGP.

NITI Aayog organises FinTech Conclave 2019

- **To shape India's continued ascendancy in FinTech**, build the narrative for future strategy and policy efforts, and to deliberate steps for comprehensive financial inclusion, **NITI Aayog organized a day-long FinTech Conclave in New Delhi.**
- The Conclave featured **representatives from across the financial space – central ministries, regulators, bankers, startups, investors, service providers and entrepreneurs.**
- **Mr Shaktikanta Das, Governor of RBI inaugurated the Conclave in the presence of Mr Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog and Mr Subhash Chandra Garg, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance.**
- **India is one of the fastest growing FinTech markets globally and industry research has projected that USD 1 Trillion or 60% of retail and SME credit, will be digitally disbursed by 2029. The Indian FinTech ecosystem is the third largest in the globe.**

The National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog, was formed via a resolution of the Union Cabinet on January 1, 2015. NITI Aayog is the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs. The current chairman of NITI Aayog is Shri Narendra Modi, current vice chairman is Dr. Rajiv Kumar and the current chief executive officer is Shri Amitabh Kant.

Indian-Sri Lankan armies to conduct military exercise Mitra Shakti

- **Exercise 'Mitra Shakti' which is conducted annually as part of military diplomacy and interaction between armies of India and Sri Lanka is being conducted from March 26 to April 8 for the year 2018-19, at Diyatalawa 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 Mitra Shakti series of military exercise between India and Sri Lanka has started in 2012, mainly as a response to China's efforts to increase its influence in South Asia and Indian Ocean region. The armies of India and Sri Lanka also serve together in the United Nations Peacekeeping missions.

International



India invited for the first time conclave of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation

- **External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj attended the inaugural plenary of the foreign ministers' conclave of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as the guest of honour.**
- **It is for the first time that India has been invited to a meeting of the OIC, which is an influential grouping of 57 Islamic countries.**

The **Organisation of Islamic Cooperation** is an international organization founded in 1969, consisting of 57 member states, with 40 countries being Muslim-majority countries. The organisation states that it is "the collective voice of the Muslim world" and works to "safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony". The official languages of the OIC are Arabic, English, and French. Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimeen is the current secretary-general of the OIC.

US 'terminated' India's designation as GSP beneficiary

- **The United States has announced its intention to "terminate" India's designation as a beneficiary of its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) because it failed to provide assurances that it will give the US "equitable and reasonable" access to its markets in numerous sectors.**
- **Under the United States GSP program, certain products can enter the United States duty-free if beneficiary developing countries meet the eligibility criteria established by its Congress.**

The **Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)** is a U.S. trade program designed to promote economic growth in the developing world by providing preferential duty-free entry for up to 4,800 products from 129 designated beneficiary countries and territories. GSP was instituted on January 1, 1976, by the Trade Act of 1974.

The US' move is expected to have minimal impact on India, as exporters here were deriving duty-free benefits of only \$190 million of the total \$5.6 billion-worth of GSP items traded, said Indian commerce secretary Anup Wadhwan. Around 1,900 products from India would be impacted due to withdrawal of GSP.

Trump extends US sanctions against Zimbabwe by a year

- **U.S. President Donald Trump extended by one year sanctions against Zimbabwe saying that the new government's policies continue to pose an "unusual and extraordinary" threat to U.S. foreign policy.**
- **According to U.S. officials, there are 141 entities and individuals in Zimbabwe, including Mnangagwa and long-time former president Robert Mugabe, currently under U.S. sanctions.**

United States of America (USA) is a federal republic composed of 50 states and capital is Washington, D.C., Donald John Trump is the 45th and current President of the United States. He became the oldest and wealthiest person ever to assume the presidency, the first without prior military or government service, and the fifth to have won the election while losing the popular vote.

Bilateral joint exercise between India, Oman Exercise Al Nagah III

- The **third edition of the bilateral joint exercise between India and Oman, Al Nagah 2019** is being started from 12th of this month at **Jabel regiment headquarters, Nizwa, in Oman**.
- A **60-member strong Indian Army contingent**, based in **northern command headquarters at Udhampur in Jammu and Kashmir**, is taking part in the military exercise 'Al-Nagah III'. The exercise is scheduled to end on March 25 at **Jabel Al Akhdar Mountains**.

The **second joint military exercise between the armies of India and Oman**, which have a history of extensive cooperation in the defence arena was held in **Himachal Pradesh in 2017**, the first one was held in **Oman in January 2015**.

Digital Savvy Estonia is set to get its first Female Prime Minister

- In **Estonia**, the center-right **Reform party won 29.4% of the vote**, setting up its leader **Kaja Kallas to become the first female prime minister of the Baltic country**, so long as she can form a coalition government.
- **Kallas**, a 41-year-old lawyer and a former member of the **EU Parliament** who specialized on digital issues and the Reform party now must negotiate with other parties to create a government coalition. **Her father, Siim Kallas**, was the **14th Estonian prime minister** and was an **EU commissioner**. **Estonia's first female president, Kersti Kaljulaid**, has been in office since 2016, though the role is largely ceremonial.

Estonia is a country in Northern Europe. Tallinn is the capital and largest city of Estonia. Juri Ratas is the current Prime Minister of Estonia. The euro is the official currency of Estonia.

Saudi Arabia air force to take part in Red Flag 2019, an international military drill

- The **Saudi Arabia air force along with air forces from United States, the United Arab Emirates, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Singapore** are being taking part in **Red Flag 2019, an international military drill**.
- The **Red Flag exercise, launched in 1975**, is a two-week advanced aerial combat training exercise held several times a year by the **US Air Force**.

Malaysia joins International Criminal Court

- On 4 March 2019, **Malaysia acceded to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, becoming the 124th State Party. The agreement was deposited with the United Nations Treaty Office on 4 March and Malaysia's accession will enter into force on 1 June 2019.**
- **Adopted in July 1998**, the **Rome Statute led to the establishment of the International Criminal Court – the only permanent international judicial mechanism with the objective of investigating and prosecuting genocide, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and the crime of aggression – in 2002.**

International Criminal Court (ICC or ICCt) is an intergovernmental organization and international tribunal that sits in **The Hague in the Netherlands. Burundi became the first country to quit the court in 2017** and the **Philippine** has announced its intention to withdraw. **Chile Eboe-Osuj is the current President of ICC.**

Finland government resigns over failed reforms

- **Finnish Prime Minister Juha Sipila's centre-right government resigned after failing to push through a flagship social and health care reform package**, just five weeks ahead of a legislative election.
- The country's president **Sauli Niinisto accepted the resignation** but asked the government to continue in a caretaker capacity until a new cabinet is formed.

Finland is a country in Northern Europe. The capital and largest city is Helsinki. The euro is the official currency of Finland. Eduskunta is the name of the Parliament of Finland.

Mohammad Shtayyeh named as Palestinian Prime Minister

- **Á** Mohammad Shtayyeh has been named as Palestinian Prime Minister by President of Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas.
- **Á** Shtayyeh, a former government minister, has been part of a number of Palestinian negotiating teams in the United States-brokered talks with Israel and is a former Minister.

Palestine is a **de jure** sovereign state in Western Asia claiming the West Bank with Jerusalem as the designated capital, although its administrative center is currently located in Ramallah. Today, the currencies in use in the Palestinian territories are the Israeli new shekel and the Jordanian dinar.

Marshall Islands gears for digital currency release in 2019

- **Á** The Marshall Islands' is gearing to release its new digital currency called the "SOV" in 2019. 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.
- **Á** We plan to launch SOV this year," said Barak Ben Ezra, chief executive officer of Neema, the Israel-based company that is partnering with the Marshall Islands government to develop the digital currency.

The Marshall Islands is an island country and a United States associated state near the equator in the Pacific Ocean, slightly west of the International Date Line. Majuro is the capital and largest city of the Marshall Islands. Hilda Cathy Heine is currently serving as the eighth President of the Marshall Islands. The United States dollar is the currency of Marshall Islands.

US Senate confirms Indian-American Neomi Rao for powerful federal judgeship

- **Á** US Senate confirmed Indian-American Neomi Rao, who was under scrutiny for her past writings on sexual assault, as a judge on the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, one of the most powerful benches in the country.
- **Á** Rao, will replace controversial Brett Kavanaugh who endured a bitter confirmation battle last year after US President Donald Trump named him to the US Supreme Court.

Pakistan made OIC body's deputy chair

- **Á** Pakistan has clinched the slot of the deputy chairman of the general body of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC).
- **Á** The PUIC is composed of parliaments of member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. It was established in Iran on June 17, 1999, with its head office situated in Tehran.

Arif-ur-Rehman Alvi is the 13th and current President of Pakistan. Pakistan is a country in South Asia. It is the fifth-most populous country. Islamabad is the capital city of Pakistan. Pakistani rupee is the currency of Pakistan. Imran Khan is the current Prime Minister of Pakistan.

European Union adds 10 countries, including UAE, to tax blacklist

- **Á** The European Union expanded its tax haven blacklist by 10 countries, adding the United Arab Emirates and Bermuda despite the objections of powerful member states such as Italy.
- **Á** The list, now 15 countries long, was first drawn up in 2017 in the wake of several scandals, including the Panama Papers and LuxLeaks that pushed the EU into doing more to fight tax evasion by multinationals and the rich.
- **Á** Seven countries are to be moved back from a grey list because reform commitments had not been met. These are Aruba, Belize, Bermuda, Fiji, Oman, Vanuatu and Dominica, an EU statement said.

European Union (EU) is a political and economic union of 28 member states that are located primarily in Europe. The Maastricht Treaty established the European Union in 1993 and introduced European citizenship. A monetary union was established in 1999 and came into full force in 2002 and is composed of 19 EU member states which use the euro currency. Brussels is the de facto capital of the European Union. Jean-Claude Juncker is serving as President of the European Commission since 2014. Donald Franciszek Tusk has been the President of the European Council since 2014.

India, China, Pakistan, other SCO members to hold joint anti-terrorism exercise in 2019

- **India, Pakistan and the other member's states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will take part in a joint anti-terrorism exercise to be held this year by the grouping.**
- **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.**

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic, and security organisation, the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter was signed in June 2002 and entered into force on 19 September 2003. India and Pakistan have become latest full members in SCO in 2017.

Vienna named best city to live

- **The Austrian capital Vienna has topped Mercer's index of most liveable cities for the 10th year in a row. Now in its 20th year, the annual Mercer Quality of Living survey has crowned it the best place in the world for the ninth year in a row.**
- **In second place was Zurich, followed in joint third place by Munich, Vancouver and Auckland. Baghdad was ranked last, followed by Bangui and Sanaa.**
- **Other cities around the world which enjoyed a notable climb in quality of living included Havana (6.5), Dubai (12.2), Maputo (15), Shanghai (15.7) and New Delhi (13.8).**

First BRICS Sherpa meeting under Presidency of Brazil concludes successfully

- **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 at the two-day meeting.**
- **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 is the acronym for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Originally the first four were grouped as "BRIC" (or "the BRICs"), before the induction of South Africa in 2010.

Finland is the happiest nation; India slips 7 spots, ranks 140th

- **Indians are not as happy in 2019 as they were in 2018 and the country figures at 140th place, seven spots down from last year, on UN World Happiness Report- 2019, released. The list is topped by Finland for the second year in a row.**
- **The report ranks countries on six key variables that support well-being: income, freedom, trust, healthy life expectancy, social support and generosity.**
- **Finland has been ranked as the happiest country in the world for the second year in succession. The Nordic nation is followed by Denmark, Norway, Iceland and The Netherlands. Pakistan is ranked 67th, Bangladesh 125th and China is place at 93rd.**

- **People in war-torn South Sudan** are the **most unhappy** with their lives, followed by **Central African Republic (155), Afghanistan (154), Tanzania (153) and Rwanda (152)**.

The **World Happiness Report** is an **annual publication** of the **United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network** on **March 20**, which was **designated as the World Happiness Day** by the **UN General Assembly** in 2012. It contains articles, and rankings of national happiness based on respondent ratings of their own lives.

India-Africa joint field training exercise to kick off on March 18

- A 10-day long **Africa-India Joint Field Training Exercise (AFINDEX-19)** between the **Indian Army and 16 African nations** was **conducted in Pune** from March 18 to 27.
- As many as 10 personnel, each from the participating nations from the African continent and personnel of Maratha Light Infantry of Indian Army **participated in the joint exercise** which was **conducted at two locations in Pune's Foreign Training Node at Aundh Military Station and College of Military Engineering in Kirkee**.

India, Maldives agree to cooperate on defence, development, health

- **India and the Maldives** discussed measures to strengthen ties and **agreed to collaborate in the fields of defence, development cooperation, capacity building and health**.
- **Sushma Swaraj unveiled a plaque** dedicating the **renovated IGM Hospital** to the people of Maldives in the city of Male. **IGMH is the first and largest government health-care facility in the Maldives**, built with Indian assistance.

Kazakhstan President resigns after nearly 30 years in power

- **Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev** has announced his **resignation after nearly 30 years in power**. The 78-year old leader had **ruled the country since it emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union** in the early 1990s. **Kassym-Jomart Tokayev** took office as the **President of Kazakhstan** on 20 March 2019.

Nursultan Nazarbayev is a **Kazakh statesman** served as **President of Kazakhstan** since the office was created on **April 24, 1990 to 19th March 2019**. **Kazakhstan is the world's largest landlocked country** and the **ninth largest in the world**. **Astana is the capital city of Kazakhstan**. The **tenge** is the **currency of Kazakhstan**.

Indonesia joins ranks with India for an inclusive Indo-Pacific region

- **Indonesia joined ranks with India** and called for an **inclusive and transparent Indo-Pacific region** amid China's slew of activities that have challenged order in the vast region.
- **Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister Retno Marsudi** stated at the opening of the **maiden High-Level Dialogue on Indo-Pacific Cooperation** that future concrete cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region aligns with Indonesia's vision to become a global maritime fulcrum.
- The **Dialogue themed "Towards a Peaceful, Prosperous, and Inclusive Region,"** was opened by Indonesia's Vice President **Jusuf Kalla**.

The **Indo-Pacific**, sometimes known as the **Indo-West Pacific** or **Indo-Pacific Asia**, is a biogeographic region of Earth's seas, **comprising the tropical waters of the Indian Ocean, the western and central Pacific Ocean, and the seas connecting the two in the general area of Indonesia**.

Prime Minister of Guinea Dr. Ibrahima Kassory Fofana calls on the President of India

- **Dr Ibrahima Kassory Fofana, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea** called on the **President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, at Rashtrapati Bhavan**.
- The President was happy to note that **India is among the top trading partners of Guinea**. He said that **India-Guinea bilateral trade in 2017-18 reached almost US\$ 900 million**, representing an increase of nearly 40 per cent from the previous year.

Trump announces plan to ground all Boeing 737 MAX planes

- After almost all countries across the world banned it, the **US also banned the Boeing 737 MAX** - the aircraft was involved in two deadly crash in the past five months.
- **US ban followed Canada's ban of the aircraft** as a precaution post the Ethiopian crash. **India banned the aircraft after the UK, Germany and France banned it post the EASA advisory.**
- **SpiceJet and Jet Airways are the two airlines in the country, which has Boeing 737 MAX in its fleet.** While Jet Airways' five such aircraft in its fleet is grounded due to non-payment of lease rentals to leasing companies along with 45 others SpiceJet's 12 aircraft have been grounded after the ban leading to 14 flight cancellations.

The **Boeing 737 MAX** is a **narrow-body aircraft series designed and produced by Boeing Commercial Airplanes** as the fourth generation of the Boeing 737, **succeeding the Boeing 737 Next Generation (NG).**

IND-INDO CORPAT: 33rd Edition of India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol begins

- **Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Sultan Thaha Syaifuddin and Maritime Patrol Aircraft CN-235 led by Cmde Dafit Santoso** arrived at Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India for the **Opening Ceremony of the 33rd edition of the India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT)** to be held from 19 Mar to 04 Apr 2019.
- His Excellency **Ambassador of Indonesia to India, Mr Shidharto Raza Suryodipuro** is also visiting Port Blair to attend the Opening Ceremony to be held at Port Blair from 20 - 21 Mar 19. The **Indian delegation is led by the senior officer from the Indian Navy, Commodore Ashutosh Ridhorkar, VSM Naval Component Commander, Andaman and Nicobar Command.**

The **IND-INDO CORPAT Series of bilaterals seek to underscore India's peaceful presence** and solidarity with friendly Maritime neighbours countries to ensure good order in the maritime domain, consolidate interoperability and strengthen existing bonds of friendship between India and Indonesia. **The 33rd IND-INDO CORPAT, also coinciding with 70 years of India-Indonesia diplomatic ties,** will contribute towards the Indian Navy's efforts to consolidate inter-operability and forge strong bonds of friendship across the seas.

British PM welcomes EU decision to postpone Brexit beyond 29 March

- **British Prime Minister Theresa May has welcomed the EU decision to postpone Brexit beyond 29th March.** The UK was offered a delay until 22nd May, if MPs approve the withdrawal deal negotiated with the EU next week.

In July 2016, following a Brexit referendum in which a majority of those voting supported leaving the European Union, Davis was appointed by new Prime Minister Theresa May as Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, with responsibility for negotiating the UK's prospective exit from the EU. **Brexit is the impending withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU).** In a referendum on 23 June 2016, **51.9% of the participating UK electorate voted to leave the EU.**

Cyclone Idai affects over 1.5 million people in three southern African countries

- **Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi have been hit by a vicious cyclone that has killed nearly 150 people,** left hundreds more missing and stranded tens of thousands.
- According to the UN and government officials, **Cyclone Idai has affected more than 1.5 million people in the three southern African countries.**

Kazakhstan renames capital 'Nursultan' after ex-president

- **Kazakhstan's parliament on March 20 voted to rename the country's capital in honor of long-time ruler Nursultan Nazarbayev, a day after he resigned as president. "Astana is now officially renamed Nursultan," the state-owned Kazinform news agency said after a parliamentary vote.**
- **Kazakhstan's new interim president Kassym-Jomart Tokayev proposed renaming the capital after he was sworn in following Nazarbayev's shock resignation on March 19.**

India, Sri Lanka joint exercise 'Mitra Shakti-VI' to commence from Mar 26

- **Exercise 'Mitra Shakti' which is conducted annually as part of military diplomacy and interaction between armies of India and Sri Lanka is being conducted from March 26 to April 8 for the year 2018-19, 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 Press Information Bureau (Defence Wing) said.**
- **"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," PIB said in a statement.**

India extended Nepalese Rs 35.5 million as financial assistance for the construction of an educational campus in Nepal

- **India has extended a total of Nepalese Rs 35.5 million as financial assistance for the construction of the three-storey building for the Siddheswar Education Public Campus in Ramechhap district which has now been completed. Established in 1963 the educational institution presently provides education to 1,000 students.**
- **The new infrastructure constructed with India's grant assistance is a triple-storey campus building comprising 12 class rooms that also includes a meeting hall, a laboratory room and a library.**

Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli is currently serving as the Prime Minister of Nepal. He was the first elected prime minister under the newly adopted Constitution of Nepal. Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia located in the Himalaya. Nepalese rupee is the official currency of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. Bidya Devi Bhandari became Nepal's first woman President in 2015. Ms. Bhandari is the current President of Nepal.

Italy becomes first Western European nation to sign up for China's belt and road plan

- **Italy has signed up for China's multibillion-dollar "Belt and Road Initiative", becoming the first Western European nation to jump on board despite scepticism from its EU counterparts and Washington.**
- **Italy also became the first Group of 7 country to join China's expansive Belt and Road Initiative, drawing concern from the U.S. and European allies.**
- **Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte and Chinese President Xi Jinping witnessed the signing of a memorandum of understanding on Beijing's trade and infrastructure scheme in Rome.**

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also known as the One Belt One Road (OBOR) or the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road 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. The paramount leader of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, originally announced the strategy during official visits to Indonesia and Kazakhstan in 2013.

The Group of Seven or G7 is a group consisting of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. These countries, with the 7 largest advanced economies in the world, represent more than 62% of the global net wealth (\$280 trillion).

India kicks off military drill 'AFINDEX-19' with 17 African countries

- **Á** The Africa-India field training exercise-2019 (AFINDEX-19) is the very first edition of the joint training conducted between India and Africa. It is held from March 18 to March 27 at Aundh Military Station at Pune.
- **Á** India kicked off an exercise with 17 nations from the continent at the Aundh military station at Pune. It is aimed at training the participating nations in "humanitarian mine action" (de-mining and other protocols to handle landmines and explosives) and UN peace-keeping operations in which India has decades of experience.

The 17 African nations participated in the exercise are Benin, Botswana, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Oslo becomes the first city in the World to get wireless charging systems for EVs

- **Á** Norway's capital Oslo becomes the first city in the world to install wireless charging systems for electric taxis, hoping to make recharging quick and efficient enough to speed the take-up of non-polluting cabs.
- **Á** The project will use induction technology, with charging plates installed in the road at taxi ranks linking to receivers installed in the vehicle.

From 2023 onward all taxis in Oslo will have to be zero emission and Norway wants all new cars to be zero emission by 2025. Among other nations, Britain and France have similar goals for 2040.

Pakistan Approves Plan to Open Sharda Temple Corridor in PoK for Hindu Pilgrims

- **Á** The Pakistan government approved a proposal to establish a corridor that will allow Hindu pilgrims from India to visit Sharda Peeth, an ancient Hindu temple and cultural site in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
- **Á** The Sharda Peeth corridor, when opened, will be the second religious tract after Kartarpur corridor in Pakistan-controlled territory that will connect the two neighbouring nations.

Arif-ur-Rehman Alvi is the 13th and current President of Pakistan. Pakistan is a country in South Asia. It is the fifth-most populous country. Islamabad is the capital city of Pakistan. Pakistani rupee is the currency of Pakistan. Imran Khan is the current Prime Minister of Pakistan.

World's largest e-waste recycling hub opens in Dubai

- **Á** The world's largest e-waste recycling facility has opened in Dubai. It is located 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.
- **Á** The facility will utilise state-of-the-art reclamation technology, which surpasses the European Union's standards for e-waste. It has a processing capacity of 100,000 tonnes of total integrated waste per year, of which 39,000 tonnes is e-waste.

Abu Dhabi is the capital and the second most populous city of the United Arab Emirates (the most populous being Dubai), and also capital of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, the largest of the UAE's seven emirates. United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a federal sovereign absolute monarchy in Western Asia. Khalifa Al Nahyan is the current President of the United Arab Emirates. Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum is the Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, and Ruler of the Emirate of Dubai. United Arab Emirates dirham is the currency of the United Arab Emirates.

Trump sign proclamation recognising Israel's sovereignty over Golan Heights

- **Á** US President Donald Trump has signed a proclamation recognising Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

- **Israel captured the Golan Heights from Syria in the 1967 war** but its sovereignty over the territory is not recognized by the international community.

Golan Heights or Golan is a large area in the Eastern Mediterranean, primarily in Western Asia. The region defined as the Golan Heights differs between disciplines: as a geological and biogeographical region. The Golan Heights is the area captured from Syria and occupied by Israel during the Six-Day War. Since the 1967 Six-Day War, the western two-thirds of the Golan Heights has been occupied and administered by Israel whereas the eastern third had remained under control of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Comoros President Azali Assoumani re-elected with over 60% of votes

- **Comoros President Azali Assoumani** was re-elected according to results published by the electoral commission of the Indian Ocean archipelago.
- Electoral commission Chief Djaza Ahmed Mohamed said, **Azali, who first took office in 2016**, was way ahead of his closest rival **Mahamoudou Ahamada**, who garnered only **14.62 percent** of the ballots cast.
- **The Comoros is a volcanic archipelago off Africa's east coast**, in the warm Indian Ocean waters of the Mozambique Channel.

Comoros is an island country in the Indian Ocean located at the northern end of the Mozambique Channel off the eastern coast of Africa between northeastern Mozambique, the French region of Mayotte, and northwestern Madagascar. The capital and largest city in Comoros is **Moroni**. The franc is the official currency of Comoros.

India's second woman envoy presents papers to Queen Elizabeth

- **Ruchi Ghanshyam**, who took as only the second woman high commissioner of India since independence in 1947 in November, presented credentials to **Queen Elizabeth** at the Buckingham Palace in a ceremony marked by royal regalia.
- **Ghanshyam, an IFS officer of the 1982 batch**, is India's 27th high commissioner and the second woman after **Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit** to hold the post.

Elizabeth II is Queen of the United Kingdom and the other Commonwealth realms. She is the longest-lived and longest-reigning British monarch as well as the world's longest-reigning queen regnant and female head of state, the oldest and longest-reigning current monarch and the oldest and longest-serving current head of state. **Theresa Mary May** is serving as the current Prime Minister of the United Kingdom.

Israel unveils world's longest salt cave

- **Israeli cave explorers** said that a salt cave with striking stalactites near the Dead Sea is the world's longest, beating the previous record-holder in Iran.
- The cave named **Malham**, stretching over **10 km**, runs through **Mount Sodom**, Israel's largest mountain, and spills out to the southwest corner of the adjacent Dead Sea.

Israel is a country in the Middle East, **Jerusalem** is one of the oldest cities in the world, and is considered holy to the three major Abrahamic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Both Israel and the Palestinian Authority claim Jerusalem as their capital, however, neither claim is widely recognized internationally. **Knesset** is the unicameral national legislature of Israel. **Israeli new shekel** is the currency of Israel. **Benjamin Netanyahu** is serving as the 9th and current Prime Minister of Israel since 2009. **Reuven Rivlin** is serving as the 10th and current President of Israel since 2014.

British Parliament rejects Brexit deal for 3rd time

- **British lawmakers** have rejected the Brexit deal proposed by embattled Prime Minister **Theresa May** in Parliament for the third time, throwing the UK's divorce plans with the EU into further chaos.

- **MPs voted in the House of Commons against the terms of Britain's so-called divorce from the European Union (EU) by 344 to 286.**

In July 2016, following a Brexit referendum in which a majority of those voting supported leaving the European Union, Davis was appointed by new Prime Minister Theresa May as Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, with responsibility for negotiating the UK's prospective exit from the EU. Brexit is the impending withdrawal of the United Kingdom (UK) from the European Union (EU). In a referendum on 23 June 2016, 51.9% of the participating UK electorate voted to leave the EU.

Algeria's Bouteflika announces new government

- **Protest-hit Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika named a new government headed by recently appointed Nouredine Bedoui.**
- **Armed forces chief Ahmed Gaid Salah, who has called for Bouteflika to step down, remained as deputy defence minister.**

Algeria is Africa's largest country by area, and Nigeria is its largest by population. The capital and most populous city is Algiers. The dinar is the monetary currency of Algeria.

India is world's 2nd largest arms importer

- **India was the world's second largest arms importer from 2014-18, ceding the long-held tag as largest importer to Saudi Arabia, which accounted for 12% of the total imports during the period.**
- **"India was the world's second largest importer of major arms in 2014-18 and accounted for 9.5% of the global total," according to the latest report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).**
- **Russia accounted for 58% of Indian arms imports in 2014-18, compared with 76% in 2009-13. Israel, the U.S. and France all increased their arms exports to India in 2014-18. As Indian imports reduced, Russian exports of major arms were dented, decreasing by 17% between 2009-13 and 2014-18.**
- **Pakistan stood at the 11th position, accounting for 2.7% of all global imports. Its biggest source was China, from which 70% of arms were sourced, followed by the U.S. at 8.9% and, interestingly, Russia at 6%.**

The five largest exporters in 2014-18 were the United States, Russia, France, Germany and China, which together accounted for 75% of the total volume of arms exports in 2014-18. China, which has emerged as a major arms exporter, has increased its share by 2.7% for 2014-18 compared to 2009-13. Its biggest customers are Pakistan and Bangladesh.

ECONOMY AND FINANCE



Economy News

India's first indigenously developed payment platform NCMC Card launched

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched One Nation, One Card for transport mobility** at a function in Ahmedabad. **India's First Indigenously Developed Payment Eco-system for transport consisting of National Common Mobility Card Card, SWEEKAR (Swachalit Kiraya: Automatic Fare Collection System) and SWAGAT (Swachalit Gate) is based on NCMC Standards.**
- **The Indigenous Automatic Fare Collection System based on One Nation One Card Model i.e. National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) is the first of its kind in India.**
- **These are bank issued cards on Debit/Credit/Prepaid card product platform. The customer may use this single card for payments across all segments including metro, bus, suburban railways, toll, parking, smart city and retail.**

India nominates Ramesh Chand to head Food and Agriculture Organisation

- **United Nations, India has nominated NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand for the post of the new Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) Director-General** and he will be facing candidates from China and three other countries. **An economist, Chand is a member of the NITI Aayog with the status of a Minister of State.**
- **The FAO announced the slate of candidates nominated by their governments for the election that is scheduled in June to pick the successor to Brazilian economist Jose Graziano da Silva, who has served two terms.**

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger. Serving both developed and developing countries, FAO acts as a neutral forum where all nations meet as equals to negotiate arguments and debate policy. In 1951, FAO's headquarters were moved from Washington, DC, United States, to Rome, Italy. Jose Graziano da Silva is the current Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

Singapore was the largest source of FDI during April-December 2018-19

- **Singapore was the largest source of FDI during April-December 2018-19 with USD 12.97 billion inflow, followed by Mauritius (USD 6 billion), the Netherlands (USD 2.95 billion), Japan (USD 2.21 billion), the US (USD 2.34 billion), and the UK (USD 1.05 billion). A decline in foreign inflows could put pressure on the country's balance of payments and may also impact the value of the rupee.**
- **Delhi, parts of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana account for about one-fourth of foreign direct investment (FDI) received by the country during April-December 2018-19, according to the government data.**

- **On the other hand Maharashtra, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu accounted for about 24 per cent of the total FDI during the period. The key sectors that received the maximum foreign investment during the nine months of the fiscal include services, computer software and hardware, telecommunications, trading, chemicals, and automobiles.**

A foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment in the form of a controlling ownership in a business in one country by an entity based in another country. Foreign investment was introduced in 1991 under Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), driven by then finance minister Manmohan Singh. In 2018, 100% FDI under automatic route for Single Brand Retail Trading, 100% FDI under automatic route in Construction Development and Foreign airlines allowed to invest up to 49% under approval route in Air India.

India tops Global Consumer Confidence Survey

- **India had a Consumer Confidence Index (CCI) score of 133 in the fourth quarter of 2018 edging past the Philippines (131) and Indonesia (127). India maintain its number one position from the third quarter when it scored 130 on the index whereas Philippines and Indonesia were joint fourth in Q3 of 2018 with an identical score of 126.**
- **The survey which was conducted over the internet, polls more than 32,000 consumers in 64 countries across Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa and North America.**

India signs 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.**
- **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 US dollars will further help in the reconstruction of bridges, road and river bank protection works in the state.**

Mukesh Ambani is 13th in Forbes ultra-rich list

- **Jeff Bezos remains the world's richest person, ahead of Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, according to the latest Forbes list of the ultra-wealthy.**
- **But while things are largely stable up top in that ranking, Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg dropped three spots and former New York mayor Michael Bloomberg rose by two.**
- **According to the list announced the riches of Mr. Bezos, have swelled by \$19 billion in one year and he is now worth \$131 billion.**
- **Mukesh Ambani saw wealth soar from \$40.1 billion in 2018 when he was placed 19th richest in the world, to \$50 billion to be rank at 13th in 2019.**

Mukesh Ambani leads the 106 billionaires from India on the Forbes list. Wipro Chairman Azim Premji is ranked 36th with a net worth of \$22.6 billion dollars. Technology major HCL's co-founder Shiv Nadar, ranked 82nd and ArcelorMittal Chairman and CEO Lakshmi Mittal at the 91st rank come in within the top-100 billionaires in the world.

Income tax exemption limit on gratuity doubled to Rs 20 lakh

- **The income tax exemption limit on gratuity has been doubled to Rs. 20 lakh from the existing Rs. 10 lakh, a move that will benefit employees who are not covered by the Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972.**
- **Ministry of Finance has enhanced the income tax exemption for gratuity under Section 10 (10) (iii) of the Income Tax Act, 1961 to Rs 20 lakhs," a labour ministry statement said.**

Bhubaneswar gets best Airport Service Quality 2018 award

- The **Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA)** in Bhubaneswar has won the **prestigious Airport Service Quality (ASQ)** award for being the **best airport in size and region for the year 2018**.
- **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**.

Star rating programme launched for Microwave Ovens and Washing Machines

- **Ministry of Power, Government of India** expanded its **ambitious Standards & Labelling (Star Rating) program** for **Energy Efficient for Appliances** to cover the **Microwave Ovens and Washing Machines (with revised parameters)** in the country.
- **The Star Labelling Programs** has been **formulated by Bureau of Energy Efficiency**. The program will now include these two appliances for grant of Star Rating in terms of their energy performance. Initially, the program for above two appliances will be **implemented on a voluntary basis** and will be **valid up to 31st December 2020**.
- **The ministry** has **estimated savings of over three billion units of electricity at consumer-end** through adoption of star-rated microwave ovens and washing machines by 2030.

Business Organisations need to pay up to Rs. 20 for using Aadhaar Services: UIDAI

- **Business organisations using Aadhaar services** will now **have to pay Rs. 20 for each customer verification and 50 paise for authentication of each transaction** carried out by the entities.
- **Aadhaar authentication services** shall be **charged at the rate of Rs. 20** (including taxes) for each e-KYC transaction and Rs. 0.50 (including taxes) for each Yes and No authentication transaction from requesting entities.

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) is a statutory authority established under the provisions of the Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and Other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Act, 2016 ("Aadhaar Act 2016") on 12 July 2016 by the Government of India, under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). Aadhaar is the world's largest biometric ID system, with over 1.19 billion enrolled members as of 30 November 2017. J. Satyanarayana is the current chairman of UIDAI.

Government approves a National Mission on E-Mobility to Boost EV Manufacturing

- The Centre formed the **National Mission on Transformative Mobility and Battery Storage** with a charge to **finalise the framework for a Phased Manufacturing Program (PMP)**, aimed at localising the production of electric vehicles (EV) and its components within the country.

India gets first TIR shipment via Chabahar Port from Afghanistan

- The **first shipment under the United Nations 'Transports Internationaux Routiers' (TIR) convention** arrived in **India from Afghanistan** through **Iran's Chabahar Port**. The consignments arrived at port of Nhava Sheva, Mumbai and Mundra.
- **India** had **joined the TIR Convention (the United Nations Customs Convention on International Transport of Goods under cover of TIR Carnets)** on **June 15, 2017**. The convention allows goods to be outlined in a TIR carnet and sealed in load compartments.

Chabahar Port is a seaport in Chabahar located in southeastern Iran, on the Gulf of Oman. Chabahar port is being considered a gateway to golden opportunities for trade by India, Iran and Afghanistan with central Asian countries besides ramping up trade among the three countries in the wake of Pakistan denying transit access to New Delhi. Under an agreement signed between India and Iran in May 2016, India is to equip and operate two berths in Chabahar Port Phase-I with capital investment of USD 85.21 million and annual revenue expenditure of USD 22.95 million on a 10-year lease.

‘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).
- **India’s overall position in terms of total gold holding** would have been **tenth** had the list included only countries. Whereas, International Monetary Fund (IMF) is included and is **third on the list** with total gold reserves of **2,814 tonnes**. The **numero uno** slot is occupied by the **U.S.**

Aamir Khan appointed as PhonePe’s Brand Ambassador

- **PhonePe** has appointed **Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan** as the face of its brand. **PhonePe** is also an **official co-presenting sponsor** for the television broadcast of **VIVO IPL 2019**, and will be launching a series of new TV ads featuring Aamir Khan during this season.

Paris, Singapore and Hong Kong have jointly been named as the world’s most expensive cities in 2019

- **Paris, Singapore and Hong Kong** have jointly been named as the **world’s most expensive cities in 2019**. The annual analysis, published by **The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)**, compared the price of more than 150 items in 133 cities around the world.
- **Asia and Europe** dominated the top of the ranking, with **Swiss cities Geneva and Zurich** and **Danish capital Copenhagen** also listed among the **world’s harshest places to open your wallet**.
- According to the EIU, **Paris** has been one of the **ten most expensive cities since 2003**. **New York and Los Angeles** were the only two **U.S. cities** to make the top ten.

While several least expensive cities of the world are in Asia, three Indian cities have made it to that list. **While Caracas (133), Damascus (132) and Tashkent (131)** have been **ranked the least expensive cities in the world**, **Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai and Bengaluru** have been **ranked 122nd, 123rd, 125th and 129th**, respectively. To an extent this remains true, and **Bengaluru, Chennai, New Delhi and Karachi** feature among the **10 cheapest locations surveyed**.

India posts highest growth in patent applications in 2018

- **India** filed **2,013 international patent applications in 2018** with the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**, registering the **highest growth of 27% among countries** but falling way below **China and the US** in volume of patent filings.
- In the previous year, **innovators and research organizations from India** filed **1,583 patent applications** with the **WIPO**.
- **Innovators from China** filed **53,345 international patent applications** last year compared with 48,905 in 2017. **China is expected to surpass the US in the next two years** as the world’s predominant hub for innovation.

The **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)** is one of the **15 specialized agencies of the United Nations (UN)**. **WIPO** was created in **1967** "to encourage creative activity, to promote the protection of intellectual property throughout the world". It is headquartered in **Geneva, Switzerland**. The current **Director-General of WIPO** is **Francis Gurry**, who took office on **1 October 2008**.

Fake goods trade rises to €460bn: EUIPO and OECD

- **Global sales of counterfeit and pirated goods** jumped to **€460 billion (\$509 billion)** a year in **2016**, amounting to **3.3% of world trade**.
- In a report issued, the **European Union Intellectual Property Office’s (EUIPO) Observatory** and the **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)** said this was a “considerable” rise on its

previous estimation, particularly considering the growth occurred during a period of a relative slowdown in overall world trade.

- Three years ago, and using the same methodology, the previous report established that international trade in **fake goods represented 2.5% of world trade or €338 billion.**

Nepal Investment Summit organised in Kathmandu

- The Government of Nepal has organized "Nepal Investment Summit 2019" on March 29 -30 in Kathmandu.
- Summit has unveiled potential opportunities for investment in various sectors in Nepal including Hydropower, Tourism, Infrastructure, Industry, Transport, Agriculture and Information and Communication Technology.

Khadga Prasad Sharma Oli is currently serving as the Prime Minister of Nepal. He was the first elected prime minister under the newly adopted Constitution of Nepal. Nepal is a landlocked country in South Asia located in the Himalaya. Nepalese rupee is the official currency of the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. Bidya Devi Bhandari became Nepal's first woman President in 2015. Ms. Bhandari is the current President of Nepal.

Union Government exceeds disinvestment target for current fiscal by Rs 5,000 cr

- Union Government has exceeded its disinvestment target for the current fiscal by Rs 5,000 crore, taking the total proceeds to Rs 85,000 crore, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said.
- This is the second highest disinvestment proceeds in a financial year after the government last fiscal mopped up a little over Rs 1 lakh crore in 2017-18, helped by ONGC acquiring government's entire 51.11 per cent stake in oil refiner HPCL for Rs 36,915 crore.
- In the current fiscal, the government is eyeing Rs 14,500 crore by way of sell of its 52.63 per cent stake in REC to state-owned Power Finance Corporation (PFC).

Disinvestment can be defined as the selling of Government equity shares of public sector units in the capitalized market. In India, the process of disinvestment was started in the year 1992.

India ranks 76th on WEF global Energy Transition index

- India has moved up two places to rank 76th on a global energy transition index. This annual list, compiled by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF), has ranked 115 economies on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability.
- India is also the second best in the BRICS block of emerging economies, with Brazil being the best at 46th place globally. However, India is the only amongst the five economies to improve its rank since last year.
- China is ranked even lower than India at 82nd position, though it ranks very high at seventh place in the world for regulation and political commitment.
- 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, as per its latest report released.

World Economic Forum (WEF), based in Cologny-Geneva, Switzerland, was founded in 1971 as a not-for-profit organization. It gained formal status in January 2015 under the Swiss Host-State Act, confirming the role of the Forum as an International Institution for Public-Private Cooperation. The WEF hosts an annual meeting at the end of January in Davos, a mountain resort in Graubunden, in the eastern Alps region of Switzerland.

Five Indian expats in UAE enter Forbes' billionaires list 2019

- Five Indian expats in UAE have been named in the Forbes' billionaires list for 2019. The combined worth of the five expats, including three from Kerala, is a whopping USD 15.1 billion (Rs 1.04 trillion).

- **Á** Prominent retail business tycoon MA Yusuff Ali, who ranks at 394 on the list, is the richest Indian expat in UAE with assets estimated over USD 4.7 billion.

ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund launches Bharat Consumption Scheme

- **Á** ICICI Prudential AMC announced launched the ICICI Prudential Bharat Consumption Scheme. The Scheme aims to benefit from the Indian consumption story, considered as one of the fastest growing consumption markets globally.
- **Á** The benchmark for the Scheme is Nifty India Consumption Index and will be managed by Rajat Chandak and Dharmesh Kakkad.

India's energy demand outpaces global growth: IEA

- **Á** India's energy demand outpaced global demand growth in 2018, according to the IEA's Global Energy & CO2 status report. The report says India saw primary energy demand increase 4 per cent or over 35 million tonne of oil equivalent. This accounts for 11 per cent of global demand growth.
- **Á** China, US, and India together accounted for nearly 70 per cent of the rise in energy demand.

International Energy Agency (IEA) is a Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organization established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis.

India, Saudi Arabia to revive work on \$44-billion West Coast refinery

- **Á** India and Saudi Arabia came to an understanding to revive and 'expedite' the implementation of \$44 billion West Coast refinery project in Maharashtra, in which Saudi Aramco will be holding a considerable stake.
- **Á** Global majors such as Saudi Aramco and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (Adnoc) had formed a joint venture with Indian state-run oil marketing companies — Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation (HPCL) — to hold 50 per cent stake in Ratnagiri Refinery and Petrochemicals (RRPCL).

Dhanbad Scores 95.3 percent 4G availability, highest among 50 Indian cities

- **Á** According to OpenSignal's measurements for 4G availability, Dhanbad scored 95.3 percent, becoming one of only two cities among India's 50 cities to pass the 95 percent mark. The other city was Ranchi which scored 95 percent in 4G availability.
- **Á** Opensignal in its report mentioned that Srinagar was just shy of the 95% mark with a 4G availability score of 94.9%. Raipur stood at fourth position by scoring 94.8% followed by Patna with 94.5%. Overall, all the cities scored over 87% 4G availability, as per Opensignal's report and analysis.

Singapore airport named best, New Delhi's IGI at 59th

- **Á** 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.
- **Á** 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.
- **Á** The list has been compiled by the UK-based Skytrax, a consultancy firm which runs an airline and airport review and ranking site, featuring 100 airports.

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.

Banks in News

World Bank to provide 250 Million dollar for NRETP to boost rural incomes in India

- **World Bank to provide 250 Million dollar for the National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP) to boost Rural Incomes across 13 States in India.**
- **The Agreement was signed by Mr. Sameer Kumar Khare, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, on behalf of the Government of India and Mr. Hisham Abdo, Acting Country Director, World Bank India, in New Delhi. The loan will help women in rural households develop viable enterprises for farm and non-farm products.**

The World Bank is a vital source of financial and technical assistance to developing countries around the world. The World Bank Group comprises five institutions managed by their member countries. It was established in 1944, the World Bank Group is headquartered in Washington, D.C. Jim Yong Kim has been served as the 12th President of the World Bank since July 1, 2012 to January 31, 2019. Kristalina Georgieva is the first Chief Executive Officer of the World Bank and is interim President of the World Bank Group since 1 February 2019. Together, IBRD and IDA form the World Bank, which provides financing, policy advice, and technical assistance to governments of developing countries. IDA focuses on the world's poorest countries, while IBRD assists middle-income and creditworthy poorer countries.

SBI, Hitachi arm to roll out digital payments platform

- **State Bank of India (SBI) 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 per cent stake, and the balance is with Hitachi Payment Services) will facilitate expansion of the digital payments landscape in India via its digital payments platform. The joint venture will facilitate expansion of the digital payments landscape in India via its digital payments platform.**

Hitachi, Ltd. is a Japanese multinational conglomerate company headquartered in Chiyoda, Tokyo, Japan. Hitachi was founded in 1910 by electrical engineer Namihei Odaira in Ibaraki Prefecture.

SBI links savings account, short term loan rates to repo rate

- **In a first of its kind, State Bank of India has decided to link the interest rate paid on savings bank balance of over Rs. 1 lakh to the repo rate — the key policy rate set by Reserve Bank of India.**
- **Also, the bank will link cash credit accounts and overdrafts, with limits above Rs. 1 lakh, to the repo rate. The new system will come into effect from May 1, 2019.**

On April 1, 2017, the State Bank of India, which was India's largest bank, merged with five of its associate banks (State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur, State Bank of Hyderabad, State Bank of Mysore, State Bank of Patiala and State Bank of Travancore), and with the Bharatiya Mahila Bank. Rajnish Kumar is the current chairman of the State Bank of India (SBI).

RBI notifies 2% interest subsidy scheme for short-term crop loans

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) notified the norms for banks with regards to two per cent interest subvention or subsidy for short-term crop loans during 2018-19 and 2019-20. The Centre has already approved the scheme.**

- **Á** To provide short-term crop loans up to Rs 3 lakh to farmers at an interest rate of 7 per cent. Under the scheme, an additional 2 per cent interest subvention is provided to farmers repaying loans promptly. For such farmers, the effective rate of short-term crop loans works out to be 4 per cent per annum.

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is India's central banking institution, which controls the monetary policy of the Indian rupee. It commenced its operations on 1 April 1935 in accordance with the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934. RBI was nationalised on 1 January 1949. Foreign exchange reserves of India are India's holdings of cash, bank deposits, bonds, and other financial assets denominated in currencies other than India's national currency, the Indian rupee. The reserves are managed by the Reserve Bank of India for the Indian government. Shaktikanta Das is the current Governor of RBI.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board inks cooperation agreement with IFC

- **Á** 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).
- **Á** 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.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India was set up on 1st October 2016 under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code). It is a unique regulator: regulates a profession as well as processes. It has regulatory oversight over the Insolvency Professionals, Insolvency Professional Agencies and Information Utilities. It writes and enforces rules for transactions, namely, corporate insolvency resolution, corporate liquidation, individual insolvency resolution and individual bankruptcy under the Code. Dr. M. S. Sahoo is currently serves as Chairperson of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India.

IDBI Bank appoints LIC as agent, forms joint group to identify synergies

- **Á** The IDBI Bank has started aligning its businesses with that of its new owner LIC, appointing the life insurer as a corporate agent under bancassurance besides setting up a joint task force to chart out their roadmap for the future.
- **Á** Both the partners have identified major areas of synergy between them to gain from the full potential of such strengths.

Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) is an Indian state-owned insurance group and investment company headquartered in Mumbai. It is the largest insurance company in India. The Life Insurance Corporation of India was founded in 1956. IDBI Bank (Industrial Development Bank of India) was established in 1964 in Mumbai by an Act of Parliament to provide credit and other financial facilities for the development of the fledgling Indian industry. It is owned by the Government of India.

14th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships held in New Delhi

- **Á** Ministry of Commerce & Industry organised the 14th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships, in association with Confederation of Indian Industry and EXIM Bank of India in New Delhi from March 17-19, 2019.
- **Á** The event marked the deepening of India-Africa economic and business ties and paves the way for a whole range of cross-border project partnerships.

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

- **Á** Bank of Baroda has become one of the first public sector banks to launch a crèche/child daycare facility for children of its employees.
- **Á** 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.

HDFC Bank crosses Rs.6 trillion market cap mark as shares hit record high

- **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.**
- **HDFC Bank is only the third Indian firm—after Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)—that crossed the market capitalisation of Rs.6 trillion.**

RBI to infuse Rs 12,500 crore via OMOs

- **The Reserve Bank of India, (RBI) will infuse 12,500 crore rupees into the system through open market operations (OMOs).**
- **The purchase will happen through multi-security auction using the multiple price method. OMOs are money market tools to infuse or suck out liquidity from the system.**

RBI to inject liquidity via forex swaps

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to inject rupee liquidity into the system through long-term foreign exchange buy/sell swap — a first-of-its-kind instrument used for liquidity management.**
- **The RBI would conduct dollar-rupee buy/sell swap auction of \$5 billion for a three-year tenor on March 26.**
- **In order to meet the durable liquidity needs of the system, the Reserve Bank has decided to augment its liquidity management toolkit and inject rupee liquidity for longer duration through long-term foreign exchange buy/sell swap.**

SBI launches cardless ATM withdrawals

- **State Bank of India launched 'YONO Cash' for cardless withdrawal of cash at over 16,500 SBI ATMs across the country.**
- **With this facility, customers can initiate the cash withdrawal process on the YONO app and set a six-digit YONO Cash PIN for the transaction.**

SBI doorstep banking

- **India's largest commercial bank, the State Bank of India (SBI), has 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 fully KYC-compliant account holders, with a valid mobile number registered with the bank and residing within 5 KM of radius from their Home Branch. This service will not be available for accounts operated jointly, minor account and accounts of non-personal nature.**

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.**

Bandhan Bank Ltd. is headquartered in Kolkata, West Bengal. Bandhan, which started as a micro-finance company in 2001, received banking licence by RBI in 2014 the first micro finance company to receive banking license in India. Chandra Shekhar Ghosh is the founder and chairman managing director of Bandhan.

RBI relaxes norms for trade credit

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) relaxed norms for imports of capital and non-capital goods by raising the trade credit limit to \$150 million under the automatic route.**

- **Announcing the modified revised framework for 'Trade Credit Policy', the RBI, however, reduced the all-inclusive cost (all-in-cost) for overseas loans to benchmark rate plus 250 basis points from the earlier 350 bps.**
- **Trade credits (TCs) refer to the credits extended by the overseas supplier, bank, financial institution and other permitted recognised lenders for maturity for imports of capital and non-capital goods permissible.**

RBI categorises IDBI Bank as private sector lender

- **The RBI said that IDBI Bank has been categorised as a private sector bank for regulatory purposes with effect from January 21, 2019.**
- **This follows Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) acquiring 51 per cent of the total paid-up equity share capital of the bank.**

RBI issues guidelines to prevent market abuse

- **The Reserve Bank of India has come out with guidelines to prevent misuse of price-sensitive information by participants in markets for financial instruments.**
- **The RBI said market participants, either acting independently or in collusion, shall not undertake any action with the intention to manipulate the calculation of a benchmark rate or a reference rate.**

State Bank of India (SBI) launches YONO Cash

- **The State Bank of India (SBI) has launched YONO Cash for its customers which will allow them to withdraw cash from ATMs without their debit cards. The launch of Yono Cash makes SBI the first bank to offer this service in the industry.**
- **The ATMs enabled for this service will also be termed as Yono Cash Point. YONO, the cardless cash withdrawal service, will be available across 16,500 ATMs of the bank in the country.**
- **Customers can initiate the cash withdrawal process on the YONO app and set a six digit YONO Cash pin for the transaction. They will also get a six digit reference number for the transaction on their registered mobile number via SMS. The cash withdrawal has to be completed within the next 30 minutes at the nearest YONO Cash point using both PIN and the reference number received.**

YONO (You Only Need One) is an integrated digital banking platform offered by State Bank of India (SBI) to enable users to access a variety of financial and other services such as taxi bookings, online shopping, or medical bill payments. YONO was launched 24 November 2017 by Arun Jaitley, the Finance Minister of India.

SBI inks pact with Bank of China for business opportunities

- **The country's largest lender SBI said it has signed a pact with the Bank of China to boost business opportunities.**
- **SBI has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Bank of China, third-largest bank in the world by capital size and one of the major players in the Chinese banking sector, to enhance business synergies between both the banks, State Bank of India (SBI) said in a release.**

Bank of China is one of the four biggest state-owned commercial banks in China. It was founded in 1912 by the Republican government to replace the Daqing Bank. It is the oldest bank in mainland China still in existence. Its headquarters are in Xicheng District, Beijing.

RBI again defers Indian Accounting Standards implementation by banks

- **Reserve Bank of India again deferred the implementation of the Indian Accounting Standards (Ind-AS) by banks as the requisite legislative amendments are still under consideration.**

- Earlier in April 2018, the central bank had postponed the implementation of the Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS) by the banks by one year.
- The RBI in February 2016 had proposed implementation of new accounting standards for banks for both standalone financial statements and consolidated financial statements with effect from April 1, 2018.

Indian Accounting Standard (abbreviated as Ind-AS) is the Accounting standard adopted by companies in India and issued under the supervision of Accounting Standards Board (ASB) which was constituted as a body in the year 1977.

RBI appoints five-member committee to deepen digital payments

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that 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 Financial Technology (Fintech). The RBI has requested the committee to give recommendations in 3 months in this regard.

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 global messaging software used for sharing information on inter-bank transactions by financial entities.

Punjab National Bank (PNB) is an Indian multinational banking and financial services company. It is a state-owned corporation based in New Delhi, India. Punjab National Bank was registered on 19 May 1894 under the Indian Companies Act, with its office in Anarkali Bazaar, Lahore, in present-day Pakistan. Sunil Mehta is the current MD & CEO of PNB. In February 2018, PNB was part of India's biggest ever fraud in which two junior officers at a single branch had illegally steered \$1.77 billion in fraudulent loans to companies, most of them controlled by billionaire jeweller Nirav Modi.

Five PSU lenders get capital infusion of Rs 21,428 crore from government

- Five state-owned banks, including PNB, Bank of Baroda and Union Bank, received shareholders' approval for capital infusion to the tune of Rs 21,428 crore in lieu of preferential allotment of shares to the government.
- This capital infusion is for the current fiscal ending March 31, 2019. This capital infusion will help the bank to shore up its capital adequacy requirements and enable the bank to build a robust loan book.

Public Sector Banks (PSBs) or Nationalised Banks in India are banks where a majority stake i.e. more than 51% is held by a government. In 1969 the Indian government nationalised 14 major private banks, one of the big bank was Bank of India. In 1980, 6 more private banks were nationalised. They dominate the banking sector because of their large size and widespread networks.

Firms in News

Tata Steel recognised as one of World's Most Ethical Companies

- **Private steel major Tata Steel** has been recognised as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies by the Ethisphere Institute, a global leader in defining and advancing the standards of ethical business practices, for 2019.
- With this, **Tata Steel** has got the recognition eight times in the 'Metals, Minerals and Mining' category. The Tata name evokes a sense of Trust, Credibility and Integrity to many millions of stakeholders in India and overseas.

Tata Steel Limited formerly **Tata Iron and Steel Company Limited (TISCO)** is an Indian multinational steel-making company headquartered in **Mumbai, Maharashtra, India**, and a **subsidiary of the Tata Group**. It is one of the **top steel producing companies globally** with annual crude steel deliveries of 27.5 million tonnes and the **second largest steel company in India (measured by domestic production) with an annual capacity of 13 million tonnes after SAIL**. **T. V. Narendran** is currently the **global CEO and Managing Director** of Tata Steel.

Arcelor Mittal to take over debt-ridden Essar Steel

- After a protracted legal battle, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Ahmedabad, **approved a Rs. 42,000 crore resolution plan** of global steel magnate **Arcelor Mittal** to take over the debt-ridden **Essar Steel** in Gujarat.
- The approval for the mega deal came almost **583 days** after the **NCLT** began the insolvency proceedings, instead of the mandated 270 days.

ArcelorMittal is an Indian multinational steel manufacturing corporation headquartered in **Luxembourg**. It was formed in **2006** from the takeover and merger of **Arcelor** by Indian-owned **Mittal Steel**. **ArcelorMittal** is the world's largest steel producer.

Premji marks 34% of his Wipro shares for charity

- **Azim Premji**, India's second-richest man gave away **34% of his shares in Wipro Ltd** to charitable causes, confirming his status as the most philanthropic Indian. The shares given away by **Premji**—a man known for his frugal ways—are valued at about **\$7.5 billion (52,750 crore)**.

Azim Hashim Premji is an Indian business tycoon, investor, and philanthropist, who is the chairman of **Wipro Limited**. He is informally known as the **Czar of the Indian IT Industry**.

Tata, Reliance, Airtel are the best Indian brands: Interbrand Report

- **Tata, Reliance and Airtel** were top Indian brands in 2019, revealed a recent report by brand consultancy **Interbrand**, a division of **Omnicom Group**.
- According to the report, **TCS** continues to help **Tata** stay India's most valuable brand, while **Jio** helped **Reliance** grow as the challenger, however, **Airtel** lost 13 per cent brand value last year. Ever since its inception, **Tata** has continued to hold the top position in the Best Indian Brands table.

According to the company, the ranking is based on three key components that contribute to a brand's cumulative value: **HDFC Bank, LIC, SBI, Infosys, Mahindra, ICICI Bank and Godrej** are the other brands in the top ten ranking.

SpiceJet joins global airlines' grouping IATA

- **Low cost carrier SpiceJet** said it has become a member of global airlines' grouping **International Air Transport Association (IATA)**.
- **SpiceJet** is the first Indian budget carrier to join the **IATA**, which has over 290 airlines as members.

- The membership allows SpiceJet to explore and grow its collaborations with international member airlines of IATA through interlining and code shares, enabling to seamlessly expand the network options for its passengers in future, it added.

International Air Transport Association (IATA) is a trade association of the world's airlines. Consisting of 290 airlines, primarily major carriers, representing 117 countries, the IATA's member airlines account for carrying approximately 82% of total available seat miles air traffic. It is headquartered in Montreal, Quebec, Canada with Executive Offices in Geneva, Switzerland.

ADNOC awards onshore block to Indian consortium

- Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) said that it had signed an agreement with an Indian consortium awarding the latter the exploration rights for an onshore block.
- Two Indian companies - Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd and Indian Oil Corp - will together hold a 100 percent stake in the exploration phase for Abu Dhabi Onshore Block 1, ADNOC said in a statement.
- The agreements, which have a term of 35 years, conclude Abu Dhabi's first-ever competitive block bid round, ADNOC said.

Fitch cuts India GDP growth forecast for FY20 to 6.8% from previous 7%

- 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 in its Global Economic Outlook, on weaker than expected momentum in the economy.
- Fitch Ratings cut India's FY19 GDP growth forecast to 7.2 per cent from 7.8 per cent on December 6. 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 Inc. is one of the "Big Three credit rating agencies" the other two being Moody's and Standard & Poor's. It is one of the three nationally recognized statistical rating organizations (NRSRO) designated by the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission in 1975. Fitch Ratings is headquartered in New York, US.

IBBI, SEBI sign MoU 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.
- Executive Directors Anand Baiwar of the SEBI and Ritesh Kavdia of the IBBI signed the pact which provides for sharing information and resources.
- 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.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India was established on April 12, 1992 in accordance with the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992. SEBI has its headquarters at the business district of Bandra Kurla Complex in Mumbai. Shri Ajay Tyagi is the current chairman of Securities and Exchange Board of India.

Jimmy Carter becomes longest living chief executive in American history

- Former US president Jimmy Carter has reached a milestone. Carter is now the longest living chief executive in American history.

- **Today is the 172nd day beyond Carter's 94th birthday. It exceeds by one day the lifespan of former President George H.W. Bush, who died last November at the age of 94 years, 171 days. Both men were born in 1924: Bush on June 12, Carter on Oct. 1.**

James Earl Carter Jr. is an American politician and philanthropist who served as the 39th president of the United States from 1977 to 1981. Carter has remained active in public life during his post-presidency, and in 2002 he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his work in co-founding the Carter Center. In 2012, Carter surpassed Herbert Hoover as the longest-retired president in U.S. history and in 2017 became the first president to live to the 40th anniversary of his inauguration.

Apple partners with Goldman Sachs and Mastercard for Apple Card

- **Tech giant Apple is known for its hardware devices like the iPhone, MacBooks, iPods, Watch and software services like iOS, MacOS, Apple Music, Apple Pay, etc. Apple announced a new credit card called the Apple Card. 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.**
- **Apple launched Apple Pay back in 2014 which helped users carry transactions easily through their card details stored in the Apple Pay mobile Wallet app. Five years after the launch; Apple has given a significant update to the Apple Pay service with the launch of Apple Card.**

Apple Inc. is an American multinational technology company headquartered in California that designs, develops, and sells consumer electronics, computer software, and online services. It was founded by Steve Jobs, Steve Wozniak, and Ronald Wayne in April 1976 to develop and sell Wozniak's Apple I personal computer. It was incorporated as Apple Computer, Inc. in January 1977. Tim Cook is the Chief Executive Officer.

Adani becomes first Indian port operator to record 200 million tonnes cargo movement

- **Adani Port and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) claimed that it has become the first Indian port operator to handle cargo movement of 200 million tonnes (MT) in 2018-19.**
- **APSEZ, part of Gautam Adani-led Adani Group had recorded 100 MT cargo in 2013-14. APSEZ, a part of globally-diversified Adani Group, is the largest port developer and operator in India.**

Adani Group is an Indian multinational conglomerate headquartered in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India. It was founded by Gautam Adani in 1988 as a commodity trading business with the flagship company Adani Enterprises Limited (previously Adani Exports Limited). Gautam Adani is the chairman.

GAIL, BHEL sign pact for development of solar power projects

- **State-owned gas utility GAIL India Ltd has signed an agreement with Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) for cooperation in the development of solar power projects.**
- **GAIL shall be the project developer and BHEL shall act as an engineering, procurement, construction and project management contractor.**

PFC is now the second largest government owned Financial Firm after SBI

- **Power Finance Corp. Ltd (PFC) has completed the purchase of a controlling stake in state-run peer REC Ltd that will create an \$80-billion lending giant by assets and potentially help in faster resolution of stressed assets in India's power sector.**
- **This made PFC India's second largest state-owned financial firm by market capitalization after State Bank of India (SBI).**

Power Finance Corporation Ltd. is an Indian financial institution. Established in 1986, it is the financial backbone of Indian Power Sector. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

Google launches Global Council to Advise on AI and Tech Ethics

- **Alphabet's Google** was launched a global advisory council to consider ethical issues around artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies.
- The **council, which is slated to publish a report at the end of 2019**, includes technology experts, digital ethicists, and people with public policy backgrounds, Kent Walker, Google's senior vice president for global affairs.

Google Inc. is an American multinational technology company that specializes in **Internet-related services and products**, which include online advertising technologies, search engine, cloud computing, software, and hardware. **Google was founded in 1998 by Larry Page and Sergey Brin** while they were Ph.D. students at **Stanford University, California**. It is now headquartered in California, USA. **Pichai Sundararajan** is the current chief executive officer (CEO) of Google Inc.

Tesla builds its 'largest energy storage system in Asia'

- In a bid to reduce energy demand and provide emergency backup power to trains in Japan, **Tesla has claimed to develop its largest power storage system in Asia.**
- **Tesla 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.
- In the event of a grid outage, this **Osaka Powerpack installation is designed to provide emergency backup power to safely move a train** and its passengers to the nearest station.

Tesla, Inc. (formerly Tesla Motors, Inc.) is an American automotive and energy company based in Palo Alto, California. The company specializes in electric car manufacturing and, through its SolarCity subsidiary, solar panel manufacturing. **Tesla was founded in July 2003, by engineers Martin Eberhard and Marc Tarpenning, under the name Tesla Motors.**

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY



China to run driverless maglev trains at 200 kmph by 2020

- **China plans to run a new generation of self-developed driverless magnetic-levitation trains with a designed speed of 200 kmph by early 2020.**
- **Magnetic-levitation (maglev) trains are capable of clocking a speed of 600 kmph while running 10 cm above the ground.**
- **Once put into operation, they will be the fastest maglev trains for commercial use in China, CRRC Zhuzhou Locomotive Co. Ltd which leads the efforts to develop the trains said.**

China currently has the world's longest high-speed rail network, with 22,000 kilometers within the country linking various key cities. Maglev (derived from magnetic levitation) is a system of train transportation that uses two sets of magnets, one set to repel and push the train up off the track, then another set to move the 'floating train' ahead at great speed taking advantage of the lack of friction.

Google Bolo Reading-Tutor App Launched in India, Now Available for Android

- **Google launched a free app called "Bolo" that parents can download to help primary grade children improve their Hindi and English reading skills.**
- **Launched in India first, the app is designed to work offline and comes with a built-in reading buddy, "Diya", who encourages, aids, explains, and corrects the child, as they read aloud. The Bolo app is now available for free via Google Play and can work offline. As per the ASER 2018 report, of all the students enrolled in grade 5 in rural India, only about half can confidently read a grade 2 level textbook.**

India, Japan hold inaugural space dialogue

- **The inaugural India-Japan Space Dialogue was held in New Delhi. The dialogue brought together Ministries and agencies related to outer space in the two countries and provided an opportunity for information exchange on the respective space policies.**
- **The Indian delegation was led by Indra Mani Pandey, Additional Secretary for Disarmament and International Security Affairs, Ministry of External Affairs, while the Japanese delegation was co-led by Kansuke Nagaoka, Deputy Assistant Minister, Foreign Policy Bureau, and Shuzo Takada, Director General, National Space Policy Secretariat.**

ISRO, French agency to set up maritime surveillance system

- **National space agency ISRO and its French counterpart CNES sealed an agreement to set up a joint maritime surveillance system in the country in May, 2019.**

- 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.

Indian Space Research Organisation is the space agency of the Government of India headquartered in the city of Bangalore. ISRO was formed in 1969. ISRO built India's first satellite, Aryabhata, which was launched by the Soviet Union on 19 April 1975. Dr Kailasavadivoo Sivan Nadar is current the chairperson of the ISRO.

NASA captures images of supersonic shockwaves

- NASA has captured unprecedented photos of the interaction of shockwaves from two supersonic aircraft, part of its research into developing planes that can fly faster than sound without thunderous “sonic booms”.
- When an aircraft crosses that threshold — around 1,225 km per hour at sea level — it produces waves from the pressure it puts on the air around it, which merge to cause the ear-splitting sound.
- Sonic booms can be a major nuisance, capable of not just startling people on the ground but also causing damage — like shattered windows — and this has led to strong restrictions on supersonic flight over land in jurisdictions like the United States.

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is an independent agency of the executive branch of the United States federal government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and aerospace research. President Dwight D. Eisenhower established NASA in 1958. James Frederick Bridenstine is an American politician and the current administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. He became the first member of Congress to lead NASA.

New beetle species' get names from pop culture

- Scientists have discovered 103 beetle species in Indonesia that are new to science, and named one of them after the Star Wars character Yoda and three others after characters from French comics series The Adventures of Asterix.
- The Indonesian island of Sulawesi has been long known for its enigmatic fauna, including the deer-pig and the midget buffalo, said researchers from the Natural History Museum in Germany and the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI).

IIT Kharagpur Students Devise Solution to detect fake notes at Smart India Hackathon

- Students from IIT Kharagpur have devised unique solutions ranging from detecting counterfeit currency to nuclear radiation tracking through wearable sensors at the recently concluded nationwide competition, Smart India Hackathon 2019.
- A group of six students from the Dept. of Computer Science and Engineering IIT Kharagpur have developed a code for a smartphone application to address the problem of detecting fake Indian currency.

Ministry of Human Resource Development, All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Inter Institutional Inclusive Innovation Center (i4C), and Persistent Systems for the first time organized Smart India Hackathon 2017 in Pune, a unique initiative to identify new and disruptive digital technology innovations for solving the challenges faced by our country.

Scientists rediscover wood snake last seen in 1878

- A species of wood snake that wasn't seen for 140 years has resurfaced in a survey conducted by scientists in the Meghamalai Wildlife Sanctuary.

- **The species, endemic to the Meghamalai forests and the Periyar Tiger Reserve landscape, was recently rediscovered by R. Chaitanya, a herpetologist, and Varad Giri, director, Foundation for Biodiversity Conservation.**
- **“The snake is a ‘point endemic’ (found only in Megha-malai). The snake he discovered was 235 mm long and uniformly dark brown.**

The local population of wood snakes was last spotted and recorded by British military officer and naturalist Colonel Richard Henry Beddome in 1878, who went on to describe it as a new species, *Xylophis indicus*. The specimens he collected were deposited by the officer in the Natural History Museum, London, and labelled as being from “the dense heavy evergreen forests on the mountains at the south of the Cumbum valley, Madura.”

Pinaka guided weapons system successfully test fired

- **The indigenously developed Pinaka guided rocket system was successfully test fired at Pokhran desert in Rajasthan, in a boost to artillery capability of the Army.**
- **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.**

Pinaka is a multiple rocket launcher produced in India and developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for the Indian Army. The system has a maximum range of 40 km for Mark-I and 75 km for Mark-II, and can fire a salvo of 12 HE rockets in 44 seconds. As of 2019, an upgraded guided missile version of the system has also been test-fired, with a range of over 70 km.

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.**
- **US reaffirmed its strong support of India’s early membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group. This commitment was made at the 9th round of the India-US Strategic Security Dialogue held in Washington DC.**

Second Scorpene submarine ready for induction

- **The Navy is set to induct the second Scorpene submarine Khanderi by early May. The remaining submarines in the series are in advanced stages of manufacturing and trials.**
- **Khanderi was launched into water in January 2017 and has since been undergoing a series of trials. Khanderi has completed all trials and is in the final stages of acceptance.**

Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL), Mumbai, is manufacturing six Scorpene submarines under technology transfer from Naval Group of France under a 2005 contract worth \$3.75 bn. After a series of delays in the project, the first submarine of the class Kalvari joined service in December 2017. The entire project is expected to be completed by 2020. The third in the Scorpene series Karanj which was launched in January last year is in advanced stage of trials and could be ready for induction by year end. The last two submarines Vagir and Vagsheer are in advanced stages of manufacturing on the assembly line. Kalvari is the first modern conventional submarine inducted by the Navy in almost two decades.

India pilots resolutions on Single-use Plastics and Sustainable Nitrogen management at Fourth United Nations Environment Assembly

- **In a significant first, India piloted resolutions on two important global environment issues relating to Single-use Plastics and Sustainable Nitrogen management at the fourth session of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) which was held in Nairobi from 11th to 15th March 2019.**

- **Á** UNEA adopted both the resolutions with consensus. The theme of the UNEA this year was 'Innovative Solutions for environmental challenges and sustainable production and consumption'.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), an agency of the United Nations, coordinates the organization's environmental activities and assists developing countries in implementing environmentally sound policies and practices. It was founded by Maurice Strong, its first director. UNEP headquarters was established in Nairobi, Kenya, on 5 June 1972 as an outcome from the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972).

Pune-based firm developing software to operate world's largest ground telescope in Hawaii

- **Á** A Pune-based IT firm is developing software for the world's largest ground-based telescope, the Thirty Metre Telescope (TMT), which is likely to come up on Mauna Kea in Hawaii.
- **Á** The telescope is being constructed jointly by India, US, China, Japan and Canada and is likely to become operational in the mid-2020s. India is building the telescope's complex optical structure, called the Segment Support Assembly (SSA), which will comprise 492 hexagonal mirror segments, collectively forming the primary mirror.
- **Á** An eight-member team at the IT firm, ThoughtWorks, is designing three different software — Common Software Services (CSS), Data Management Services (DMS) and Executive Software (ES) — to deal with the control systems to manoeuvre the telescope and manage the big data that will be generated once it becomes operational.

This telescope will be a precursor version of the world's largest proposed radio telescope, the Square Kilometre Array (SKA), which is coming up in South Africa and Australia. The Square Kilometre Array (SKA) is a radio telescope project proposed to be built in Australia and South Africa. If built, it would have a total collecting area of approximately one square kilometre

MOU Signed Between ISRO & IIT Roorkee on Space Technology Cell

- **Á** Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee signed an MOU with The Indian Space Research Organization of the Department of Space, Government of India, Bengaluru to set up an ISRO-IITR Space Technology Cell (STC) at IIT Roorkee, recognizing 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.

IIT KGP signs MoU with C-DAC for high performance computing

- **Á** The IIT Kharagpur has signed an 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.
- **Á** PetaFlop is the measurement of computing power based on the frequency of mathematical calculations that can be done per second.

The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) is an Autonomous Scientific Society of Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY), Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, Government of India. It was established to research and assemble High Performance Computers. It is headquartered in Pune, Maharashtra.

NASA's Fermi Satellite clocks 'cannonball' pulsar speeding through space

- **Á** Astronomers found a pulsar hurtling through space at nearly 2.5 million miles an hour — so fast it could travel the distance between Earth and the Moon in just 6 minutes. The discovery was made using NASA's

Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope and the National Science Foundation's Karl G. Jansky Very Large Array (VLA).

- **Pulsars are superdense**, rapidly spinning neutron stars left behind when a massive star explodes. **This one, dubbed PSR J0002+6216 (J0002 for short)**, sports a radio-emitting tail pointing directly toward the expanding debris of a recent supernova explosion.

Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope (FGST), formerly called the Gamma-ray Large Area Space Telescope (GLAST), is a space observatory being used to perform gamma-ray astronomy observations from low Earth orbit. Fermi was launched on 11 June 2008. The mission is a joint venture of NASA, the United States Department of Energy, and government agencies in France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and Sweden, becoming the most sensitive gamma-ray telescope on orbit, succeeding INTEGRAL.

Intain Fintech to launch blockchain product

- **Intain Fintech**, an AI and block chain-based software products firm, will be launching eMulya, an intelligent block chain that facilitates efficient, secure and trustworthy asset securitisation transactions for NBFCs in India by end-2019.
- **Intain has its global AI Lab in Pune with 10 people** and it will hire 15 more staff in Chennai for this purpose. Mr. Siddhartha said the firm had enough funds to carry its operations till 2019 and it was **looking for raising \$2 million**.

Indian Navy - first Responder to Cyclone 'IDAI' in Mozambique 19 Mar 19

- **The ships of First Training Squadron of Indian Navy (Sujata, Sarathi and Shardul)** operating in the Southern Indian Ocean were diverted to Port Beira, Mozambique based on request received from the Government of Mozambique to provide **Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR)** to the local population post the devastation caused by cyclone 'IDAI' which struck the coast of Mozambique.
- **INS Sujata along with ICGS Sarathi arrived at Port Beira** morning of 18 Mar 19 whilst **INS Shardul** arrived on 19 Mar 19 and are providing necessary support to the local administration.
- **Cyclone 'IDAI' made landfall at Beira, Mozambique** in early hours of 15 Mar 19 causing widespread damage and loss of human life in the Central and Northern provinces of the country.

Cyclone Idai is regarded as one of the worst tropical cyclones on record to affect Africa and the Southern Hemisphere as a whole. The long-lived storm caused catastrophic damage in Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi, leaving more than 700 people dead and hundreds more are missing. The tenth named storm and seventh intense tropical cyclone of the 2018–19 South-West Indian Ocean cyclone seasons, Idai originated from a tropical depression that formed off the east coast of Mozambique on 4 March.

ISRO launched 29 satellites including EMISAT

- **India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C45) successfully launched EMISAT and 28 international customer satellites** from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR in Sriharikota. This flight marked the first mission of PSLV-QL, a new variant of PSLV with four strap-on motors.
- **EMISAT has been developed for monitoring radar network by India.** EMISAT, weighing 436 kg, is intended for electromagnetic spectrum measurement.
- **EMISAT is the first electronic reconnaissance satellite developed by the state-run Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** to detect enemy radar and gather communications intelligence.
- **It will be placed in an orbit of about 753 km altitude.** The customer payloads are from Lithuania, Spain, Switzerland and the US. They will be hurled into space at an altitude of about 505 km.

Indian Space Research Organisation is the space agency of the Government of India headquartered in the city of Bangalore. ISRO was formed in 1969. ISRO built India's first satellite, Aryabhata, which was launched by the Soviet Union on 19 April 1975. Dr Kailasavadivoo Sivan Nadar is current the chairperson of the ISRO.

Ooty's muon detection facility measures potential of thundercloud

- **For the first time in the world, researchers at the GRAPES-3 muon telescope facility in Ooty have measured the electrical potential, size and height of a thundercloud** that passed overhead on December 1, 2014. At 1.3 gigavolts (GV), this cloud had **10 times higher potential than the previous record** in a cloud.
- **This is not because clouds with such high potentials are a rarity**, but rather, because the methods of detection have not been successful so far.

India's indigenous supersonic fighter jet Tejas took part in Malaysia's LIMA

- **India's indigenous supersonic fighter jet Tejas was for the first time participated in aerial displays during the five-day Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) in Malaysia.**
- **India's indigenous supersonic Light Combat Aircraft(LCA)-Tejas & the world's lightest supersonic fighter which has already joined IAF, is for the first time took part in aerial displays during 05 day Langkawi International Maritime & Aerospace Exhibition.**

The HAL Tejas is an Indian single-engine, delta wing, multirole light fighter designed by the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy. It came from the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme, which began in the 1980s to replace India's ageing MiG-21 fighters. In 2003, the LCA was officially named "Tejas".

Vega Rocket launches Earth-Watching PRISMA Satellite for Italy

- **PRISMA satellite was launched on 22 March 2019 aboard a Vega rocket. A European Vega rocket carried a new Earth-observation satellite into orbit for the Italian Space Agency, lighting up the nighttime sky over its French Guiana launch site.**
- **The PRISMA Earth observation satellite lifted off at from the South America's Guiana Space Center in Kourou, French Guiana. The satellite will operate in a sun-synchronous orbit**, meaning that it circles the Earth in such a way that the sun is always in the same position as the satellite takes pictures of the planet below.

PRISMA (Hyperspectral Precursor of the Application Mission) is an Italian Space Agency pre-operational and technology demonstrator mission focused on the development and delivery of hyperspectral products and the qualification of the hyperspectral payload in space. PRISMA is an Earth observation satellite with innovative electro-optical instrumentation which combines a hyperspectral sensor with a medium-resolution panchromatic camera.

India successfully conducts anti-satellite missile test

- **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 interceptor missile was a three-stage missile with two solid rocket boosters. India has demonstrated anti-satellite missile capability by shooting down a live satellite on a Low Earth Orbit.

Anti-satellite weapons (ASAT) are space weapons designed to incapacitate or destroy satellites for strategic military purposes. Several nations possess operational ASAT systems. Although no ASAT system has yet been utilised in warfare. **Only the United States, Russia , China, and India have demonstrated this capability successfully.**

Russia develops washing machine for space

- The days of astronauts packing enough clean clothes to last a whole mission could soon be over as Russia said that it is developing a washing machine for space.
- The RKK Energiya Corporation, which builds spacecraft, dropped a brief mention of the innovation in a video posted on YouTube.
- With water at a premium, currently astronauts on the International Space Station (ISS) for stints of some six months cannot wash their clothes in any way and simply put on new outfits when their clothes get dirty.

GRSE becomes 'first' Indian shipyard to deliver 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, Rear Admiral (Retd) V K Saxena, formally handed over the 100th warship -- 'IN LCU L-56' -- to the Indian Navy.

INS Kadmatt participated in maritime and aerospace exhibition in Malaysia

- Indian Navy's frontline corvette INS Kadmatt reached Malaysian archipelago Langkawi and participated in the 15th edition of Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA-19).
- Vice Admiral Karambir Singh, Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, and the Chief of Naval Staff designate led the Indian delegation and attend various engagements as part of LIMA 19.

INS Kadmatt is an indigenous stealth anti-submarine warfare corvette and was commissioned into the Indian Navy in January 2016. The primary role of the INS Kadmatt is in anti-submarine warfare – to protect ships in convoys and ports from enemy submarine attacks.

Inventions/Discoveries

IIT-Delhi scientists create 'DotBook', India's first Braille laptop for visually-impaired

- The alumnus and researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi have created a laptop for visually-impaired. In what they claim to be a first in the country, the laptop has an interface in form of dots or Braille instead of a visual one. The researchers have named it 'DotBook'.
- Pulkit Sapra from Delhi and Suman Murali krishnan from Chennai both students of IIT-Delhi did not opt for a job and continued researching on the topic which after five years was launched as India's first laptop for visually-impaired.

The laptop comes with 4 GB internal storage and is expandable up to 64 GB. It is built in Linux. The 20-Cell Braille Variant has Perkins Keys while the 40-Cell Braille Variant with QWERTY keyboard. The 40 cell version costs Rs 60,000 and the 20 cell version comes at a price of Rs 40,000. The laptop can be connected with mobile phones and other laptops to provide a visual display for sighted persons.

Scientists gave mice 'night vision' with nanoparticles injection

- The team led by Tian Xue from the University of Science and Technology of China and Gang Han from the University of Massachusetts Medical School Scientists claim to have successfully given 'night vision' to mice, allowing them to see infrared light with minimal side effects.
- Mice see approximately the same small slice of the electromagnetic spectrum as visible light that we do — about 380 to 740 nanometers. By injecting the nanoparticles into mice, added the near-infrared (800 to 1,000nm)

to the mouse's visible spectrum. **Experiments confirmed the animals could see infrared light for about ten weeks after the injection**, and there were no ill effects.

First exoplanet Kepler spotted finally confirmed

- **Ten years after it was launched, the first exoplanet candidate spotted by NASA's Kepler space telescope has finally been confirmed as a real world.**
- **The exoplanet known as Kepler-1658 b is a massive hot Jupiter that whips around its star every 3.85 days, according to scientists from the University of Hawaii in the U.S.**

Kepler spacecraft was launched in 2009 with an objective to learn more about the number and frequency of planets in our galaxy, the telescope which is some 94 million miles away from Earth has continuously monitored over 150,000 stars in the Cygnus-Lyra region and has discovered over 4,600 planet candidates as per the data provided by NASA.

New solar-powered device creates water from thin air

- **In a "breakthrough", scientists have developed a novel solar-powered harvesting system that absorbs moisture from the air and converts it into clean, usable water.**
- **The technology could be used in disaster situations, water crises or poverty-stricken areas and developing countries. It relies on hydrogels, gel-polymer hybrid materials designed to be "super sponges" that can retain large amounts of water.**
- **Researchers led by Guihua Yu from The University of Texas at Austin in the US used hydrogels that are both highly water absorbent and can release water upon heating.**

Scientists use solar power to create hydrogen fuel from seawater

- **Stanford scientists have devised a way to generate hydrogen fuel from seawater using solar power, an advance that may help pave the way for a novel sustainable source of energy. The findings, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, demonstrate a new way of separating hydrogen and oxygen gas from salt water.**
- **The technology could also be used for purposes beyond generating energy. Since the process also produces breathable oxygen, divers or submarines could bring devices into the ocean and generate oxygen down below without having to surface for air. Existing water-splitting methods rely on highly purified water, which is a precious resource and costly to produce. Theoretically, to power cities and cars, "you need so much hydrogen it is not conceivable to use purified water," said Hongjie Dai, professor at Stanford University in US.**

Evidence of water, particle plumes found on asteroid Benu: NASA

- **A NASA spacecraft, which will return a sample of a near-Earth asteroid named Benu to Earth in 2023, has discovered plumes erupting from the cosmic body's surface — among a numerous other findings including evidence of water-bearing minerals.**
- **Benu also revealed itself to be more rugged than expected, challenging the mission team to alter its flight and sample collection plans, due to the rough terrain.**
- **Benu is the target of NASA's Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer (Osiris-REx) mission, which is intended to return samples to Earth in 2023 for further study.**

National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is an independent agency of the executive branch of the United States federal government responsible for the civilian space program, as well as aeronautics and aerospace research. President Dwight D. Eisenhower established NASA in 1958. James Frederick Bridenstine is an American politician and the current administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. He became the first member of Congress to lead NASA.

Caltech Researchers have found a new way to levitate objects using only light

- **Researchers at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech)** say they've found a way to levitate and propel objects using only light - though, for the time being, the work remains theoretical.
- **That means no fuel needed** - just a powerful laser fired at a spacecraft from back on Earth. **The Caltech scientists devised the so-called "photonic levitation and propulsion" system** by designing a complex pattern that could be etched into an object's surface.
- The way the concentrated light beam reflected from the etching causes the object to "self-stabilize", they say, as it attempts to stay inside the focused laser beam. **The first breakthrough that laid the groundwork for the new research were the development of "optical tweezers"** - scientific instruments that use a powerful laser beam to attract or push away microscopic objects.

Network of lakes discovered beneath Antarctica

- **Scientists have discovered a network of lakes beneath the largest glacier in East Antarctica**, a finding that may be critical in predicting how the melting of polar ice will change the world's oceans in the future.
- **Researchers of the Australian Antarctic Program have undertaken seismic studies to find out if there is bedrock or water, as subglacial lakes or ocean**, under the ice. The flow of water in and out of these lakes has the potential to exert a powerful control on the rate that the ice flows into the oceans.

Artificial Intelligence discovers two planets from space telescope data

- **Scientists have used artificial intelligence (AI) to uncover two more hidden planets** in the data collected by the Kepler space telescope.
- The technique shows promise for **identifying many additional planets that traditional methods could not catch**. **Researchers from The University of Texas at Austin in the US created an algorithm** that sifts through the data taken by Kepler to ferret out signals that were missed by traditional planet-hunting methods.

Hubble Tracks the Lifecycle of Giant Storms on Neptune

- **In 1989, NASA's Voyager 2 zipped past Neptune**—its final planetary target before speeding to the outer limits of the solar system. **It was the first time a spacecraft had visited the remote world**. As the craft zoomed by, it snapped pictures of two giant storms brewing in Neptune's southern hemisphere. **Scientists dubbed the storms "The Great Dark Spot" and "Dark Spot 2."**
- In the new study, planetary scientists analyzed **Hubble's photos of the ice giant taken over the past several years** and chronicled the growth of a new Great Dark Spot that became visible in 2018.

James Webb Space Telescope billed as the successor to the Hubble Space Telescope, the new space telescope is an infrared observatory designed to peer deep into the universe, study the earliest stars and galaxies, and seek out strange new planets around distant stars. NASA has delayed the launch of its much awaited, \$8 billion James Webb Space Telescope set to be the world's biggest space observatory until at least May 2020.

Health/ Disease

Microsoft successfully translates digital information into DNA

- In the future, you will be storing data not into megabytes or gigabytes, but into DNA. In what comes as a significant achievement, **Microsoft and researchers from the University of Washington have been able to translate digital information into DNA and then back to bits.** Together, the researchers have been able to **build a full end-to-end automated DNA storage device.**
- The prototype device converted the word 'Hello' into DNA. The device first encoded the bits (1's and 0's) into DNA sequences (A's, C's, T's, G's). It then synthesized the DNA and stored it as a liquid. This was then read by a DNA sequences, and software translated the sequences back into bits.

Microsoft Corporation is an American multinational technology company with headquarters in Redmond, Washington. Microsoft was founded by Paul Allen and Bill Gates on April 4, 1975, to develop and sell BASIC interpreters for the Altair 8800. The first versions of two classic Microsoft products, Microsoft Word and the Windows operating system, were released in 1983. By 1991, Microsoft's operating systems were used by 93 percent of the world's personal computers.

Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is a molecule composed of two chains that coil around each other to form a double helix carrying the genetic instructions used in the growth, development, functioning, and reproduction of all known organisms and many viruses. DNA was first isolated by Friedrich Miescher in 1869. Its molecular structure was first identified by Francis Crick and James Watson at the Cavendish Laboratory within the University of Cambridge in 1953.

7,000 new marine microbial species discovered

- Researchers have discovered more than 7,000 new microbial species from the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans, enhancing our understanding of biodiversity in the world seas.
- The scientists at The Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST) discovered the microbial species, including Acidobacteria — a natural medicinal phylum containing the CRISPR gene editing system found at sea for the first time.

Acidobacteria -- one of the new marine phyla identified in this research only exist in terrestrial soils, and has been used for developing novel antibiotics and anti-tumour drugs due to its high level of biosynthetic gene clusters.

IIT-H's device detects heart attack early

- A low-cost, ultra-sensitive device that is capable of detecting the cardiac biomarker troponin T protein has been fabricated by a research team from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad.
- This could help pave the way for early diagnosis of a heart attack, increasing a patient's survival rate. It even has the potential to be able to predict the onset of a heart attack.

Troponin T is a cardiac protein that is released into the bloodstream after a heart attack. Unlike the commercially available test that can detect the protein at nanogram per ml concentration, this device can detect the protein at an extremely low concentration of femto gram per ml.

ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT



India to collaborate with four nations to protect Asian rhinos

- **India** will collaborate with **Bhutan, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia** to increase the population of three species of Asian rhinos, including the **Greater one-horned rhinoceros** found in the Indian sub-continent.
- **The five rhino range nations** signed a declaration ‘**The New Delhi Declaration on Asian Rhinos 2019**’ for the conservation and protection of the species.

The greater one-horned rhino (or “Indian rhino”) is the **largest of the rhino species**. Once widespread across the entire northern part of the Indian sub-continent, rhino populations plummeted as they were hunted for sport or killed as agricultural pests. **It is listed as Vulnerable on the IUCN Red List**, as populations are fragmented and **restricted to less than 20,000 km² (7,700 sq mi)**.

India’s biodiversity-rich zones also ‘hotspots’ of human impacts

- **Human impacts on species occur across 84% of the earth’s surface**, finds a study published on March 13 in PLOS Biology, an international journal dedicated to biological science.
- **Southeast Asian tropical forests including India’s biodiversity-rich Western Ghats, Himalaya and the north-east also fall in this category; India ranks 16th in such human impacts**, with 35 species impacted on average.
- **A team of scientists led by James Allan (University of Queensland) found this** when they mapped the distribution of eight human activities — including hunting and conversion of natural habitats for agriculture — in areas occupied by **5,457 threatened birds, mammals and amphibians worldwide**.

India’s newest frog evolved 60 million years ago

- It is just **2 cm long and sports pale blue spots and brilliant orange thighs**. The **discovery of the starry dwarf frog, a nocturnal amphibian that lives under leaf litter on a mountaintop in Kerala’s Wayanad**.
- **The team named the new species the starry dwarf frog *Astrobatrachus kurichiyana* (genus *Astrobatrachus* after its starry spots and kurichiyana in honour of the Kurichiya tribal community who live in the area). It is not only a new species but different enough to be assigned to a new ‘subfamily’.**

A climate vulnerability index for India on the anvil

- **The Department of Science and Technology (DST) will be commissioning 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** and discussed at last year's U.N. climate change conference in Poland that **found States such as Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand vulnerable to climate change.**

UN Environment's sixth Global Environment Outlook released

- The **United Nation Environment Program (UNEP)** has released the sixth edition of the **Global Environment Outlook (2019)** titled '**Healthy Planet, Healthy People**'.
- The **GEO -6** has reviewed the **state of the health of the environment** and the **related health of the people** and the prospects for **meeting the Sustainable Development Goals of the UN's Agenda 2030.**

Meghalaya's community-managed forests protect endangered Western Hoolock Gibbon

- The **Western Hoolock Gibbon**, the **only wild ape found in India** and also among the **most endangered primates in the world**, has found a safe haven thanks to the people of Meghalaya.
- It is estimated that **only about 3,000 Western Hoolock gibbons are left in northeast India.** These gibbons are listed among the **25 most endangered primates in the world.**
- The species is classified as endangered by the **International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)** and as a **schedule 1 species** by the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.**

India's carbon dioxide emissions up 5%

- **India emitted 2,299 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2018, a 4.8% rise from last year**, according to a report by the **International Energy Agency (IEA).** **India's emissions growth this year was higher than that of the United States and China — the two biggest emitters in the world —** and this was primarily due to a rise in coal consumption.
- **India's per capita emissions were about 40% of the global average and contributed 7% to the global carbon dioxide burden.** The **United States, the largest emitter, was responsible for 14%.**
- As per its commitments to the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, India has promised to reduce the emissions intensity of its economy by 2030, compared to 2005 levels.** **India has also committed to having 40% of its energy from renewable sources by 2030** and, as part of this, **installs 100 GW of solar power by 2022.**

SPORTS



Sports Personalities in News

Roger Federer wins 100th ATP title in Dubai with victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas

- **Á Roger Federer - a 20-time Grand Slam champion - beat Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4 6-4. Federer's first ATP title came at the Milan Indoors on 4 February, 2001, when he beat Frenchman Julien Boutter.**
- **Á Switzerland's Belinda Bencic won Dubai Championship women's Singles title by defeating Petra Kvitova of Czech Republic. This is Belinda's first win over second seed Kvitova.**

Sheikh Ahmad re-elected Asia Olympic chief amid Swiss probe

- **Á Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah has been re-elected president of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) for an eighth term despite being embroiled in a forgery case brought by Swiss investigators.**
- **Á The long-serving Kuwaiti, a powerful ally of International Olympic Committee (IOC) head Thomas Bach, was re-elected unanimously at the OCA general assembly in Bangkok, the OCA has said.**
- **Á An IOC member since 1992, Sheikh Ahmad stepped down from his roles in the global Olympic body in November, less than two weeks after the Public Prosecutor of Geneva submitted a forgery accusation to a criminal court against the Kuwaiti and four others.**

P. Iniyan becomes the 61st Grandmaster of India

- **Á P. Iniyan, the 16-year-old boy has become the 61st Grandmaster of India after crossing 2,500 points during the Noisiel Open 2019, held in Paris.**

Randhir Singh appointed coordination committee chairman of 2022 Asian Games

- **Á Veteran Indian sports administrator Randhir Singh has been appointed as the chairman of the Coordination Committee of the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games by the General Assembly of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA). Randhir had served as Secretary General of the OCA for 24 years from 1991 to 2015.**

China's Liu sets 50km walk World record

- **Á China's Liu Hong set a new World record for the women's 50km race walk, becoming the first woman to complete the event in under four hours.**

Indian wrestlers win 4 medals including two golds at Dan Kolov-Nikol Petrov tournament

- **Indian wrestlers** have won four medals including two golds at the Dan Kolov-Nikol Petrov tournament in Ruse, Bulgaria.
- **Bajrang Punia** won gold in the freestyle wrestling 65kg category and **Pooja Dhanda** claimed gold in the 59kg category.

World Fame 100: Virat Kohli only Indian in top 10, MS Dhoni in 13th spot

- **This year's ESPN World Fame 100 list**, an annual list of the most famous athletes on the planet, placed the Portuguese footballer **Cristiano Ronaldo** at the top spot, followed by basketball player **LeBron James** and FC Barcelona captain **Lionel Messi**.
- **Eight Indian cricketers** found a place in the list. **Kohli** bagged the seventh position and is the only Indian athlete in the top 10, whereas **Dhoni** is placed in the 13th spot.

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.

One gold, four silver medals for India at Finland boxing tourney

- **Kavinder Singh Bisht** in the 56kg-category struck gold while **Shiva Thapa** in the 60kg category and three others claimed silver medals to end a fine Indian campaign at the 38th GeeBee Boxing Tournament in Helsinki, Finland.

Mumbai Indians owner Mukesh Ambani tops list of richest sports owners

- **Mukesh Ambani**, the 13th richest person in the world is also the richest sports team owner according to **Forbes' The World's Richest Sports Team Owners 2019 list**. In 2019 alone, his fortune reportedly increased from \$40.1 billion in 2018 to \$50 billion and that resulted in him climbing six spots, from 19th to 13th on the Forbes World's Billionaire list.
- Recently, at the **Indian Super League final between Bengaluru FC and FC Goa in Mumbai**, the television presenter called **Nita Ambani**, the wife of businessman **Mukesh Ambani**, "the first lady of Indian football." And that is because to the naked eye, Nita Ambani and Reliance have contributed massively to the Indian Super League which might well be the only league in the country from next season onwards.

Irfan is first Indian to qualify for Tokyo Games

- **National record holder K.T. Irfan** became the first Indian to qualify for next year's Tokyo Olympics while finishing fourth in the 20 km event of the Asian Race Walking Championships in Nomi, Japan.
- **Japan's Toshikazu Yamanishi** won the 20 km race walk event with an impressive time of 1:17:15 while Kazakhstan's Georgiy Sheiko and Korea's Byeongkwang Choe were second and third in 1:20:21 and 1:20:40.
- The Asian and World record in men's 20 km race walk stands in the name of Japanese **Yusuke Suzuki** who clocked 1:16:36 in the 2015 edition of the same championships in Nomi.

Diksha triumphs in Cape Town

- **Diksha Dagar** became only the second Indian woman golfer to win on the Ladies European Tour. Diksha, 18, follows **Aditi Ashok**, who became the first Indian to win on the LET in 2016.

Former hockey captain Sardar Singh named in OCA Standing Committee

- **Former India hockey captain Sardar Singh** has been named in the Standing Committee of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) at its 38th General Assembly in Bangkok.

- **Á Sardar is part of a 10-member panel** which has been **nominated for a four-year term from 2019 to 2023**. The OCA General Assembly was held in Bangkok on March 2 and 3.

Suresh Raina becomes first player to score 5,000 IPL runs

- **Á Suresh Raina** added another feather to his illustrious cap, as the Chennai Super Kings' (CSK) batsman **became the first in the Indian Premier League (IPL) history to amass 5,000 runs**.
- **Á During the ongoing IPL 2019 opener against Royal Challengers Bangalore**, Raina, a vital cog in the Chennai's armory, achieved the rare feat as soon as he touched the individual score of 15.

Former top-10 badminton player Joachim Persson banned

- **Á Denmark's Joachim Persson** has been **banned for 18 months for offences linked to betting and match-fixing**, the Badminton World Federation said.
- **Á The 36-year-old former world number six was found guilty of “four violations of the code of conduct in relation to betting, wagering and irregular match results”**.

Manu Bhaker-Saurabh Chaudhary bag Gold medal in 10m Air Pistol Mixed event at Asian Airgun C'ship

- **Á In Shooting**, Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary have bagged a Gold medal in the 10-metre Air Pistol Mixed team event at the 12th Asian Airgun Championship at Taoyuan in Taipei.
- **Á The teenage Indian duo went on to win the five-team final with a score of 484.8 points**.

Manu Bhaker shoots another gold

- **Á Manu Bhaker won her second gold medal, topping the air pistol event with a total of 239.0** in the 12th Asian airgun championship.

Sport Events

World wrestling body asks all national federations to suspend dealing with India

- **Á The United World Wrestling (UWW) has asked all the national federations under it to stop communication with the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) in the wake of visa denial of Pakistani shooters in the recent World Cup**.
- **Á The denial of visa to Pakistani shooters had led to the International Olympic Committee suspending discussions with India** for hosting future global events. The denial of visas to Pakistani shooters in the Delhi World Cup last month has **jeopardised India's chances of hosting the Olympics or any global event with the IOC suspending all such discussions with the country** and recommending that no big tournament be awarded to it.

United World Wrestling (UWW) is the international governing body for the sport of amateur wrestling; its duties include overseeing wrestling at the Olympics. **The first International Federation for the development of wrestling and weight lifting was created in Duisburg in 1905 by the Deutsche Athleten-Verband (DAV).**

Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports recognises Kudo International Federation India as National Sport Federation

- **Á Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has granted provisional recognition to Kudo International Federation India (KIFI) as National Sport Federation with immediate effect**.

- **The grant of recognition is subject to compliance of the provisions of National Sports Development Code of India, 2011** as modified from time to time, by the federation including displaying information on their website as per the instructions issued by the Ministry.
- The recognition means granting a major role to KIFI Association for promotion and Development of Kudo sport in India.

5th SAAF Women's Championship begins in Nepal

- In the opening match, hosts Nepal easily defeated Bhutan by 3-0. India remained unbeaten in 19 matches from last four editions of the championship.
- Defending champion India defeated Maldives by 6-0 in the 5th South Asian Football Federation (SAFF) Women's Championship.

Special Olympics World Games 2019 makes history

- **Special Olympics World Games 2019** which is held from March 14 to March 21 in UAE, has made history by welcoming a record-breaking 200 nations ahead of the Games. Of the 200 nations, 195 will compete in the Games and five will observe.
- It is being held in West Asia for the first time. 7,500 athletes will take part in 24 Olympic-style sports over seven days.

Argentina, Colombia set to be co-hosts of 2020 Copa America

- Argentina and Colombia are poised to co-host the 2020 Copa America after South America's ruling body CONMEBOL once again ruled out a US proposal to host the tournament.

Mayank, Kadam lead Karnataka to maiden T20 title

- Mayank Agarwal (85 n.o., 57b, 6x4, 3x6) put up a class act at the Holkar Stadium and led Karnataka to its first Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 title. The win against Maharashtra in the final was its 12th on the trot in this year's tournament.

India to host U-17 Women's Football World Cup in 2020

- The 2020 FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup will be the 7th edition of the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, the biennial international women's youth football championship contested by the under-17 national teams of the member associations of FIFA, since its inception in 2008.
- The tournament will be held in India. Spain team is the defending champions, having won their first title in 2018.

Tokyo unveils chatty robots for 2020 Olympics

- Tokyo Olympic organisers rolled out a pair of chatty robots they will put to work to assist wheelchair users at the 2020 Games.
- Toyota unveiled its human support (HSR) and delivery support robots (DSR), which are set to act as seat ushers and will fetch food and drinks.
- Tokyo will host the 2020 Summer Olympics and the 2020 Summer Paralympics.

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.

India finishes second in medal tally at Asian Youth Championships

- **Boys medley relay team won a gold medal for India on the final day of the Asian Youth Athletics Championships 2019 in Hong Kong** to help Indian youth team **finish second in the overall medals tally** with a **total of 26 medals** including eight gold, nine silver and nine bronze medals.
- **China topped the overall medals tally with 31 medals** that included **12 gold, 11 silver and eight bronze medals**.

Tokyo 2020 Olympics torch unveiled

- **Organisers of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics unveiled a cherry-blossom shaped torch for the Games** as the city prepares for the famed flower season to begin in coming days. The top part of the torch is shaped in the traditional emblem of the sakura, or cherry blossom using the same cutting-edge technology as in production of Japan's bullet trains, the organisers said.
- **The shiny rose-gold torch, which is 71 centimetres (28 inches) long and weighs 1.2 kilograms (2 pounds 10 ounces),** uses aluminium construction waste from temporary housing built for victims of the 2011 quake and tsunami.
- **Fukushima was chosen as the starting point for the Olympic torch relay.** The passing of the flame is scheduled to start on March 26, 2020, and the torch will head south to the sub-tropical island of Okinawa -- the **starting point for the 1964 Tokyo Games relay** -- before returning north and arriving in the Japanese capital on July 10.

India bag 368 medals at Special Olympics World Games

- **India has bagged 368 medals - 85 Gold, 154 Silver and 129 Bronze at Special Olympic Games in Abu Dhabi.** Our correspondent reports that the eight-day extravaganza finally drew to a close in a spectacular ceremony.

India wins fifth consecutive SAFF Women's Championship

- **India won their fifth consecutive SAFF Women's Football championship** defeating hosts Nepal 3-1 in the finals.
- **Dalima Chhiber, Grace Dangmei and substitute Anju scored for the team. This win has extended India's run in the tournament history to 23 games.**

South Korea defeat India in Azlan Shah Cup final

- **India has lost to South Korea in the final of Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey tournament** at Ipoh in Malaysia. South Korea lifted the title, defeating India in a shootout 4-2.

Sultan Azlan Shah Cup is an annual international men's field hockey tournament held in Malaysia. It began in 1983 as a biennial contest.

China wins 2019 badminton Asia mixed team trophy

- **China won the 2019 badminton Asia mixed team championships by defeating Japan 3-2 in the final.**

Breakdancing makes next move to Olympic status at Paris 2024

- **The Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has recommended adding breakdancing, skateboarding, and sport climbing and surfing to the 2024 Paris Olympic Games** when the full membership meets in June. A final decision must be made by the board in December 2020 after further monitoring of the four.

AWARDS



Two Nobel Prizes for literature will be awarded this year: Swedish Academy

- The Swedish Academy has said that **two Nobel Prizes for literature** will be awarded this year. The decision comes after a sex scandal causing the suspension of the award last year.
- The Academy in a statement at Stockholm said the Nobel Prize in Literature will be awarded this autumn for both 2018 and 2019.

The Nobel Prize in Literature is a Swedish literature prize that has been awarded annually, since 1901, to an author from any country who has, in the words of the will of Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel, produced "in the field of literature the most outstanding work in an ideal direction". It is one of the five Nobel Prizes established by the 1895 will of Alfred Nobel, which are awarded for outstanding contributions in chemistry, physics, literature, peace, and physiology or medicine. The first Nobel Prize in Literature was awarded in 1901 to Sully Prudhomme of France. In 2017, the Swedish Academy awarded Kazuo Ishiguro the Nobel Prize in Literature.

Japan's Arata Isozaki wins top architecture prize

- Japanese architect Arata Isozaki has been awarded the Pritzker Prize, considered architecture's highest honour, for a lifetime of work that found global resonance while mining local traditions.
- The 87-year-old's over 100 works range from the Palau Saint Jordi, built in Barcelona for the 1992 Summer Olympics, to the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, his first international commission.

Tripura's tribal musician Thanga Darlong awarded first AB Vajpayee Life Time Award

- Tripura's Thanga Darlong, the last tribal musician to play Rosem – a bamboo made a flute-like musical instrument, was conferred the Atal Behari Vajpayee Life Time Award during the 37th Agartala Book Fair.
- Deputy Chief Minister Jishnu Devvarma handed over the first AB Vajpayee Life Time Achievement Award to the Rosem maestro and congratulated him for preserving the musical form.
- In January, the 99-year old tribal musician and music guru was conferred with the prestigious Padma Shri award for his contribution to the field of music. He is scheduled to receive the award from President Ramnath Kovind at New Delhi later this year.

- **Thanga Darlong** was also screened in ‘Tree of Tongues in Tripura’, directed by the National Awards winner Joshy Joseph in 2016.

President Kovind confers Padma awards

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** confers Padma awards at Rashtrapati Bhawan. **Fifty-six of the 112 personalities, who were selected for this year's Padma awards, were conferred the honour at a special function.**
- **Folk Singer from Chhattisgarh Teejan Bai, President of Djibouti Ismail Omar Guelleh, Noted author and Maratha history scholar Babasaheb Purandare and executive chairman of L&T Anil Kumar Manibhai Naik are recipients of Padma Vibhushan this year. Fourteen persons have been selected for Padma Bhushan which includes Scientist Nambi Narayan, Malayalam Actor Mohanlal, South African politician Pravin Gordhan and late journalist Kuldip Nayar.**

The Padma Awards are one of the highest civilian honours of India announced annually on the eve of Republic Day. The Awards are given in three categories: Padma Vibhushan (for exceptional and distinguished service), Padma Bhushan (distinguished service of higher order) and Padma Shri (distinguished service). The award seeks to recognize achievements in all fields of activities or disciplines where an element of public service is involved. The Government of India instituted two civilian awards-Bharat Ratna & Padma Vibhushan in 1954. The latter had three classes namely Pahela Varg, Dusra Varg and Tisra Varg. These were subsequently renamed as Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri vide Presidential Notification issued on January 8, 1955.

Raghu Karnad's book on war gets Campbell prize

- **Writer Raghu Karnad** has won the Windham-Campbell prize under non-fiction category for his work **Farthest Field: An Indian Story of the Second World War (2015).**
- **TheWire.in's Chief of Bureau and editor-at-large is among eight writers who have been chosen for this award this year and will get a cash prize of \$1, 65,000.**

Indian social entrepreneur wins Commonwealth award

- **A social entrepreneur from Tamil Nadu bagged the Commonwealth Youth Award for the Asian region from among hundreds of nominations for his technology-based food rescue organisation.**
- **Padmanaban Gopalan, founder of No Food Waste, was named the winner of the award worth 3,000 pounds at a ceremony at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London for his work towards achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Zero Hunger with his innovative system of recovering excess food to distribute to those in need.**

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presented the Business Line Change maker Of the Year award

- **Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presented the 'Business Line Changemaker Of The Year award' to Union Minister Arun Jaitley for successfully introducing the Goods and Services Tax (GST).**

Greta Thunberg nominated for Nobel peace prize

- **Greta Thunberg, the founder of the Youth Strike for Climate movement, has been nominated for the Nobel peace prize.**
- **Thunberg began a solo protest in Sweden in August but has since inspired students around the globe. Strikes are expected in 1,659 towns and cities in 105 countries, involving hundreds of thousands of young people.**

The first Nobel Peace Prize was awarded in 1901 to Frederic Passy and Henry Dunant; the prize was awarded to the International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons in 2017. The Norwegian Nobel Committee has decided to award the Nobel Peace Prize for 2018 to Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict.

India Bags First Prize at the International ‘Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019’ In ‘TV Cinema Spot’ Category at ITB, Berlin

- The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has won the First Prize in the category of TV Cinema Spot at the prestigious international Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019.
- The Golden City Gate Tourism Multi-media Awards are given annually in various categories related to the Tourism and Hospitality sectors. The ‘Golden City Gate’ is a creative multi-media international competition for countries, cities, regions and hotels.

Swati Shingade bags first prize of DD Mahila Kisan Award

- Swati Shingade of Pune, Maharashtra has bagged the first prize of DD Mahila Kisan Award for 2018-19.
- Prasara Bharati Chairman A Surya Prakash gave away the award to Ms Shingade at a grand finale event organised by DD Kisan Channel in New Delhi.

Seema Mehta bags 'Nari Shakti Puraskar' award

- Renowned Kathak dancer Seema Mehta has been conferred the 'Nari Shakti Puraskar' award for her contribution towards women empowerment over the last 15 years.
- She received the award from President Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhawan in New Delhi as part of the Women's Day celebrations.

Karen Uhlenbeck is first woman to win prestigious maths Abel prize

- Mathematician Karen Uhlenbeck has become the first woman to win the Abel prize, sometimes called the Nobel prize of mathematics. 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.
- Gauge theory underpins much of modern theoretical physics, and is integral to cutting-edge research in particle physics, general relativity and string theory. Her work laid the foundations for one of the major milestones of 20th-century physics, the unification of two of the four fundamental forces of nature: electromagnetism and the weak nuclear force.

Abel Prize is a Norwegian prize awarded annually by the King of Norway to one or more outstanding mathematicians. It is named after Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel (1802–1829) and directly modeled after the Nobel Prizes. It comes with a monetary award of 6 million Norwegian Kroner (NOK). Jean-Pierre Serre is the first winner of this prize.

Marcelo Gleiser Wins the 2019 Templeton Prize

- Marcelo Gleiser, the Appleton Professor of Natural Philosophy and a professor of physics and astronomy, is the 2019 winner of the Templeton Prize.
- Gleiser joins an eminent roster of 48 past awardees, including Mother Teresa, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, and the Dalai Lama. The prize carries a monetary award of 1.1 million British pounds, or about \$1.4 million.

The Templeton Prize is an annual award granted to a living person who, in the estimation of the judges, "has made an exceptional contribution to affirming life's spiritual dimension, whether through insight, discovery, or practical works". It was established, funded and administered by John Templeton starting in 1972, and then after 1987 by the John Templeton Foundation. The prize was originally awarded to people working in the field of religion (Mother Teresa was the first winner), but in the 1980s the scope broadened to include people working at the intersection of science and religion.

Kusumagraj literature award for Ved Rahi

- **Á** Film director and novelist Ved Rahi has been selected for prestigious "Kusumagraj" national award for literature.
- **Á** Instituted by the city-based Yashwantrao Chavan Maharashtra Open University (YCMOU), the "Kusumagraj Rashtriya Sahitya Puraskar" carries cash prize of Rs one lakh, a memento and a citation.

Hindi writer Leeladhar Jagudi awarded Vyas Samman 2018

- **Á** Renowned Hindi writer Leeladhar Jagudi will be honoured with Vyas Samman 2018 for his collection of poems "Jitne Log Utne Prem". His poem book was published in 2013. He was born in Dhangal village in Tehri Garhwal district of Uttarakhand.
- **Á** He is author of several poetry anthologies including Natak Jari Hai and Shankha Mukhi Shikharon Par. He was awarded with many awards, including Sahitya Akademi Award, Akashvani National Award and Uttarakhand Gaurav Samman.
- **Á** The Government of India awarded him the fourth highest civilian honour of the Padma Shri, in 2004, for his contributions to Hindi literature.

Vyas Samman is given annually to outstanding literary work in Hindi authored by Indian citizen which has been published in the last decade. It was started in 1991 by the KK Birla Foundation. It carries monetary amount of Rs. 4 lakh.

Filmfare Awards 2019: Alia Bhatt's Raazi also took home the Best Film trophy

- **Á** The 64th Filmfare Awards ceremony, presented by the The Times Group, will honour the best Indian Hindi-language films of 2018. The venue for the 64th Filmfare Awards was the Jio Gardens in Mumbai and was hosted by Shah Rukh Khan with several stars swapping places as his co-host. **Bollywood's biggest award night - the 64th edition of the Filmfare Awards** - ended on a celebratory note for Team Raazi, which went home with as many as five of the black statuettes. **Alia Bhatt won Best Actress** for playing the role of a spy while **Raazi** also fetched **Meghna Gulzar the Best Director Filmfare Award**.
- **Á** **Raazi** also grabbed the **Best Film trophy**. Meanwhile, **Ranbir Kapoor** scored the **Best Actor Filmfare Award** for playing the role of Sanjay Dutt in biopic **Sanju**. **Ranveer Singh** won **Best Actor Critics' Award** for his menacing role in "**Padmaavat**". It was a tie in the category with **Ayushmann Khurrana** winning for **AndhaDhun**. **Neena Gupta** was awarded in the **Best Actress Critics' category** for playing a middle-aged pregnant mother in **Badhaai Ho**.
- **Á** "**Padmaavat**", which had as many as **17 categories**, scored win in four of them! **Raazi** clearly scored the highest number of awards at the 64th edition of the Filmfare Awards.
- **Á** **Best Film: Raazi**
- **Á** **Critics' Award for Best Film: AndhaDhun**
- **Á** **Best Actor in a Leading Role (Female):** Alia Bhatt, *Raazi*
- **Á** **Best Actor in a Leading Role (Male):** Ranbir Kapoor, *Sanju*
- **Á** **Critics' Award for Best Actor (Female):** Neena Gupta, *Badhaai Ho*
- **Á** **Critics' Award for Best Actor (Male):** Ranveer Singh for "*Padmaavat*", Ayushmann Khurrana for
- **Á** **Best Debut Actor (Female):** Sara Ali Khan, *Kedarnath*
- **Á** **Best Debut Actor (Male):** Ishaan Khatter, *Beyond The Clouds*
- **Á** **Best Director:** Meghna Gulzar, *Raazi*
- **Á** **Best Music Album:** "*Padmaavat*"

- **Best Playback Singer (Male):** Arijit Singh for *Ae Watan, Raazi*
- **Best Playback Singer (Female):** Shreya Ghoshal for *Ghoomar, "Padmaavat"*

Nobel Prize recipient Amartya Sen awarded with Oxford University's Bodley award

- Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen was awarded with the prestigious Bodley Medal, the highest honour granted by the University of Oxford's world-famous Bodleian Libraries.
- The medal is awarded to individuals who have made outstanding contributions to the fields in which the Bodleian is awarded are, including literature, culture, science, and communication.

Rita Moreno to be honoured with Peabody Career Achievement award

- Veteran actor Rita Moreno is set to receive 2019 Peabody Career Achievement honour. Moreno will be bestowed with the honour on May 18.
- The Peabody Career Achievement Award is for individuals whose work and commitment to electronic media has left an indelible mark on the field.

Turing Award Won by 3 Pioneers in Artificial Intelligence

- The Association for Computing Machinery, the world's largest society of computing professionals, announced that Drs. Hinton, LeCun and Bengio had won this year's Turing Award for their work on neural networks.
- The Turing Award, which was introduced in 1966, is often called the Nobel Prize of computing, and it includes a \$1 million prize, which the three scientists will share.

Kenyan science teacher Peter Tabichi wins global prize

- A science teacher from rural Kenya, who gives away most of his salary to support poorer pupils, has won a \$1m prize (£760,000) for the world's best teacher.
- Peter Tabichi, a member of the Franciscan religious order, won the 2019 Global Teacher Prize.

PERSONS IN NEWS

Soumya Swaminathan is WHO chief scientist

- As part of the reforms at the **World Health Organisation (WHO)**, **Soumya Swaminathan** has been moved from the **position of Deputy Director-General to chief scientist heading the division created to strengthen the organisation's core scientific work** and ensure the quality and consistency of its norms and standards.
- Previously, she was one of the three **Deputy Director-Generals** supporting the **Director-General** in overseeing all programmes. **She was the first Indian to hold the post.**

Shri Subhash Chandra Garg appointed as Finance Secretary

- The Appointments Committee of the **Cabinet** has **approved designating Shri Subhash Chandra Garg Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, and Ministry of Finance as Finance Secretary.**

Bernard Arnault, the richest person in Europe

- **French businessman Bernard Arnault** is the **richest person in Europe**. He's worth an estimated **\$80.8 billion**, according to **Bloomberg**.
- As the chairman and CEO of **LVMH Moët Hennessy Louis Vuitton SE**, known as **LVMH**, the world's largest maker of luxury goods, Arnault is also the richest person in the fashion industry.

UNDP appoints Padma Lakshmi as Goodwill Ambassador

- **Indian-American television personality and food expert Padma Lakshmi** has been **appointed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** as its newest goodwill ambassador.
- She will mobilise support for the sustainable development goals with a focus on **fighting inequality and empowering the disenfranchised.**

Ajit Kumar Mohanty appointed Director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre

- **Distinguished scientist Ajit Kumar Mohanty** has been **appointed Director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).**
- It is the country's **premier multi-disciplinary nuclear research facility based in Mumbai**. An order by the Ministry of Personnel and Training said Mohanty has been appointed Director for a period of three years

At 21, Kylie Jenner becomes the Youngest Self-Made Billionaire Ever

- **Kylie Jenner** was named the **youngest self-made billionaire of all time** by **Forbes** magazine, thanks to the booming cosmetics company she founded three years ago.
- **Jenner, 21**, the half-sister of reality television stars **Kim, Khloe and Kourtney Kardashian**, made it onto the annual **Forbes** list of billionaires after debuting her **Kylie Cosmetics** online in 2015 with **\$29 lip kits** containing matching lipstick and lip liner.
- **Forbes** said she was **both the world's youngest billionaire** and also the **youngest self-made billionaire ever**. On their billionaires list, **Forbes** distinguishes between those who inherited much of their wealth and those who made their fortunes on their own. **Kylie would be in 2,057th place whether she was self-made or inherited.**

Kumar takes charge as LIC chairman

- **M.R. Kumar** is the newly-appointed chairman of **Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).**
- **Mr. Kumar**, who had joined **LIC** as a **direct recruit officer in 1983**, took over from **Hemant Bhargava** who had been the acting chairman since January 2019.

- The government had also named two MDs for LIC Vipin Anand and T.C. Suseel Kumar.

Prajapati Trivedi awarded performance management practice award in US

- Professor Prajapati Trivedi, a senior director in the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, has been awarded the prestigious Harry Hatry Distinguished Performance Management Practice Award for 2019 for his contribution in public administration.
- The Center for Accountability and Performance (CAP), American Society for Public Administration (ASPA), awarded Trivedi at a ceremony in Washington.

Ex-RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan to get Yashwantrao Chavan national award

- Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Raghuram Rajan has been awarded the 'Yashwantrao Chavan National Award 2018' for his contribution towards economic development.

London mayor Sadiq Khan named UK Politician of the Year

- London Mayor Sadiq Khan has been named the Politician of the Year at an annual awards ceremony held in the UK's House of Commons complex for his ongoing contribution to the political life in the British capital.
- The annual Political and Public Life Awards presented by Britain's 'Asian Voice' weekly newspaper also recognised UK defence secretary Gavin Williamson as Cabinet Minister of the Year and Indian-origin politician Priti Patel as Conservative Party MP of the Year.

Nara Lokesh, Poonam Mahajan among Indians in Young Global Leaders list: WEF

- Andhra Pradesh IT minister Nara Lokesh, BJP MP Poonam Mahajan and Xiaomi India head Manu Kumar Jain are among the Indians featuring in the list of Young Global Leaders, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- The list has 127 of the world's "most promising social activists, business leaders, public servants, artists and technologists under the age of 40".

UK lifetime business award for Swraj Paul

- Industrialist Swraj Paul, one of the richest Indians in the UK who set up his first companies in Birmingham in the 1960s, has been awarded for his lifetime contribution in the Midlands region, which is home to a large Indian diaspora.
- Paul, 88, who is also a member of the House of Lords, received the 'Lifetime Contribution-Midlands Business Awards 2019' from Harj Sandher, founder of the awards.

Vice Admiral Karambir Singh appointed next Navy Chief

- The government appointed Vice Admiral Karambir Singh as the next Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS). With the announcement, the government has for the second time overlooked the seniority principle in service chief appointments.
- Vice Admiral Singh will take over as the 24th Navy chief from incumbent CNS Admiral Sunil Lanba, who is set to retire on May 31 on completing three years in office. He is currently the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief (FOC-in-C) of Eastern Naval Command headquartered at Visakhapatnam.

Rear Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, VSM assumes Charge as Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST)

- Rear Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, VSM, has assumed charge as Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) at Kochi on 18 Mar 19.

- **Á** Prior to assuming charge as FOST, the Admiral was the **Chief Staff Officer (Training) at Headquarters Southern Naval Command** and played a key role in the conduct of all training in the Indian Navy.
- **Á** The officer has **taken over the appointment from Rear Admiral Sanjay J Singh, NM**, who has proceeded to Mumbai to assume his next appointment as Flag Officer Commanding Western Fleet (FOCWF).

UK court issues arrest warrant against Nirav Modi

- **Á** A UK court has **issued an arrest warrant against fugitive diamond jeweller Nirav Modi**, taking cognisance of the sanction granted by the UK home secretary on India's request to extradite the jeweller.
- **Á** According to the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** and the **ED**, **Modi**, Choksi and companies owned by them **obtained more than Rs. 13,000 crore from PNB through fraudulent Letters of Undertaking and Letters of Credit between 2011 and 2017**. It was alleged that Modi and others committed the offence in connivance with bank officials. In May last year, the CBI had filed two separate charge sheets against the duo and other accused, including the brass of PNB.

Goa CM Manohar Parrikar passes away at 63

- **Á** Goa Chief Minister **Manohar Parrikar** passed away in **Panaji** after a prolonged illness. Mr. Parrikar was diagnosed with a pancreatic ailment. **He was the chief minister of Goa from 2000 to 2005 and from 2012 to 2014 and from 2014 to 2017, he served as the Minister of Defence. He was a former member of the Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh. He is the India's first IITian Chief Minister.**

Ombudsman DK Jain to double up as BCCI's Ethics Officer

- **Á** The BCCI's newly-appointed ombudsman, **Justice (Retd) D.K. Jain**, will also be its **ad-hoc Ethics Officer**.
- **Á** The COA had requested the Supreme Court to appoint an Ethics Officer in addition to an Ombudsman for looking into the matters of Conflict of Interest.

Chhattisgarh HC chief justice resigns after appointment to Lokpal

- **Á** Chhattisgarh High Court's Chief Justice **Ajay Kumar Tripathi** has **resigned from his post** after being appointed as judicial member in the anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal.
- **Á** Justice **Prashant Kumar Mishra** has been subsequently appointed as acting chief justice of the high court, a notification of the Union law ministry dated March 22 said.
- **Á** **Tripathi** had **taken over as chief justice of the Chhattisgarh high court on July 7, 2018**. Acting chief justice Mishra is the senior-most judge of the high court.

Goyals step down from Jet board

- **Á** Ending a nearly two month-long struggle to remain in control, **Jet Airways' power couple Naresh Goyal and his spouse Anita Goyal** resigned as directors from the board of the company.
- **Á** Their exit paves the way for **recapitalisation of the financially challenged airline** through a resolution plan.

MISCELLANEOUS

Young Scientist Programme Launched at ISRO

- **Indian Space Research Organisation** has launched a special programme for School Children called “Young Scientist Programme” “YUva Vigyani KAryakram” from this year.
- The Program is primarily aimed 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.

2019-20 to be year of construction technology

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** declared 'April 2019-March 2020' as Construction-Technology year and stressed on use of advanced technology to meet the increasing demand for housing in the country caused by rapid urbanisation.
- He also sought the support of the private sector in fulfilling the government's mission of providing a brick house to every Indian by 2022.

Women officers inducted in Short Service Commission of Indian Army to be given Permanent Commission

- **Women officers** will be granted Permanent Commission in the Indian Army in all the ten branches where they are inducted for Short Service Commission (SSC).
- Now, the Permanent Commission will be granted in Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Army Air Defence, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers, Army Service Corps, Army Ordnance Corps and Intelligence to women officers besides the existing two streams of Judge Advocate General and Army Education Corps.

CBRI appointed to carry out post-earthquake reconstruction of educational facilities in Nepal

- **The Central Building Research Institute (CBRI), Roorkee** has been appointed to carry out post-earthquake reconstruction of 72 educational facilities in Nepal.
- **CBRI** will work with the Central Level Project Implementation Unit (CLPIU) of Nepal's Ministry of Education to reconstruct and retrofit educational facilities as per the Government of Nepal's guidelines on disaster-resilient reconstruction.

PM lays Foundation Stone of Vishva Umiyadham Complex

- **The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi**, laid the Foundation Stone of the Vishva Umiyadham Complex at Jaspur, Ahmedabad.

Smriti Irani inaugurates refurbished Handloom Haat at Janpath, New Delhi

- **Textiles Minister Smriti Irani** inaugurated the refurbished Handloom Haat at Janpath in New Delhi.
- The main objective of the Haat is to provide infrastructure support to handloom agencies to augment their sales of handloom products and to showcase the exquisite variety of products produced all over the country.

Smt. Maneka Gandhi felicitates 'Web Wonder Women'

- **The Ministry of Women and Child Development** hosted a felicitation event for Web Wonder Women, a campaign organised to celebrate the exceptional achievements of women, who have been driving social reforms via social media.

- As many as 30 women, who were selected after an extensive research process, were honoured by the Minister for Women and Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi in New Delhi.

Maharashtra government to extend all schemes of tribal department to Dhangars

- The Maharashtra government has decided to extend all schemes of the Tribal Welfare Department to Dhangars till a decision on the reservation is taken.
- Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis chaired the first Cabinet sub-committee meeting to discuss the various demands of Dhangar community in view of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) report in Mumbai.

Hardeep S Puri launches 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 payment system in Land and Development Office, L&DO has also been completely digitized.

Cabinet approves investment for Kiru Hydro Electric Project in J&K

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the investment sanction for construction of 624 Megawatt Kiru Hydro Electric Project in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The CCEA also approved the investment for 1320 Megawatt Khurja Super Thermal Power Plant at Bulandshahar in Uttar Pradesh.

Mumbai is world's 16th most expensive prime residential market: Report

- India's financial capital Mumbai is the 16th most expensive prime residential property market in the world.
- Globally, Philippines' capital city of Manila led the Knight Frank Prime International Residential Index (PIRI 100) after luxury home prices jumped 11 percent last year, bolstered by a lack of supply and a thriving domestic economy.
- Mumbai (67 PIRI rank), which has the most expensive real estate in India, saw a marginal rise in prime real estate costs at 0.3 percent while Delhi recorded a rise of 1.4 percent putting it ahead of Mumbai at 55th rank on the survey. Bengaluru recorded a rise of 1.1 percent rise in prime residential real estate in 2018 over the previous year.

Delhi Government launches 'One Delhi' app

- To ease the use of public transport in the nation capital, the Delhi government launched a common mobility app 'One Delhi' to allow users plan more efficiently their journey with Delhi Metro and all city buses.
- The app was developed by Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System, or DIMTS.

Odisha govt announces financial assistance for craftsmen

- As a token of appreciation towards the craftsmen of the state, the Odisha government has launched a scheme to provide them with monthly assistance. Called 'Mukhya Mantri Karigar Sahayata, the scheme was launched by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.
- Craftsmen with over 10 years of experience and annual income below Rs 1 lakh would become eligible to get an assistance of Rd 800 a month. Those above 80 years of age would get Rs 1,000 monthly allowance.

SC appoints 3-member panel to mediate in Ayodhya dispute

- A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court referred the Ayodhya dispute for mediation in a bid to heal minds and hearts.

- The five-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, appointed a panel of mediators, comprising former Supreme Court judge F.M.I. Kalifulla as chairman, Art of Living founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, and Sriram Panchu, a senior advocate with experience in alternative dispute resolution.
- The mediation would start in a week in Faizabad district of Uttar Pradesh — of which the disputed area is a part — with the process conducted in-camera.

Prime Minister inaugurated Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology in Greater Noida, UP

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology on 9th March, 2019 at Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
- The Institute of Archaeology (IA) is an academic wing of ASI under the Ministry of Culture.

Maharashtra government launches scheme for construction workers

- Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the Maharashtra government launched a special scheme for construction workers in the state.
- The scheme, "Atal Aahar Yojna," will provide good quality and hygienic food to construction workers at a highly subsidised rate.

IGIA declared as 'Best Airport' in 2018 ASQ Awards

- The Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport, New Delhi has been adjudged as the best airport in the category of over 40 million passengers per annum (MPPA) in Asia Pacific by Airports Council International (ACI) in the Airport Service Quality Programme for 2018.

7 of the top 10 most polluted cities in the world are in India

- Seven of the top 10 most polluted cities in the world are in India, a study showing South Asia's battle with deteriorating air quality and the economic toll it's expected to take worldwide, stated.
- Gurugram led the most polluted cities in the world in 2018, with Ghaziabad, Faridabad, Noida, and Bhiwadi in the top six worst-affected cities.
- What's alarming, according to the report, is that air pollution is likely to cause the death of an estimated seven million lives globally in the next year while costing the world's economy nearly \$ 225 billion. **The only non-Indian city in the top five list is Faisalabad, Pakistan.** India, the world's fastest-growing major economy, **makes up 22 of the top 30 most polluted cities, with five in China, two in Pakistan and one in Bangladesh.**

Kumbh Mela concludes; over 24 cr devotees took holy dip

- In Uttar Pradesh, Kumbh 2019, the 49 days long biggest religious congregation on earth at Prayagraj formally concluded.
- Branded as Divya Kumbh, Bhawya Kumbh the mela concluded with a grand cultural performance.

93% of rural Indians have access to toilets: sanitation survey

- A new government-commissioned survey has found that 93.1% of rural Indian households now have access to toilets, in comparison to 77% last year.
- The second edition of the National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) also recorded encouraging data with regard to toilet usage and open defecation, **finding that 96.5% of people who had access to toilets use them.** The Centre's flagship Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, launched in 2014, aims to completely eliminate open defecation in the country by October 2, 2019.

- The NARSS figures seem to contradict the findings of a recent independent survey by the research institute for compassionate economics (r.i.c.e.), which found that **44% of people in rural Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan still defecate in the open.**

MP: Ancient tribal language Gondi to be taught in tribal districts

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

Marayur jaggery finally gets Geographical Indication tag

- The Marayur jaggery from Idukki district of Kerala has finally got the geographical indication (GI) tag, making it safe for consumption while rejuvenating the traditional way of production and ensuring a safe market in future.
- It has been a long-term demand of farmers in Marayur and Kanthallur grama panchayats, where jaggery is produced without adding any chemicals.
- It was the persistent efforts made by the Intellectual Property Rights cell, Kerala Agriculture University, from August 2016 that resulted in the jaggery receiving the GI tag.

Release of Dictionary of Martyrs of India's Freedom Struggle (1857-1947)

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, released the Dictionary of Martyrs of India's Freedom Struggle, at an event in Lok Kalyan Marg, New Delhi.
- This five-volume dictionary contains an account of the martyrs from India's First War of Independence in 1857, to India's Independence in 1947.

FM releases 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas' book on PM's selected speeches

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley released the book Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas - a collection of selected speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the presence of Information and Broadcasting Minister Col Rajyavardhan Rathore.
- The book reflects the vision of the Prime Minister of seeing all citizens of the country as one and taking everyone along on the path of inclusive development.

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 featured 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 participated in the five-day fair.

17th Lok Sabha elections announced; to be held in 7 phases

- The largest festival of democracy in the world will begin from 11th of April when India goes to polls to elect the 17th Lok Sabha of the country. Ninety crore electorates of 29 states and 7 Union territories will elect 543 Lok Sabha members in seven phases from 11th April to 19th May. Simultaneously, Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh will also take place.

Delhi: High-level committee set up 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.

- **Á** The committee, 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”.

PM Modi, Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina, jointly unveil e-plaques for development projects in Bangladesh

- **Á** Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina jointly unveiled e-plaques for development projects in Bangladesh, through video conference.
- **Á** Both leaders unveiled e-plaques for supply of buses and trucks, inauguration of 36 community clinics, 11 water treatment plants, and extension of National Knowledge Network to Bangladesh.

First Workshop on India Energy Modelling Forum Held

- **Á** The NITI Aayog and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) organized the first workshop on development of the India Energy Modelling Forum (IEMF), which has been envisaged as a pan-stakeholder platform for debating ideas, scenario-planning & discussing the India's energy future.
- **Á** The two-day workshop, being held with the support of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL), was organized under the Sustainable Growth Pillar of the India-U.S. Strategic Energy Partnership.

Namaste Thailand festival aims to strengthen bilateral ties, increase cultural exchange

- **Á** Aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and increasing cultural exchange between India and Thailand, the 3rd edition of Namaste Thailand festival started with a delectable array of Thai cuisine and a lineup of cultural events.

Mizoram assembly unanimously passed Mizoram Maintenance of Household Register Bill, 2019

- **Á** Mizoram assembly unanimously passed Mizoram Maintenance of Household Register Bill, 2019. Under the law a comprehensive data base of residents will be maintained. The government wants to provide individual identification system through which it will arrest slippage of benefits of development schemes to those who are not entitled.
- **Á** President of village council, town committee will be the registering authority. They will maintain two registers one will list the residents in the area and another non-residents. The register will be updated every three months.
- **Á** The law provides that for offence committed under this act a citizen may be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to one year or with fine of Rs 3000 for willfully making false statement or destroy the whole or any part of the form.

Bihar celebrates its 107th foundation day

- **Á** Bihar is celebrated its 107th foundation day. It was on this day in 1912, Bihar was carved out of Bengal presidency.
- **Á** A number of programmes are being organised to mark the occasion. Bihar Foundation organises Bihar day abroad including in US, Britain, Germany, Mauritius and Trinidad and Tobago. It was on this day in 1912 that the state was carved out of United Bengal.

The 3rd Indo-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction held in New Delhi

- **Á** The 3rd Indo-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction was held in New Delhi. The workshop was attended by about 140 delegates from Japan and India including experts from both the governments, top premium research institutes, city administrators, specialized Disaster Management agencies and private sector.
- **Á** The Government of India and the Government of Japan had signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) in the field of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) in September 2017. The 3rd Indo-Japan workshop is the follow-up

of the deliberations held during the 1st Indo-Japan Workshop on DRR held on March 18-19, 2018 in New Delhi as well as during the 2nd Indo-Japan workshop on DRR held on October 13-15, 2018 in Tokyo, Japan.

Indian Railways ICF becomes largest rail coaches maker in the world

- **Indian Railways** with dedication and commitment to the work, achieving new heights every day, but special congratulations to **ICF Chennai**. This coach factory produced 301 coaches in the month of February, taking the total for this fiscal to 2,919, so this puts the factory among the **largest railcar builders in the world**.
- **This year, ICF Chennai beats top Chinese manufacturers** who produce around 2,600 coaches a year. According to official reports, this is the 2nd time in the year; the factory crossed the 300 coaches per month mark.
- This discourse shows a 40% increase in production. **Now in the financial year of 2019, ICF aiming for 3200 coaches.**

Mobile app developed by IIPHG, PHFI to combat exam pressure

- The **Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar (IIPHG)** has launched a mobile application – “**Conquer Exam, Be a Warrior**” in collaboration with National Mental Health Program, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Gujarat.
- **Dr. Somen Saha, Associate Professor at IIPHG and Principal Researcher** explains, “It's that time of year where exam stress hits a peak. There is a way to beat stress, as well as anxiety during the exam. **Conquer Exam - Be a Warrior** is a powerful and intuitive collaborative idea of IIPHG to create awareness and help students and parents to analyse and overcome exam pressure.

The book titled ‘The Great Disappointment: How Narendra Modi Squandered a Unique Opportunity to Transform the Indian Economy’ launched

- The **economic commentator and Congress member Salman Anees Soz** released his book ‘**The Great Disappointment: How Narendra Modi Squandered A Unique Opportunity to Transform The Indian Economy**’ at the India International Centre.
- The **Great Disappointment: How Narendra Modi Squandered a Unique Opportunity to Transform the Indian Economy** attempts to answer the overarching question of whether or not the Modi government transformed India's economy and what the next government's agenda should look like.
- **Written by economic and political commentator Salman Anees Soz**, the book is also a critical assessment of five years of the brand of economics Modi has championed, often referred to as 'Modinomics'.

Oxford dictionary adds ‘chuddies’ to list

- The word ‘**chuddies**’, meaning an undergarment for the nether regions, is one of 650 words in the **Oxford English Dictionary’s** quarterly list of additions announced on March 18.
- The entry for **chuddies** cites usages dating back to 1885, but the addition, a post on the OED website makes clear, is more to do with the usage from the show.

Centre bans Yasin Malik-led JKLF under UAPA

- **Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** banned separatist **Yasin Malik’s Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)** under the **anti-terror law, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA)**. The move comes days after the Centre banned **Jamat-e-Islami (JeI-J&K)** under **Section 3(1) of the UAPA**.
- **Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba** told the media that murders of **Kashmiri Pandits** by the **JKLF** in 1989 triggered their exodus from the Valley. “**Yasin Malik** was the **mastermind** behind the purging of **Kashmiri Pandits** and is responsible for their genocide,” Mr. Gauba said.

UN council passes resolution to combat terrorist financing

- The UN Security Council has unanimously passed the first-ever resolution ordering members to enforce laws against terror financing.
- UNSC resolution demands all states "ensure that their domestic laws and regulations establish serious criminal offenses" to collect funds or financial resources to terrorist groups or individual criminals.

Permanent members of the United Nations Security Council also known as the **Permanent Five, Big Five, or P5** are the five states which the UN Charter of 1945 grants a permanent seat on the UN Security Council (UNSC), **China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States**. **Antonio Guterres** is a **Portuguese politician** and diplomat who is serving as the **ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations**. Previously, he was the **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees** between 2005 and 2015.

The book titled 'Every Vote Counts' was launched by former Vice President of India

- The former Chief Election Commissioner of India **Navin Chawla's** latest book '**Every Vote Counts**', was launched at New Delhi's **Taj Mahal Hotel** on **Man Singh Road**.
- India is on the cusp of change, and with its parliamentary elections coming up, every household, every chai tapri, and of course, every newsroom, is abuzz with one thought: what next for India? Who's going to form the next government?
- **Navin Chawla's** book was launched by former Vice President of India, **Hamid Ansari**. Then a discussion ensued between the author and **N Ram**, Chairman of the **Hindu Group of Publications**.

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 Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement that 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.

First Indian Army Mountaineering Expedition to Mt Makalu flags 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**.
- **Indian Army** is launched its maiden expedition to **Mt Makalu** in **Mar-May 2019**.

Cabinet clears creation of additional posts in NCLAT

- Six additional posts of judicial and technical members will be created in the **National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)**.
- The Cabinet cleared a proposal for creation of three additional posts, each for judicial members and technical members, in the **NCLAT**.

Vijayawada Railway Station Awarded the 'Gold Rating' For Being Clean & Eco-Friendly

- **Vijayawada's** railway station is one of the busiest in India, but that has not affected its cleanliness because it still looks immaculate. So, the station was awarded with '**Gold Rating**' by the **Indian Green Building Council**.
- The **Indian Green Building Council** with the help of **Environment Directorate of Indian Railways** has come up with a system called **Green Railway Stations Rating System** where railway stations will be encouraged to adopt more eco-friendly ways.

ECI collaborates with Indian Railways for Voter Awareness Campaign;

- As part of **Voter Awareness campaign for Lok Sabha Election 2019**, Election Commission of India and Indian Railways have come together to utilize **four long distance Trains to carry voter awareness and motivational messages**.
- The Train displays important contact details for the citizens including the **Voter Helpline number and the National Voters' Services Portal** besides motivational messages urging them to Vote.

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 voter's special facilities** including wheelchairs, ramps and transport from home at polling booths during the Lok Sabha elections.

Facebook candidate connect and share you voted tools to boost engagement ahead of Lok Sabha elections

- Social-networking site Facebook launched two new India-specific tools called "**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.

Tripura has second-highest number of child marriages: Report

- Tripura ranks second in the list of states where **child marriages among girls between the age of 15 and 19** are performed, an international study has revealed.
- The report also found that **more than 80 per cent of child marriages were registered in three districts of the state**. Quoting data released by the National Family Health Survey (NFHS), Young Lives – an international study on childhood poverty, said, "**Tripura occupies the second position with respect to the highest prevalence of child marriages among girls aged 15-19 years at 21.6%** which is significantly higher than the national average of 11.9%."

'Indian Fiscal Federalism'

- The book '**Indian Fiscal Federalism**' is written by **Y V Reddy**, who had served as RBI Governor as well as **Finance Commission Chairman**.
 - The economist was speaking at the **Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad** at the **unveiling of his new book 'India's Fiscal Federalism'**. Goods and Service Tax (GST) does not pose "**any major threat**" to **Centre-state relations**, its roll-out by the Narendra Modi government "**does not command the trust of the states**".
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IMPORTANT DAYS

World Wildlife Day

- The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 3 March, the day of signature of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), as UN World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild animals and plants.
- The theme for World Wildlife Day 2019 is 'Life below water: for people and planet', which aligns with goal 14 - Life below water - of the Sustainable Development Goals.

March 7, 2019 celebrated as 'Janaushadhi Diwas' across India

- The 7th March, 2019 has been celebrated as 'Janaushadhi Diwas' across India. Prime Minister has interacted with owners of Janaushadhi Kendras and beneficiaries of the scheme across the country through video conference on 7th March, 2019.

International Women's Day

- International Women's Day is annually held on March 8 to celebrate women's achievements throughout history and across nations.
- It is also known as the United Nations (UN) Day for Women's Rights and International Peace.
- The theme for International Women's Day 2019, which took place on 8 March, is "Think equal, build smart, innovate for change".

International Day of Happiness: 20 March

- The International Day of Happiness is celebrated worldwide every on March 20, and was conceptualized and founded by philanthropist, activist, statesman, and prominent United Nations special advisor Jayme Illien to inspire, mobilize, and advance the global happiness movement.
- This year's theme is Happier Together, focusing on what we have in common, rather than what divides us.

World Kidney Day

- World Kidney day is celebrated on 13th March 2019. This year, World Kidney Day sets out to raise awareness of the high and increasing burden of kidney diseases worldwide and the need for strategies for kidney diseases prevention and management.
- 'Kidney Health for Everyone Everywhere' is the theme for this year and calls for universal health coverage (UHC) for prevention and early treatment of kidney disease.

World Consumer Rights Day

- World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated every year on March 15.
- World Consumer Rights Day theme is "Trusted Smart Products". It is a day marked to raise global awareness about consumer rights and needs.

World Sparrow Day

- World Sparrow Day is a day designated to raise awareness of the house sparrow and then other common birds to urban environments, and of threats to their populations, observed on 20 March.
- It is an international initiative by the Nature Forever Society of India in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France) and numerous other national and international organisations across the world.

International Day of Happiness

- **March 20** is the **International Day of Happiness** and this year's theme is ‘**Happier Together**’, focusing on what we have in common, rather than what divides us.
- **Since 2013**, the **United Nations** has **celebrated the International Day of Happiness** as a way to recognise the importance of happiness in the lives of people around the world.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination

- The **International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination** is observed annually on **21 March**. On that day, in **1960**, police opened fire and killed **69 people** at a peaceful demonstration in **Sharpeville, South Africa**, against the apartheid "pass laws".
- Theme for the **2019** is: **Mitigating and countering rising nationalist populism and extreme supremacist ideologies**

World Poetry Day

- **World Poetry Day** is celebrated on **21 March**, and was declared by **UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)** in **1999**. Its purpose is to **promote the reading, writing, publishing and teaching of poetry** throughout the world.
- It was generally celebrated in **October**, but in the **latter part of the 20th century** the world community celebrated it on the **15th**, the birthday of **Virgil**, the Roman epic poet and poet laureate under **Augustus**.

World Water Day (WWD)

- **World Water Day (WWD)** is celebrated on **22 March every year** to focus attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. The **United Nations General Assembly** initiated this response on **22 March 1993** as the **first World Water Day**.
- The theme for **WWD, 2019** is, “**Leaving no one behind**”.

World Down syndrome Day

- In **December 2011**, the **General Assembly** declared **21 March** as **World Down Syndrome Day**.
- For **WDS 2019**, **Down Syndrome International** focuses on: **Leave no one behind**: All people with Down syndrome must have opportunities to live fulfilling lives, included on a full and equal basis with others, in all aspects of society. The **2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development**, a global plan of action for people, planet and prosperity, pledges that “**no one will be left behind**”.

World Meteorological Day

- The date of the establishment of the **World Meteorological Organization** in **23 March 1950** has been named **World Meteorological Day**. **World Meteorological Day** is celebrated every year on **23 March** to commemorate the entry into force in **1950** of the convention that created the **World Meteorological Organization**.
- The theme is **The Sun, the Earth and the Weather**, reflecting the slogan for **World Meteorological Day** on **23 March 2019**.

World Tuberculosis Day observed

- **World Tuberculosis Day** is observed on **24th March every year** to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of **TB**, and to step up efforts to end the global epidemic.

- **The theme for this year is, 'It's time'.** It focusses on the urgency to act on the commitments made by global leaders to scale up access to prevention and treatment of the disease, build accountability and ensure sufficient and sustainable financing including for research among others.

International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade

- **For over 400 years, more than 15 million men, women and children were the victims of the tragic transatlantic slave trade,** one of the darkest chapters in human history.
- **Every year on 25 March, the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade** offers the opportunity to honour and remember those who **suffered and died at the hands of the brutal slavery system.** The International Day also aims to raise awareness about the dangers of racism and prejudice today.

Epilepsy awareness day -Purple day

- **Epilepsy Awareness Day is observed annually on March 26th.** The day has become known as “Purple Day” as people are encouraged to wear the color to increase awareness of Epilepsy.

World Theatre Day

- **World Theatre Day, observed annually on March 27, was started in 1962 by the International Theatre Institute (ITI).**
- To mark this day, various events are organised across the world to celebrate the medium of theatre.

World Autism Awareness Day on 2nd April

- **World Autism Awareness Day is an internationally recognized day on 2 April every year, encouraging Member States of the United Nations to take measures to raise awareness about people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) throughout the world.**
- **2019 World Autism Awareness Day observance “Assistive Technologies, Active Participation”.**

Rajasthan Diwas observed on 30th March

- **Rajasthan Diwas celebrated on 30 March marking the unification of the erstwhile princely states in the region into the State of Rajasthan.**

QUESTIONS

- Name the Indian district, which has shot up to number one from the 52nd position, among the aspirational districts of the country, according to a new report released by the NITI Aayog recently.
(a) Bastar (b) Hailakandi (c) Chamoli (d) Bharuch
- Who among the following has assumed the charge of chairman of the newly constituted National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC)?
(a) Kaushalendra Singh Patel (b) Achary Talloju
(c) Bhagwan Lal Sahni (d) Sudha Yadav
- In a bid to increase the use of modern technology in the construction sector, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the _____ as the year of construction technology.
(a) 2019-2020 (b) 2020-2021 (c) 2021-2022 (d) 2022-2023
- Union Minister Harsh Vardhan launched an anthem as a part of a campaign to make India plastic-free by 2022. Currently the anthem has been launched in _____ languages.
(a) Three (b) Four (c) Seven (d) Nine
- Name the Indian company, which has been recognised as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies by the Ethisphere Institute, a global leader in defining and advancing the standards of ethical business practices, for 2019.
(a) Bhushan Steel (b) Tata Steel (c) Bharati Airtel (d) Reliance Industries Limited
- Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched One Nation, One Card for transport mobility in:
(a) Hyderabad (b) Ahmedabad (c) Surat (d) Bengaluru
- India's first Braille laptop for visually-impaired created by alumnus and researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi is:
(a) SpotBook (b) EveryBook (c) DotBook (d) SpecialBook
- Name the tennis player, who won 100th ATP title in Dubai recently.
(a) Roger Federer (b) Rafael Nadal (c) Andy Murray (d) Stefanos Tsitsipas
- Who among the following has launched a special programme for School Children called "Young Scientist Programme" "YUva VIGyani KAryakram" from this year?
(a) ISRO (b) DRDO (c) HAL (d) Union HRD Ministry
- UN World Wildlife Day is celebrated every year on:
(a) 1st March (b) 2nd March (c) 3rd March (d) 4th March
- The "smart fencing" will be operationalised in the 61 km riverine section of the international border between India and _____.
(a) Nepal (b) Pakistan (c) Bangladesh (d) China
- Which of the following countries has announced its intention to "terminate" India's designation as a beneficiary of its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) in March 2019?
(a) USA (b) France (c) China (d) UK

13. Which of the following countries has extended by one year sanctions against Zimbabwe in March 2019?
(a) India (b) France (c) China (d) USA
14. NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand has been nominated for the post of the new Director-General of:
(a) Food and Agriculture Organisation (b) UNICEF
(c) WTO (d) WHO
15. Which of the following countries plans to run a new generation of self-developed driverless magnetic-levitation trains with a designed speed of 200 kmph by early 2020?
(a) India (b) France (c) China (d) Japan
16. The team led by Tian Xue from the University of Science and Technology of China and Gang Han from the University of Massachusetts Medical School have successfully given 'night vision' to _____, allowing them to see infrared light with minimal side effects.
(a) Mice (b) Rabbit (c) Dog (d) Bat
17. Which of the following countries was the largest source of FDI in India during April-December 2018-19?
(a) Mauritius (b) Singapore (c) Netherland (d) Japan
18. According to the new study, how many cities from India are most polluted cities in the world out of top 10 cities?
(a) 3 (b) 5 (c) 6 (d) 7
19. Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah has been re-elected president of the:
(a) Olympic Council of Asia (b) Olympic Council of Europe
(c) Olympic Council of Middle East (d) Olympic Council of Africa
20. The United World Wrestling (UWW) has asked all the national federations under it to stop communication with the Wrestling Federation of _____ in the wake of visa denial of Pakistani shooters in the recent World Cup.
(a) India (b) China (c) Israel (d) Syria
21. Who has been appointed as the first Lokayukta of Odisha recently?
(a) Justice Ajit Singh (b) Justice Amit Kumar Singh
(c) Justice Amrendra Chauhan (d) Justice Chandan Vashisth
22. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan (PM-SYM) Yojana. It provides for a monthly pension of _____ to the employees of the unorganised sector after 60 years of age.
(a) Rs. 2,000 (b) Rs. 3,000 (c) Rs. 4,000 (d) Rs. 5,000
23. Recently, Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the refurbished Handloom Haat in:
(a) Guwahati (b) Itanagar (c) Imphal (d) New Delhi
24. The third edition of the bilateral joint exercise Al Nagah 2019 will begin between:
(a) India and Afghanistan (b) India and Oman (c) India and Kuwait (d) India and Uzbekistan
25. World Bank is to provide 250 Million dollar for the National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP) to boost Rural Incomes across _____ States in India.
(a) 9 (b) 11 (c) 13 (d) 17
26. According to the latest Forbes list of the ultra-wealthy, who is the world's richest person at present?
(a) Warren Buffet (b) Jeff Bezos (c) Bill Gates (d) Mukesh Ambani

27. According to the ranking compiled by IQAir Group, a manufacturer of air-monitoring sensors as well as purifiers and environmentalist group Greenpeace, how many most polluted cities in the world are located in India in top 20 cities?
(a) 8 (b) 10 (c) 15 (d) 18
28. Recently, tribal musician Thanga Darlong was awarded the first Atal Bihari Vajpayee Life Time Award. Thanga Darlong belongs to:
(a) Manipur (b) Mizoram (c) Tripura (d) Meghalaya
29. Name the Indian wrestler, who won gold in the freestyle wrestling 65kg category at Dan Kolov-Nikol Petrov tournament.
(a) Bajranj Punia (b) Sushil Kumar (c) Yogeshwar Dutt (d) Shyam Kapoor
30. Who among the following has been awarded the Pritzker Prize, considered architecture's highest honour, for a lifetime of work that found global resonance while mining local traditions?
(a) Suchita Nagpal (b) Arata Isozaki (c) William Noel (d) Krishnadev Advani
31. Which of the following Indian cities has bagged the cleanest city award for third straight year under Swachh Survekshan, 2019?
(a) Bhopal (b) Indore (c) Mysuru (d) Chandigarh
32. Who among the following is to become the first female prime minister of Estonia?
(a) Vaira Freiberga (b) Ferica Miguel Marthaer
(c) Dalia Grybauskait (d) Kaja Kallas
33. Which of the following Indian states has decided to extend all schemes of the Tribal Welfare Department to Dhangars till a decision on the reservation is taken?
(a) Maharashtra (b) Chhattisgarh (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Jharkhand
34. The Saudi Arabia air force is being taking part in Red Flag 2019. The Red Flag exercise, launched in 1975, is a two-week advanced aerial combat training exercise held several times a year by the:
(a) US Air Force (b) UK Air Force (c) Netherlands Air Force (d) France Air Force
35. India will collaborate with _____ to increase the population of three species of Asian rhinos, including the Greater one-horned rhinoceros found in the Indian sub-continent.
(a) Bhutan, Nepal and Bangladesh (b) Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Malaysia
(c) Bhutan, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia (d) Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Malaysia
36. India signed a loan agreement with the World Bank for 96 Million US dollars for additional financing of _____ Disaster Recovery Project.
(a) Uttarakhand (b) Gujarat (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Rajasthan
37. What is the name of the first exoplanet candidate spotted by NASA's Kepler space telescope that has finally been confirmed as a real world by the scientists from the University of Hawaii in the U.S?
(a) Kepler-432 b (b) Kepler-1658 b (c) Kepler-4333 d (d) Kepler-2345 c
38. Which of the following Indian ministries hosted a felicitation event for Web Wonder Women, a campaign organised to celebrate the exceptional achievements of women, who have been driving social reforms via social media?
(a) Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
(b) Ministry of Women and Child Development
(c) Ministry of Human Resource Development
(d) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

39. Who has been appointed as the chairman of the Coordination Committee of the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games by the General Assembly of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)?
(a) Deepak Raheja (b) Amitabh Bhattacharya
(c) Randhir Singh (d) Kaushik Narayan
40. Who has been appointed as the Director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) recently?
(a) Chandrabhan Singh (b) Kaushalendra Ojha (c) Ajit Kumar Mohanty (d) Ganesh Ranjan Acharya
41. Who among the following has launched e-Dharti app where all the three modules- Conversion, Substitution and Mutation related to properties have been made online?
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Hardeep Puri (c) Shri Nitin Gadkari (d) Shri Ramnath Kovind
42. Recently the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the investment sanction for construction of 624 Megawatt Kiru Hydro Electric Project in:
(a) Meghalaya (b) Manipur (c) Mizoram (d) Jammu & Kashmir
43. According to the Knight Frank Prime International Residential Index (PIRI 100), which of the following is the most expensive prime residential property market in the world?
(a) Tokyo (b) Paris (c) Manila (d) Hong Kong
44. India sealed a \$3-billion deal with _____ for leasing a nuclear-powered attack submarine for the Indian Navy for a period of 10 years.
(a) USA (b) France (c) UK (d) Russia
45. Which Indian state launched a scheme 'Mukhya Mantri Karigar Sahayata' to provide them with monthly assistance?
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Odisha (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Chhattisgarh
46. Which of the following countries has become a member of the International Criminal Court in a boost for the beleaguered institution at a time it faces growing criticism?
(a) Myanmar (b) Malaysia (c) Indonesia (d) Nigeria
47. Which of the following Indian banks and Hitachi Payment Services Pvt Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Hitachi Ltd, launched their merchant-acquiring joint venture for establishing a digital payments platform for India and other countries in the region?
(a) State Bank of India (b) Punjab National Bank (c) Indian Overseas Bank (d) Oriental Bank of Commerce
48. Which of the following companies unveiled its new Bolo Android app that is a speech-based reading-tutor app aimed at rural kids?
(a) Microsoft (b) Google (c) Samsung (d) Facebook
49. Who is the Indian chief scientist of World Health Organisation (WHO), heading the division created to strengthen the organisation's core scientific work and ensure the quality and consistency of its norms and standards?
(a) Soumya Swaminathan (b) Gargi Mittal
(c) Megha Vyas (d) Deepika Vatsal
50. Who has been announced as "The Youngest Self-Made Billionaire Ever" by Forbes?
(a) Mark Zuckerberg (b) Kylie Jenner (c) Larry Wilson (d) Akash Ambani
51. Recently, Supreme Court appointed 3-member panel to mediate in Ayodhya dispute. Who has been appointed as chairman of the panels of mediators?
(a) Sri Sri Ravi Shankar (b) Sri Ram Jethamalani (c) F.M.I. Kalifulla (d) Sriram Panchu

52. Rajasthan government has amended the Lokayukta Act to reduce the Lokayukta's tenure from eight years to:
(a) Seven Years (b) Six Years (c) Five Years (d) Three Years
53. The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology at:
(a) Greater Noida (b) Gurugram (c) Rewari (d) New Delhi
54. Recently, Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's centre-right government resigned after failing to push through a flagship social and health care reform package. Juha Sipilä was the prime minister of:
(a) Finland (b) Iceland (c) Ireland (d) Sweden
55. Recently, the Government of India has approved establishment of two new benches of National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) in:
(a) Andhra Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh (b) Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh
(c) Odisha and Chhattisgarh (d) Jharkhand and Odisha
56. Name the airport, which has won the prestigious Airport Service Quality (ASQ) award for being the best airport in size and region for the year 2018.
(a) Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport
(b) Swami Vivekananda Airport
(c) Biju Patnaik International Airport
(d) Bhavnagar Airport
57. Recently, In a first of its kind which of the following banks has decided to link the interest rate paid on savings bank balance of over Rs. 1 lakh to the repo rate?
(a) Bank of Baroda (b) Bank of India (c) Bank of Maharashtra (d) State Bank of India
58. Recently, the inaugural India-Japan Space Dialogue was held in:
(a) Tokyo (b) New Delhi (c) Mumbai (d) Osaka
59. International Women's Day is annually held on:
(a) 5th March (b) 7th March (c) 8th March (d) 9th March
60. Who has been appointed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as its newest goodwill ambassador?
(a) Priyanka Chopra (b) Hannah Simone (c) Padma Lakshmi (d) Indira Varma
61. Which of the following Indian states has launched the scheme, "Atal Aahar Yojna," which will provide good quality and hygienic food to construction workers at a highly subsidised rate?
(a) Maharashtra (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Himachal Pradesh (d) Assam
62. Which of the following airports has been adjudged as the best airport in the category of over 40 million passengers per annum (MPPA) in Asia Pacific by Airports Council International (ACI) in the Airport Service Quality Programme for 2018?
(a) Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport
(b) Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport
(c) Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport
(d) Visakhapatnam International Airport
63. Recently, the second edition of Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) - 2019 was held in:
(a) Mumbai (b) Hyderabad (c) New Delhi (d) Bengaluru

64. According to latest Bloomberg report, who is the richest person in Europe?
(a) Laxmi Niwas Mittal (b) Beate Heister (c) Bernard Arnault (d) Amancio Ortega
65. Recently, The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) notified the norms for banks with regards to _____ interest subvention or subsidy for short-term crop loans during 2018-19 and 2019-20.
(a) 1% (b) 1.5% (c) 2% (d) 3%
66. Star rating programme launched for Microwave Ovens and Washing Machines are expected to save over 3.0 Billion Units by year:
(a) 2020 (b) 2022 (c) 2025 (d) 2030
67. Recently, a low-cost, ultra-sensitive device that is capable of detecting the cardiac biomarker troponin T protein has been fabricated by a research team from the:
(a) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur (b) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad
(c) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Delhi (d) Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay
68. Name the woman, who set a new World record for the women's 50km race walk, becoming the first woman to complete the event in under four hours.
(a) Lakshmi Mahatram (b) Sunu Liu (c) Abi Johnson Thiri (d) Liu Hong
69. Recently, the Marayur jaggery has got the geographical indication (GI) tag. Marayur jiggery is the traditional and handmade product from:
(a) Kochi district (b) Gonda district (c) Idukki district (d) Vizag district
70. Who released the Dictionary of Martyrs of India's Freedom Struggle in New Delhi recently?
(a) Shri Ramnath Kovind (b) Shri Rajnath Singh
(c) Shri Narendra Modi (d) Shri Shashi Tharoor
71. President Ram Nath Kovind confers Padma awards at Rashtrapati Bhawan. Fifty-six of the _____ personalities, who were selected for this year's Padma awards, will be conferred the honour at a special function.
(a) 95 (b) 106 (c) 112 (d) 120
72. Which of the following state governments has issued an ordinance raising reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) to 27 per cent from the present 14 per cent?
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Bihar (d) Gujarat
73. Sadiq Khan has been named the Politician of the Year at an annual awards ceremony held in the UK's House of Commons complex. He is the current Mayor of:
(a) Bristol (b) London (c) Wales (d) Newham
74. Industrialist Swraj Paul, one of the richest Indians in the _____ who set up his first companies in the 1960s, has been awarded for his lifetime contribution in the Midlands region
(a) UK (b) USA (c) France (d) Germany
75. Mohammad Shtayyeh has been named as Prime Minister of:
(a) Iraq (b) Libya (c) Palestine (d) Somalia
76. Which of the following banks has started aligning its businesses with that of its new owner LIC, appointing the life insurer as a corporate agent?
(a) SBI (b) ICICI Bank (c) IDBI Bank (d) Punjab National Bank

77. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has signed a Cooperation Agreement with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a member of the:
(a) ADB (b) IMF (c) World Bank Group (d) AIIB
78. The 38th GeeBee Boxing Tournament is held in:
(a) Norway (b) Germany (c) India (d) Finland
79. Which of the following ministries of India has won the First Prize in the category of TV Cinema Spot at the prestigious international Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019?
(a) The Ministry of Tourism (b) The Ministry of Culture
(c) The Ministry of External Affairs (d) The Ministry of Home Affairs
80. Who among the following has released the book Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas - a collection of selected speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi?
(a) Shri Venkaiah Naidu (b) Shri Arun Jaitley
(c) Shri Ram Nath Kovind (d) Shri Amit Shah
81. Who has been sworn in as the first Lokayukta of Mizoram?
(a) Brijesh Kumar Jha (b) C Lalsawta (c) R Tharalang (d) G Gurung Singh
82. Election Commission (EC) has formed a committee comprising three "eminent" members to assess the situation on the ground in Jammu and Kashmir before it takes a decision about holding the Assembly elections in Jammu & Kashmir. Who among the following is not a member?
(a) Noor Mohammed (b) Sameer Ranade (c) Vinod Zutshi (d) A.S. Gill
83. The 34th edition of AAHAR - the International Food and Hospitality fair is held in:
(a) Mumbai (b) New Delhi (c) Pune (d) Nagpur
84. The Marshall Islands' is gearing to release its new digital currency called the _____ in 2019.
(a) LIU (b) SOV (c) DOU (d) MEL
85. Ministry of Commerce & Industry organised the 14th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships, in association with Confederation of Indian Industry and EXIM Bank of India in:
(a) New Delhi (b) Mumbai (c) Nagpur (d) Pune
86. According to the latest report published by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), which country is the world's largest arms importer from 2014-18?
(a) India (b) Saudi Arabia (c) Pakistan (d) Syria
87. Researchers have discovered more than _____ new microbial species from the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans, enhancing our understanding of biodiversity in the world seas.
(a) 4,000 (b) 5,000 (c) 6,000 (d) 7,000
88. A species of wood snake that wasn't seen for 140 years has resurfaced in a survey conducted by scientists in the:
(a) Viralmalai Wildlife Sanctuary (b) Meghamalai Wildlife Sanctuary
(c) Mudumalai Wildlife Sanctuary (d) Kalakuddu Wildlife Sanctuary
89. The International Day of Happiness is celebrated worldwide on:
(a) 5th March (b) 15th March (c) 20th March (d) 25th March

90. Union Government of India has approved a state of the art passenger terminal building for:
(a) Kartarpur Corridor (b) Bangladesh Assam Corridor
(c) Kathmandu Gorakhpur Corridor (d) Jhanshi Aligarh Defence Corridor
91. Name the Indian site, which was accorded recently the status of 'Wetland of International Importance' under the Ramsar Convention.
(a) Deepor Beel (b) Bhitarkanika Mangroves
(c) Indian Sundarban (d) Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary
92. Name the State / Union territory, whose government's Dialogue and Development Commission (DDC) has set up a 17-member high-level committee to "reform higher education" recently.
(a) Sikkim (b) Delhi (c) Puducherry (d) Nagaland
93. Name the country, which was recently made the deputy chairman of the general body of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC).
(a) India (b) Pakistan (c) Kuwait (d) Iraq
94. Name the bank, which has become one of the first public sector banks to launch a crèche/child daycare facility for children of its employees recently.
(a) Punjab National Bank (b) Oriental Bank of Commerce
(c) Bank of Baroda (d) Bank of India
95. Recently, India and _____ came to an understanding to revive and 'expedite' the implementation of \$44 billion West Coast refinery project in Maharashtra.
(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Kuwait (c) Iran (d) Russia
96. Recently, Erode turmeric finally got a Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the Geographical Indication Registry. Erode is a district in:
(a) Kerala (b) Karnataka (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Andhra Pradesh
97. Recently, who has been awarded the 'Yashwantrao Chavan National Award 2018' for his contribution towards economic development?
(a) Urjit R Patel (b) Usha Thorat (c) Raghuram Rajan (d) H.R.Khan
98. Recently, who has been awarded the prestigious Harry Hatry Distinguished Performance Management Practice Award for 2019 for his contribution in public administration?
(a) Professor Deepak Raheja (b) Professor Pankaj Lal
(c) Professor Prajapati Trivedi (d) Professor Upendra Dixit
99. The 5th SAAF Women's Championship began in:
(a) Bhutan (b) India (c) Myanmar (d) Nepal
100. Name the young sailor, who bagged the bronze medal in the Laser Standard race for men in the Asian Open Laser Sailing Championship which concluded in Singapore recently.
(a) Upamanyu Dutta (b) Adnan Siddhiqui (c) Abhimanyu Iswaran (d) Bijoy Sengupta
101. Recently, US Senate confirmed Indian-American _____ as a judge on the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, one of the most powerful benches in the country.
(a) Neelam Rana (b) Neomi Rao (c) Alexa Patel (d) Kamla Harris

102. As per the latest report by the World Gold Council (WGC), India has the _____largest gold reserve, with the current holding pegged at 607 tonnes.
(a) 6th (b) 8th (c) 11th (d) 16th
103. Which of the following is only the third Indian firm after Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) to cross Rs.6 trillion market cap mark?
(a) ICICI Bank (b) HDFC Bank (c) BHEL (d) Indian Aeronautics Limited
104. Which of the following has decided to inject rupee liquidity into the system through long-term foreign exchange buy/sell swap a first-of-its-kind instrument used for liquidity management?
(a) Ministry of Finance (b) Ministry of Corporate Affairs
(c) Reserve Bank of India (d) Federal Reserve Bank of America
105. Recently, The first shipment under the United Nations 'Transports Internationaux Routiers' (TIR) convention arrived in India from _____through Iran's Chabahar Port.
(a) Iraq (b) Afghanistan (c) Turkey (d) Egypt
106. India and the United States have committed to strengthen bilateral security and civil nuclear cooperation, including the establishment of _____US nuclear power plants in India.
(a) Three (b) Five (c) Six (d) Nine
107. Special Olympics World Games 2019 is held in:
(a) France (b) Abu Dhabi (c) New Delhi (d) Jakarta
108. According to Mercer's index of most liveable cities, which of the following cities topped the list for the 10th year in a row?
(a) Manila (b) Vienna (c) Brussels (d) New York
109. Recently, IT czar Azim Premji has earmarked economic benefits of about _____of his shares in Wipro, worth Rs. 52,750 crore, for his foundation involved in philanthropy.
(a) 10% (b) 18% (c) 28% (d) 34%
110. World Kidney day was celebrated on:
(a) 7th March (b) 9th March (c) 11th March (d) 13th March
111. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), who is not among the Indians featuring in the list of Young Global Leaders?
(a) Manu Kumar Jain (b) Nara Lokesh (c) Anand Piramal (d) Poonam Mahajan
112. 'Exercise Sampriti-VIII' was a joint military exercise between:
(a) India and Nepal (b) India and Bangladesh
(c) India and Bhutan (d) India and Sri Lanka
113. Name the writer, who won the Windham-Campbell prize under non-fiction category for his work Farthest Field: An Indian Story of the Second World War (2015) recently.
(a) Arvind Raheja (b) Sumit Nagarath (c) Raghu Karnad (d) Amit Jindal
114. Name the social entrepreneur from Tamil Nadu, who bagged the Commonwealth Youth Award for the Asian region for his technology-based food rescue organization.
(a) Aseem Khurana (b) Deepak Awasthy
(c) Padmanaban Gopalan (d) Muzeeb Rehman Abidi

115. For the first time in the arecanut sector, 'Sirsi Supari' has received the Geographic Indication (GI) tag. Sirsi Supari is grown in:
(a) Karnataka (b) Bihar (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Andhra Pradesh
116. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) relaxed norms for imports of capital and non-capital goods by raising the trade credit limit to _____ million under the automatic route.
(a) \$50 (b) \$100 (c) \$150 (d) \$200
117. Which of the following banks has recently launched 'Doorstep Banking' for senior citizen customers over 70 years of age, differently-abled customers and infirm customers, including visually-impaired customers?
(a) Punjab National Bank (b) HDFC Bank (c) State Bank of India (d) Union Bank of India
118. Who is the newly appointed chairman of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC)?
(a) Hemant Bhargava (b) M.R. Kumar (c) Vipin Anand (d) T.C. Suseel Kumar
119. Name the team, which won the famous Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 title first time recently.
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Baroda (c) Delhi (d) Karnataka
120. Name the countries, which are poised to co-host, the 2020 Copa America men's football championship.
(a) Chile and Ecuador (b) Brazil and Peru
(c) Argentina and Colombia (d) Venezuela and Bolivia
121. Recently, President Ramnath Kovind inaugurated the Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship in:
(a) Hyderabad (b) Gandhinagar (c) Mumbai (d) Guwahati
122. Recently, India and Pakistan have agreed to work expeditiously on operationalizing the Kartapur corridor. Kartarpur was founded in year 1504 by:
(a) Guru Nanak Dev (b) Guru Angad Dev (c) Akbar (d) Birbal
123. Which of the following banks launched 'YONO Cash' for cardless withdrawal of cash recently?
(a) Punjab National Bank (b) State Bank of India (c) Canara Bank (d) Oriental Bank of Commerce
124. Recently, The European Union expanded its tax haven blacklist by _____ countries.
(a) 5 (b) 10 (c) 15 (d) 20
125. Recently, The RBI has categorised which of the following as a private sector bank for regulatory purposes with effect from January 21, 2019?
(a) IDFC Bank (b) IDBI Bank (c) Bandhan Bank (d) Dena Bank
126. Name the founder of the Youth Strike for Climate movement, who has been nominated for the Nobel peace prize recently.
(a) Anna Kournigo (b) Greta Thunberg (c) Mariana Gureter (d) Jae in Mhwe
127. Recently, United Nation Environment Program (UNEP) has released the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook (2019) titled:
(a) Keeping the Environment under Review (b) Healthy Planet, Healthy People
(c) Environment under Threat, Be alert (d) Be Safe Be Happy
128. Which of the following countries will host the Under-17 Women's Football World Cup in 2020?
(a) China (b) Japan (c) India (d) Maldives

129. World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated every year on:
(a) 3rd March (b) 7th March (c) 13th March (d) 15th March
130. According to ESPN World Fame 100 list, an annual list of the most famous athletes on the planet. Who among the following is placed at the top spot in the list?
(a) Virat Kohli (b) LeBron James (c) Lionel Messi (d) Cristiano Ronaldo
131. Prayut Chan-o-cha is the current Prime Minister of:
(a) Taiwan (b) Thailand (c) Vietnam (d) Laos
132. The joint anti-terrorism exercise 'Sary-Arka-Antiterror 2019' to be held this year by:
(a) Shanghai Cooperation Organisation countries (b) SAARC Countries
(c) ASEAN Countries (d) India and USA
133. The first BRICS Sherpa meeting under the Presidency of _____ concluded at Curitiba in March 2019.
(a) India (b) China (c) South Africa (d) Brazil
134. Which of the following banks has received no objection from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the proposed acquisition of Gruh Finance?
(a) Axis Bank (b) SBI Bank (c) Bandhan Bank (d) Bank of Baroda
135. According to the recent report by brand consultancy Interbrand, which is the top brand from India in 2019?
(a) Tata (b) Reliance (c) Airtel (d) Patanjali
136. INS Khanderi is the second of the Indian Navy's _____ Kalvari-class submarines being built in India.
(a) Four (b) Five (c) Six (d) Ten
137. In a "breakthrough", scientists from _____ have developed a novel solar-powered harvesting system that absorbs moisture from the air and converts it into clean, usable water.
(a) USA (b) India (c) Israel (d) Japan
138. The fourth session of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) was held in:
(a) Nairobi (b) Beijing (c) Tokyo (d) New Delhi
139. Who has been conferred the 'Nari Shakti Puraskar' award for her contribution towards women empowerment over the last 15 years in March 2019?
(a) Shovana Narayan (b) Sonal Mansingh (c) Seema Mehta (d) Mallika Sarabhai
140. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presented the Business Line Changemaker Of The Year award to _____ for successfully introducing the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
(a) Shri Arun Jaitley (b) Shri Narendra Modi (c) Shri Piyush Goel (d) Both A and B
141. Who among the following is the India's first anti-corruption ombudsman or Lokpal, after his name was cleared and recommended by the high-level selection committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi?
(a) Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose (b) Justice Arjan Kumar Sikri
(c) Justice Madan Bhimrao Lokur (d) Justice Prafulla Chandra Pant
142. Who is the first transgender government officer appointed by government of Madhya Pradesh?
(a) Mallika Rawat (b) Anita Ranjan (c) Sanjana Singh (d) Karishma Rana

143. A 10-day long Africa-India Joint Field Training Exercise (AFINDEX-19) between the Indian Army and 16 African nations conducted in:
(a) Durban (b) Asmara (c) Pune (d) Dehradun
144. Name the IIT, which 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.
(a) IIT Delhi (b) IIT Madras (c) IIT Kharagpur (d) IIT Kanpur
145. According to the Election Commission's latest data on political parties, registered till March 9. How many political parties are registered in India?
(a) 1,345 (b) 1,698 (c) 1,765 (d) 2,293
146. Recently, who became only the second Indian woman golfer to win on the Ladies European Tour?
(a) Aditi Ashok (b) Sukirti Rajpal (c) Diksha Dagar (d) Akshita Narain
147. Recently, In Asian Youth Athletics Championships Indian youth team finished _____ in the overall medals tally.
(a) First (b) Second (c) Third (d) Fifth
148. Who is the first Indian to qualify for next year's Tokyo Olympics athletics recently?
(a) Govind Lahiri (b) Thomas Isaac (c) K.T. Irfan (d) Amartej Sarna
149. Who is the first IITian to become the Chief Minister of an Indian state?
(a) Shri Manohar Parikar (b) Shri Arvind Kejriwal
(c) Shri Ajit Singh (d) Shri Jairam Ramesh
150. Name the Film director and novelist, who has been selected for prestigious "Kusumagraj" national award for literature recently.
(a) Ved Rahi (b) Shyam Benegal (c) Sudhir Mishra (d) Tigmanshu Dhulia
151. Pramod Sawant was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of:
(a) Goa (b) Manipur (c) Sikkim (d) Bihar
152. Dr Ibrahima Kassory Fofana is the current Prime Minister of:
(a) Republic of Ghana (b) Republic of Belgium (c) Greece (d) Republic of Guinea
153. According to the UN and government officials, Cyclone Idai has affected more than _____ million people in the three southern African countries.
(a) 1.5 (b) 2.5 (c) 3.5 (d) 4.5
154. Boeing 737 MAX has been in the news, which of the following airlines in India has Boeing 737 MAX in its fleet?
(a) SpiceJet (b) Jet Airways (c) Air India (d) Both A and B
155. The 3rd Indo-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction was held in:
(a) Mumbai (b) New Delhi (c) Tokyo (d) Chennai
156. Which of the following banks has launched YONO Cash for its customers which will allow them to withdraw cash from ATMs without their debit cards?
(a) ICICI Bank (b) SBI (c) HDFC Bank (d) Punjab National Bank

157. A Pune-based IT firm is developing software for the world's largest ground-based telescope, the Thirty Metre Telescope (TMT), which is likely to come up on Mauna Kea in:
(a) Hawaii (b) Mumbai (c) California (d) New York
158. Which of the following football teams has clinched their maiden Indian Super League title in March 2019?
(a) Mumbai City FC (b) Bengaluru FC (c) FC Goa (d) Kerala Blasters FC
159. Indian youth team finished _____ in the overall medals tally with a total of 26 medals at Asian Youth Athletics Championships 2019 held in Hong Kong.
(a) Second (b) Third (c) Fourth (d) Fifth
160. Rear Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, VSM, has assumed charge as Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) at:
(a) Kochi (b) Vishakhapatnam (c) Chennai (d) Kolkata
161. The former Supreme Court judge Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose has been appointed as the country's first:
(a) NSBC Chairperson (b) Lokpal (c) NHRC Chairperson (d) NBFC Chairperson
162. Indian-origin Jagmeet Singh has created history in _____ when he made his debut in the House of Commons as the first non-white leader of a major opposition party in the country.
(a) Canada (b) UK (c) China (d) Germany
163. Nursultan Nazarbayev has announced his resignation as the President of:
(a) Tajikistan (b) Kazakhstan (c) Turkmenistan (d) Turkey
164. The 33rd edition of 'IND-INDO CORPAT' is being held in:
(a) India (b) Indonesia (c) Italy (d) Iran
165. Which of the following cities been named as the world's most expensive cities in 2019 by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU)?
(a) Paris (b) Singapore (c) Hong Kong (d) All of the above
166. Which of the following banks has signed a pact with the Bank of China to boost business opportunities?
(a) ICICI Bank (b) SBI (c) HDFC Bank (d) Punjab National Bank
167. Who is the 2019 winner of the Templeton Prize?
(a) Marcelo Gleiser (b) Robert Johnson (c) Michael Philips (d) Henry Cripps
168. Astronomers from NASA found a pulsar hurtling through space at nearly _____ an hour, so fast it could travel the distance between Earth and the Moon in just 6 minutes.
(a) 1.5 million miles (b) 2.5 million miles (c) 3.5 million miles (d) 4.5 million miles
169. Who has been named in the Standing Committee of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) at its 38th General Assembly in Bangkok?
(a) Akashdeep Singh (b) Birendra Lakra (c) Sardar Singh (d) Rupinder Pal Singh
170. International Day of Happiness is celebrated every year on:
(a) March 18 (b) March 19 (c) March 20 (d) March 21
171. The Election Commission of India has appointed transgender social activist Gauri Sawant, as one of the 12 election ambassadors from:
(a) Maharashtra (b) Bihar (c) Jharkhand (d) Andhra Pradesh

172. India's deepest shaft cave was discovered in:
(a) Manipur (b) Meghalaya (c) Andhra Pradesh (d) Gujarat
173. Which of the following countries has joined ranks with India and called for an inclusive and transparent Indo-Pacific region?
(a) Indonesia (b) Iran (c) USA (d) Japan
174. What is the India rank in the UN World Happiness Report- 2019?
(a) 125 (b) 130 (c) 135 (d) 140
175. Which of the following countries has filed highest international patent applications in 2018 with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)?
(a) China (b) USA (c) Japan (d) India
176. Which of the following airlines from India has become a member of global airlines' grouping International Air Transport Association (IATA)?
(a) SpiceJet (b) Jet Airways (c) Air India (d) IndiGo
177. Scientists from _____ have devised a way to generate hydrogen fuel from seawater using solar power, an advance that may help pave the way for a novel sustainable source of energy.
(a) China (b) USA (c) Japan (d) India
178. Organisers of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics unveiled a _____ blossom shaped torch for the Games as the city prepares for the famed flower season to begin in coming days.
(a) Cherry (b) Apple (c) Mango (d) Banana
179. Who will be honoured with Vyas Samman 2018 for his collection of poems "Jitne Log Utne Prem"?
(a) Shrilal Shukla (b) Naresh Mehta (c) Vishnu Prabhakar (d) Leeladhar Jagudi
180. The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on:
(a) March 18 (b) March 19 (c) March 20 (d) March 21
181. Election Commission has appointed _____ eminent former Civil Servants as Special Expenditure Observers for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections.
(a) Two (b) Three (c) Four (d) Five
182. Which of the following countries parliament voted to rename the country's capital in honor of long-time ruler Nursultan Nazarbayev, a day after he resigned as president?
(a) Tajikistan (b) Kazakhstan (c) Turkmenistan (d) Turkey
183. The military exercise 'Mitra Shakti' which is conducted annually between armies of:
(a) India and Sri Lanka (b) India and Nepal (c) India and China (d) India and Iran
184. Global sales of counterfeit and pirated goods jumped to _____ a year in 2016, amounting to 3.3% of world trade.
(a) €360 billion (b) €400 billion (c) €460 billion (d) €560 billion
185. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the _____ for effective implementation of the new bankruptcy law.
(a) SBI (b) SEBI (c) RBI (d) BSE

186. Who has become the first woman to win the Abel prize, sometimes called the Nobel prize of mathematics:
(a) Karen Uhlenbeck (b) Maryam Mirzakhani
(c) Grace Brewster Murray (d) Augusta Ada
187. The ships of First Training Squadron of Indian Navy operating in the Southern Indian Ocean were diverted to _____ to provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) to the local population post the devastation caused by cyclone 'IDAI'.
(a) Japan (b) Maldives (c) Mozambique (d) Indonesia
188. How many medals India won at Special Olympic Games held in Abu Dhabi?
(a) 268 (b) 300 (c) 368 (d) 400
189. World Poetry Day is celebrated every year on:
(a) March 18 (b) March 19 (c) March 20 (d) March 21
190. The Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar (IIPHG) has launched a mobile application - "Conquer Exam, Be a Warrior" in collaboration with _____.
(a) National Mental Health Program, Government of Bihar
(b) National Mental Health Program, Government of Gujarat
(c) National Mental Health Program, Government of Andhra Pradesh
(d) National Mental Health Program, Government of Odisha
191. Bihar was carved out of Bengal presidency in:
(a) 1912 (b) 1913 (c) 1914 (d) 1915
192. Union Ministers Piyush Goyal and Dr Harsh Vardhan are among the _____ 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.
(a) 3 (b) 5 (c) 7 (d) 10
193. British Prime Minister Theresa May has welcomed the EU decision to postpone Brexit beyond _____.
(a) 27th March (b) 29th April (c) 29th March (d) 29th May
194. Fitch Ratings cut India's economic growth forecast for the next financial year starting April 1, 2019 to _____ per cent from its previous estimate of 7 per cent, on weaker than expected momentum in the economy.
(a) 6.5 (b) 6.6 (c) 6.7 (d) 6.8
195. Intain Fintech, an AI and block chain-based software products firm will be launching 'eMulya', an intelligent block chain that facilitates efficient, secure and trustworthy asset securitisation transactions for NBFCs in India by end-2019. Intain has its global AI Lab in:
(a) Pune (b) Hyderabad (c) New Delhi (d) Kolkata
196. Researchers at the _____ have found a way to levitate and propel objects using only light - though, for the time being, the work remains theoretical.
(a) Harvard University (b) California Institute of Technology
(c) The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (d) Yale University

197. A NASA spacecraft, which will return a sample of a near-Earth asteroid named Bennu to Earth in _____, has discovered plumes erupting from the cosmic body's surface - among a numerous other findings including evidence of water-bearing minerals.
(a) 2020 (b) 2021 (c) 2022 (d) 2023
198. India won their fifth consecutive SAFF Women's Football championship defeating which of the following countries?
(a) Nepal (b) Pakistan (c) Bhutan (d) China
199. The book titled 'The Great Disappointment: How Narendra Modi Squandered A Unique Opportunity to Transform The Indian Economy' is written by:
(a) P. Chidambaram (b) Salman Anees Soz (c) Kapil Sibal (d) Mapanna Mallikarjun Kharge
200. World Water Day (WWD) is celebrated every year on:
(a) March 18 (b) March 19 (c) March 21 (d) March 22
201. India's first forest-certification scheme gets global recognition, which was developed by Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF). The NCCF was set up in:
(a) 2010 (b) 2012 (c) 2014 (d) 2015
202. Union Government of India has appointed Vice Admiral Karambir Singh as the next Chief of the:
(a) Naval Staff (b) Army Staff (c) Air Staff (d) BSF Staff
203. According to the preliminary world airport traffic rankings for 2018 released by the Airports Council International (ACI), Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) has now become the world's _____ busiest airport.
(a) 10th (b) 12th (c) 14th (d) 16th
204. India has extended a total of Nepalese Rs _____ as financial assistance for the construction of the three-storey building for the Siddheswar Education Public Campus in Ramechhap district which has now been completed.
(a) 32.5 million (b) 35.5 million (c) 45.5 million (d) 55.5 million
205. Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) banned separatist Yasin Malik's Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) under the anti-terror law, Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) of _____.
(a) 1952 (b) 1962 (c) 1965 (d) 1967
206. Microsoft and researchers from the _____ have been able to translate digital information into DNA and then back to bits.
(a) Harvard University (b) University of Washington
(c) The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (d) Yale University
207. In which of the following years, Bhagat Singh along with his associates Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru were hanged to death for the killing 21-year-old British police officer John Saunders?
(a) 1921 (b) 1925 (c) 1931 (d) 1936
208. World Meteorological Day is celebrated every year on:
(a) March 20 (b) March 21 (c) March 22 (d) March 23
209. Who has become the first cricketer in the Indian Premier League (IPL) history to amass 5,000 runs?
(a) Virat Kohli (b) Rohit Sharma (c) Chris Gayle (d) Suresh Raina

210. Who won the best actress award at the 64th edition of the Filmfare Awards?
(a) Katrina Kaif (b) Deepika Padukone (c) Alia Bhatt (d) Anushka Sharma
211. Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra has been appointed as the acting chief justice of the:
(a) Patna High Court (b) Chhattisgarh High Court
(c) Bhopal High Court (d) Andhra Pradesh High Court
212. Which of the following countries has become the first G7 country to sign up for China's multibillion-dollar "Belt and Road Initiative"?
(a) Japan (b) France (c) UK (d) Italy
213. How many African countries have participated in the field training exercise 'AFINDEX-19'?
(a) 10 (b) 15 (c) 17 (d) 20
214. Jimmy Carter is now the longest living chief executive in _____ history.
(a) American (b) Israel (c) France (d) UK
215. Union Government has exceeded its disinvestment target for the current fiscal by Rs 5,000 crore, taking the total proceeds to Rs _____ crore.
(a) 55,000 (b) 65,000 (c) 75,000 (d) 85,000
216. India's indigenous supersonic fighter jet Tejas will for the first time participate in aerial displays during the five-day Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) in:
(a) Italy (b) Malaysia (c) Vietnam (d) Indonesia
217. India on April 1 launched an electronic intelligence satellite Emisat for the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) along with _____ third party satellites.
(a) 28 (b) 38 (c) 48 (d) 50
218. Denmark's Joachim Persson has been banned for 18 months for offences linked to betting and match-fixing. He is associated with which of the following sports?
(a) Cricket (b) Hockey (c) Badminton (d) Tennis
219. The book titled 'Every Vote Counts' was written by:
(a) T. Sheshadri (b) Navin Chawla (c) Hamid Ansari (d) K. Krishna Murthy
220. World Tuberculosis Day is observed every year on:
(a) March 21 (b) March 22 (c) March 23 (d) March 24
221. Recently, NITI Aayog organized a day-long FinTech Conclave in:
(a) Mumbai (b) New Delhi (c) Hyderabad (d) Bengaluru
222. Which of the following cities is the first city in the world to install wireless charging systems for electric taxis, hoping to make recharging quick and efficient enough to speed the take-up of non-polluting cabs?
(a) Oslo (b) Zurich (c) Paris (d) Stockholm
223. The joint training exercise MITRASHAKTI - VI is being held between:
(a) India and Bhutan (b) India and China (c) India and Sri Lanka (d) India and Bangladesh

224. What is the rank of India on a global energy transition index, the annual list compiled by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF)?
(a) 34th (b) 47th (c) 63rd (d) 76th
225. Who has been appointed by the Reserve Bank of India as the chairman of 5-member committee to deepen digital payments and enhance financial inclusion through Fintech?
(a) Anil Ambani (b) Nandan Nilekani
(c) N. R. Narayana Murthy (d) Azim Premji
226. Recently, Naresh Goyal and his spouse Anita Goyal resigned as directors from the board of which of the following international airlines?
(a) Go Air (b) Vistara Airlines (c) Jet Airways (d) Indigo Airlines
227. Which is the only wild ape found in India and also among the most endangered primates in the world?
(a) Mandrill (b) Chimpanzee
(c) Western Hoolock Gibbon (d) Diademed Sifaka
228. Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched _____satellites including the primary payload EMISAT, on the first of April.
(a) 16 (b) 20 (c) 29 (d) 34
229. Which country won the 2019 badminton Asia mixed team championships?
(a) China (b) Japan (c) India (d) Nepal
230. International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is observed every year on:
(a) 19th March (b) 21st March (c) 24th March (d) 25th March
231. The world's largest e-waste recycling facility has opened in:
(a) Dubai (b) Bengaluru (c) Moscow (d) Doha
232. Which of the following countries had recently approved a proposal to establish a corridor that will allow Hindu pilgrims from India to visit Sharda Peeth, an ancient Hindu temple and cultural site?
(a) Bangladesh (b) China (c) Pakistan (d) Afghanistan
233. Recently, Indian Navy's maiden nuclear, biological and chemical training facility was inaugurated in:
(a) Mysuru (b) Lonavla (c) Mumbai (d) Pune
234. Which of the following countries has signed a proclamation recognising Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights?
(a) France (b) Syria (c) USA (d) Canada
235. Recently, Comoros President Azali Assoumani was re-elected. Comoros is a volcanic archipelago in:
(a) Pacific Ocean (b) Arctic Ocean (c) Atlantic Ocean (d) Indian Ocean
236. Recently, Apple partners with Goldman Sachs and _____for Apple Card.
(a) VISA (b) Mastercard (c) Maestro (d) Amex
237. For the first time in the world, researchers at the GRAPES-3 muon telescope facility in _____have measured the electrical potential, size and height of a thundercloud.
(a) Ooty (b) Laddakh (c) Kiev (d) Toronto

238. Recently, Scientists have discovered a network of lakes beneath the largest glacier in East:
(a) Asia (b) Europe (c) Antarctica (d) Australia
239. According to a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA), India emitted _____ of carbon dioxide in 2018.
(a) 2,299 million tonnes (b) 2,700 million tonnes (c) 2,989 million tonnes (d) 3,457 million tonnes
240. Epilepsy Awareness Day is observed annually on:
(a) 21st March (b) 23rd March (c) 25th March (d) 26th March
241. Recently, Defence Research and Development Organisation, DRDO, successfully conducted an Anti-Satellite (A-SAT) missile test, under _____ from Dr A P J Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha.
(a) Mission Shakti (b) Mission Bhakti (c) Mission Urja (d) Mission Prahaar
242. Who is the richest Indian expat in UAE with assets estimated over USD 4.7 billion named in the Forbes' billionaires list for 2019?
(a) Micky Jagtiani (b) BR Shetty (c) MA Yusuff Ali (d) Sunny Varkey
243. The Government of Nepal is organized "Nepal Investment Summit 2019" in:
(a) Pokhara (b) Kathmandu (c) New Delhi (d) Biratnagar
244. How many additional posts of judicial and technical members will be created in the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)?
(a) Two (b) Four (c) Six (d) Eight
245. Who among the following is not the judicial member of the anti-corruption ombudsman?
(a) Deepak Raheja (b) Ajay Kumar Tripathi (c) Dilip B. Bhosale (d) Pradip Kumar Mohanty
246. Recently, Indian Navy's frontline corvette INS Kadmat reached _____ archipelago Langkawi to participate in the 15th edition of Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition, LIMA-19.
(a) Malaysian (b) Mauritian (c) Indonesian (d) Fijian
247. Recently, First Indian Army Mountaineering Expedition to Mt Makalu (8485m) was flagged off. Mt Makalu is located in:
(a) France (b) Nepal (c) New Zealand (d) Canada
248. World Theatre Day is observed annually on:
(a) 23rd March (b) 25th March (c) 27th March (d) 28th March
249. Which among the following launched two new India-specific tools called "Candidate Connect" and "Share You Voted", to boost civic engagement on its platform during the general elections that commence in April?
(a) Google (b) YouTube (c) Twitter (d) Facebook
250. The 12th Asian Airgun Championship is held in:
(a) India (b) Indonesia (c) Taiwan (d) Thailand
251. Name the Indian railway station which is awarded with 'Gold Rating' by the Indian Green Building Council recently?
(a) Kurnool (b) Guwahati (c) Gangtok (d) Vijaywada

252. Who among the following had won this year's Turing Award for their work on neural networks announced by the Association for Computing Machinery, the world's largest society of computing professionals?
(a) Amardeep Singla, Keimu and Indries (b) Drs. Hinton, LeCun and Bengio
(c) Li Chu, David Jefferson and Gonghiyter (d) Osaka and Rehug
253. Name the country, which unveiled the world's longest salt cave "Malham" recently.
(a) Syria (b) Iran (c) Israel (d) Jordan
254. According to the Skytrax World Airport Awards, which of the following International airports has been crowned the world's best aviation hub for the seventh time in a row?
(a) Indira Gandhi International Airport (b) Changi Airport
(c) O'Hare International Airport (d) Narita International Airport
255. Name the Indian woman, who took as only the second woman high commissioner of India to UK since independence in 1947 and presented credentials to Queen Elizabeth at the Buckingham Palace.
(a) Sujata Menon (b) Asha Negi (c) Sushma Khatri (d) Ruchi Ghanshyam
256. Name the Nobel Prize winner, who was awarded with the prestigious Bodley Medal, the highest honour granted by the University of Oxford's world-famous Bodleian Libraries recently.
(a) Kailash Satyarthi (b) Muhammad Yunus (c) Amartya Sen (d) Malala Yousufzai
257. The theme of World Tuberculosis (TB) Day 2019 was:
(a) Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free world (b) Transforming the fight towards elimination
(c) 'It's time' (d) Unite to End TB
258. Which is the first Indian port operator to record 200 million tonnes cargo movement in 2018-19?
(a) Kamarajar Port Limited (Erstwhile & Ennore Port Limited)
(b) Adani Port and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ)
(c) APM Terminals
(d) Essar Ports
259. Recently, Five PSU lenders get capital infusion of Rs 21,428 crore from government. Which of the following is not among the five PSU's?
(a) Punjab National Bank (b) Indian Overseas Bank (c) Canara bank (d) Bank of Baroda
260. Who among the following has been recently appointed as ad-hoc Ethics Officer of Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)?
(a) Justice (Retd) D.K. Jain (b) Justice (Retd) Ashok Ganguly
(c) Justice (Retd) Deepak Pujari (d) Justice (Retd) Amrit Wadhwa
261. Recently, the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has recommended how many new games to become medal events at the 2024 Paris Olympic Games?
(a) 2 (b) 3 (c) 4 (d) 7
262. Which is the highest polling station in the world at present?
(a) Tashigang (b) Mawsynram (c) Rohtang (d) Hikkam
263. Which among the following has recently unanimously passed the first-ever resolution ordering members to enforce laws against terror financing?
(a) USA (b) World Bank (c) UN Security Council (d) ASEAN

264. Which of the following is the largest state-owned financial firm by market capitalization at present?
(a) BHEL (b) SBI (c) GAIL (d) PFC
265. Which of the following companies launched a global advisory council to consider ethical issues around artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies recently?
(a) Facebook (b) Google (c) Adobe (d) Oracle
266. Which of the following countries is being developing a washing machine for space?
(a) USA (b) Canada (c) Russia (d) China
267. Recently, how many varieties of Indian coffee have been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, a move that will enhance their visibility globally and allow growers to get the right value?
(a) Four (b) Five (c) Seven (d) Eight
268. The book 'Indian Fiscal Federalism' is written by:
(a) Dr Bimal Jalan (b) Y V Reddy (c) C Rangrajan (d) Dr Urjit Patel
269. According to an international study, which of the following north eastern state ranks second in the list of states where child marriages among girls between the age of 15 and 19 are performed?
(a) Nagaland (b) Manipur (c) Mizoram (d) Tripura
270. World Autism Awareness Day is an internationally recognized day observed every year on:
(a) 27th March (b) 29th march (c) 30th March (d) 2nd April
271. The First Amendment to the Statement of Guiding Principles (SGP) on Triangular Cooperation for Global Development was signed between India and _____.
(a) United States (b) France (c) China (d) Japan
272. Abdelaziz Bouteflika has been the President of:
(a) Nigeria (b) Algeria (c) Zambia (d) Ghana
273. In March 2019, State-owned gas utility GAIL India Ltd has signed an agreement with _____ for cooperation in the development of solar power projects.
(a) IOC (b) ONGC (c) BHEL (d) BEL
274. Which of the following companies has claimed to develop its largest power storage system in Asia?
(a) Microsoft (b) Reliance (c) Tesla (d) TATA
275. According to OpenSignal's measurements for 4G availability, Dhanbad scored 95.3 percent, becoming one of only two cities among India's 50 cities to pass the 95 percent mark. The other city was:
(a) Pune (b) Hyderabad (c) Bengaluru (d) Ranchi
276. Garden Reach Ship Builders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) became the "first Indian shipyard" to build and deliver _____ warships.
(a) 25 (b) 50 (c) 75 (d) 100
277. Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey tournament 2019 won by:
(a) Japan (b) North Korea (c) South Korea (d) India
278. Durga Puja from _____ is the India's official nomination for UNESCO's 2020 list of cultural institutions from around the world that require protection and preservation.
(a) Vijayawada (b) Kolkata (c) Hyderabad (d) Chennai

279. Rajasthan Diwas celebrated on _____marking the unification of the erstwhile princely states in the region into the State of Rajasthan.
(a) 28 March (b) 29 March (c) 30 March (d) 31 March
280. Who is set to receive 2019 Peabody Career Achievement honour on May 18, 2019?
(a) Angelina Jolie (b) Rita Moreno (c) Emily Jean Stone (d) Scarlett Ingrid Johansson

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ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

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1. b Assam's Hailakandi district has shot up to number one from the 52nd position, among the aspirational districts of the country, a new report released by the Niti Aayog.
2. c Bhagwan Lal Sahni, a BJP leader from Bihar's Muzaffarpur, has assumed charge as the chairman of the newly constituted National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC), according to sources in the Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry.
3. a In a bid to increase the use of modern technology in the construction sector, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the 2019-2020 as the year of construction technology.
4. c Currently, the anthem is launched in seven languages -- Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Tamil, Telegu, Malyalam and Kannada.
5. b Private steel major Tata Steel has been recognised as one of the World's Most Ethical Companies by the Ethisphere Institute, a global leader in defining and advancing the standards of ethical business practices, for 2019.
6. b Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched One Nation, One Card for transport mobility at a function in Ahmedabad.
7. c The alumnus and researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi have created a laptop for visually-impaired. In what they claim to be a first in the country, the laptop has an interface in form of dots or Braille instead of a visual one. The researchers have named it 'DotBook'.
8. a Roger Federer wins 100th ATP title in Dubai with victory over Stefanos Tsitsipas.
9. a Indian Space Research Organisation has launched a special programme for School Children called "Young Scientist Programme" "YUva VIgyani KAryakram" from this year.
10. c The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) proclaimed 3 March, the day of signature of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), as UN World Wildlife Day to celebrate and raise awareness of the world's wild animals and plants.
11. c In a bid to check illegal immigration and smuggling of arms, ammunition, drugs and cattle, a porous riverine section of the Indo-Bangladesh border in Assam will be put under electronic surveillance, said Union Home Ministry (MHA). The "smart fencing" will be operationalised in the 61 km riverine section of the international border in Dhubri district of Assam where the Brahmaputra River enters into Bangladesh.
12. a The United States has announced its intention to "terminate" India's designation as a beneficiary of its Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) because it failed to provide assurances that it will give the US "equitable and reasonable" access to its markets in numerous sectors.
13. d U.S. President Donald Trump extended by one year sanctions against Zimbabwe saying that the new government's policies continue to pose an "unusual and extraordinary" threat to U.S. foreign policy.
14. a United Nations, India has nominated NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand for the post of the new Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) Director-General and he will be facing candidates from China and three other countries. An economist, Chand is a member of the NITI Aayog with the status of a Minister of State.

15. c China plans to run a new generation of self-developed driverless magnetic-levitation trains with a designed speed of 200 kmph by early 2020.
16. a Scientists claim to have successfully given 'night vision' to mice, allowing them to see infrared light with minimal side effects. The team led by Tian Xue from the University of Science and Technology of China and Gang Han from the University of Massachusetts Medical School added the near-infrared (800 to 1,000nm) to the mouse's visible spectrum.
17. b Singapore was the largest source of FDI during April-December 2018-19 with USD 12.97 billion inflow, followed by Mauritius (USD 6 billion), the Netherlands (USD 2.95 billion), Japan (USD 2.21 billion), the US (USD 2.34 billion), and the UK (USD 1.05 billion).
18. d Seven of the top 10 most polluted cities in the world are in India, a study showing South Asia's battle with deteriorating air quality and the economic toll it's expected to take worldwide, stated.
19. a Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah has been re-elected president of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) for an eighth term despite being embroiled in a forgery case brought by Swiss investigators.
20. a The United World Wrestling (UWW) has asked all the national federations under it to stop communication with the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) in the wake of visa denial of Pakistani shooters in the recent World Cup.
21. a Former Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court Justice Ajit Singh has been appointed as the first Lokayukta of Odisha.
22. b Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan (PM-SYM) Yojana provides for a monthly pension of Rs. 3,000 to the employees of the unorganised sector after 60 years of age.
23. d Textiles Minister Smriti Irani inaugurated the refurbished Handloom Haat at Janpath in New Delhi.
24. b The third edition of the bilateral joint exercise between India and Oman, Al Nagah 2019 will begin from 12th of March at Jabel Al Akhdar Mountains in Oman.
25. c World Bank to provide 250 Million dollar for the National Rural Economic Transformation Project (NRETP) to boost Rural Incomes across 13 States in India.
26. b Jeff Bezos remains the world's richest person, ahead of Bill Gates and Warren Buffett, according to the latest Forbes list of the ultra-wealthy.
27. c Fifteen of the top 20 most polluted cities in the world are located in India, according to an analysis of air quality in several cities around the world.
28. c Tripura's Thanga Darlong, the last tribal musician to play Rosem - a bamboo made a flute-like musical instrument, was conferred the Atal Behari Vajpayee Life Time Award during the 37th Agartala Book Fair.
29. a Bajrang Punia won gold in the freestyle wrestling 65kg category and Pooja Dhanda claimed gold in the 59kg category.
30. b Japanese architect Arata Isozaki has been awarded the Pritzker Prize, considered architecture's highest honour, for a lifetime of work that found global resonance while mining local traditions.
31. b Indore has bagged the cleanest city award for third straight year under Swachh Survekshan, 2019.

32. d In Estonia, the center-right Reform party won 29.4% of the vote, setting up its leader Kaja Kallas to become the first female prime minister of the Baltic country, so long as she can form a coalition government.
33. a The Maharashtra government has decided to extend all schemes of the Tribal Welfare Department to Dhangars till a decision on the reservation is taken.
34. a The Red Flag exercise, launched in 1975, is a two-week advanced aerial combat training exercise held several times a year by the US Air Force.
35. c India will collaborate with Bhutan, Nepal, Indonesia and Malaysia to increase the population of three species of Asian rhinos, including the Greater one-horned rhinoceros found in the Indian sub-continent.
36. a India signed a loan agreement with the World Bank for 96 Million US dollars for additional financing of Uttarakhand Disaster Recovery Project.
37. b Ten years after it was launched, the first exoplanet candidate spotted by NASA's Kepler space telescope has finally been confirmed as a real world.
38. b The Ministry of Women and Child Development hosted a felicitation event for Web Wonder Women, a campaign organised to celebrate the exceptional achievements of women, who have been driving social reforms via social media.
39. c Veteran Indian sports administrator Randhir Singh has been appointed as the chairman of the Coordination Committee of the 2022 Hangzhou Asian Games by the General Assembly of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA).
40. c Distinguished scientist Ajit Kumar Mohanty has been appointed Director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC).
41. b 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.
42. d The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the investment sanction for construction of 624 Megawatt Kiru Hydro Electric Project in Jammu and Kashmir.
43. c Globally, Philippines' capital city of Manila led the Knight Frank Prime International Residential Index (PIRI 100) after luxury home prices jumped 11 percent last year, bolstered by a lack of supply and a thriving domestic economy.
44. d India sealed a \$3-billion deal with Russia for leasing a nuclear-powered attack submarine for the Indian Navy for a period of 10 years.
45. b As a token of appreciation towards the craftsmen of the state, the Odisha government has launched a scheme to provide them with monthly assistance. It is called 'Mukhya Mantri Karigar Sahayata, the scheme was launched by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.
46. b Malaysia has become a member of the International Criminal Court in a boost for the beleaguered institution at a time it faces growing criticism.

47. a State Bank of India (SBI) 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.
48. b As the smartphone penetration expands in rural India, Google is hoping to piggyback on it to help the children with their reading skills.
49. a As part of the reforms at the World Health Organisation (WHO), Soumya Swaminathan has been moved from the position of Deputy Director-General to chief scientist heading the division created to strengthen the organisation's core scientific work and ensure the quality and consistency of its norms and standards.
50. b At 21, Kylie Jenner becomes the Youngest Self-Made Billionaire Ever
51. c The five-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, appointed a panel of mediators, comprising former Supreme Court judge F.M.I. Kalifulla as chairman, Art of Living founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, and Sriram Panchu, a senior advocate with experience in alternative dispute resolution.
52. c The Rajasthan government has amended the Lokayukta Act to reduce the Lokayukta's tenure from eight years to five years.
53. a The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi inaugurated Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology on 9th March, 2019 at Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
54. a Prime Minister Juha Sipilä's centre-right government resigned after failing to push through a flagship social and health care reform package
55. b The Government has approved establishment of two new benches of National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), one at Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh and the other at Indore in Madhya Pradesh.
56. c The Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) in Bhubaneswar has won the prestigious Airport Service Quality (ASQ) award for being the best airport in size and region for the year 2018.
57. d In a first of its kind, State Bank of India has decided to link the interest rate paid on savings bank balance of over Rs. 1 lakh to the repo rate - the key policy rate set by Reserve Bank of India.
58. b The inaugural India-Japan Space Dialogue was held in New Delhi.
59. c International Women's Day is annually held on March 8 to celebrate women's achievements throughout history and across nations.
60. c Indian-American television personality and food expert Padma Lakshmi has been appointed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) as its newest goodwill ambassador.
61. a Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the Maharashtra government launched a special scheme for construction workers in the state. The scheme, "Atal Aahar Yojna," will provide good quality and hygienic food to construction workers at a highly subsidised rate.
62. b The Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport has been adjudged as the best airport in the category of over 40 million passengers per annum (MPPA) in Asia Pacific by Airports Council International (ACI) in the Airport Service Quality Programme for 2018.

63. c The second edition of Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) - 2019 was held on 05 and 06 March 2019 at the Manekshaw Centre, New Delhi.
64. c French businessman Bernard Arnault is the richest person in Europe. He's worth an estimated \$80.8 billion, according to Bloomberg.
65. c The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) notified the norms for banks with regards to two per cent interest subvention or subsidy for short-term crop loans during 2018-19 and 2019-20.
66. d Star rating programme launched for Microwave Ovens and Washing Machines; expected to save over 3.0 Billion Units by 2030.
67. b A low-cost, ultra-sensitive device that is capable of detecting the cardiac biomarker troponin T protein has been fabricated by a research team from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad.
68. d China's Liu Hong set a new World record for the women's 50km race walk, becoming the first woman to complete the event in under four hours.
69. c The Marayoor jaggery, the traditional and handmade product from Idukki district, has finally received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag from central government.
70. c The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, released the Dictionary of Martyrs of India's Freedom Struggle, at an event in Lok Kalyan Marg, New Delhi.
71. c President Ram Nath Kovind confers Padma awards at Rashtrapati Bhawan. Fifty-six of the 112 personalities, who were selected for this year's Padma awards, will be conferred the honour at a special function.
72. a In Madhya Pradesh, the state government has issued an ordinance raising reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBC) to 27 per cent from the present 14 per cent.
73. b London Mayor Sadiq Khan has been named the Politician of the Year at an annual awards ceremony held in the UK's House of Commons complex for his ongoing contribution to the political life in the British capital.
74. a Industrialist Swraj Paul, one of the richest Indians in the UK who set up his first companies in Birmingham in the 1960s, has been awarded for his lifetime contribution in the Midlands region, which is home to a large Indian diaspora.
75. c Mohammad Shtayyeh has been named as Palestinian Prime Minister by President of Palestinian Authority Mahmoud Abbas.
76. c The IDBI Bank has started aligning its businesses with that of its new owner LIC, appointing the life insurer as a corporate agent under bancassurance besides setting up a joint task force to chart out their roadmap for the future.
77. c 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).
78. d Kavinder Singh Bisht in the 56kg-category struck gold while Shiva Thapa in the 60kg category and three others claimed silver medals to end a fine Indian campaign at the 38th GeeBee Boxing Tournament in Helsinki, Finland.
79. a The Ministry of Tourism, Government of India has won the First Prize in the category of TV Cinema Spot at the prestigious international Golden City Gate Tourism Awards 2019.

80. b Finance Minister Arun Jaitley released the book Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas - a collection of selected speeches of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in the presence of Information and Broadcasting Minister Col Rajyavardhan Rathore.
81. b Retired IAS officer C Lalsawta becomes the first Lokayukta of Mizoram.
82. b The three members of the committee are two retired IAS officers Noor Mohammed and Vinod Zutshi and a retired IPS officer, A.S. Gill.
83. b The 34th edition of AAHAR - the International Food and Hospitality fair - begins at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.
84. b The Marshall Islands' is gearing to release its new digital currency called the "SOV" in 2019.
85. a Ministry of Commerce & Industry organised the 14th CII-EXIM Bank Conclave on India-Africa Project Partnerships, in association with Confederation of Indian Industry and EXIM Bank of India in New Delhi from March 17-19, 2019.
86. b India was the world's second largest arms importer from 2014-18, ceding the long-held tag as largest importer to Saudi Arabia, which accounted for 12% of the total imports during the period.
87. d Researchers have discovered more than 7,000 new microbial species from the Pacific, Atlantic and Indian oceans, enhancing our understanding of biodiversity in the world seas.
88. b A species of wood snake that wasn't seen for 140 years has resurfaced in a survey conducted by scientists in the Meghamalai Wildlife Sanctuary.
89. c The International Day of Happiness is celebrated worldwide every March 20, and was conceptualized and founded by philanthropist, activist, statesman, and prominent United Nations special advisor Jayme Illien to inspire, mobilize, and advance the global happiness movement.
90. a The government has approved a state of the art passenger terminal building for Kartarpur Corridor.
91. c The Indian Sundarban was accorded the status of 'Wetland of International Importance' under the Ramsar Convention.
92. b 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.
93. b Pakistan has clinched the slot of the deputy chairman of the general body of the Parliamentary Union of the OIC Member States (PUIC).
94. c Bank of Baroda has become one of the first public sector banks to launch a crèche/child daycare facility for children of its employees.
95. a India and Saudi Arabia came to an understanding to revive and 'expedite' the implementation of \$44 billion West Coast refinery project in Maharashtra, in which Saudi Aramco will be holding a considerable stake.
96. c Erode is a city and urban agglomeration in Erode district, Tamil Nadu, India.

97. c Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Raghuram Rajan has been awarded the 'Yashwantrao Chavan National Award 2018' for his contribution towards economic development.
98. c Professor Prajapati Trivedi, a senior director in the Commonwealth Secretariat in London, has been awarded the prestigious Harry Hatry Distinguished Performance Management Practice Award for 2019 for his contribution in public administration.
99. d 5th SAAF Women's Championship begins in Nepal.
100. a 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.
101. b US Senate confirmed Indian-American Neomi Rao as a judge on the DC Circuit Court of Appeals, one of the most powerful benches in the country.
102. c 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).
103. b HDFC Bank is only the third Indian firm-after Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)-to achieve the mark.
104. c The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to inject rupee liquidity into the system through long-term foreign exchange buy/sell swap a first-of-its-kind instrument used for liquidity management.
105. b The first shipment under the United Nations 'Transports Internationaux Routiers' (TIR) convention arrived in India from Afghanistan through Iran's Chabahar Port.
106. c 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.
107. b Special Olympics World Games 2019 which is held from March 14 to March 21 in Abu Dhabi (UAE), has made history by welcoming a record-breaking 200 nations ahead of the Games.
108. b The Austrian capital Vienna has topped Mercer's index of most liveable cities for the 10th year in a row.
109. d IT czar Azim Premji has earmarked economic benefits of about 34% of his shares in Wipro, worth Rs. 52,750 crore, for his foundation involved in philanthropy.
110. d World Kidney day was celebrated on 13th March 2019.
111. c Andhra Pradesh IT minister Nara Lokesh, BJP MP Poonam Mahajan and Xiaomi India head Manu Kumar Jain are among the Indians featuring in the list of Young Global Leaders, according to the World Economic Forum (WEF).
112. b 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 was concluded at Tangail, Bangladesh.
113. c Writer Raghu Karnad has won the Windham-Campbell prize under non-fiction category for his work Farthest Field: An Indian Story of the Second World War (2015).

114. c Padmanaban Gopalan, founder of No Food Waste, was named the winner of the award worth 3,000 pounds at a ceremony at the Commonwealth Secretariat in London for his work towards achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of Zero Hunger with his innovative system of recovering excess food to distribute to those in need.
115. a For the first time in the arecanut sector, 'Sirsi Supari' grown in Uttara Kannada has received the Geographic Indication (GI) tag.
116. c The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) relaxed norms for imports of capital and non-capital goods by raising the trade credit limit to \$150 million under the automatic route.
117. c India's largest commercial bank, the State Bank of India (SBI), has launched 'Doorstep Banking' for senior citizen customers over 70 years of age, differently-abled customers and infirm customers, including visually-impaired customers.
118. b M.R. Kumar is the newly-appointed chairman of Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).
119. d Mayank Agarwal led Karnataka to its first Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 title.
120. c Argentina and Colombia are poised to co-host the 2020 Copa America after South America's ruling body CONMEBOL once again ruled out a US proposal to host the tournament.
121. b President Ramnath Kovind inaugurated the Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship at Grambharti near Gandhinagar in Gujarat.
122. a The first guru of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, founded Kartarpur in 1504 CE on the right bank of the Ravi River and established the first Sikh commune there.
123. b State Bank of India launched 'YONO Cash' for cardless withdrawal of cash at over 16,500 SBI ATMs across the country.
124. b The European Union expanded its tax haven blacklist by 10 countries, adding the United Arab Emirates and Bermuda despite the objections of powerful member states such as Italy.
125. b The RBI said that IDBI Bank has been categorised as a private sector bank for regulatory purposes with effect from January 21, 2019.
126. b Greta Thunberg, the founder of the Youth Strike for Climate movement, has been nominated for the Nobel peace prize.
127. b The United Nation Environment Program (UNEP) has released the sixth edition of the Global Environment Outlook (2019) titled 'Healthy Planet, Healthy People'.
128. c India will host the Under-17 Women's Football World Cup in 2020.
129. d World Consumer Rights Day is celebrated every year on March 15.
130. d This year's ESPN World Fame 100 list, an annual list of the most famous athletes on the planet, placed the Portuguese footballer Cristiano Ronaldo at the top spot, followed by basketball player LeBron James and FC Barcelona captain Lionel Messi. Eight Indian cricketers found a place in the list.

131. b Aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and increasing cultural exchange between India and Thailand, the 3rd edition of Namaste Thailand festival started with a delectable array of Thai cuisine and a lineup of cultural events. Prayut Chan-o-cha serves as the Prime Minister of Thailand.
132. a India, Pakistan and the other member's states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) will take part in a joint anti-terrorism exercise 'Sary-Arka-Antiterror 2019' to be held this year by the grouping.
133. d The first BRICS Sherpa meeting under the Presidency of Brazil concluded at Curitiba in Brazil.
134. c Bandhan Bank has received no objection from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for the proposed acquisition of Gruh Finance.
135. a Tata, Reliance and Airtel were top Indian brands in 2019, revealed a recent report by brand consultancy Interbrand, a division of Omnicom Group.
136. c The Navy is set to induct the second Scorpene submarine Khanderi by early May. The remaining submarines in the series are in advanced stages of manufacturing and trials. Khanderi has completed all trials and is in the final stages of acceptance. INS Khanderi is the second of the Indian Navy's six Kalvari-class submarines being built in India.
137. a In a "breakthrough", scientists have developed a novel solar-powered harvesting system that absorbs moisture from the air and converts it into clean, usable water. Researchers led by Guihua Yu from The University of Texas at Austin in the US used hydrogels that are both highly water absorbent and can release water upon heating.
138. a In a significant first, India piloted resolutions on two important global environment issues relating to Single-use Plastics and Sustainable Nitrogen management at the fourth session of United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA) which was held in Nairobi from 11th to 15th March 2019.
139. c Renowned Kathak dancer Seema Mehta has been conferred the 'Nari Shakti Puraskar' award for her contribution towards women empowerment over the last 15 years.
140. a Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh presented the Business Line Changemaker Of The Year award to Union Minister Arun Jaitley for successfully introducing the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
141. a Former Supreme Court judge and current member of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), Pinaki Chandra Ghose, is likely to be India's first anti-corruption ombudsman, or Lokpal, after his name was cleared and recommended by the high-level selection committee chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
142. c In a first in Madhya Pradesh, the state has appointed a transgender government officer. Sanjana Singh recently joined as the personal secretary of the director of social justice and disabled persons welfare.
143. c A 10-day long Africa-India Joint Field Training Exercise (AFINDEX-19) between the Indian Army and 16 African nations will be conducted in Pune from March 18 to 27.
144. c The IIT Kharagpur has signed an 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.
145. d The Election Commission's latest data on political parties, registered till March 9, a day before the Lok Sabha elections were announced, reveal that the country has a total of 2,293 political parties.

146. c Diksha Dagar became only the second Indian woman golfer to win on the Ladies European Tour.
147. b In Asian Youth Athletics Championships in Hong Kong, boys medley relay team won a gold medal for India on the final day to help Indian youth team finish second in the overall medals tally with a total of 26 medals including eight gold, nine silver and nine bronze medals.
148. c National record holder K.T. Irfan became the first Indian to qualify for next year's Tokyo Olympics athletics.
149. a Shri Manohar Parikar is the first IITian to become the Chief Minister of an Indian state. He is one of the most prominent IITians who became politicians.
150. a Film director and novelist Ved Rahi has been selected for prestigious "Kusumagraj" national award for literature
151. a Pramod Sawant was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Goa, capping a day of hectic parleys between the saffron party and its allies to put a new government in place in the state.
152. d Dr Ibrahima Kassory Fofana, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea called on the President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, at Rashtrapati Bhavan.
153. a Mozambique, Zimbabwe and Malawi have been hit by a vicious cyclone that has killed nearly 150 people, left hundreds more missing and stranded tens of thousands. According to the UN and government officials, Cyclone Idai has affected more than 1.5 million people in the three southern African countries.
154. d After almost all countries across the world banned it, the US also banned the Boeing 737 MAX - the aircraft was involved in two deadly crash in the past five months. SpiceJet and Jet Airways are the two airlines in the country, which has Boeing 737 MAX in its fleet.
155. b The 3rd Indo-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction was held in New Delhi.
156. b The State Bank of India (SBI) has launched YONO Cash for its customers which will allow them to withdraw cash from ATMs without their debit cards.
157. a A Pune-based IT firm is developing software for the world's largest ground-based telescope, the Thirty Metre Telescope (TMT), which is likely to come up on Mauna Kea in Hawaii.
158. b 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.
159. a Boys medley relay team won a gold medal for India on the final day of the Asian Youth Athletics Championships 2019 in Hong Kong to help Indian youth team finish second in the overall medals tally with a total of 26 medals including eight gold, nine silver and nine bronze medals.
160. a Rear Admiral Krishna Swaminathan, VSM, has assumed charge as Flag Officer Sea Training (FOST) at Kochi on 18 Mar 19.
161. b Former Supreme Court judge Justice Pinaki Chandra Ghose has been appointed as the country's first Lokpal. According to a communique issued by Rashtrapati Bhavan, President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed the Chairman of the Lokpal along with other members of the anti-corruption watchdog.
162. a Indian-origin Jagmeet Singh has created history in Canada when he made his debut in the House of Commons as the first non-white leader of a major opposition party in the country.

163. b Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev has announced his resignation after nearly 30 years in power. The 78-year old leader had ruled the country since it emerged from the collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s.
164. b Indonesian Naval Ship KRI Sultan Thaha Syaifuddin and Maritime Patrol Aircraft CN-235 led by Cmde Dafit Santoso arrived at Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India for the Opening Ceremony of the 33rd edition of the India-Indonesia Coordinated Patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) to be held from 19 Mar to 04 Apr 2019.
165. d Paris, Singapore and Hong Kong have jointly been named as the world's most expensive cities in 2019. The annual analysis, published by The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), compared the price of more than 150 items in 133 cities around the world.
166. b The country's largest lender SBI said it has signed a pact with the Bank of China to boost business opportunities.
167. a Marcelo Gleiser, the Appleton Professor of Natural Philosophy and a professor of physics and astronomy, is the 2019 winner of the Templeton Prize.
168. b Astronomers from NASA found a pulsar hurtling through space at nearly 2.5 million miles an hour - so fast it could travel the distance between Earth and the Moon in just 6 minutes. The discovery was made using NASA's Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope and the National Science Foundation's Karl G. Jansky Very Large Array (VLA).
169. c Former India hockey captain Sardar Singh has been named in the Standing Committee of the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) at its 38th General Assembly in Bangkok .
170. c March 20 is the International Day of Happiness and this year's theme is Happier Together, focusing on what we have in common, rather than what divides us.
171. a The Election Commission of India has appointed transgender social activist Gauri Sawant, as one of the 12 election ambassadors from Maharashtra. During 2004 and 2009 Lok Sabha elections there was no record of transgender voters.
172. b A five-member team of cavers of the Meghalaya Adventurers' Association (MAA) have discovered India's deepest shaft at Krem Um Ladaw.
173. a Indonesia joined ranks with India and called for an inclusive and transparent Indo-Pacific region amid China's slew of activities that have challenged order in the vast region.
174. d Indians are not as happy in 2019 as they were in 2018 and the country figures at 140th place, seven spots down from last year, on UN World Happiness Report- 2019, released. The list is topped by Finland for the second year in a row.
175. a India filed 2,013 international patent applications in 2018 with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), registering the highest growth of 27% among countries but falling way below China and the US in volume of patent filings.
176. a Low cost carrier SpiceJet said it has become a member of global airlines' grouping International Air Transport Association (IATA).
177. b USA, Stanford scientists have devised a way to generate hydrogen fuel from seawater using solar power, an advance that may help pave the way for a novel sustainable source of energy. The findings, published in the

journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, demonstrate a new way of separating hydrogen and oxygen gas from salt water.

178. a Organisers of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics unveiled a cherry-blossom shaped torch for the Games as the city prepares for the famed flower season to begin in coming days.
179. d Renowned Hindi writer Leeladhar Jagudi will be honoured with Vyas Samman 2018 for his collection of poems "Jitne Log Utne Prem". His poem book was published in 2013. He was born in Dhangal village in Tehri Garhwal district of Uttarakhand.
180. d The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on 21 March.
181. a Election Commission has appointed two eminent former Civil Servants Shailendra Handa and Ms. Madhu Mahajan as Special Expenditure Observers for the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections.
182. b Kazakhstan's parliament on March 20 voted to rename the country's capital in honor of long-time ruler Nursultan Nazarbayev, a day after he resigned as president.
183. a Exercise 'Mitra Shakti' which is conducted annually as part of military diplomacy and interaction between armies of India and Sri Lanka will be conducted from March 26 to April 8 for the year 2018-19, in Sri Lanka.
184. c Global sales of counterfeit and pirated goods jumped to €460 billion (\$509 billion) a year in 2016, amounting to 3.3% of world trade.
185. b 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.
186. a Mathematician Karen Uhlenbeck has become the first woman to win the Abel prize, sometimes called the Nobel prize of mathematics.
187. c The ships of First Training Squadron of Indian Navy (Sujata, Sarathi and Shardul) operating in the Southern Indian Ocean were diverted to Port Beira, Mozambique based on request received from the Government of Mozambique to provide Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) to the local population post the devastation caused by cyclone 'IDAI' which struck the coast of Mozambique on 15 Mar 19.
188. c India has bagged 368 medals - 85 Gold, 154 Silver and 129 Bronze at Special Olympic Games in Abu Dhabi. Our correspondent reports that the eight-day extravaganza finally drew to a close in a spectacular ceremony.
189. d World Poetry Day is celebrated on 21 March, and was declared by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) in 1999.
190. b The Indian Institute of Public Health Gandhinagar (IIPHG) has launched a mobile application - "Conquer Exam, Be a Warrior" in collaboration with National Mental Health Program, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Gujarat.
191. a Bihar is celebrated its 107th foundation day. It was on this day in 1912, Bihar was carved out of Bengal presidency.
192. c 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.

193. c British Prime Minister Theresa May has welcomed the EU decision to postpone Brexit beyond 29th March. The UK will be offered a delay until 22nd May, if MPs approve the withdrawal deal negotiated with the EU next week.
194. d Fitch Ratings cut India's economic growth forecast for the next financial year starting April 1, 2019 to 6.8 per cent from its previous estimate of 7 per cent, on weaker than expected momentum in the economy.
195. a Intain Fintech, an AI and block chain-based software products firm, will be launching eMulya, an intelligent block chain that facilitates efficient, secure and trustworthy asset securitisation transactions for NBFCs in India by end-2019. Intain has its global AI Lab in Pune with 10 people and it will hire 15 more staff in Chennai for this purpose.
196. b Researchers at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) say they've found a way to levitate and propel objects using only light - though, for the time being, the work remains theoretical.
197. d A NASA spacecraft, which will return a sample of a near-Earth asteroid named Bennu to Earth in 2023, has discovered plumes erupting from the cosmic body's surface - among a numerous other findings including evidence of water-bearing minerals.
198. a India won their fifth consecutive SAFF Women's Football championship defeating hosts Nepal 3-1 in the finals.
199. b The economic commentator and Congress member Salman Anees Soz released his book 'The Great Disappointment: How Narendra Modi Squandered A Unique Opportunity to Transform The Indian Economy' at the India International Centre.
200. d World Water Day (WWD) is celebrated every year on 22 March to focus attention on the importance of freshwater and advocating for the sustainable management of freshwater resources. The United Nations General Assembly initiated this response on 22 March 1993 as the first World Water Day.
201. d India now has a globally recognised forest-certification scheme developed specifically for Indian forests. Recently, a Geneva-based non-profit decided to endorse the Certification Standard for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) developed by Network for Certification and Conservation of Forests (NCCF), an Indian non-profit. The NCCF was set up in 2015 by representatives of forest-based industries, non-profits, forest auditors and government forest departments with an aim to set standards for certifying India's forests, their products and their sustainable management.
202. a Union Government of India appointed Vice Admiral Karambir Singh as the next Chief of the Naval Staff (CNS). With the announcement, the government has for the second time overlooked the seniority principle in service chief appointments.
203. b The nation capital'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 over took mega-hubs like Frankfurt, Dallas Fort Worth, Guangzhou and Istanbul Ataturk airports.
204. b India has extended a total of Nepalese Rs 35.5 million as financial assistance for the construction of the three-storey building for the Siddheswar Education Public Campus in Ramechhap district which has now been completed.

205. d Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) banned separatist Yasin Malik's Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) under the anti-terror law, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA). The move comes days after the Centre banned Jamat-e-Islami (JeI-J&K) under Section 3(1) of the UAPA.
206. b In the future, you will be storing data not into megabytes or gigabytes, but into DNA. In what comes as a significant achievement, Microsoft and researchers from the University of Washington have been able to translate digital information into DNA and then back to bits.
207. c Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid tribute to Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru on their death anniversary, observed as Martyrs' Day or Shaheed Diwas. The story of their sacrifice for the nation will continue to inspire generations. On March 23, 1931, Bhagat Singh along with his associates Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru were hanged to death for the killing 21-year-old British police officer John Saunders.
208. d World Meteorological Day is celebrated every year on 23 March to commemorate the entry into force in 1950 of the convention that created the World Meteorological Organization.
209. d Suresh Raina added another feather to his illustrious cap, as the Chennai Super Kings' (CSK) batsman became the first in the Indian Premier League (IPL) history to amass 5,000 runs.
210. c Alia Bhatt won Best Actress for playing the role of a spy while Raazi also fetched Meghna Gulzar the Best Director Filmfare Award at the 64th edition of the Filmfare Awards.
211. b Chhattisgarh High Court's Chief Justice Ajay Kumar Tripathi has resigned from his post after being appointed as judicial member in the anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal. Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra has been subsequently appointed as acting chief justice of the high court, a notification of the Union law ministry dated March 22 said.
212. d Italy has signed up for China's multibillion-dollar "Belt and Road Initiative", becoming the first Western European nation to jump on board despite scepticism from its EU counterparts and Washington.
213. c The field training exercise 'AFINDEX-19' is the very first edition of the joint training conducted between India and Africa. It is being held from March 18 to March 27 at Aundh Military Station at Pune. Towards this end, the inaugural Africa-India field training exercise-2019 (AFINDEX-19)", being held from March 18 to 27, is aimed at training the participating nations in "humanitarian mine action" (de-mining and other protocols to handle landmines and explosives) and UN peace-keeping operations in which India has decades of experience.
214. a Former US president Jimmy Carter has reached a milestone. Elected as the 39th President, Carter is now the longest living chief executive in American history.
215. d Union Government has exceeded its disinvestment target for the current fiscal by Rs 5,000 crore, taking the total proceeds to Rs 85,000 crore, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said.
216. b India's indigenous supersonic fighter jet Tejas will for the first time participate in aerial displays during the five-day Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition (LIMA) in Malaysia.
217. a India on April 1 launched an electronic intelligence satellite Emisat for the Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) along with 28 third party satellites and also demonstrate its new technologies like three different orbits with a new variant of PSLV rocket, ISRO said. According to Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), a new variant of its Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) rocket will first put the 436 kg Emisat into a 749 km orbit.

218. c Denmark's Joachim Persson has been banned for 18 months for offences linked to betting and match-fixing, the Badminton World Federation said.
219. b The former Chief Election Commissioner of India Navin Chawla's latest book 'Every Vote Counts', was launched at New Delhi's Taj Mahal Hotel on Man Singh Road. Navin Chawla's book was launched by former Vice President of India, Hamid Ansari.
220. d World Tuberculosis Day is observed on 24th March every year to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of TB, and to step up efforts to end the global epidemic.
221. b NITI Aayog organized a day-long FinTech Conclave in New Delhi.
222. a Norway's capital Oslo is the first city in the world to install wireless charging systems for electric taxis, hoping to make recharging quick and efficient enough to speed the take-up of non-polluting cabs.
223. c The joint training exercise MITRASHAKTI - VI between Indian and Sri Lanka Army is being held at Diyatalawa in Sri Lanka.
224. d India has moved up two places to rank 76th on a global energy transition index. This annual list, compiled by Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF), has ranked 115 economies on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability.
225. b Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das has said that 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.
226. c Ending a nearly two month-long struggle to remain in control, Jet Airways' power couple Naresh Goyal and his spouse Anita Goyal resigned as directors from the board of the company.
227. c The Western Hoolock Gibbon, the only wild ape found in India and also among the most endangered primates in the world, has found a safe haven thanks to the people of Meghalaya.
228. c Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched 29 satellites including the primary payload EMISAT, on the first of April.
229. a China won the 2019 badminton Asia mixed team championships by defeating Japan 3-2 in the final.
230. d International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is a United Nations international observance designated in 2007 to be marked on 25 March every year.
231. a The world's largest e-waste recycling facility has opened in Dubai.
232. c The Pakistan government approved a proposal to establish a corridor that will allow Hindu pilgrims from India to visit Sharda Peeth, an ancient Hindu temple and cultural site in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
233. b Indian Navy's maiden nuclear, biological and chemical training facility was inaugurated in Lonavla.
234. c US President Donald Trump has signed a proclamation recognising Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.
235. d The Comoros is a volcanic archipelago off Africa's east coast, in the warm Indian Ocean waters of the Mozambique Channel.

236. b
237. a For the first time in the world, researchers at the GRAPES-3 muon telescope facility in Ooty have measured the electrical potential, size and height of a thundercloud that passed overhead on December 1, 2014.
238. c Scientists have discovered a network of lakes beneath the largest glacier in East Antarctica, a finding that may be critical in predicting how the melting of polar ice will change the world's oceans in the future.
239. a India emitted 2,299 million tonnes of carbon dioxide in 2018, a 4.8% rise from last year, according to a report by the International Energy Agency (IEA). India's emissions growth this year was higher than that of the United States and China - the two biggest emitters in the world - and this was primarily due to a rise in coal consumption. China, the United States, and India together accounted for nearly 70% of the rise in energy demand.
240. d Epilepsy Awareness Day is observed annually on March 26th. The day has become known as "Purple Day" as people are encouraged to wear the color to increase awareness of Epilepsy.
241. a 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.
242. c Prominent retail business tycoon MA Yusuff Ali, who ranks at 394 on the list, is the richest Indian expat in UAE with assets estimated over USD 4.7 billion.
243. b The Government of Nepal is organized "Nepal Investment Summit 2019" on March 29 -30 in Kathmandu.
244. c Six additional posts of judicial and technical members will be created in the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).
245. a Former Chief Justices - Dilip B. Bhosale, Pradip Kumar Mohanty, and Abhilasha Kumari and sitting Chief Justice of Chhattisgarh High Court Ajay Kumar Tripathi are the judicial members who took the oath.
246. a Indian Navy's frontline corvette INS Kadmat reached Malaysian archipelago Langkawi to participate in the 15th edition of Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition, LIMA-19
247. b 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 (12 mi) southeast of Mount Everest, on the border between Nepal and Tibet, China. One of the eight-thousanders, Makalu is an isolated peak whose shape is a four-sided pyramid.
248. c World Theatre Day, observed annually on March 27, was started in 1962 by the International Theatre Institute (ITI).
249. d Social-networking site Facebook launched two new India-specific tools called "Candidate Connect" and "Share You Voted", to boost civic engagement on its platform during the general elections that commence in April.
250. c In Shooting, Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary have bagged a Gold medal in the 10-metre Air Pistol Mixed team event at the 12th Asian Airgun Championship at Taoyuan in Taipei.
251. d Vijayawada's railway station is one of the busiest in India, but that has not affected its cleanliness because it still looks immaculate. So, the station was awarded with 'Gold Rating' by the Indian Green Building Council.

252. b The Association for Computing Machinery, the world's largest society of computing professionals, announced that Drs. Hinton, LeCun and Bengio had won this year's Turing Award for their work on neural networks.
253. c The cave named Malham, stretching over 10 km, runs through Mount Sodom, Israel's largest mountain, and spills out to the southwest corner of the adjacent Dead Sea.
254. b 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
255. d Ruchi Ghanshyam, who took as only the second woman high commissioner of India since independence in 1947 in November, presented credentials to Queen Elizabeth at the Buckingham Palace in a ceremony marked by royal regalia.
256. c Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen was awarded with the prestigious Bodley Medal, the highest honour granted by the University of Oxford's world-famous Bodleian Libraries.
257. c The theme of World TB Day 2019 - 'It's time' - puts the accent on the urgency to act on the commitments made by global leaders to:
258. b Adani Port and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) claimed that it has become the first Indian port operator to handle cargo movement of 200 million tonnes (MT) in 2018-19.
259. c Five state-owned banks, including PNB, Bank of Baroda and Union Bank, received shareholders' approval for capital infusion to the tune of Rs 21,428 crore in lieu of preferential allotment of shares to the government.
260. a The BCCI's newly-appointed ombudsman, Justice (Retd) D.K. Jain, will also be its ad-hoc Ethics Officer.
261. c Breakdancing and three other sports have made the next move toward becoming medal events at the 2024 Paris Olympics.
262. a Tucked away deep in trans-Himalayas, Tashigang, a small Himachal Pradesh village at an altitude of 15,256 feet, is now the highest polling station in the world.
263. c The UN Security Council has unanimously passed the first-ever resolution ordering members to enforce laws against terror financing.
264. b PFC is now the Second Largest Govt-Owned Financial Firm after SBI.
265. b Alphabet's Google was launching a global advisory council to consider ethical issues around artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies.
266. c The days of astronauts packing enough clean clothes to last a whole mission could soon be over as Russia is developing a washing machine for space.
267. b Five varieties of Indian coffee have been awarded the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, a move that will enhance their visibility globally and allow growers to get the right value.
268. b The book 'Indian Fiscal Federalism' is written by Y V Reddy, who had served as RBI Governor as well as Finance Commission Chairman.

269. d Tripura ranks second in the list of states where child marriages among girls between the age of 15 and 19 are performed, an international study has revealed.
270. d World Autism Awareness Day is an internationally recognized day on 2 April every year.
271. a The First Amendment to the Statement of Guiding Principles (SGP) on Triangular Cooperation for Global Development was signed by Devyani Khobragade, Joint Secretary, Ministry of External Affairs of India, and Mark Anthony White, Mission Director for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in India.
272. b Protest-hit Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika named a new government headed by recently appointed Nouredine Bedoui.
273. c State-owned gas utility GAIL India Ltd has signed an agreement with Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) for cooperation in the development of solar power projects.
274. c In a bid to reduce energy demand and provide emergency backup power to trains in Japan, Tesla has claimed to develop its largest power storage system in Asia.
275. d According to OpenSignal's measurements for 4G availability, Dhanbad scored 95.3 percent, becoming one of only two cities among India's 50 cities to pass the 95 percent mark. The other city was Ranchi which scored 95 percent in 4G availability.
276. d Garden Reach Ship Builders and Engineers Ltd (GRSE) became the "first Indian shipyard" to build and deliver 100 warships.
277. c India has lost to South Korea in the final of Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey tournament at Ipoh in Malaysia.
278. b Kolkata's Durga Puja is the India's official nomination for UNESCO's 2020 list of cultural institutions from around the world that require protection and preservation, according to Sangeet Natak Akademi, an autonomous body under the Union ministry of culture that is the nodal agency for this purpose.
279. c Rajasthan Diwas celebrated on 30 March marking the unification of the erstwhile princely states in the region into the State of Rajasthan.
280. b Veteran actor Rita Moreno is set to receive 2019 Peabody Career Achievement honour. Moreno will be bestowed with the honour on May 18. Rita Moreno is a Puerto Rican actress, dancer and singer.