

# **MANTHAN**

## **Current Affairs Supplement**

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# Preface

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**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

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1.	<b>POLITY AND GOVERNANCE .....</b>	<b>1–24</b>
	• National	
	• International	
2.	<b>ECONOMY AND FINANCE.....</b>	<b>25–43</b>
	• Economy News	
	• Banks in News	
	• Firms in News	
3.	<b>SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY .....</b>	<b>44–52</b>
	• Inventions/Discoveries	
	• Health/ Disease	
4.	<b>ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT.....</b>	<b>53–54</b>
5.	<b>SPORTS.....</b>	<b>55–61</b>
	• Sports Personalities in News	
	• Sport Events	
6.	<b>AWARDS.....</b>	<b>62–66</b>
7.	<b>PERSONS IN NEWS .....</b>	<b>67–69</b>
8.	<b>MISCELLANEOUS .....</b>	<b>70–82</b>
9.	<b>IMPORTANT DAYS .....</b>	<b>83–84</b>
10.	<b>QUESTIONNAIRE.....</b>	<b>85–123</b>
	• Questions	
	• Answer Key & Explanation	

## **POLITY AND GOVERNANCE**

### **National**



#### **Indus River dolphin declared as state aquatic animal of Punjab**

- **Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh** gave the nod to **declare the endangered Indus River Dolphin**, found only in Beas River, as **Punjab state aquatic animal**.
- **Capt Amarinder** said Indus dolphin, a rare aquatic mammal, would be the flagship species for the conservation of the Beas eco-system. He also gave approval to **declare Kanjli Wetland and holy Kali Bein** as a **wildlife conservation reserve** to mark the **550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak**.

The state capital of Punjab is Chandigarh, a Union Territory and also the capital of the neighboring state of Haryana. The five rivers from which the region took its name were Sutlej, Ravi, Beas, Chenab and Jhelum; Sutlej, Ravi and Beas are part of the Indian Punjab. **Captain Amarinder Singh** is currently the **26th Chief Minister** of Punjab and **Vijayendrapal Singh Badnore** is the **current Governor of Punjab**. The Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship **Shri Dharmendra Pradhan** **laid the foundation stone for permanent campus of National Skill Training Institute (NSTI) for Women at Mohali, Punjab**. This is the **first NSTI Institute for Punjab** and only one of its kind in India which is exclusively for women.

#### **World heritage centre to be set up at Mayapur**

- A **World Heritage Centre** housing 'spiritual camps' of **45 countries** would be set up at **Mayapur**, the **global headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)**, in **Nadia district, West Bengal**.
- The **Temple of Vedic Planetarium** will come up at the **first part of the World heritage centre**. It will have one of the **biggest domes in the world**. The **TOVP** is expected to be **inaugurated in 2022**.

#### **Kerala became the first State to set up a price monitoring and research unit**

- **Kerala** has become the **first State to set up a price monitoring and research unit (PMRU)** to track violation of **prices of essential drugs and medical devices** under the **Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO)**.
- The **State Health Secretary** would be the **Chairman of the society** and the **Drugs Controller** would be its member secretary.

**Kerala** is a state on the southwestern, **Malabar Coast of India**. It was formed on **1 November 1956** following the **States Reorganisation Act** by combining Malayalam-speaking regions. **Kerala has the highest literacy rate 93.91%** in the 2011 census; the **highest life expectancy, 77 years**; and the **highest sex ratio, 1,084 women per 1,000 men**. **Palanisamy Sathasivam** is the **current Governor of Kerala**. **Kerala is known as "God's own country"** and is one of the **popular tourist destinations in India**. **Pinarayi Vijayan** is the **current Chief Minister of Kerala**, in office since **25 May 2016**. **Kerala is the first State to have a floating solar power plant with a capacity of 250 MW**.

## India becomes world's second largest LPG consumer

- **India is world's second largest LPG consumer**, whose demand is projected to rise 34 per cent by 2025, surpassing import volumes of Japan in the financial year 2017.
- **"Rapid increase in population combined with LPG penetration** Under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) in rural areas has resulted in an average growth of 8.4 per cent in LPG consumption, making **India the second largest consumer of LPG in the world at 22.5 million tonnes.**

**Under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) of providing free cooking gas (LPG) connection to poor**, over **6.31 crore connections** have been **provided since the launch of the scheme on May 1, 2016**. With estimated imports of above 12 million metric tonnes in the financial year 2018-19, **India stands as world's second largest importer of LPG, after China.**

## Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) meet on Disaster Risk Management begins

- **The Ministry of Home Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is organised a meeting of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Cluster Group on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) on 5-6 February 2019 in New Delhi.**
- **Indian Ocean Rim Association is an inter-governmental organisation** and has many disaster-prone countries among its **22 members** and nine dialogue partners. DRM is one of its **priority areas and its Action Plan (2017-2021)** has specific goals to improve resilience in IORA countries.

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

## Cabinet approves establishment of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog

- **The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for the establishment of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog for conservation, protection and development of cows and their progeny.**
- **The Aayog will work in collaboration with Veterinary, Animal Sciences or Agriculture University or departments or organizations of the Central or State Government** engaged in the task of research in the field of breeding and rearing of the cow, organic manure, biogas etc. **Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog** was announced in pursuance of the announcement of **setting up of the Aayog in the Union Budget 2019-20.**

## Madhya Pradesh government makes it mandatory for industries to hire 70% locals

- **The Congress government in Madhya Pradesh has made it mandatory for industries seeking various incentives to provide 70 per cent employment to locals in the state.**
- **Hours after taking over as the chief minister on December 17 last year, Nath had announced that the incentives would be granted to those industries that give 70 per cent of jobs to the local youths.**
- **All industries incentivised by the state government to hire 70 per cent local people of Madhya Pradesh**

**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 18th Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh**. He was appointed the **Pro Tem Speaker of the 16th Lok Sabha**. **Anandiben Patel is the current Governor of Madhya Pradesh and Governor of Chhattisgarh** and former Chief Minister of Gujarat. She was the **first woman chief minister of the Gujarat state**. **Madhya Pradesh was recently granted GI tag for the Kadaknath chicken breed on 30th July 2018.**

## UNESCO, Sahapedia join hands for second India Heritage Walk Festival

- The second edition of the India Heritage Walk Festival (IHWF) is being held across 37 cities in February, with the UNESCO joining hands with Sahapedia this year.
- The festival is being held from February 2-28, with a focus on heritage education and walks for people with special needs, festival. The IHWF, which received the PATA Gold Award 2018 for its maiden pan-India event, kick-started with a heritage walk in Ahmedabad on February 2, focusing on the religious history and co-existence of multiple faiths in that city.
- For the second edition of IHWF, Sahapedia has collaborated with about 40 local-level partners to conduct its pan-India heritage walk festival.

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. India is sixth on the list of countries with the most number of sites in the list. Italy leads with 53 sites followed by China with 52 sites.

## J&K government grants Divisional Status to Ladakh region

- While exercising powers conferred in Section 5 of Land Revenue Act, the State Government of Jammu and Kashmir issued a notification of creation of Ladakh as 3rd Division in the state.
- Divisional status would facilitate this region in a great way to progress. Routine administrative clearances for Leh and Kargil can be obtained at Divisional headquarters in Leh.

Jammu and Kashmir has special autonomy under Article 370 of the Constitution of India. Srinagar is the summer capital and Jammu is the winter capital. Mehbooba Mufti served as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, from 4th April 2016 to 19th June 2018. She resigned on June 19 2018 after BJP withdrew support from the coalition government. She was the first woman to hold the office. Mehbooba Mufti is India's second Muslim woman chief minister after Syeda Anwara Taimur of Assam.

## Union Minister Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal lays Foundation Stone of Mega Food Park at Mathura District in Uttar Pradesh

- Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal laid foundation stone for M/s Nandvan Mega Food Park Private Limited located in Badawal, Chhata-Barsana road in Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. Under the Scheme, Government of India provides financial assistance upto Rs. 50.00 Crore per Mega Food Park project.

## Centre announces mascot for COP-13 on conservation of migratory species

- The Centre announced that the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) will be its mascot for the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on the conservation of migratory species (CMS) to be held in Gujarat next year.
- Launching the logo and the mascot along with a website for the international event, Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan said that hosting the 13th COP would give India an opportunity to showcase its conservation initiatives for wildlife species.

The great Indian Bustard (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) or Indian bustard is a bustard found on the Indian subcontinent. A large bird with a horizontal body and long bare legs, giving it an ostrich like appearance, this bird is among the heaviest of the flying birds. Once common on the dry plains of the Indian subcontinent, as few as 150 individuals were estimated to survive in 2018 (reduced from an estimated 250 individuals in 2011). It is protected under Wildlife Protection Act 1972 of India.



## PM Narendra Modi lays foundation for Sela Tunnel

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the strategically important Sela Tunnel Project in Arunachal Pradesh.
- The project, costing Rs 687 crore, is being constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and would be completed in the next three years. Once the 12.04-km tunnel is complete it will give a fillip to the overall development of the area as it will provide all-weather connectivity to Tawang and other areas. It will also reduce the travelling time from Tezpur to Tawang by more than an hour.

Arunachal Pradesh is the northeastern-most state of the country. Itanagar is the capital of the state. Brigadier (Dr.) B. D. Mishra is the present Governor of Arunachal Pradesh. Pema Khandu is the current Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh.

## Krishi Kumbh organised at Motihari in Bihar

- In Bihar, three-day Krishi Kumbh is organised in Motihari. Over fifteen thousand farmers across different states and about two hundred agricultural scientists are participating in the Kumbh.
- This is the largest Krishi Kumbh of Eastern India. The Governor Lalji Tandon and Union Agriculture Minister Radha Mohan Singh jointly inaugurated this Krishi Kumbh.
- The objective of Krishi Kumbh is to promote modern techniques and diversification in agriculture that could help in doubling farmer's income. About two hundred different stalls in the fair will inform farmers about modern agricultural technologies.

Bihar is the third-largest state of India by population, according to the census 2011. It is a land-locked state, although the outlet to the sea through the port of Kolkata is not far away. Nalanda University is located in the town of Rajgir, in the northern Indian state of Bihar. It was a Buddhist center of learning from 427 to 1197 CE. It has been called "one of the first great universities in recorded history. Nitish Kumar has been the Chief Minister of Bihar.

## MP cadre IPS Rishi Kumar Shukla appointed as CBI director

- A 1983-batch IPS officer of Madhya Pradesh Cadre Rishi Kumar Shukla has been appointed as the new Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). He will serve in the post for a period of two years.
- The High-Level Committee chaired by Prime Minister approved the appointment of Mr Shukla to the post.

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is the premier investigating agency of India. Operating under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, the CBI is headed by the Director. The agency has been known to investigate several economic crimes, special crimes, and cases of corruption and other high-profile cases. The CBI headquarters are located at Lodhi Road in New Delhi. The founding director of the CBI was D. P. Kohli, who held the office from 1 April 1963 to 31 May 1968.

## IAF gets its first woman flight engineer

- Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal becomes the first woman flight engineer, breaching what until last year was the Indian Air Force's men-only club.
- Commissioned in January 2015 to the IAF's engineering branch, she created history when she was chosen as the first woman candidate to pursue the elite course. In her new role, Flt. Lt. Jaiswal will serve at IAF's operational helicopter units and serve in demanding and stressful conditions from the icy heights of the Siachen glacier to the seas of the Andamans.

The Indian Air Force (IAF) is the air arm of the Indian armed forces. Its complement of personnel and aircraft assets ranks fourth amongst the airforces of the world. It was officially established on 8 October 1932 as an auxiliary air force of the British Empire which honoured India's aviation service during World War II with the prefix Royal. It is headquartered in New Delhi. The President of India holds the rank of Supreme Commander of the IAF. Air Chief Marshal Birender Singh Dhanoa is the 25th Chief of the Air Staff of the Indian Air Force. Arjan Singh is the first and only officer of the Indian Air Force to be promoted to five-star rank as Marshal of the Indian Air Force, equal to the army rank of Field Marshal.

### "Exercise Topchi"

- Using ultra-light Howitzers and indigenous Swathi weapon-locating radar, Indian Army demonstrated its artillery firepower at the annual "Exercise Topchi" held near Nashik.
- The event took place at the vast firing ranges at Deolali Camp. Latest ultra-light Howitzer M-777, self-propelled gun K-9 Vajra and indigenous Swathi weapon-locating radar is testimony to the increasing lethality and technical threshold of our Army

### Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurates India's first IAV in Thiruvananthapuram

- Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the Institute of Advanced Virology (IAV) in Thiruvananthapuram.
- A first of its kind research institute that is linked to the Global Virus Network (GVN), it will operate from the Bio 360 Life Sciences Park at Thonnakkal in the capital city.

### Harsimrat Kaur Badal commissions first Aqua Mega Food Park in Andhra Pradesh

- Union Minister Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal commissioned Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park at Tundurru Village in Bhimavaram Mandal, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh via video conferencing. The park is promoted by M/s Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park Pvt. Ltd.
- This is the first Mega Aqua Food Park operationalised exclusively established for fish and marine products processing in the State of Andhra Pradesh.
- Another Mega Food Park sanctioned by the Ministry in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh has already been inaugurated on 9th of July 2012. The 3rd Mega Food Park sanctioned by the Ministry in Andhra Pradesh is under implementation at Krishna District.

Andhra Pradesh is the first state in India to be formed under the State reorganisation act in 1956 and first state to be created based on the language in India. On 2 June 2014, the north-western portion of Andhra Pradesh was separated to form the new state of Telangana. The longtime capital of Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, was transferred to Telangana as part of the division. Amaravati is the de facto capital city of the Andhra Pradesh. Nara Chandrababu Naidu is the current and first chief minister of the state since it was divided from Telangana.

### Sapta Shakti Command of Indian Army conducting 'Exercise Rahat' in Jaipur

- In Rajasthan, Jaipur based Sapta Shakti Command of Indian Army is conducted a two- day Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise "Exercise Rahat".
- The exercise began in Jaipur. It involves all stake holders at the national and state level. This is the eighth such exercise conducted by the Indian Defence Forces.
- The exercise is conducted in pursuance of the directions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during Combined Commanders Conference - 2015, to achieve 'Disaster Resilient India'.



## Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan pension scheme comes into effect

- The Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan scheme is implemented from 15th February, 2019. Under the scheme, workers of the unorganised sector will receive a minimum assured pension of three thousand rupees per month after attaining the age of 60 years.
- The workers whose monthly income are 15 thousand rupees per month or less and belong to the entry age group of 18 to 40 years are eligible for the scheme. The scheme is a voluntary and contributory pension scheme on a 50:50 basis.

Around 42 crore workers are estimated to be engaged in the unorganized sector in the country. The scheme was announced in the interim Budget. During the receipt of pension, if the subscriber dies, the spouse of the beneficiary will be entitled to receive 50 per cent of the pension. It said family pension is applicable only to a spouse.

## INS Trikand participates in exercise Cutlass Express 2019

- INS Trikand, a front-line warship of the Indian Navy, participated in a multinational training exercise 'CUTLASS EXPRESS – 19' held from 27 Jan to 06 Feb 19 at the Djibouti Naval Base.
- The aim of the exercise was to improve law enforcement capacity, promote regional security and progress inter-operability between the armed forces of the participating nations for the purpose of interdicting illegal maritime activity in the Western Indian Ocean. The closing ceremony of the event was held at the Djibouti Naval Base on 06 Feb 19.

INS Trikand (F51) is a Talwar-class frigate of the Indian Navy. It is the third and final ship of the second batch of Talwar-class frigates ordered by the Indian Navy. It was built by the Yantar shipyard in Kaliningrad, Russia. It was commissioned to Indian Navy service on 29 June 2013.

## Asia's largest early Childhood Conference - Early Ed Asia 2019

- The two day educational event, touted to be Asia's largest conference on Early Childhood was held at the pink city's most revered heritage structure - The iconic City Palace. Jaipur hosted the Early Ed Asia 2019.
- Conceived and presented by Early Childhood Association (ECA) and ScooNews under the patronage of the Royal Family of Jaipur, the conference will bring together the brightest minds in Early Childhood Education on 12th and 13th February to discuss the latest trends in teaching and research to provide a stronger foundation to our children.

It is the first time that a conference of this magnitude is organised around early childhood education in India. Over 600 eminent early childhood educators, policy makers, researchers and other stakeholders from India and foreign countries were attended the conference.

## CBDT Chairman appointed new Election Commissioner

- Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, Sushil Chandra, has been appointed as the new Election Commissioner.
- With his appointment, the Election Commission now has Sunil Arora as the Chief Election Commissioner and Ashok Lavasa and Sushil Chandra as fellow commissioners.

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.

## Rajasthan passes 5% quota bill for Gujjars, four other communities

- Rajasthan government passed a bill to provide five per cent quota in jobs and educational institutions to Gurjars and four other communities. The government introduced the Rajasthan Backward Classes Amendment Bill, 2019, which was passed by the assembly.
- The government has also decided to increase the ceiling of creamy layer from Rs 2.5 lakh to Rs 8 lakh. The bill seeks to increase the backward classes' reservation from present 21 per cent to 26 per cent with five per cent reservation to Gurjars, Banjaras, Gadia Lohars, Raikas and Gadaria.

Rajasthan is India's largest state by area, Thar Desert, also known as the Great Indian Desert; More than 60% of the desert lies in the state of Rajasthan, and extends into Gujarat, Punjab, and Haryana. Kalyan Singh is the current Governor of Rajasthan. India's first global counter terrorism and anti-insurgency centre will come up in Jaipur on a 50-acre land.

## India revokes Pakistan MFN status

- India revoked the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status of Pakistan and warned of more measures in response to its support for terrorist groups targeting India. Indian granted Pakistan the status in 1996.
- Most favoured nation status is given a trade partner to ensure non-discriminator trade between the two countries. On November 2, 2011, the Pakistani cabinet decided formally to accord India MFN status. But that decision remains unimplemented.

Article 1 of General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 1994, requires every WTO member country to accord MFN status (or preferential trade terms with respect to tariffs and trade barriers) to all other member countries. Accordingly, India accorded MFN status to all WTO member countries, including Pakistan, from the date of entry into force of the so called Marrakesh Agreement, establishing the WTO. The WTO is the only global international organisation dealing with the rules of trade between nations and the 164 member countries of the WTO represent 98 per cent of world trade.

## PM Narendra Modi flagged off India's first engineless train 'Vande Bharat Express'

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off India's first semi-high speed train, first engineless train, Train 18 or Vande Bharat Express, at New Delhi Railway Station.
- The semi-high speed express will cover the 780-km distance from Delhi to Varanasi in just eight hours. The express will ply between Delhi and Varanasi, with halts at Kanpur and Allahabad.
- The train, named 'Train 18' at the concept stage, is a plush 16-coach, air-conditioned, self-propelled train set and doesn't have a locomotive.
- This is India's fastest train to date, capable of commercial speeds up to 160 km per hour. On the Delhi-Varanasi route, however, its top speed would be restricted to 130 km per hour.

Train 18 is an Indian semi-high speed train, an intercity electric multiple unit, a type of self-propelled train without a separate dedicated locomotive. It was designed and built by Integral Coach Factory (ICF) Chennai. When this indigenously designed train is made operational, it will become the country's fastest train. Train 18 is capable of touching 200 kilometres per hour provided the rest of Indian Railways' system, permit

## India's first district cooling system to be built in Amaravati

- A UAE-based international cooling provider has entered into a 30-year concession with Andhra Pradesh government to build, own, operate and transfer India's first district cooling system in the state's new capital Amaravati.

- The **agreement between the National Central Cooling Company (Tabreed) and Andhra Pradesh Capital Region Development Authority (APCRDA)** is for a contracted cooling capacity of 20,000 refrigeration tonnes and this will be the **company's first plant outside its Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) market**.
- **Tabreed's district cooling system** is part of **Andhra Pradesh government's vision for Amaravati to create jobs and homes along with a world-class infrastructure, a green city, and efficient resource management**.

**Amaravati** is the **de facto capital city of the Indian state of Andhra Pradesh**. The foundation stone was laid for the construction of new capital on 22 October 2015, at **Uddandarayunipalem** area by the **Prime Minister, Narendra Modi**. The planned city is located on the southern banks of the **Krishna River** in Guntur district. The word "**Amaravati**" derives from the historical **Amaravathi Temple town**, the ancient capital of the **Satavahana dynasty**.

### India hikes customs duty to 200 per cent on all goods imported from Pakistan

- **India hiked the customs duty on all goods imported from Pakistan to 200%** with immediate effect, a day after it revoked the most favoured nation (MFN) status that it had given its neighbour in 1996.
- India has withdrawn MFN status to Pakistan after the Pulwama incident. Upon withdrawal, **basic customs duty on all goods exported from Pakistan to India has been raised to 200% with immediate effect**.

**'Customs Duty'** is the tax imposed on the goods when they are transported across the international borders. The objective behind levying customs duty is to safeguard each nation's economy, jobs, environment, residents, etc., by regulating the movement of goods, especially prohibited and restrictive goods, in and out of any country. **Customs duty is an indirect tax in India.**

### Prime Minister Narendra Modi launches India Korea startup hub in Seoul

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched India Korea startup hub in Seoul**. India has emerged as a land of opportunity and no other large economy in the world is growing at over 7 per cent year after year.
- Prime Minister said, his **government has introduced flagship program Start-up India with 1.4 billion dollars fund for four years** to create a startup eco-system in India.

**India is among Korea's top-10 trade partners. Their trade volume has reached 21.5 billion dollars for 2018.**

### Kerala Police inducts India's first RoboCop robot, gives it SI rank

- **Kerala Police Headquarters has become the first police department in the country to use a robot for police work**. CM **Pinarayi Vijayan** inaugurated **KP-BOT**, first humanoid police robot in India, in **Thiruvananthapuram**. The robot will perform duties of the front office of police headquarters.
- **Chief Minister Vijayan welcomed the Sub Inspector (SI)-ranked robot** into the service with an honorary salute and the 'RoboCop' responded with a perfect salute. **The KP-Bot will be deployed to perform duties of the front office of the police headquarters** which means that it will receive visitors and direct them to different places as and when required.

### India decides to stop its share of river waters which flow into Pakistan

- The **Government of India has decided to stop the share of river waters which flow into Pakistan**. Government of India will **divert water from Eastern Rivers and supply it to the people in Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab**.
- According to the **Indus Waters Treaty**, subject to certain conditions, **India has the right to use water flowing in eastern rivers, namely, the Beas, the Ravi and the Sutlej** while **Pakistan controls the right to use water in western rivers, namely, the Indus, the Jhelum and the Chenab**.

The Indus Waters Treaty was signed on September 19, 1960 by the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan's President Ayub Khan. It was brokered by the World Bank. A Permanent Indus Commission was set up as a bilateral commission to implement and manage the Treaty. The Commission solves disputes arising over water sharing.

### India's first fulldome 3D Digital theatre inaugurated

- India's first 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science City, Kolkata was inaugurated by Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma.
- The 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science city was the first of its kind in India having a 23 metre titled dome to offer a fully immersive experience to the visitors, Sharma said while inaugurating it through video conferencing from New Delhi.

The Science City, one of its kind in India, inaugurated on 1st July, 1997 has been developed as a major attraction for the residents' of Kolkata as well as for the national and international visitors to the metropolis. It is one of the largest and finest in the world, presenting science and technology in a stimulating and engaging environment that is truly educational and enjoyable for the people of all ages. The Science City is operated by the National Council of Science Museums under the Ministry of Culture. Science City current Director is Subhabrata Chaudhury.

### Bill to make Sanskrit Himachal Pradesh's second official language passed

- The Himachal Pradesh Assembly passed the Himachal Pradesh Official Language (Amendment) Bill, 2019, paving the way for making Sanskrit the second official language of the state.
- The Bill was tabled in the House on February 14 by Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur. Once given assent by the Governor, it will amend the Himachal Pradesh Official language Act, 1975.

Himachal Pradesh state's name was coined from the Sanskrit—Him means 'snow' and achal means 'land' or 'abode'—by acharya Diwakar Datt Sharma. Shimla is the capital and the largest city of the northern Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. In 1864, Shimla was declared as the summer capital of British India. Dharamshala is the second winter capital of the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. Jai Ram Thakur is the 13th and the current Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh. Acharya Dev Vrat is the current Governor of Himachal Pradesh.

### Cabinet approves launch Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved launch of Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan with the objective of providing financial and water security to farmers.
- The proposed scheme consists of three components: Component-A: 10,000 MW of Decentralized Ground Mounted Grid Connected Renewable Power Plants. Component-B: Installation of 17.50 lakh standalone Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps. Component-C: Solarisation of 10 Lakh Grid-connected Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps.

All three components combined, the scheme aims to add a solar capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022. The total central financial support provided under the scheme would be Rs. 34,422 crore.

### President promulgates 4 Ordinances including Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Second Ordinance

- President Ram Nath Kovind promulgated four Ordinances. These are the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Second Ordinance, the Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Second Ordinance, the Companies (Amendment) Second Ordinance and the Banning of Unregulated Deposit Schemes Ordinance, 2019



- The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Second Ordinance has been promulgated to give continued effect to the provisions brought in by the earlier ordinance. This **Ordinance declares the practice of instant triple talaq to be void and illegal and also to make it an offence punishable with imprisonment up to three years and fine.**

**Under Article 123 of the Indian Constitution, President of India has the power to promulgate ordinances during recess of Parliament. Under the Constitution, the power to make laws rests with the legislature. However, in cases when Parliament is not in session, and 'immediate action' is needed, the President can issue an ordinance.**

### Regional Maritime Safety Conference 2019 organized by India for the first time

- The **Regional Maritime Safety Conference 2019** was organized by India for the first time, commenced in Mumbai.
- The two-day conference deliberated on issues related to **assuring maritime safety in the India-ASEAN sub-region, safeguarding our shores and promoting maritime trade.**
- The volume of maritime traffic to be found within the India-ASEAN sub-region is already very dense. For instance, the **Straits of Malacca-and-Singapore alone account for about 90,000 ship movements every year.**
- The inaugural edition is organized by the National Maritime Foundation (NMF), in coordination with Ministry of Shipping and Ministry of External Affairs.
- Today, over 80 per cent of global trade by volume and 70 per cent by value is conducted via the maritime space. In the Indian context, 95 per cent of trade by volume and 77 per cent by value flows on the sea.

**India has a coastline nearly 7,500 km long and India has been engaging very actively with ASEAN countries in the maritime sector. International Maritime Organization (IMO) low sulphur regulations for marine fuel oil comes into effect from January 1, 2020, is a challenge for the region.**

### Justice Uma Nath Singh takes oath as First Lokayukta of Nagaland

- The first Lok Ayukta of Nagaland, Justice Uma Nath Singh, took the oath of office. Nagaland Governor PB Acharya administered the oath to him at a function held at Raj Bhavan.
- **Justice Uma Nath Singh** was a former **Chief Justice of Meghalaya High Court.** He will hold the office for a term of five years or till he attains the age of 70 years whichever is earlier.
- **Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, Opposition Leader, T R Zeliang, Cabinet Ministers, MLAs and Government officers attended the swearing in ceremony of the new Lokayukta.**

**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.**

### Attukal Pongala, world's largest religious congregation of women hosted in Kerala

- In Kerala, the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram hosted the Attakal Ponkala festival which is considered as one of the **world's largest religious gathering of women on a single day.**
- The festivities were held in and around the **Attukal Bhagavathy Temple.** Head priest Vamanan Nampoothiri lit earthen hearths, and hundreds of women cooked rice porridge with jaggery and coconut. **Traditionally a harvest festival, Pongala now attracts large numbers of women to the Attukal Bhagavathy temple. "Around three million women are participated in the festival.**

The Attukal Bhagavathy Temple is a Hindu religious shrine at Attukal in Kerala, India. Goddess Bhadrakali (Kannaki), mounted over 'vethala', is the main deity in this temple. Bhadrakali, a form of Mahakali, who killed the demon king Daruka, believed to be born from the third eye of lord Shiva. 'Bhadra' means good and 'Kali' means goddess of time. So Bhadrakali is considered as the goddess of prosperity and salvation. Goddess 'Attukal devi', itself is the supreme mother 'Bhaadrakali devi', (in soumya aspect) the goddess of power and courage.

### Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurates Waste to Wonder Park in Delhi

- Union Home Minister **Rajnath Singh** inaugurated a new park which houses the replicas of Seven Wonders of the World at Sarai Kale Khan, New Delhi. The park, which is called the 'Waste to Wonder Park', was built by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC).
- It is the first-of-its-kind tourist attraction in the world, with the replicas of the Taj Mahal, the Great Pyramid of Giza, Eiffel Tower, and Leaning Tower of Pisa, Christ the Redeemer statue of Rio de Janeiro, Rome's Colosseum, and the Statute of Liberty which were opened for the public at the inauguration.
- "The replicas of all seven wonders of world has been built with eco-friendly, self-sustainable material, and has its own solar and wind power generation. It is open to all and we are more than happy that the park has been constructed within six months' time and now it is a reality in Delhi.

**Rajnath Ram Badan Singh** is the current Union Home Minister and previously served as the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and as a Cabinet Minister in the Vajpayee Government. He has been representing the 16<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha from Lucknow constituency.

### Tamil Nadu becomes first state in mainland to get 2 Coast Guard districts

- Necessitated by frequent issues pertaining to fishermen, Tamil Nadu became the first state in the country to get a second Coast Guard district headquarters - Thoothukudi. The first district headquarters is Chennai.
- Inaugurated by state Governor Banwarilal Purohit, the Thoothukudi district headquarters has been set up with an aim to augment security mechanism on the eastern coast and the state in particular.
- Coast Guard DIG Arvind Sharma has taken over charge as the first district Commander of the district headquarters (Tuticorin).

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is an armed force that protects India's maritime interests and enforces maritime law, with jurisdiction over the territorial waters of India, including its contiguous zone and exclusive economic zone. The Indian Coast Guard was formally established on 18 August 1978 by the Coast Guard Act, 1978 of the Parliament of India as an independent Armed force of India. It operates under the Ministry of Defence. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

### Prayagraj Kumbh Mela 2019 makes it to the Guinness World Records

- Prayagraj Kumbh Mela 2019 has been placed in the Guinness World Records in three sectors. It includes largest traffic and crowd management plan, the biggest painting exercise of public sites under paint my city scheme and biggest sanitation and waste disposal mechanism.
- A three member team from Guinness World Records visited the Prayagraj for this purpose. Exercise at large scale was done before the team members for three days from February 28 to March 3.

The Kumbh Mela is the largest public gathering and collective act of faith, anywhere in the world. Primarily, this congregation includes Ascetics, Saints, Sadhus, Sadhis, Kalpvasis, and Pilgrims from all walks of life. Kumbh Mela, in Hinduism, is a religious pilgrimage that is celebrated four times over a course of 12 years. The geographical location of Kumbh Mela spans over four locations in India, they are 1. Haridwar on the Ganges in Uttarakhand 2. Ujjain on the Shipra in Madhya Pradesh 3. Nashik on the Godavari in Maharashtra 4. Prayagraj at the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical Sarasvati in Uttar Pradesh



## Bihar becomes the first state to deploy dog squad to check liquor smuggling

- Bihar has become the first state in the country to have raised a special dog squad to detect liquor consignment. As many as 20 liquor-tracker dogs which were imparted training for nine months in Hyderabad have been deployed in nine police ranges in the state. Notably, Bihar had banned liquor in the state in 2016.

## PM launches “PM-KISAN” from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.
- With the launch, the first instalment of Rs 2,000 will be directly credited to the bank accounts of selected beneficiary farmers. About 12 crore farmers are expected to benefit from PM-KISAN.

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme was announced in the Union Budget of 2019-20. This new Central Sector Scheme aims to provide income support to all small and marginal landholding farmer families to supplement their financial needs for procuring various inputs related to agriculture and allied activities as well as domestic needs. Landholder Farmer families with total cultivable holding up to 2 hectares shall be provided a benefit of Rs.6000 per annum per family payable in three equal installments, every 4 months.

## Former finance secretary Ajay Narayan Jha joins 15th Finance Commission as member

- Former finance secretary Ajay Narayan Jha joined the 15th Finance Commission as a member, pursuant to the resignation of Shaktikanta Das.
- Shaktikanta Das had resigned as a member of the Commission after being appointed as governor, Reserve Bank of India.
- Jha, a 1982 batch IAS officer of Manipur cadre, superannuated as a finance secretary to the Government of India on February 28. Jha had also served as the secretary to the 14th Finance Commission which was headed by former RBI Governor Y V Reddy.
- The 15th Finance Commission is mandated to recommend distribution of net proceeds of taxes between the Union and the states, for a period of five years - April, 2020 to March, 2025, among others.

The First Finance Commission was established by the President of India in 1951 under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution. Kshitish Chandra Neogy was the chairman of the first Finance Commission of India. It was formed to define the financial relations between the central government of India and the individual state governments. There have been fifteen commissions to date. The most recent was constituted in 2017 and is chaired by N. K. Singh, a former member of the Planning Commission.

## PM dedicates the National War Memorial to the nation

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi dedicated the National War Memorial to the nation in a solemn ceremonial function on February 25<sup>th</sup> 2019 in New Delhi.
- The National War Memorial, near India Gate in New Delhi, is a fitting tribute to our soldiers who laid down their lives defending the nation, post-independence. The National War Memorial also commemorates the soldiers who participated and made the supreme sacrifice in Peace Keeping Missions, and Counter Insurgency Operations.
- In 2014, Prime Minister had spelt out his vision for the National War Memorial as a state-of-the-art world class monument. The layout of the National War Memorial comprises four concentric circles, namely, the ‘Amar Chakra’ or Circle of Immortality, the ‘Veerta Chakra’ or Circle of Bravery, the ‘Tyag Chakra’ or Circle of Sacrifice, and the ‘Rakshak Chakra’ or Circle of Protection.
- The National War Memorial complex includes a central obelisk, an eternal flame, and six bronze murals depicting famous battles fought by Indian Army, Air Force and Navy.

The chief architect of the National War Memorial is Ar. Yogesh Chandrahasan of WeBe Design Lab, Chennai. WeBe Design Lab was chosen for the conceptualization of the architectural design and for coordinating the construction of the project.

### ‘Aviation Conclave 2019’ with theme of “Flying for All” held in New Delhi

- The Ministry of Civil Aviation, in association with Airports Authority of India, AAICLAS and Confederation of Indian Industry, is organized the Aviation Conclave 2019 with an overarching theme of “Flying for All” in New Delhi.
- This Conclave (the Aviation Conclave 2019) is about the future of Indian aviation -- bringing together industry leaders, government and regulators for setting the tone and propelling us to realize our Vision-2040.
- India, which is one of the fastest growing aviation markets in the world, aims to be the leader and if the current progress is something to go by, the country will attain the numero uno position by 2035.

Suresh Prabhakar Prabhu is currently serving as the Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation under the Modi government. He currently represents Andhra Pradesh in the Rajya Sabha. He was the Union Railway Minister of India from November 2014 to September 2017. On 25 February 2016, Suresh Prabhu became the last railway minister to present a separate Railway Budget in the parliament.

### India-Bangladesh Joint Military Exercise Sampriti – 2019

- As part of the ongoing India Bangladesh defence cooperation, a joint military exercise Sampriti-2019 is being conducted at Tangail, Bangladesh from 02 March to 15 March 2019.
- Exercise Sampriti-2019 is an important bilateral defence cooperation endeavour between India and Bangladesh and this will be the eighth edition of the exercise which is hosted alternately by both countries.
- The exercise is aimed to strengthen and broaden the aspects of interoperability and cooperation between the Indian and Bangladesh Armies.

In 2009, the event initially commenced as a platoon level exercise and it gradually progressed to a company level exercise from 2015. The armies conducted the seventh annual Sampriti exercise in 2017 at Counter Insurgency and Jungle Warfare School, Vairengte in Mizoram, India.

### Andhra Pradesh to get new Railway zone

- Southern Coast Railway will be a new zone of the Indian Railways. This new 18th railway zone of the country will be headquartered at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.
- The new zone will comprise the existing Guntakal, Guntur and Vijayawada divisions that currently fall under the South Central Railway. Mr. Goyal said the South Central Railway will then consist of the Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Nanded divisions.

Indian Railways (IR) is India's national railway system operated by the Ministry of Railways. It manages the fourth-largest railway network in the world by size. The Indian Railways' operations are currently divided into 17 zones, which are further sub-divided into divisions, each having a divisional headquarter. There are a total of 73 divisions at present. In 2002-2003, seven new zones and eight new divisions were created.

### Jual Oram launched MSP for Minor Forest Produce scheme

- Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram launched Minimum Support Price for Minor Forest Produce and Value Addition Component of Van Dhan scheme in New Delhi.
- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs is now scaling up the Van Dhan Scheme and is ready to extend it to all tribal districts of the country in phases starting with the Aspirational Districts with substantial tribal population.

- The Ministry also expanded the coverage of the Minimum Support Price for Minor Forest Produce Scheme to 50 Minor Forest Produce. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had launched the scheme in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on April 14, 2018.

Jual Oram is a member of the 16th Lok Sabha of India. He represents the Sundargarh constituency of Odisha and is a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). He is the current minister for Tribal Affairs.

### Cabinet approves "Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN yojana"

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the "Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN (Jaiv Indhan- Vatavaran Anukool fasal awashesh Nivaran) Yojana" for providing financial support to Integrated Bioethanol Projects using lignocellulosic biomass and other renewable feedstock.
- The ethanol produced by the scheme beneficiaries will be mandatorily supplied to Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to further enhance the blending percentage under EBP Programme.

Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has targeted to achieve 10% blending percentage of Ethanol in petrol by 2022. Centre for High Technology (CHT), a technical body under the aegis of MoP&NG, will be the implementation Agency for the scheme.

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

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Amendment Order, 2019. It will serve the purpose of application of relevant provision of the constitution as amended through the constitution (77th Amendment) act, 2019 for Jammu and Kashmir by issuing the constitution Amendment order.
- The ordinance provides for amendment in the Jammu and Kashmir reservation act 2004 to bringing persons residing in the areas adjoining International Border within the ambit of reservation at par with persons living in areas adjoining actual line of control.

Gujarat has become the first state to implement newly-introduced 10 per cent reservations in government jobs and higher education for the economically weaker sections in the general category and followed by Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh. Those people, who have an annual salary of less than Rs. 8 lakh per year and possess less than 5 acres of land, will be able to avail themselves of reservation in educational institutions and jobs.

### NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission partners with Adobe to enhance creativity in ATL Schools

- NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and Adobe signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) to collectively drive the charter of developing creative skills and spreading digital literacy across all Atal Tinkering Labs in India.
- By inducting creative tools and skills as part of the ATL content, the collaboration is oriented towards fostering essential digital skill sets across school children in India, to help kindle the spirit of creativity among young minds of a New India.

The first phase of Atal Tinkering Labs brought India a step closer to the mission of Creating One Million Neoteric Child Innovators in India by 2020. 2441 schools across the country have been selected to establish an Atal Tinkering Lab. ATLs will be hubs of innovation where young minds will accelerate their ideas to solve unique local problems.

## Karnataka launched water conservation scheme

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- **Karnataka**, which has the **largest swathe of drought-prone land in the country next only to Rajasthan**, launched a major **water conservation scheme** titled **‘Jalamrutha’**, which focusses on drought-proofing measures, including protection and rejuvenation of waterbodies.
- The **ambitious scheme of the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department** was **launched by Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy** in Bengaluru.
- **‘Jalamrutha’** will **deploy scientific approaches to water budgeting, water harvesting and water conservation** through the use of geospatial data, satellite imagery, topographical and geological data. A **State-level committee, headed by the Chief Minister**, will be established **for strategic monitoring, convergence, policy and programmatic guidance**.

**Karnataka** was formed on **1 November 1956**, with the passage of the States Reorganisation Act. **Originally known as the State of Mysore**, it was **renamed Karnataka in 1973**. The **capital and largest city is Bangalore (Bengaluru)**. **Vajubhai Rudabhai Vala** is the **current Governor** of the state of Karnataka.

## International



### Germany, France and UK set up transactions channel with Iran

- Germany, France and the UK have set up a payment channel with Iran called INSTEX, to help continue trade and circumvent US sanctions.
- While, the new institution, called INSTEX is a project of the three governments, it will receive the formal endorsement of all 28 EU members. Deputy foreign minister Abbas Araghchi also welcomed the step as a first step by the EU in fulfilling its commitments toward Iran.

In May 2018, US President Donald Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, and re-impose sanctions against Iran that had been lifted under the agreement. The first round of restrictions came into force in August and the second on 5 November 2018.

### Ami Bera to head key Congressional panel

- Indian-American Congressman Ami Bera has been named the head of a key congressional subcommittee that will have broad jurisdiction to conduct oversight into America's foreign policy.
- He would chair the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.

Ami Bera is an American physician and politician who has been the U.S. Representative for California's 7th congressional district since 2013. He is a member of the Democratic Party.

### US suspends nuclear arms control treaty with Russia

- The Trump administration said that it was suspending one of the last major nuclear arms control treaties Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, widely known as the INF with Russia, following five years of heated conversations over accusations by the United States that Moscow is violating the Reagan-era agreement.
- The decision has the potential to incite a new arms race — not only with Russia but also with China, which was never a signatory to the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty.
- It also comes as the United States has begun building its first long-range nuclear weapons since 1991, a move that other nations are citing to justify their own nuclear modernization efforts. U.S. will formally give Russia and the other treaty parties a formal notice that it is withdrawing under Article XV of the Treaty.

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty) was a 1987 arms control agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union (and its successor state the Russian Federation) signed by President Ronald Reagan and General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev on 8 December 1987. President Donald Trump announced on 20 October 2018 that he was withdrawing the U.S. from the treaty, citing Russian non-compliance. The U.S. formally suspended the treaty on 1 February 2019.



## Head of state of Monaco Prince Albert II arrived in New Delhi for week-long visit

- The head of state of Monaco, Prince Albert II arrived in New Delhi on a week-long visit to India. Prince Albert attended the India-Monaco Business Forum followed by a round-table on energy and climate.
- He met President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will also call on Prince Albert. Prince Albert II also visited Udaipur in Rajasthan before heading home.

Albert II is the reigning monarch of the Principality of Monaco and head of the princely house of Grimaldi. He is the son of Prince Rainier III and the American actress Grace Kelly. Prince Albert II is one of the wealthiest royals in the world, with assets valued at more than \$1 billion. Monaco is a sovereign city-state, country, and microstate on the French Riviera in Western Europe. Monaco has an area of 2.020 km<sup>2</sup> (0.780 sq mi), making it the second-smallest country in the world after the Vatican. The currency is Euro.

## Singapore most liveable for Asian expats

- Singapore has been rated as the most liveable location for Asian expatriates in 2019 for the 14th consecutive year, according to a survey by ECA International.
- Hong Kong dropped 12 places to become the 41st liveable city for Asian expatriates, "due to the disruption and considerable damage caused by Typhoon Mangkhut in September 2018. Other cities in Asian countries like Malaysia and Thailand have also seen higher ratings largely due to infrastructure improvement.

The survey is done annually by global mobility experts based on evaluation of such factors as climate, health service availability, natural phenomena, and personal safety and so on. The other top 20 locations included cities in Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Denmark, Netherlands, Switzerland and Norway, with several cities at the same place in the ranking, according to the survey.

## Sri Lanka celebrated its 71st Independence Day

- Sri Lanka is celebrated its 71st Independence Day with usual fervor and enthusiasm.
- The main function was held at Galle face grounds in Colombo where President Maithripala Sirisena was chief guest while Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih attended the function as guest of honour.

Sri Lanka is an island country in South Asia, located in the Indian Ocean to the southwest of the Bay of Bengal. Sri Lanka is separated from the India by the Gulf of Mannar and the Palk Strait. Sri Jayewardenepura Kotte is the official, administrative capital of Sri Lanka. Colombo is the commercial capital and largest city of Sri Lanka. Maithripala Sirisena is the current and 7th and current President of Sri Lanka, in office since January 2015. Sri Lankan rupee is the currency of Sri Lanka.

## Pope Francis lands in Abu Dhabi, becomes first pontiff to visit Arabian Peninsula

- Pope Francis landed in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), on a historic visit, becoming the first pontiff to visit the Arabian Peninsula. He was received at the airport by the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed.
- Pope Francis visited the UAE on the invitation of the Crown Prince to take part in an interfaith Conference, which includes representatives of the Muslim, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh faiths.

Pope Francis is the head of the Catholic Church and sovereign of the Vatican City State. Francis is the first Jesuit pope, the first from the Americas, the first from the Southern Hemisphere, the first to visit and hold papal mass in the Arabian Peninsula, and the first pope from outside Europe since the Syrian Gregory III, who reigned in the 8th century.



## El Salvador: anti-corruption candidate Nayib Bukele wins presidential election

- **Nayib Bukele**, a former mayor of El Salvador's capital, has won a landslide victory in presidential election. The supreme electoral court declared **Bukele the winner**, saying he had nearly 54% of the votes, with nearly 90% of ballots counted.

**El Salvador** is the smallest and the most densely populated country in Central America. El Salvador's capital and largest city is **San Salvador**. **United States dollar** is the currency of this country. **Salvador Sánchez Cerén** is the current President of El Salvador.

## Trump plans second meeting with North Korea's Kim in Vietnam later this month

- **U.S. President Donald Trump** plans to meet North Korean leader **Kim Jong Un** in Vietnam on Feb. 27 and 28.
- **Trump first met Kim on June 12, 2018 in Singapore** and **U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo visited Vietnam in July and urged North Korea** to follow its example, saying Trump believed **Pyongyang** could replicate **Hanoi's** path to normal relations with Washington and prosperity after its own war with the United States.

**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.

## Macedonia signs accord to join NATO

- **Macedonia signed an accord to join NATO** to become the 30th member of the US-led alliance.
- The **Macedonia-NATO accord** follows a deal with Greece ending a 27-year-old dispute over Macedonia's name. The accord must now be ratified by allied governments.

**North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)**, also called the **North Atlantic Alliance**, is an intergovernmental military alliance between 29 North American and European countries. The organization implements the **North Atlantic Treaty** that was signed on 4 April 1949. **NATO's Headquarters** are located in **Haren, Brussels, Belgium**, while the headquarters of **Allied Command Operations** is near **Mons, Belgium**. **Jens Stoltenberg** is serving as the 13th **Secretary General of NATO** since 2014.

## Multinational Maritime Exercise 'AMAN 19' kicks off

- **Multinational Maritime Exercise AMAN 19** formally commenced at **Pakistan Navy Dockyard**, with a colorful flag hoisting ceremony.
- **Ships of the participating navies, observers, foreign diplomats** and a large number of **Pakistan Navy personnel** attended the event. **Commander Pakistan Fleet, Vice Admiral Muhammad Amjad Khan Niazi** graced the occasion as **Chief Guest**

## Thailand names Siamese fighting fish its national aquatic animal

- **Tiny, testy and eye-catching** with a colourful fin plumage, the **Siamese fighting fish** was named **Thailand's national aquatic animal**.
- **Known in the West as a betta fish**, the underwater brawler is popular in home aquariums for its iridescent body and many-hued tail.
- **The government** said in a statement that the cabinet green lighted a proposal for the "**fighting fish to be the national fish**", citing its historical and cultural significance.
- **Thailand** officially the **Kingdom of Thailand** and formerly known as **Siam** is a country at the center of the **Southeast Asian Indochinese peninsula**. The capital and largest city is **Bangkok**, a special administrative area. **Prayut Chan-o-cha** serves as the **Prime Minister** of Thailand. **Maha Vajiralongkorn** is the **King** of Thailand since 2016. The **baht** is the official currency of Thailand.

## Hindi included as third official court language in Abu Dhabi

- **Abu Dhabi has decided to include Hindi as the third official language used in its courts, alongside Arabic and English, as part of a move designed to improve access to justice.**
- **Our West Asia correspondent reports that an estimated 3.3 million Indian expats live in UAE, and a large number of them are blue collared workers.**

**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.**

## Egypt's President El-Sissi elected as chairman of African Union

- **Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has been elected as the chairman of the African Union at the continental body's summit in Ethiopia.**
- **El-Sisi's election brings an end the one-year chairmanship of Rwanda's President Paul Kagame.**

**The African Union (AU) is a continental union consisting of 55 countries of the continent of Africa, with exception of various territories of European possessions located in Africa. The bloc was founded on 26 May 2001 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and launched on 9 July 2002 in South Africa. Moussa Faki Mahamat has been Chairperson of the African Union Commission since 14 March 2017. The main administrative capital of the African Union is in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where the African Union Commission is headquartered.**

## Red Cross calls for total ban on nuclear weapons

- **The Red Cross called for a total ban on nuclear weapons, warning of the growing risk that such arms could again be used with devastating effect.**
- **The International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies launched a global campaign to raise awareness about the rising nuclear threat facing the world.**
- **The campaign aims to encourage people to lobby their governments to sign and ratify the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, which has so far been signed by 70 nations and ratified by 21.**

**The Red Cross founded in 1863 in Geneva, Switzerland, in particular by Henry Dunant and Gustave Moynier. The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is an international humanitarian movement with approximately 17 million volunteers, members and staff worldwide which was founded to protect human life and health, to ensure respect for all human beings, and to prevent and alleviate human suffering. The ICRC was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on three occasions (in 1917, 1944 and 1963).**

## Women with four children to get life tax exemption in Hungary

- **Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has said that women in the country with four children or more will be exempted for life from paying income tax, in a move aimed at boosting the country's population.**
- **In his state of the nation address, Orban said that this was a way of defending Hungary's future without depending on immigration. Orban also criticised the mixed population of European countries. Apart from tax exemption for women who raise at least four children, a subsidy of 8,825 US dollars towards the purchase of a seven-seat vehicle for families with three or more children has also been proposed.**

**Hungary is a landlocked country in Central Europe. It's capital and its largest city and metropolis is Budapest. The forint is the official currency of Hungary. Janos Ader has been the President of Hungary since 10 May 2012.**

## India and Norway launch initiative to combat Marine Pollution

- The **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change** signed a **letter of Intent** establishing the **India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative** together with the Norwegian ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- In partnership, Norway and India will share experiences and competence, and collaborate on efforts **to develop clean and healthy oceans, sustainable use of ocean resources and growth in the blue economy.**
- **Both the governments launched the first Joint initiative under this new partnership.** The India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative will **combat marine pollution, which is one of the fastest growing environmental concerns.**

## Third Indo-German Environment Forum held in New Delhi

- **Third Indo-German Environment Forum** with the theme **"Cleaner Air, Greener Economy:"** is held in New Delhi.
- The one-day event through panel discussions and parallel sessions focuses on challenges, solutions and necessary framework conditions of **air pollution control, waste management and circular economy as well as implementation of NDCs and SDGs based on Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030 of UN respectively.**

## Seventh session of World Government Summit held in Dubai

- The **seventh session of the World Government Summit** kicked off in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), with the participation of more than 4,000 people from 140 countries.
- **"Human being is the centre of the World Government Summit.** Our main aim is to foresee the future of different sectors to improve humanity," Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, UAE prime minister said.

**World Government Summit is an annual event held in Dubai, UAE.** It brings together leaders in government for a global dialogue about governmental process and policies with a **focus on the issues of futurism, technology and innovation,** as well as other topics. The **first World Government Summit** was held in Dubai in 2013, and has been held annually since then.

## Spanish PM calls polls after budget defeat

- **Spain's socialist Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez** called early elections for April 28, the **third in less than four years, after his draft budget was rejected in Parliament** over the **Catalan secession crisis.** Mr. Sanchez assumed power just over eight months ago.
- **Catalan MPs joined right-wing lawmakers in rejected his Budget.** They withdrew their backing in protest at separatist leaders being put on trial for their role in a 2017 attempt to break Catalonia from Spain.

**Spain is a sovereign state mostly located on the Iberian Peninsula in Europe. Madrid is the capital of Spain and the largest municipality in both the Community of Madrid and Spain as a whole. Euro is the currency of Spain. Felipe VI is the king of Spain. Modern humans first arrived in the Iberian Peninsula around 35,000 years ago.**

## India becomes top buyer of Venezuelan crude in February, imports jump 66%

- **India is feasting on Venezuelan oil, after the US imposed a de facto ban on crude imports** from the Latin American nation.
- While flows to the US came to a halt, **India became the No. 1 buyer of Venezuelan crude in the first half of February,** with imports jumping 66 per cent to 620,000 barrels a day. Indian refiners Reliance Industries and Nayara Energy, which is backed by Rosneft Oil Co PJSC, are driving the boost.

Venezuela is a country on the northern coast of South America. Nicolas Maduro has been the President of Venezuela since assuming office in 2013. Since January 23, 2019, President of Venezuela post has been disputed between the Nicolas Maduro and Juan Guaido. Some countries recognize Nicolas Maduro is the President of Venezuela while some countries recognize Juan Guaido is the current President of Venezuela. Venezuela Capital is Caracas and Currency is Venezuelan bolivar.

### Israel launched its first moon mission

- **Israel has launched its first moon mission**, sending an unmanned spacecraft to collect data to be shared with NASA. According to a report, the **585-kilogram Beresheet (Genesis) spacecraft is lifted off atop a Falcon 9 rocket from Cape Canaveral, Florida.**

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.

### China's unveiled the world's first ever artificial intelligence (AI) female news anchor

- **China's state-owned TV channel Xinhua unveiled the world's first ever artificial intelligence (AI) female news anchor. Xin Xiaomeng, the world's first female AI news anchor is expected to make her professional debut during the upcoming meetings of China's national legislature in March.**
- **In November 2018, China introduced the world's first male AI news anchor, Qiu Hao, that can mimic human facial expressions and mannerisms while reading out reports. The AI anchor, developed by state news agency Xinhua and tech firm Sogou Inc.**

China is a country in East Asia and the world's most populous country, with a population of around 1.404 billion. Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China, the world's third most populous city proper, and most populous capital city. Xi Jinping is serving as president of the People's Republic of China. National People's Congress is the national legislature of the People's Republic of China. With 2,980 members in 2018, it is the largest parliamentary body in the world. China's currency yuan joins the International Monetary Fund's basket of reserve currencies.

### Sudan: President Bashir declares year-long state of emergency

- **Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has declared a year-long state of emergency, dissolving his cabinet and local governments throughout the country.**
- **Omar al-Bashir in a televised address called on Sudan's parliament to postpone constitutional amendments that would allow him to run for another term in a presidential election in 2020.**
- **Omar al-Bashir's term ends in 2020** and he has repeatedly promised over the years not to make new runs for the presidency. Since December 2018, various areas in Sudan, including the capital Khartoum, have been witnessing popular protests over the deteriorating economic conditions and price hikes of basic commodities.

The Sudan or Sudan also known as North Sudan since South Sudan's independence is a country in Northeast Africa. The capital is Khartoum. Sudanese pound is the basic unit of the Sudanese currency.



## FATF keeps Pak on grey list for failing to curb terror funding

- **International terror financing watchdog, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has decided to keep Pakistan on its grey list** at the end of its week-long plenary meeting in Paris. **Paris-based FATF said, Pakistan has made only limited progress in curbing money laundering and terrorism financing.**
- **India had made a strong push to ensure that Islamabad is not taken off the list, in the aftermath of Pulwama terror attack.** The global financial body said, **Pakistan has until October this year to either comply with the demands made by FATF members or it could be blacklisted.**

The **Financial Action Task Force (FATF)** is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the Ministers of its Member jurisdictions. The objectives of the FATF are to set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

## Iran launched 3-day navy drill from Gulf to Indian Ocean

- **Iran launched a three-day annual navy drill in a vast area of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean** including a sensitive global shipping route. **The drill is dubbed as "Velayat 97,"** the drill will showcase Iran's submarines, warships, helicopters and drones, according to the admiral.
- **"The drill was held in the waters of Strait of Hormuz, Makran coast, Oman Sea and the north of the Indian Ocean, covering 2 million square kilometres.**

**Iran also called Persia is a country in Western Asia. Tehran is the capital of Iran and Tehran Province. The Iranian rial is the currency of Iran. Hassan Rouhani is serving as the current and seventh President of Iran since 3 August 2013. Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei is the current Supreme Leader of Iran, in office since 1989.**

## Zimbabwe's banks launched new currency for trading

- **Zimbabwe's banks started trading a new currency with corporate clients and individuals, although interbank trading won't begin.** This new currency -- the RTGS (Real Time Gross Transfer dollars) -- combines those bonds and the electronic dollars people had been unable to use from their accounts -- **due to the cash shortage.**
- **Zimbabwe's central bank announced it would scrap the official 1:1 peg between its quasi-currency bond note and the U.S. dollar, launching a new currency known as RTGS dollars.** The central bank began selling U.S. dollars to banks at a rate of 2.5 RTGS to the greenback, its governor said.

**Zimbabwe is a landlocked country located in southern Africa and Harare is the capital and most populous city of Zimbabwe. Emmerson Dambudzo Mnangagwa is serving as the third and current President of Zimbabwe.**

## Japan's emperor marks 30th year of reign at Tokyo ceremony

- **Japan's Emperor Akihito attended a ceremony to mark the 30th year of his reign** while calling for the country to embrace openness in a more globalised world.
- **The government-sponsored ceremony at the National Theatre in Tokyo was attended by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Empress Michiko. Akihito's Heisei era will end when he abdicates on April 30, 2019 in favour of his elder son, 59-year-old Crown Prince Naruhito, beginning a new, as yet unnamed era.**

**Tokyo is the capital city of Japan and yen is the official currency of Japan and it is the third most traded currency in the foreign exchange market after the United States dollar and the euro. Tokyo will host the 2020 Summer Olympics and the 2020 Summer Paralympics. Shinzo Abe is serving as the 57th Prime Minister of Japan. National Diet is Japan's bicameral legislature. During the final stage of World War II, the United States detonated two nuclear weapons over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively.**

## Bashir names new Sudan Vice-President, PM

- Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir appointed a first Vice-President and a new Prime Minister, a day after declaring a state of emergency to counter the most sustained protests since he came to power 30 years ago in a military coup.
- Mohamed Tahir Ayala, the former Governor of Gezira state whom Mr. Bashir had previously touted as a potential successor as President was appointed Prime Minister. Defence Minister Awad Mohamed Ahmed Ibn Auf became first Vice-President while retaining his defence portfolio.

The Sudan or Sudan also known as North Sudan since South Sudan's independence is a country in Northeast Africa. The capital is Khartoum. Sudanese pound is the basic unit of the Sudanese currency.

## Cuba votes on new constitution

- Cubans have overwhelmingly voted to approve a new constitution that enshrines the one-party system and ushers in a series of economic and social changes, according to government officials.
- Almost 87% of the 7.8 million people who participated in the historic referendum voted to ratify the new constitution, according to preliminary results. In Cuba, voters took part in a referendum on a new constitution that expands recognition of private property. The new document replaces the 1976 Soviet-era charter enacted under Fidel Castro. It protects private property and foreign investment,
- Under the new constitution, the Communist party is still the only political party allowed in Cuba, and it remains the guiding force for all government policy.

Havana is the capital city, largest city, and leading commercial center of Cuba. The peso is one of two official currencies in use in Cuba, the other being the convertible peso. Miguel Mario Díaz-Canel Bermudez is serving as the 19th and current President of Cuba. He was previously First Vice President from 2013 to 2018.

## Nigerian Prez Muhammadu Buhari re-elected for second term

- Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari has been re-elected for a second four year term. The country's Election Commission said Buhari defeated his main rival, former Vice President Atiku Abubakar with a margin of around four million votes.
- Abubakar's People's Democratic Party has rejected the result. Overall, the APC got 15.2 million votes while the PDP received 11.3 million.
- A former soldier, Mr Buhari led a military regime for 20 months in the 1980s and was first elected president in 2015, becoming the first opposition candidate to defeat an incumbent and win the presidency.

Nigeria is a federal republic in West Africa. Abuja is the capital city of Nigeria. Algeria is Africa's largest country by area, and Nigeria is its largest by population. The naira is the currency of Nigeria.

## Trump, Kim holds formal talks in Hanoi

- US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un are met in Hanoi on the second day of their interaction in the Vietnamese capital.
- The talks come eight months after their historic summit in Singapore in June last year. During their second summit, the two leaders are discussed a roadmap for removing nuclear weapons from the Korean peninsula and ending international sanctions against Pyongyang.

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. Kim Jong-un is serving as Supreme Leader of North Korea since 2011. Korean People's won is the official currency of North Korea.



## Indian-Origin Woman Noor Inayat Khan gets 'Blue Plaque' Honour

- Britain's World War II spy Noor Inayat Khan was confirmed as the first Indian-origin woman to be honoured with a Blue Plaque at her former London home.
- The Blue Plaque scheme run by English Heritage honours notable people who lived or worked in particular buildings across London. Noor Inayat Khan's plaque is set to go up at 4 Taverton Street in Bloomsbury, where she lived as a secret agent during the war.

Noor Inayat Khan, the daughter of Indian Sufi saint Hazrat Inayat Khan, was an agent for Britain's Special Operations Executive (SOE) during World War II and was captured and killed by the Nazis in 1944 at just 30 years of age.

## Senegal President Macky Sall wins re-election

- Senegalese President Macky Sall has been officially re-elected to a second term in office after the country's constitutional council confirmed his win in the February 24 elections with 58% of the vote.
- Candidates in Senegal's presidential polls are required to secure more than 50% of the vote tally in the first round to be declared winner. Sall, who first came to power in 2012 after defeating incumbent Abdoulaye Wade.

Senegal is a country in West Africa. Senegal's economic and political capital is Dakar. West African CFA franc is the currency of eight independent states in West Africa: Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea-Bissau, Ivory Coast, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

## **ECONOMY AND FINANCE**



### **Economy News**

#### **World's largest digital sky survey issues biggest-ever astronomical data release**

- The world's largest digital sky survey has released the **second edition of data -- amounting to over 1.6 petabytes the biggest astronomical information** ever released.
- The **Space Telescope Science Institute (STScI) in the US** in conjunction with the **University of Hawai'i Institute for Astronomy (IfA)**, released data from Pan-STARRS -- the Panoramic Survey Telescope & Rapid Response System.

The **Pan-STARRS** observatory consists of a **1.8-metre telescope** equipped with a **1.4-billion-pixel digital camera**. **Pan-STARRS** was the first survey to observe the entire sky visible from Hawai'i multiple times in many colours of light. One of the survey's goals was to identify moving, transient, and variable objects, including asteroids that could potentially threat.

#### **Railways gets Rs. 1.59 lakh cr., the highest-ever allocation**

- **Union Finance Minister Piyush Goyal** proposed a **capital expenditure of Rs. 1, 58,658 crore for the Railways Ministry for the year 2019-20** in the Interim Budget. This is the **highest-ever allocation for the national transporter, surpassing last year's allocation of Rs. 1, 48,528 crore**.
- **Vande Bharat Express, indigenously developed semi-high speed (train)**, will give Indian passengers world class experience. Goyal also announced that the **operating ratio for the current fiscal has improved to 96.2 per cent**, and in the next financial year the aim will be to have it at **95 per cent**.

The practice of a separate **Railway Budget** was started by the **British in 1924** under the recommendation of a **10-member Acworth Committee** headed by British economist William Mitchell Acworth in 1920-21. **On 21 September 2016, Government of India approved the merger of the Railway Budget with the Union budget of India**, and thus came to end — a **92-year-old practice of separate rail and general budgets**. In the past, every year the **Railway Budget** was presented in the **Parliament by the Railway Minister** few days prior to the general budget. **On 25 February 2016, Suresh Prabhu** became the last railway minister to present a separate **Railway Budget** in the parliament.

#### **India replaces Japan to become the second top steel producer in the world**

- **India has replaced Japan as world's second largest steel producing country**. According to **World Steel Association's** report, India's steel production was at **106.5 MT in 2018**. It went up by **4.9 %** from **101.5 MT** in 2017.
- **Japan produced 104.3 MT in 2018, down 0.3 % compared to 2017**. **China is the largest producer of crude steel** accounting for more than **51 %** of production.

## UAE, Saudi central banks launch common digital currency called 'Aber'

- The central banks of the UAE and Saudi Arabia have launched a common digital currency called "Aber", which will be used in financial settlements between the two countries through Blockchains and Distributed Ledgers technologies.
- Through this digital currency, both the United Arab Emirates Central Bank (UAECB) and the Saudi Arabian Monetary Authority (SAMA) are studying the impact on the improvement and reduction of remittance costs and the assessments of risks.

## India improves its global corruption ranking in 2018

- India has improved its ranking on a global corruption index in 2018 by three points and moved to 78th position with a score of 41.
- In the list of 180 countries, China and Pakistan lagged far behind at 87th and 117th position, respectively.

According to the rankings released by an anti-corruption watchdog, Denmark is the least corrupt country followed by New Zealand while Somalia, Syria and South Sudan are the most corrupt countries in the world.

## PETROTECH-2019, the 13th International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition

- PETROTECH-2019, the 13th International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition, is being organised in Greater Noida under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India.
- India's flagship hydrocarbon international conference is expected to be inaugurated by Prime Minister of India. Over 95 Energy Ministers from partner countries have been invited by the Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas to participate in the Conference.

## EAC approves individual trade pacts with EU in absence of joint deal

- East African countries can individually sign separate trade agreements with the European Union (EU) if a joint deal is not reached within the next four months, according to a statement from a meeting of regional leaders.
- The East African Community (EAC) and the EU have been at loggerheads for years over signing the so-called Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), designed to replace preferential trade deals struck down by the World Trade Organization. The agreement was reached at the summit in the northern Tanzanian town of Arusha.
- The bloc launched a common market in 2010 but missed its target of having a common currency in place in 2012. The stated goal was a political federation, although analysts say that is likely to be many years off if it happens at all.

## No income tax on individuals with income up to Rs 5 lakh

- Finance Minister Piyush Goyal has proposed that individuals with income upto Rs 5 lakh will not have to pay any income tax for FY2019-20. As per the Budget speech, "Individual taxpayers having taxable annual income up to Rs 5 lakh will get full tax rebate and therefore will not be required to pay any income tax."
- However, such taxpayers will still need to file their tax returns unless their income is below the taxable threshold of Rs. 2.5 lac ( 3 lac for senior citizen and 5 lac for super senior citizen)."
- In the previous budgets also, the Narendra Modi led-government provided tax relief to taxpayers. In Budget 2014, the minimum tax-exemption limit was raised from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 2.5 lakh. Along with that deduction, limit under section 80C was hiked by Rs 50,000 to Rs 1.5 lakh.

The Constitution of India has given the power to the Central Government to levy a tax on any income other than agricultural income, which is defined in Section 10(1) of the Income Tax Act, 1961. Income tax is a direct tax. The Income Tax Department is the biggest revenue mobilizer for the Government.

## App of world's largest health insurance, PM-JAY, launched

- The world's largest cashless health insurance scheme — the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY), popularly known as the Ayushman Bharat — is now active on Google Play Store and one can download the PM-JAY app to access scheme details.
- The scheme received an INR 6,400 Cr commitment from the government in the interim budget of 2019.
- The app was created by the National Health Authority (NHA), the app was launched by PM-JAY's CEO Indu Bhushan. The app offers users easy access to information on the scheme, besides allowing them to check eligibility, find hospitals nearby, and receive help.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Ayushman Bharat, world's largest government-funded healthcare scheme in Jharkhand's capital Ranchi in September 2018 and the scheme has become operational from September 25, 2018 on the birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay. The scheme has the benefit cover of Rs. 5 lakh per family per year. The target beneficiaries of the proposed scheme will be more than 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on SECC database.

## Indian Online Companies rank 11th for overseas expansion

- Singapore and Hong Kong are the number one countries when it comes to online companies doing business abroad. India fell just outside the top ten but still ahead of the UK and US.
- This was revealed in a study conducted by San Francisco-based online payment processing firm Stripe which specialises in helping internet companies do business online.
- With 43 percent of the world's population or about 3.2 billion people using the Internet, global expansion which was once the domain of giant multinationals is now within the reach of small companies and start-ups.
- In its study, Stripe surveyed 9,000 founders and senior executives of online businesses across 15 global markets and 10 industries. India is ranked at 11<sup>th</sup> when it comes to online companies doing business abroad.

## Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2018-19 (Series 6) opened

- The Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme 2018-19 (Series 6) was opened.
- The issue price of the Bond during this subion period will be three thousand three hundred twenty-six rupees per gram with the settlement date of 1st of February.
- The Centre in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India has decided to allow discount of 50 rupees per gram from the issue price to those investors who apply online and make the payment through digital mode.

Union Government had launched the Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme on 5th November, 2015. The main objective of the scheme is to reduce the demand for physical gold and shift a part of the gold imported every year for investment purposes, into financial savings through Gold Bonds. Sovereign Gold Bonds are issued by RBI on behalf of the Government of India on payment of the required amount in rupees and are denominated in grams of gold. The Bonds are restricted for sale to resident Indian entities including individuals, HUFs, trusts, Universities, charitable institutions. Minimum permissible investment is 2 grams of gold to be paid in rupees. The maximum amount subscribed by an entity will not be more than 500 grams per person per fiscal year (April-March).

## Smriti Irani launches India Size project in Mumbai

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



Smriti Irani is a Member of Parliament, being elected to the Rajya Sabha from the state of Gujarat. She is the current Textiles Minister in the Government of India. On 26 May 2014, Prime Minister Narendra Modi appointed her as the Minister of Human Resource Development in his cabinet. In July 2016, the Ministry of Human Resource Development was taken away from Irani, and she was given the Ministry of Textiles instead, in a cabinet reshuffle.

### Fugitive tycoon Vijay Mallya's extradition to India approved by UK minister

- UK Home Secretary Sajid Javid has ordered the extradition of Vijay Mallya on charges of conspiracy to defraud and money laundering offences, the Home Office said, in a major blow to the embattled liquor baron.
- India welcomed the UK government ordering the extradition of embattled liquor baron Vijay Mallya and said it awaits “early completion” of the legal process in the matter.

Vijay Vittal Mallya is an Indian businessman and a former member of the Upper House of the Parliament of India. The son of businessman Vittal Mallya, he is the ex-chairman of United Spirits, the largest spirits company in India and continues to serve as chairman of United Breweries Group, an Indian conglomerate with interests including beverage alcohol, aviation infrastructure, real estate and fertilizer.

### First State Level Awareness Programme on Agri Export Policy Held in Pune

- For creating awareness among the farmers, exporters and other concerned stakeholders, a first State level awareness programme on Agriculture Export Policy was organized on 2nd February, 2019 in Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management (VAMNICOM), Pune.
- Commerce Minister, Suresh Prabhu, in his address at the first state level awareness programme on agriculture export policy said that in order to achieve the purpose of the policy clusters have been identified across the country for development of agriculture exports.
- In Maharashtra, six clusters have been identified for grapes, mango, pomegranate, banana, oranges and onion for successful implementation.

### 50% India's working-age population out of labour force, says report

- Half of India's working-age population (15 years and above), for the first time, is not contributing to any economic activity, according to the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) latest jobs survey. The labour force participation rate (LFPR) stood at 49.8 per cent in 2017-18, falling sharply from 55.9 per cent in 2011-12, Business Standard reported based on the leaked survey.
- LFPR is the section of working population in the age group of 16-64 in the economy currently employed or seeking employment. People who are still undergoing studies, housewives and persons above the age of 64 are not factored in the labour force.
- The report says the proportion of the active labour force declined twice for females between 2011-12 and 2017-18. Compared to 2011-12, the LFPR for females fell by 8 percentage points to 23.3 per cent in 2017-18 whereas the LFPR for males dipped by 4 percentage points to 75.8 per cent.

### NFDC to be felicitated by MSME ministry for promotion of SC/ST entrepreneurs

- The National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) has been named a winner under the 'miniratna' category by the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises which is felicitating select central public sector enterprises for their work towards promotion of SC/ST entrepreneurs.
- The performance parameters for the felicitation were procurement from SC/ST entrepreneurs, number of vendor development programmes for SC/ST and number of SC/ST entrepreneurs benefitting according to data.

The National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC) based in Mumbai is the central agency established in 1975, to encourage high quality Indian cinema. The NFDC was formed by the government with the primary objective of **planning and promoting an organised, efficient and integrated development of the Indian film industry.**

### India jumps 8 places to 36th on International IP Index

- **India jumps eight places to 36th position on the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, the highest gain for any country this year.**
- **The index, which analyses the IP climate in 50 global economies, is brought out by the US Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC). The index ranks countries based on 45 indicators.**
- **India's overall score has also increased substantially from 30.07% (12.03 out of 40) in the previous edition to 36.04% (16.22 out of 45) in the present edition.**

The US, the UK, Sweden, France and Germany remained the top five economies on the intellectual property index in 2019 retaining their spots from the last year.

### WB receives more than Rs 2, 84,288 crore investment proposals in Bengal Global Business Summit

- **The West Bengal has received more than two Lakhs 84 thousands 288 crore rupees investment proposals in the Bengal Global Business Summit. The two day long summit ended in Kolkata.**
- **Announcing this, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said that around 10 lakhs employment will be generated by these industrial proposals. She also informed that 86 Memorandum of Understanding were signed during the summit.**

### Panel moots minimum wage of Rs. 375 per day

- **An expert panel has recommended that a need-based national minimum wage for workers across the country be set at Rs. 375 per day or Rs. 9,750 per month. It is higher than the existing rate of Rs 321 for agriculture or unskilled workers and Rs 371 for semi-skilled workers.**
- **In a report submitted to the Ministry of Labour and Employment, an Expert Committee on Determining the Methodology for Fixation of the National Minimum Wage has also recommended different national minimum wages for “different geographical regions of the country to suit the local realities and as per socio-economic and labour market contexts.”**
- **These regional wage recommendations range from Rs. 342 per day in some States including Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal to Rs. 447/day for States such as Delhi, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab.**
- **It has also recommended introducing an additional house rent allowance (city compensatory allowance), averaging up to Rs 55 per day, or Rs 1,430 per month, for urban workers over and above the national minimum wage”.**
- **The committee proposed that the minimum wage should include reasonable expenditure on essential non-food items such as clothing, fuel and light, house rent, education, medical expenses, footwear and transport, which must be equal to the median class, and spending on other non-food items be equivalent to the sixth fractile (25-30%) of household expenditure distribution, as per the NSSO-CES 2011/12 data.**

The **ministry of labour and employment** had constituted the committee **under the chairmanship of Anoop Satpathy**, fellow of the VV Giri National Labour Institute, **in January 2017 to review and recommend ways to calculate the national minimum wage.** The committee submitted its report to the labour secretary.



## Inland Waterways Authority of India launches a new portal LADIS

- Moving a step ahead towards ensuring optimum use of National Waterways, the **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** launched a new portal **LADIS – Least Available Depth Information System**.
- **LADIS will ensure that real-time data on least available depths** is disseminated for ship/barge and cargo owners so that they can undertake transportation on NWs in a more planned way.
- The portal being hosted on IWAI's website **www.iwai.nic.in** has been developed in-house. Initially **LAD information will be available for NW-1, NW-2, Indo-Bagladesh Protocol route and NW-3**, along with the date of survey. The facility will be expanded to other NWs also.

**Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** was created by Government of India on **27 October 1986** for development and regulation of Inland waterways for shipping and navigation. IWAI is the statutory authority in charge of the waterways in India. Its headquarters is located in Noida, Uttar Pradesh.

## Union Minister inaugurates the first Mega Food Park of Himachal Pradesh

- **Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal** inaugurated **Cremica Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd** via video conference. The Park is located at **Village Singhain Una District of Himachal Pradesh**. This is the **first Mega Food Park operationalized in the State of Himachal Pradesh**.
- The Park will give an impetus to the growth of the Food Processing Sector in Himachal Pradesh. **Cremica Mega Food Park will benefit the people of Una District and the people of nearby districts of Kangra, Hamirpur & Bilaspur**. This Mega Food Park has been set up in 52.40 acre of land at a cost of Rs. 107.34 crore.

To give a major boost to the food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage and loss at each stage of the supply chain with particular focus on perishables, **Ministry of Food Processing Industries** is implementing **Food Mega Food Parks Scheme** in the country since the year 2008. **Financial Assistance upto Rs. 50.00 Crore** is provided for setting up Mega Food Parks for creation of modern infrastructure facilities for food processing along the value chain from farm to market.

## NFDC declared winner under Miniratna Category by Ministry of MSME

- **National Film Development Corporation of India** has been selected as **Winner under the Miniratna Category (Category II)** by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).
- This has been done as part of endeavour by Ministry of MSME to felicitate select CPSEs to recognize their exemplary work towards promotion of SC/ST entrepreneurs.

**National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC)** based in Mumbai is the central agency established in 1975, to encourage high quality Indian cinema. The **primary goal of the NFDC is to plan, promote and organise an integrated and efficient development of the Indian Film Industry** and foster excellence in cinema.

## Union Government gets Rs 10,000 crore from additional offering of Bharat-22 ETF

- The government has raised **Rs 10,000 crore** by additional offering of **Bharat-22 Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)**. The additional 'on-tap' offering of Bharat-22 ETF was opened for a single day with a base issue size of Rs 3,500 crore and an option to retain over-subscription.
- The issue was over-subscribed 10 times and received bids for **Rs 4, 00,000 crore** till 7pm. Bids will pour in till 8pm, the Finance Ministry said.

The **Government of India** launched the **BHARAT-22 Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)** managed by **ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund** targeting an initial amount of about **Rs.8, 000 crore**. The strength of this ETF lies in the specially created **Index S&P BSE BHARAT-22 INDEX**.

## IRS officer PC Mody takes charge as new CBDT chairman

- **IRS officer Pramod Chandra Mody** took over as the new chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the policy making body of the Income Tax Department.
- Mody, a **1982-batch Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax cadre)** officer has been **appointed in place of Sushil Chandra**, who was **named as Election Commissioner** ahead of the Lok Sabha polls due this summer.
- Mody, who has worked in various capacities in the I-T Department, has been **working as the Member (Administration) in the CBDT**.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) is a part of **Department of Revenue in the Ministry of Finance**. On one hand, **CBDT provides essential inputs for policy and planning of direct taxes in India**, at the same time it is also **responsible for administration of direct tax laws** through the Income Tax Department. **Jamuna Pd Singh is the first Chairperson of the CBDT**.

## DPIIT launches second edition of States' ranking on Startup initiatives

- **After the successful first edition of States' Startup Ranking in 2018**, where 27 States and 3 Union Territories participated, **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)** released second edition of **Startup Ranking for 2019**.
- The **Startup Ranking framework aims to rank the States/UTs for establishing a robust ecosystem for supporting Startups**. The framework also encourages States and UTs to identify, learn and replicate good practices from each other.

The **Ranking Framework 2019** comprises of **7 pillars and 30 action points**. The pillars will assess States'/UTs efforts across institutional support, simplifying regulations, easing public procurement, incubation support, seed funding support, venture funding support and awareness and outreach related activities. **Till date, 25 States and UTs have launched their dedicated Startup policies to incentivize Startups** in their jurisdiction. The **Startup Ranking 2019 is expected to take forward the Startup ecosystem in the country** and give impetus to the vision of India becoming a Startup Nation.

## Union Government issues guidelines to set up EV charging stations at every 25 km

- The government has **issued a set of guidelines to set up charging stations for electric vehicles across the country**, outlining ways to build such **fuelling points every 25 km**, an official statement said.
- According to the **Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry**, the **government expects 25 per cent of the total vehicles on roads will be electric vehicles by 2030**, necessitating erecting robust electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure across the country.
- It also stated that **for long range and heavy-duty electric vehicles**, there should be **at least one station on each side of the highway every 100 kilometers**. It also stated a **public charging station should be on both sides of the highways or roads on every 25 km**.

## Saudi Arabia to invest 100 billion dollars in India

- **Saudi Arabia will invest 100 billion dollars in India in range of areas including energy, refining, petrochemicals, infrastructure, agriculture and manufacturing**.
- **Prime Minister and Crown Prince Mohammad Bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud** underlined the importance of comprehensive sanctioning of terrorists and terror organisations by the United Nations.

**Saudi Arabia is a sovereign Arab state in Western Asia. Saudi Arabia is the largest country in the Middle East. Riyadh is the capital and most populous city of Saudi Arabia. Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud has been King of Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister of Saudi Arabia, and Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques since 23 January 2015. Mohammad bin Salman is the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, also serving as First Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Council for Economic and Development Affairs and Minister of Defense—the world's youngest office holder at the time. Saudi riyal is the currency of Saudi Arabia.**

## Smriti Irani launches Integrated Large Scale Eri Farming in Arunachal Pradesh

- **Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani launched the Integrated Large Scale Eri Farming in Arunachal Pradesh** under North East Region Textile Promotion Scheme (NERTPS) in Itanagar.
- Initially, the **Project will cover five districts of the state**, they are: Papumpare, East Kameng, Siang, East Siang and West Siang. About one thousand acres land will be **covered for Eri Farming in the chosen districts of the state**.

Under “North East Region Textile Promotion Scheme” (NERTPS), 24 sericulture projects are being implemented under two broad categories viz., Integrated Sericulture Development Project (ISDP) and Intensive Bivoltine Sericulture Development Project [IBSDP] covering Mulberry, Eri and Muga sectors in all North Eastern States. The projects aim at holistic development of sericulture in all its spheres from plantation development to production of fabrics with value addition at every stage of production chain.

## PM Modi addresses Global Business Summit in New Delhi

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid out his vision for making India a 10 trillion dollar economy, and the third-largest in the world** at the **Global Business Summit in New Delhi**.
- **The Prime Minister said, under the NDA government**, the country witnessed the highest post-liberalisation growth rate of 7.4 per cent and lowest inflation of less than 4.5 per cent under the NDA government's rule.

## India's debt-to-GDP ratio second-worst among emerging markets

- **Government debt as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) for India is one of the highest among emerging markets (EMs)**, making the domestic economy vulnerable to foreign flows and global uncertainties.
- According to an analysis by Motilal Oswal, **India's government debt-to-GDP ratio is 68.4 per cent, second only to Brazil**. Asian peers such as **Indonesia, Thailand and China have much lower government debt-to-GDP**.

The **debt-to-GDP ratio compares a country's sovereign debt to its total economic output** for the year. Its output is measured by gross domestic product.

## MSME Ministry's First Conclave on Empowering Marginalised Sections' Women Entrepreneurs organized in Mumbai

- **Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) is organized a Conclave “Empowering Women Entrepreneurs 2019, Financing & Enabling Women from Marginalised Sections”, in Mumbai**.
- The **first of its kind conclave endeavours to empower women entrepreneurs from marginalised sections** and enable their growth and success in business by offering substantial knowledge on various business opportunities and national best practices in doing business.
- The **conclave is organized under National SC-ST Hub initiative of the MSME ministry** which is targeted towards **developing a supportive ecosystem towards SC/ST entrepreneurs**. Issues of access to financing, assessing risks and growth mantras enabling SC-ST women entrepreneur to setup and run a sustainable business will be discussed during the day long programme.

The **Union Cabinet** chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has **approved change in the basis of classifying Micro, Small and Medium enterprises from ‘investment in plant & machinery/equipment’ to ‘annual turnover’**. A micro enterprise will be defined as a unit where the annual turnover does not exceed five crore rupees; A small enterprise will be defined as a unit where the annual turnover is more than five crore rupees but does not exceed Rs 75 crore; A medium enterprise will be defined as a unit where the annual turnover is more than seventy five crore rupees but does not exceed Rs 250 crore.

## Gram Samridhi Yojana: New scheme to help unorganised food processing sector

- India's food processing ministry is working on a new scheme Gram Samridhi Yojana to bolster the unorganised food processing sector concentrated in rural areas. About 66% of unorganised food processing units are in rural areas and of these, 80% were family run.
- The Rs 3,000 crore scheme funded by the World Bank and the centre will help cottage industry, farmer producers' organisation and individual food processors to increase capacity, upgrade technology besides skill improvement, entrepreneurship development and strengthening the farm-to market supply chain.

## AIIB and India sign US\$ 455 Million Loan to improve Rural Connectivity in State of Andhra Pradesh

- The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the Government of India signed a USD 455 million loan in New Delhi to finance the Andhra Pradesh Rural Roads Project, which will connect some 3,300 habitations with a population of more than 250, and benefit around two Million people.
- The objective of the Project is to improve road transport connectivity in previously unserved communities by providing all weather rural roads in all 13 Districts of the State of Andhra Pradesh.

## Skill Development Min inaugurates Skill Saathi Youth Conclave in Odisha

- Union Skill Development Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has inaugurated a "Skill Saathi Youth Conclave in Bhubaneswar. Skill Saathi model was created to impart information on vocational education and available market opportunities to the youth.
- Currently, 10 Counselling Implementing Organisations (CIO) are empanelled under the 'Skill Saathi' initiative in Odisha, who mobilise candidates and provide career counselling to them. All blocks and urban local bodies in Odisha have been divided among these empanelled CIOs.

Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship is a Ministry of Government of India set up on 9 November 2014 to coordinate all skill development efforts across the country. Dharmendra Debendra Pradhan is currently the Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas and Skill Development & Entrepreneurship in the NDA Government. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in March 2018 from Madhya Pradesh.

## STEP gets award for best EdTech firm

- STEP (Standardized Test of English Proficiency) received the prestigious Digital learning company of the year award at EdTech Review Summit and Expo 2019 – India's biggest EdTech gathering. The event was attended by more than 1,000 members of the EdTech community including startup founders, venture capitalists and educators.
- It was launched by The Hindu Group in 2016; STEP's mission is to address the prevalent English language communication gap in the country, identified as one of the major reasons for underemployment and unemployment.

## Rice Knowledge Bank launched under World-bank funded Assam Agribusiness & Rural Transformation (APART) project

- 'Rice Knowledge Bank - Assam', an agriculture web portal dedicated to enhancing knowledge on rice production techniques and technologies, best production practices and state agriculture facts, was launched as part of the World Bank funded project- Assam Agri-business and Rural Transformation (APART).
- According to an official communique the portal is the result of efforts of Assam Rural Infrastructure and Agricultural Services Society (ARIAS, Autonomous body of Govt of Assam); Assam Agricultural University (AAU); with technical assistance from International Rice Research Institute (IRRI).



## RCEP trade ministers to meet in Cambodia

- **Commerce ministers of RCEP countries including India and china**, which are **negotiating a mega trade deal**, will hold a crucial **meeting in Cambodia**.
- **The 16-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) bloc** aims to cover among the issues related to goods, services, investments, economic and technical cooperation, competition and intellectual property rights.

**Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** is a proposed **free trade agreement (FTA)** between the **ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) **and the six Asia-Pacific states with which ASEAN has existing free trade agreements** (Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand). **RCEP** is the world's largest economic bloc, covering nearly half of the global economy.

## Banks in News

### ICICI Bank sacks Chanda Kochhar

- The **ICICI Bank** has decided to **terminate the contract of former managing director and CEO, Chanda Kochhar** after the **B.N. Srikrishna panel** found that **she violated the bank's code of conduct**. The bank also said there **would be a clawback of bonuses paid between 2009 and 2019**.
- In June last year, the **bank formed the one-member panel, assisted by a law firm, to look into the allegations of conflict of interest against Ms. Kochhar** in relation to a loan given to Videocon Industries.

**ICICI Bank**, stands for **Industrial Credit and Investment Corporation of India**, it is an Indian multinational banking and financial services company **headquartered in Mumbai**. As of 2018, **ICICI Bank is the second largest bank in India in terms of assets and market capitalisation**. **Sandeep Bakhshi** is the current MD & CEO of Bank.

### ADB buys 14% stake in Annapurna Finance

- The **Asian Development Bank (ADB)** has **bought a 14% stake in micro-financier Annapurna Finance for Rs 137 crore**, reinforcing the belief that India's microfinance sector is on course to attracting long-term funds from global lenders and investors.
- **ADB's investment in the Bhubaneswar-based Annapurna** is an equity expansion, while a few of the existing investors such as **Oman India Joint Investment Fund (OIJIF)**, **Oikocredit** and **Bamboo Finance Partners** raised their holding in the MFI through secondary market deals totaling Rs 75 crore,.

**Asian Development Bank (ADB)** is a regional development bank **established on 19 December 1966**, which is **headquartered in the Ortigas Center located in the city of Mandaluyong, Metro Manila, Philippines**. **Takehiko Nakao** is the **current and ninth president of the Asian Development Bank**.

### Two RRBs set to merge to form TN Grama Bank

- **Two regional rural banks (RRB) — Pallavan Grama Bank and Pandyan Grama Bank — will be amalgamated into a single RRB in Tamil Nadu**, according to a statement from Indian Bank. **Pallavan Grama Bank is sponsored by Indian Bank and Pandyan Grama Bank is sponsored by the Indian Overseas Bank**, both state-run lenders **headquartered in Chennai**.
- **Ministry of Finance, Government of India...** in exercise of **powers conferred under Regional Rural Banks Act 1976** announced **amalgamation of Pallavan Grama Bank (Sponsored by Indian Bank) and Pandyan Grama Bank (Sponsored by Indian Overseas Bank) into a Single Regional Rural Bank in... Tamil Nadu**," the statement said.



- The newly amalgamated bank will be named Tamil Nadu Grama Bank and will be under the sponsorship of Indian Bank, with its head office located at Salem, Tamil Nadu. The amalgamation would be effective from April 1, 2019.

Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) also known as Gramin banks, are Indian scheduled banks (Government banks) operating at regional level in different States of India. They have been created with a view of serving primarily the rural areas of India with basic banking and financial services. The sponsor banks of the RRBs are National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), the Government of Punjab and Punjab National Bank, State Bank of India and Punjab and Sind Bank.

### RBI fines Axis Bank, UCO Bank and Syndicate Bank for non-compliance of norms

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it has imposed a total penalty of Rs 2.2 crore on private sector lender Axis Bank in two separate cases. A penalty of Rs 2 crore has also been imposed on UCO Bank and Rs 1 crore on Syndicate Bank for violation of norms.
- In another case, a penalty of Rs 20 lakh has been imposed on Axis Bank for contravention of the directions related to detection and impounding of counterfeit notes. The penalty on Syndicate Bank has been imposed for violation of guidelines related to checking fraud and managing risk.

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. The inaugural officeholder was the British banker Osborne Smith, while C. D. Deshmukh was the first Indian governor. The bank's 15th governor, Manmohan Singh, later became India's 13th prime minister. The position is currently held by Shaktikanta Das.

### SBI UK chief awarded 'Freedom of the City of London'

- India's largest state-owned lender SBI's regional head in the UK has been honoured with the 'Freedom of the City of London' award in recognition of his contribution to promoting the bilateral relations.
- Sanjiv Chadha, who oversaw State Bank of India (SBI) UK's transition into a subsidiary in April last year, was nominated for the honour by Lord Mayor of London Peter Estlin and Sheriff Vincent Keaveny.

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).

### NITI Aayog hosts Conference on The Future of Indian Banking

- NITI Aayog co-hosted a conference on “The Future of Indian Banking” on February 22, 2019, with the Foundation for Economic Growth and Welfare (EGROW Foundation) in New Delhi. Dr. Rajiv Kumar, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog, inaugurated the event.
- The conference aimed to increase and elevate the discourse on the banking sector in India, and help develop insights to inform the continued evolution of the Indian banking sector for optimally supporting the growing credit needs of the Indian economy.

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.

## Trump nominates US treasury diplomat David Malpass to head World Bank

- In the USA, President Donald Trump has nominated senior Treasury official David Malpass as the next chief of the World Bank.
- He would replace Jim Yong Kim as the president if voted by the Directors of the World Bank Group. The position of Managing Director of International Monetary Fund has gone to Europe.

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 30<sup>th</sup> January 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.

## RBI cuts repo rate, reverse repo rate in its bi-monthly monetary policy

- Reserve Bank of India in its bi-monthly monetary policy has reduced repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25 per cent. RBI's six-member monetary policy committee also brought down reverse repo rate to 6 per cent.
- The repo rate is the rate at which the Reserve Bank lends short-term money to the banks, while the reserve repo rate is the rate at which the central bank borrows money from commercial banks.
- It was the first policy review by the RBI after appointment of its governor Shaktikanta Das in December last year. The RBI governor said that they expect GDP growth rate to be at 7.4 per cent in fiscal 2019-20 which is up from 7.2 per cent estimated for financial year 2018-19 by central statistical organization.

Monetary policy is the process by which the monetary authority of a country, typically the central bank or currency board, controls either the cost of very short-term borrowing or the monetary base, often targeting an inflation rate or interest rate to ensure price stability and general trust in the currency. Monetary Policy Committee of India is a committee of the Reserve Bank of India that is responsible for fixing the benchmark interest rate in India. The committee comprises six members - three officials of the Reserve Bank of India and three external members nominated by the Government of India.

## RBI Raises Collateral-Free Farm Loan Limit From Rs. 1 Lakh to Rs. 1.6 Lakh

- The Reserve Bank of India or RBI raised the limit of collateral-free agricultural loans to Rs. 1.6 lakh from the current Rs. 1 lakh with a view to help small and marginal farmers.
- The central bank also decided to set up an internal working group (IWG) to review agricultural credit and arrive at a workable policy solution.

## ADB Debuts in Offshore Philippine Peso Bond Market

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has raised 5,2204 billion Philippine pesos (\$100 million) from a new issue of local currency bonds in the international market.
- ADB issued bonds in the Philippine domestic capital market in 2005 and 2007 but today's issue is the first time it has mobilized Philippine peso funding from international investors through a currency-linked structure. Currency-linked bonds are denominated in the local currency but settled in US dollars. The bonds pay a fixed interest rate of 5.25% and have a final maturity of 4 years.

## RBI imposes penalty of Rs 3.5 crore on Allahabad Bank, Corp Bank for violating norms

- The Reserve Bank has imposed a cumulative penalty of Rs 3.5 crore on state-owned lenders Corporation Bank and Allahabad Bank for violation of various norms.

- "This is to inform that Reserve Bank of India...has imposed an **aggregate penalty of Rs 20 million on our bank due to some lapses in monitoring of end use of funds** and Corporation Bank said in a regulatory filing. Allahabad Bank said the RBI has **imposed a penalty of Rs 1.5 crore for not monitoring end use of funds**.
- Earlier, the **regulator had imposed penalties on Axis Bank, UCO Bank and Syndicate Bank** for violation of various norms.

### YES BANK Bags Prestigious Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 for ‘Innovation in Data Science’

- **Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 announced YES BANK as winner in “Innovation in Data Science” category for their industry-first project “Yes EEE (Engage Enrich Excel)”.**
- **YES BANK has been applauded as winner at the 9th edition of Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 hosted by Government of Goa at Entertainment Society of Goa, Panaji.**

**Yes Bank is India's fourth largest private sector bank, founded by Rana Kapoor and Ashok Kapur in 2004. Yes Bank is the only Greenfield Bank licence awarded by the RBI in the last one decade. Ravneet Gill is the current MD & CEO of the bank.**

**Aegis Graham Bell Awards (AGBA) has been promoting innovations and entrepreneurship in Information and Communication Technology (ICT) domain. AGBA has been rewarding those who made outstanding contribution in these fields since 8 years with a vision to foster and stimulate innovators, for India to become a nucleus of innovations.**

### RBI withdraws 20% limit on investments by FPIs in corporate bonds

- **The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) withdrew the 20 per cent limit on investments by FPIs in corporate bonds of an entity with a view to encourage more foreign investments.**
- **As part of the review of the FPI investment in corporate debt undertaken in April 2018, it was stipulated that no FPI should have an exposure of more than 20 per cent of its corporate bond portfolio to a single corporate (including exposure to entities related to the corporate).**

### JP Morgan becomes first US bank to create cryptocurrency for payments business

- **US investment bank, JP Morgan Chase, has become the first US bank to offer its own cryptocurrency. The New York-based bank moves more than \$6trn around the world every day for corporations through its wholesale payment businesses.**
- **The cryptocurrency, called “JPM Coin”, will be tied to the US dollar in a bid to make it more financially stable than other cryptocurrencies. In short, a JPM coin will always have a value equivalent to one US dollar.**

**J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. is an American multinational investment bank and financial services company headquartered in New York City. JPMorgan Chase is the largest bank in the United States, and is ranked by S&P Global as the sixth largest bank in the world by total assets as of 2018, to the amount of \$2.534 trillion. It is the world's most valuable bank by market capitalization.**

### RBI imposes Rs 3.5 cr penalty on 3 PSU banks

- **The Reserve Bank of India has imposed Rs 3.5 crore penalties on three public sector banks, including PNB and OBC, for violation of various banking norms.**
- **The monetary penalty on the banks has been imposed for non-compliance with various directions issued by the RBI on monitoring of end use of funds, exchange of information with other banks, and on restructuring of accounts, the Reserve Bank of India said in a statement.**

- A penalty of Rs 1.5 crore has been imposed on Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) and Rs 1 crore each on Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Bank of India.

### RBI to transfer Rs. 28,000 crore interim surplus to government

- The board of Reserve Bank of India decided to transfer an interim surplus (dividend) of Rs. 28,000 crore to the government, the central bank said.
- This is second consecutive year that the central bank has transferred interim surplus to the government. Inclusive of the Rs. 40,000 crore transferred by the central bank as final dividend for 2017-18, the Centre has earned a total of Rs. 68,000 crore as dividend from the RBI for the 2018-19 fiscal. The accounting year of the RBI runs from July to June.

### Vijaya, Dena merger with BoB effective from April 1

- Bank of Baroda said the merger of Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with itself would be effective from April 1 as per the scheme of amalgamation approved by the government.
- As per the Scheme of Amalgamation, shareholders of Vijaya Bank will get 402 equity shares of BoB for every 1,000 shares held. In case of Dena Bank, its shareholders will get 110 shares for every 1,000 shares of BoB.

The government in September last year had announced merger of state-owned Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank, with larger peer Bank of Baroda, aiming to create the third largest lender after SBI and ICICI Bank. Bank of Baroda (BoB) is an Indian multinational, public sector banking and financial services company. It is owned by Government of India and headquartered in Vadodara, Gujarat.

### Government to infuse Rs 48,239 crore in 12 public sector banks

- The government has approved recapitalisation of Rs 48,239 crore in 12 public sector banks in this fiscal to help them maintain regulatory capital requirements and finance growth plans.
- The government will infuse over nine thousand crore rupees in Corporation Bank and six thousand 896 crore rupees in Allahabad Bank.

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.

### RBI bundles NBFCs into one category

- To provide greater operational flexibility to non-banking lenders, the Reserve Bank created a single category for them by bundling their present three-tier structure.
- The central bank also decided that exposures to all NBFCs, excluding core investment companies, would be risk weighted as per credit ratings.
- “To provide NBFCs with greater operational flexibility, harmonisation of different categories of NBFCs into fewer ones shall be carried out based on the principle of regulation by activity rather than regulation by entity.”

A non-banking financial company (NBFC) is a company registered under the Companies Act, 1956, NBFCs are doing functions akin to that of banks, however there are a few differences: NBFC cannot accept demand deposits (demand deposits are funds deposited at a depository institution that are payable on demand -- immediately or within a very short period -- like your current or savings accounts.) and it is not a part of the payment and settlement system and as such cannot issue cheques to its customers.



### Cabinet approves Rs. 1450 crore for the share capital of RBI in National Housing Bank, NHB

- The Cabinet approved payment of the face value of the subscribed share capital of Rs.1450 crore in National Housing Bank(NHB) to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) consequent to amendments made to the NHB Act, 1987 in 2018.
- The expenditure of Rs.1,450 crore is to be met out of Gross Budgetary Support 2018-19. The beneficiaries are the Reserve Bank of India and the Housing Sector.

National Housing Bank (NHB) is an All India Financial Institution(AIFI), set up in 1988, under an Act of Parliament, viz. the National Housing Bank Act, 1987 (Central Act No. 53 of 1987). It is an apex agency established to operate as a principal agency to promote housing finance institutions both at local and regional levels and to provide financial and other support incidental to such institutions and for matters connected therewith.

### RBI, Bank of Japan sign Bilateral Swap Arrangement

- Reserve Bank of India and Bank of Japan has signed a Bilateral Swap Arrangement (BSA). It may be recalled that the BSA was negotiated between India and Japan during the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Tokyo in October last year.
- The BSA provides for India to access 75 billion US dollars whereas the earlier BSA had provided for 50 billion dollars.
- India can access the agreed amount of 75 billion dollars for its domestic currency, for the purpose of maintaining an appropriate level of balance of payments or short-term liquidity.

### Government appoints Hasmukh Adhia as chairman of Bank of Baroda

- Union Government has appointed former Finance Secretary Hasmukh Adhia as chairman of state-owned Bank of Baroda (BoB).
- Bank of Baroda is set to become the third largest lender of the country after amalgamation with Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank effective April 1.

Bank of Baroda (BoB) is an Indian multinational, public sector banking and financial services company. It is owned by Government of India and headquartered in Vadodara, Gujarat. The government in September last year had announced merger of state-owned Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank, with larger peer Bank of Baroda, aiming to create the third largest lender after SBI and ICICI Bank.

### RBI constitutes task force under Usha Thorat on offshore rupee markets

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) announced a task force headed by its former deputy governor Usha Thorat to examine issues related to offshore rupee markets and recommend policy measures to ensure the stability of the external value of the domestic currency.
- The eight-member task force will assess the causes behind the development of the offshore rupee market and study the effects of the offshore markets on the rupee exchange rate and market liquidity in the domestic market.

Usha Thorat is served as Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) from 10 November 2005 to 8 November 2010. Prior to this she was the executive Director of the RBI. Usha Thorat has been the Reserve Bank of India nominee on the boards of Bank of Baroda, Indian Overseas Bank and the Securities Trading Corporation of India.



## Firms in News

### IRDAI imposes Rs 9 lakh fine on United India Insurance

- **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority** has imposed a fine of Rs nine lakh on state-owned **United India Insurance Co Ltd** for violating certain procedures.
- "In conclusion, as directed under the respective charges, the **total penalty amount of Rs nine lakh shall be remitted by UIIC by debiting shareholders' account within a period of 45 days from the date of receipt of this order** through NEFT/RTGS (details for which will be communicated separately)," the IRDAI said.

The **Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)** is an **autonomous, statutory body** tasked with **regulating and promoting the insurance and re-insurance industries** in India. It was **constituted by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority Act, 1999** an Act of Parliament passed by the Government of India. The agency's headquarters are in **Hyderabad, Telangana**, where it moved from **Delhi** in **2001**.

### Mukesh Ambani tops Hurun India Philanthropy list

- **Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) Chairman Mukesh Ambani** topped the **Hurun India Philanthropy List 2018**, released with the **highest contribution of Rs 437 crore** between October 2017 and September 2018.
- He was also **named the richest Indian by the Barclays Hurun India Rich List for 2018**, released in September last year, with a net worth of **Rs 3.71 lakh crore** as on **July 31, 2018**.
- **Ambani was followed by Piramal Group Chairman Ajay Piramal** who made **Rs 200 crore** donations during the period.

The list, compiled by the **Hurun Research Institute**, ranks individuals from **India** who donated **Rs 10 crore and above** between **October 1, 2017 and September 30, 2018**. The **total Indian philanthropy amount** in the list stands at **Rs 1,560 crore**. The list included **39 Indians**. It showed that **education** was the most preferred cause for donations, followed by **healthcare** and **rural development**.

### Mukesh Ambani ranked among top 10 in global rich list by China's hurun

- **Reliance Industries Chairman and Managing Director Mukesh Ambani** has become the **first Indian** to enter the **global top 10 richest billionaire list** compiled by Hurun Research.
- According to the **Hurun Global Rich List 2019**, **Mr Ambani broke into the top 10 in the world for the first time** after a **\$9 billion or 20 per cent surge in his wealth to \$54 billion**.
- The **only Asian in the Top 10**, **Mr Ambani's wealth is based on telecom, retail and energy**, and bucked the poor stock market trend in India last year," Hurun Research said in a statement.

According to the **Hurun Global Rich List 2019**, **India has 104 billionaires**. Last year, the country had added **32 billionaires**, but **this year it lost 28**. "**India drops to 5th spot with 104 billionaires**, 28 less than last year. **Mumbai and New Delhi** are the **billionaire capitals of the country with 42 and 25** finding residence there.

### Parliamentary panel summons Twitter head to appear before it on Feb 25

- The **Parliamentary panel on Information Technology** has summoned **Twitter head Jack Dorsey** to appear before it on the 25th of this month. The **committee's Chairman, BJP MP Anurag Thakur** said after the meeting the **Twitter head and senior officials** have been summoned on the issue.
- The **panel decided to call Twitter officials against the backdrop of growing concerns about safeguarding citizens' data privacy and possibility** that social media could be used to interfere in elections. Ahead of the **Lok Sabha elections**, the **government has been warning social media platforms of strong action** if any attempt was made to influence the country's electoral process through undesirable means.

Twitter is an online news and social networking service on which users post and interacts with messages known as "tweets". Twitter was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams and launched in July, 2006. Twitter, Inc. is based in San Francisco, California, USA.

### 'Amazon Pay UPI' launched for Android users in India

- To facilitate secure payments and financial transactions on its platform, **Amazon launched "Amazon Pay Unified Payments Interface (UPI)"** for Android users **in partnership with Axis Bank to issue UPI IDs** to its customers in India. UPI is an instant real-time payment system developed by National Payments Corporation of India processing inter-bank transactions

**Amazon is a multinational technology company focusing in e-commerce, cloud computing, and artificial intelligence in Seattle, Washington. Amazon is the largest e-commerce marketplace and cloud computing platform in the world as measured by revenue and market capitalization. Amazon.com was founded by Jeff Bezos on July 5, 1994 in Seattle, Washington, U.S.**

### HDFC ERGO launches the first-of-its-kind 'Trip Protector' policy

- HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company, India's third-largest non-life insurance provider** in the private sector, announced the launch of **'Trip Protector' insurance policy**, a pioneering policy in the non-life insurance segment in India.
- In the event of a cancellation**, either a flight or hotel booking, **Trip Protector insurance policy will safeguard travellers financially against the cost of cancellation** levied by Hotels or Airlines.

**HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Limited is a joint venture between HDFC Ltd. and ERGO International AG, a Germany-based company that is part of the Munich Re Group. HDFC holds 51 per cent, and ERGO the other 49 per cent. It is headquartered in Mumbai.**

### LIC launches Micro Bachat plan

- Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) launched a new micro insurance plan 'Micro Bachat'.** It is a regular premium, non-linked, participating endowment micro insurance plan, which offers a combination of protection and savings.
- For the first time, a micro insurance plan has been launched providing coverage up to Rs 2 lakh.** This plan is available for standard healthy lives only in the age group of 18-55 years without undergoing any medical examination.
- This plan provides financial support for the family in case of unfortunate death of the policyholder** during the policy term and a lump sum amount at the time of maturity for the surviving policyholders

**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.**

### Adani Logistics buys agri-logistics arm of Adani Enterprise for Rs 1,662 cr

- In a bid to deepen its presence in the growing domestic logistics industry, **Adani Logistics announced that it would be acquiring Adani Agri Logistics from Adani Enterprises in an all-cash deal**, at a proposed enterprise value of **Rs 1,662 crore.**
- Adani Logistics is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Gautam Adani-led Adani Ports and SEZ (APSEZ).** The acquisition is expected to be completed by March, the company said in a press release. **"Adani Agri Logistics is the largest agri-products logistics player** with long-term contracts and strong margins.

## JSPL wins FICCI CSR Award for Women Empowerment

- **Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL)** has been honoured with the prestigious 'FICCI CSR Award' for Women Empowerment, a company release said.
- **JSPL won the award for its innovative and high impact women empowerment programmes**, implemented by the company's CSR Arm - JSPL Foundation, across its operational areas in the country, the release said.
- **Director, JSPL and the Co-Chairperson of JSPL Foundation Shallu Jindal received the award** from Union Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu at a function held in Delhi, it said.

**Jindal Steel and Power Limited (JSPL)** is an Indian steel and energy company based in New Delhi, India. In 1969, O. P. Jindal started Pipe Unit Jindal India Limited at Hisar, India. After Jindal's death in 2005, much of his assets were transferred to his wife, Savitri Jindal.

## JioSaavn only Indian company to make it to '50 Most Innovative Companies' list

- **India-based global audio and music streaming service JioSaavn** has announced that it has secured the first rank India-wise and 28th rank globally in the 2019 list of "50 Most Innovative Companies".
- **JioSaavn is the only Indian company that made it to the list**, published by US-based business publication Fast Company.
- "The music streaming company which was formed in October 2018 when streaming start-up Saavn merged with telecom giant Reliance's JioMusic services, offers more than 40 million tracks in 15 regional languages for 38 million monthly active users," Fast Company wrote in its listing.

**JioSaavn** (formerly known as Saavn & JioMusic) is an Indian music streaming service and a digital distributor of Bollywood, English and other regional Indian music across the world. Since it was founded in 2007 as Saavn, the company has acquired rights to over 4.5 crore (45 million) music tracks in 15 languages. On 23 March 2018, Saavn announced merger with JioMusic in a deal worth more than \$1 billion. The merger was completed in December 2018, with Saavn being rebranded JioSaavn.

## IFFCO Tokio launches India's first policy to protect bank locker

- **IFFCO Tokio General Insurance Company** announced the launch of **Bank Locker Protector Policy**, which is the first policy in the industry to protect the contents of a bank locker such as jewellery and other valuables.
- The policy offers a cover against various risks including fire, earthquake, burglary, and holdup, infidelity by a bank staff or any act of terrorism.

**IFFCO-Tokio General Insurance** was incorporated on 4th December 2000 with a vision of being industry leader by building customer satisfaction through fairness, transparency, and quick response. It is a joint venture between the **Indian Farmers Fertilizer Co-operative (IFFCO)** and its associates and **Tokio Marine and Nichido Fire Group** which is also the largest listed insurance group in Japan. It is headquartered in Gurugram, New Delhi.

## Indian economy expected to grow at 7.3% in 2019-20: Moody's

- **Indian economy is projected to grow at 7.3 per cent** in calendar years 2019 and 2020, the US-based rating agency Moody's said.
- In its quarterly **Global Macro Outlook for 2019 and 2020** released the agency said the country is less exposed to a slowdown in global manufacturing trade growth than other major Asian economies and emerging markets and is poised to grow at a relatively stable pace in the two years.
- **Moody's said the announcement in Interim Budget 2019-20 on direct cash transfer programme for farmers and the middle-class tax relief measures** will contribute a fiscal stimulus of about 0.45 per cent of GDP.

Moody's Investors Service is a leading provider of credit ratings, research, and risk analysis. The company was incorporated in 1914 and is based in New York, New York. Moody's Investors Service, Inc. operates as a subsidiary of Moody's Corporation.

### Bharti AXA General wins 'Assocham Non-Life Insurer of The Year Award'

- **Bharti AXA General Insurance** has been conferred with the 'Non-Life Insurer of The Year Award 2019' by the Assocham, one of the apex trade associations of India.
- The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (Assocham) honored **Bharti AXA General Insurance** with this recognition for its excellence and contribution to the non-life insurance sector during the recently-held Insurance Leaders Meet 2019 (Regulation, Disruption and Product Dynamics) and Excellence Awards in Kolkata.

**Bharti AXA General Insurance Company Ltd.** is a joint venture between **Bharti Enterprises** and **AXA business Group** that operates in India. **Bharti Enterprises** shares **51% stake** in the venture while **AXA Group** shares **49% stake**. It is headed by **Sanjeev Srinivasan**, who is **CEO and the Managing Director**. It is headquartered in **Mumbai**.

### PSBloansin59minutes.com emerges largest fintech lending platform

- **PSBloansin59minutes.com**, launched by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** three months ago, has emerged as the country's largest online lending platform, with loan sanctions exceeding over Rs 35,000 crore.
- The portal was launched in November to provide credit of up to **Rs 1 crore** to **micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** in just **59 minutes** or less than an hour, in a bid to make banking transparent and hassle-free.

**PSB Loans in 59 minutes** is an online marketplace, which will enable **In-Principle approval for MSME loans up to INR 1 Crore in 59 minutes from Public Sector Banks**. This Platform has **reduced the loan processing turnaround time from 20-25 days to 59 minutes**. Post receiving of In-Principle approval letter, the loan is expected to be disbursed in 7-8 working days.



## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**



### **Huawei to launch 5G foldable phone on Feb 24**

- **Huawei recently confirmed that it is working on a foldable 5G smartphone, which will be launched at Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2019 in Barcelona.** The company has shared a press invite on its official Twitter account for the same.
- According to earlier reports, **Huawei's upcoming foldable 5G smartphone will sport a 7.2-inch foldable display.** It will be **powered by the company's own HiSilicon Kirin 980 processor paired with the Balong 5000 modem for supporting 5G networks.**

**Huawei Technologies Co., Ltd.** is a Chinese multinational telecommunications equipment and consumer electronics manufacturer, headquartered in Shenzhen. **Ren Zhengfei**, a former engineer in the People's Liberation Army, founded Huawei in 1987.

### **UNESCO launches International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements**

- The **International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements** was launched at **UNESCO's Headquarters, Paris.** According to a statement from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), **events and activities will be held throughout the year to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the organisation of the periodic table by Russian scientist Dmitri Mendeleev, one of the fathers of modern chemistry.**
- The **Director-General of UNESCO, Audrey Azoulay,** opened the event with **Mikhail Kotyukov, Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, Pierre Corvol, President of France's Académie des Sciences,** and **Andrey Guryev, CEO of PhosAgro.**

### **ISRO launches Human Space Flight Centre in Bengaluru**

- The **Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC),** the hub of ISRO's future manned missions, was **inaugurated at ISRO headquarters in Bengaluru.**
- Announced on August 15 2018, the **country's first crewed mission is set to happen by 2022, the 75th year of Independence.**

**Indian Human Spaceflight Programme (HSP)** was created by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** to develop the technology needed to launch **crewed orbital spacecraft into low Earth orbit.** **India's first manned space flight 'Gaganyaan'** will send **three humans into space for five to seven days** and the spacecraft will be placed in a **low earth orbit of 300-400 k m** from the earth's surface.



## ISRO launched communication satellite GSAT-31

- The Indian Space Research Organisation has **launched its 40th communication satellite GSAT-31** from the spaceport in French Guiana.
- **The satellite with a mission life of 15 years** will provide continuity to operational services on some of the in-orbit satellites and augment the Ku-band transponder capacity in Geostationary Orbit. The **satellite, weighing about 2,535 kg**, has launched **Ariane-5 rocket** from Kourou in French Guiana.
- **GSAT-31 will provide transponder capacity for DTH television and connectivity to services like VSATs for ATMs, stock-exchanges, Digital Satellite News Gathering DSNG and e-governance applications.**

**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**.

## US in talks with India over missile defence collaboration

- The US has **discussed potential missile defence collaboration with India**, a top Pentagon official has said, underlining that America wants to build a "much deeper and broader relationship" with the country.
- The US has also **agreed to sell two advanced missile defence systems to India for two Boeing-777 Head-of-State aircraft** for an estimated cost of USD 190 million, a decision that will enhance the security of the planes flying the president and the prime minister.

**In 2018, the US granted India Strategic Trade Authorisation-1 (STA-1) status. India is the only South Asian country to get STA1 status and third Asian country after Japan and South Korea.** The status eases India's defence procurement from the US.

## Helicopter-launched anti-tank missile 'Helina' test-fired in Balasore

- **India test fired its helicopter-launched version of one of the most-advanced anti-tank weapons** from the Odisha coast.
- **Helina, the helicopter-launched version of the Nag anti-tank guided missile with a hit range of 7-8 km**, was launched from an Army chopper. The weapon system was tested for its **full range at 12.55 pm near the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur in Balasore district**. Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), it is **one of the most-advanced anti-tank weapons in the world**.

## WHO issues guidelines for audio devices

- The **World Health Organization and the International Telecommunications Union presented new standards, or voluntary guidelines, for the manufacture and use of personal audio devices.**
- World Health Organization considers a volume above 85 decibels for eight hours or 100 decibels for 15 minutes as unsafe.
- **WHO says nearly half of all people aged 12 to 35, or 1.1 billion people, are at risk of hearing loss due to "prolonged and excessive exposure to loud sounds."**

**World Health Organization (WHO)** is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is **concerned with international public health**. It was established on 7 April 1948, and is **headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland**. The WHO is a member of the United Nations Development Group. **Tedros Adhanom** has been Director-General of the World Health Organization.

## **Observatory set up in Tehri to monitor cloud activities**

- A Himalayan Cloud Observatory has been set up in Tehri district to receive forecast and monitor cloud burst incidents in the Himalayan region and help minimise the damage.
- The Observatory has been established in the SRT campus Badshahithaul and is currently in the testing period.

Cloud activities in higher regions of the Himalayas are monitored by the Himalayan Cloud Observatory in SRT campus Chamba, which has different types of parameters for rainfall, temperature, wind speed, wind direction, and data is being prepared. This is the second observatory in the country to monitor cloud activities by the Indian Science and Technology Department and Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur that can function in high-altitudes.

## **The first of the 15 Chinook heavy lift helicopters arrived in India**

- The first of the 15 Chinook heavy lift helicopters ordered by the Indian Air Force (IAF) arrived in India.
- The CH-47F (I) was received at the Mundra Port in Gujarat and will be transported to its home base at Chandigarh.
- Boeing, the maker of Chinooks, announced the arrival of the helicopter that will significantly enhance IAF's air lift capabilities.

The Boeing CH-47 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). The CH-47 is among the heaviest lifting Western helicopters. Its name, Chinook, is from the Native American Chinook people of modern-day Washington State.

## **NASA will launch a New Space Telescope in 2023 to investigate the Universe**

- NASA has announced a new space telescope mission dedicated to understanding the origins of life and the universe.
- It's called the Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization and Ices Explorer or SPHEREx, for short. The space agency is aiming for a 2023 launch and has already earmarked \$242 million for the project, not including launch costs, which is supposed to last for at least two years.

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.

## **Astronomical Society of India gets first woman president**

- Dr G C Anupama, Senior Professor (Dean) from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru became the first woman to be elected president of Astronomical Society of India (ASI), prime association of professional astronomers in the country.
- She is the second Kannadiga after former Chairman of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), Prof U R Rao. Anupama will be taking over charge. Being in-charge of the Indian Astronomical Observatory at Hanle in Ladakh, she observes supernovae occurring in distant galaxies, millions of light years away — something she has done for several years.
- Presently the dean and senior professor at the Bangalore based Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Anupama is in the Indian core team which is part of the international team engaged in establishing the 'Thirty Meter Telescope' (TMT) project at cost of over one billion USD in USA (Hawaii).

The **Astronomical Society of India (ASI)** is an **Indian society of professional astronomers and other professionals** from related disciplines. It was founded in 1972, with **Vainu Bappu** being the **founder President of the Society**, and as of 2010 has a membership of approximately 1000. Its **registered office is at the Astronomy Department, Osmania University, Hyderabad, India.**

## Fighter jets, helicopters swarm skies after IAF carries out mega exercise in Pokhran

- The **Indian Air Force (IAF)** carried out a **mega exercise in Pokhran, Rajasthan**, involving almost all variants of its fighter jets and attack helicopters, in a fire power demonstration near the border with Pakistan.
- In the **Vayu Shakti** exercise, the IAF showcased fire power capability of **indigenously-developed platforms like Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH)** and efficacy of the **Akash surface-to-air missile and Astra air-to-air missile.**

## OFB gets clearance for producing 114 long-range artillery gun Dhanush

- The **Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)** has received a **bulk production clearance from the Indian Army and the Defence Ministry for production of 114 'Dhanush' artillery guns.**
- The defence ministry said in a statement that **'Dhanush' is the first long-range artillery gun to be produced in India** and it is a major success story of the 'Make in India' initiative.

## Israeli company sends world's first privately funded mission to moon

- An **Israeli spacecraft** aboard a **SpaceX rocket** has **launched from Cape Canaveral in Florida**, beginning a two-month journey to land on the Moon.
- If successful, **Israel, a state with fewer than 9 million citizens**, will join **Russia, the US and China** as the **only countries to have made a controlled landing on the surface of earth's nearest neighbour.**
- About the size of a washing machine, the **585kg (1,290lb) robotic lander named Beresheet**, the Hebrew word for Genesis.

## Japanese space probe Hayabusa 2 touches down on asteroid to collect samples

- A **Japanese space probe named after a falcon, Hayabusa 2**, has touched down on an **asteroid more than 300 million km from Earth on a mission to seek clues about the origins of life**, Japan's space agency said.
- The **spacecraft's landing on the asteroid Ryugu, just 900 metres in diameter**, came after an initial attempt in October was delayed because it was difficult to pick a landing spot on the asteroid's rocky surface.
- The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency, or JAXA, said **Hayabusa 2 fired a small projectile into the surface of Ryugu to collect particles** scientists hope the spacecraft will bring back to Earth for analysis.

## Iran launches cruise missile from submarine during drill

- **Iran has launched a cruise missile from a submarine for the first time during an ongoing annual military drill in the Strait of Hormuz.** Iran frequently touts its military arsenal, much of which is **manufactured locally because of international sanctions.**
- The **Strait of Hormuz, at the mouth of the Persian Gulf**, is a crucial bottleneck for global energy supplies, with **about a third of all oil traded by sea passing through it.**
- Tensions have risen since the **U.S. withdrew from Iran's 2015 nuclear agreement** with world powers and restored wide-ranging sanctions.

**Iran also called Persia is a country in Western Asia. Tehran is the capital of Iran and Tehran Province. The Iranian rial is the currency of Iran. Hassan Rouhani is serving as the current and seventh President of Iran since 3 August 2013. Sayyid Ali Hosseini Khamenei is the current Supreme Leader of Iran, in office since 1989.**

## Salivary protein biomarkers of breast, ovarian cancer metastasis identified

- **Researchers at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee** have taken the **first step to identify certain proteins found in saliva** that can be used as **potential biomarkers indicative of breast and ovarian cancer metastasis**. The composition and expression of salivary gland-derived proteins are altered in people with breast and ovarian cancer. So studying the salivary proteins may offer an easy alternative for screening cancer patients.
- **Using 10 samples each of healthy and stage IV breast and ovarian cancer patients**, and from ovarian cancer patients who have undergone **at least three cycles of chemotherapy** (with paclitaxel and carboplatin) the researchers were able to identify **409 unique proteins**.

## Twin Success for Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile

- **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** successfully test fired **indigenously developed Quick Reach Surface-to-Air missiles (QRSAM)** from ITR Chandipur, off the Odisha Coast.
- The **indigenously developed canister-based sophisticated high-speed missile** is capable of destroying aerial targets, fighter aircraft, short range and cruise missiles. With **cent percent kill probability** the missile can deceive enemy radars making it difficult to be detected.

The missile is a highly mobile air defence system which can **destroy multiple targets at a distance upto 30 km**. Sanctioned in 2014, the missile was **first tested in 2017** and its two developmental trials were conducted last year. **Once inducted, it will be deployed at the border** and is expected to supplement surface-to-air missile Akash.

## India hosts '4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit'

- **Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare inaugurated the '4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit' in New Delhi**, in the presence of **Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad Union Minister of Law & Justice and Electronics & Information Technology and Health Ministers from several countries**.
- The global intergovernmental meeting on digital health is being **hosted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP)**.
- **Dr. Poonam Khetrpal Singh, Regional Director, WHO South-East Asia Region (SEAR), Dr. Preeti Sudan, Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Ms Harinder Sidhu, Australia's High Commissioner to India, Shri Sanjeeva Kumar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Mr. Tim Kelsey, Chief Executive, Australian Digital Health Agency, Australia were also present at the inaugural session.**

The **Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP)** is an **international collaboration of governments, government agencies and multinational organisations** dedicated to **improving the health and well-being of their citizens** through the **best use of evidence-based digital technologies**.

## DRDO Chairman wins missile systems award

- The **American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)** has selected **G. Satheesh Reddy, the Secretary of India's Department of Defence R&D and Chairman of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** as the **co-winner of the 2019 Missile Systems Award** for his role in the design and development of diversified strategic and tactical missile systems.
- **"Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy, Chairman of the DRDO, Ministry of Defence, India, was selected for his over three decades of significant national contributions toward indigenous design, development, and deployment of diversified strategic and tactical missile systems, guided weapons, advanced avionics, and navigation technologies in India,"**

**Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** is an agency of the Republic of India, **charged with the military's research and development, headquartered in New Delhi, India**. It was **formed in 1958 by the merger of the Technical Development Establishment and the Directorate of Technical Development and Production** with the Defence Science Organisation.



## Inventions/Discoveries

### Hubble discovers dwarf galaxy in cosmic neighbourhood

- The **Hubble Space Telescope** has made an unexpected discovery of a never-before-seen dwarf galaxy in our cosmic backyard, located just 30 million light-years away.
- An international team of astronomers used the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope to study white dwarf stars within the globular cluster NGC 6752.

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.

### Graphene biosensor could diagnose lung cancer early

- Scientists from University of Exeter in the UK have developed a graphene-based biosensor that could 'sniff' out evidence of lung cancer from a person's breath, paving the way for low-cost, early diagnosis systems.
- Researchers from University of Exeter in the UK developed a new technique that could create a highly sensitive graphene biosensor with the capability to detect molecules of the most common lung cancer biomarkers.

Graphene is an allotrope of carbon consisting of a single layer of carbon atoms arranged in a hexagonal lattice. It is the strongest material ever tested. The material was rediscovered, isolated, and characterized in 2004 by Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov at the University of Manchester. This work resulted in the two winning the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2010 "for groundbreaking experiments regarding the two-dimensional material graphene.

### Antibiotic-resistant NDM-1 gene found in pristine Arctic

- The recent detection of the antibiotic resistant (AR) gene NDM-1, first isolated in India, in the Arctic region is a further indication of the globalisation of antimicrobial resistance, said a study.
- The research was conducted in the High Arctic zone (Kongsfjorden region of Svalbard) and scientists were surprised to find a rather robust presence of NDM-1.

### AntBot, the first walking robot that navigates without GPS

- Scientists claim to have developed the first walking robot that can explore its environment and find its way home without GPS or mapping, opening new avenues for the navigation of autonomous vehicles.
- Researchers from the French National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) took inspiration from desert ants, which are extraordinary solitary navigators, to design the AntBot.
- Ants use polarised light and ultraviolet radiation to locate themselves in space. Cataglyphis desert ants in particular can cover several hundreds of metres in direct sunlight in the desert to find food, and then return in a straight line to the nest, without getting lost. AntBot copies the desert ants' exceptional navigation capacities, allowing it to explore without using Global Positioning System (GPS)

### Scientists discovered massive mountains under Earth's crust

- Scientists have discovered massive mountains in the Earth's mantle, an advance that may change our understanding of how the planet was formed. Most school children learn that the Earth has three layers: a crust, mantle and core, which is subdivided into an inner and outer core.



- **Scientists used data from an enormous earthquake in Bolivia** to find mountains and other topography on a layer **located 660 km straight down**, which separates the upper and lower mantle.
- To peer deep into the Earth, **scientists from the Princeton University in the U.S. and the Institute of Geodesy and Geophysics in China**, used the most powerful waves on the planet, which are generated by massive earthquakes.

For this study, the key data came from waves picked up after a **magnitude 8.2 earthquake** — the **second-largest deep earthquake ever recorded** — that **shook Bolivia in 1994**. Scientists used powerful computers to simulate the complicated behaviour of scattering waves in the deep Earth.

### More than 300,000 new galaxies discovered

- **The 300,000 new galaxies** were discovered as part of a study involving **200 scientists from 18 countries**, using a **Low-Frequency Array (LOFAR) telescope** in the Netherlands.
- **The telescope can detect light sources that optical instruments cannot see**. Using the device, scientists were able to spot hundreds of thousands of light sources thought to be galaxies, which were once too faint to be detected from Earth. **The discovery is shedding new light – literally – on the universe.**

The LOFAR telescope works by pick up traces, or "jets," of ancient radiation produced when galaxies merge. These jets can extend over millions of light years. "LOFAR has a remarkable sensitivity and that allows us to see that these jets are present in all of the most massive galaxies, which means that **their black holes never stop eating**," said Philip Best, a professor of extragalactic astrophysics at the University of Edinburgh.

### SpaceX astronaut capsule launched on ISS test mission

- **SpaceX celebrated the successful launch of a new astronaut capsule** on a week-long round trip to the **International Space Station** — a key step towards resuming **manned space flights from U.S. soil** after an eight-year break.
- This time around, the **only occupant on board SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule was a dummy named Ripley** — but NASA plans to put two astronauts aboard in July, although that date could be delayed.

Space Exploration Technologies Corp., doing business as SpaceX, is a **private American aerospace manufacturer and space transportation services company** headquartered in Hawthorne, California. It was founded in 2002 by entrepreneur Elon Musk with the goal of reducing space transportation costs and enabling the colonization of Mars. SpaceX has since developed the Falcon launch vehicle family and the Dragon spacecraft family, which both currently deliver payloads into Earth orbit.

### Scientists discover minuscule silver particles to kill brain-eating amoeba

- **The brain-eating monsters are real enough** — they lurk in freshwater ponds in much of the United States. Now scientists from USA have discovered a new way to kill them.
- **Minuscule silver particles coated with anti-seizure drugs one day may be adapted to halt Naegleria fowleri**, an exceptionally lethal microbe that invades through the sinuses and feeds on human brain tissue.
- **Since 1962, only four of 143 known victims in the United States have survived**, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

### India's first indigenous semiconductor chips for 4G/LTE and 5G NR modems unveiled

- **India's first Indigenous Semiconductor Chips** by Bengaluru based semiconductor company "SIGNALCHIP" for 4G/LTE and 5G NR MODEMs was unveiled in New Delhi.
- **At present only 8 companies and a few countries can design and build semiconductor chips** and launch of Indigenous Chip is in a real sense Make in India for the World.

- **Secretary, Telecom, Mrs Aruna Sundararajan** congratulated the **Founder and CEO of SIGNALCHIP Mr Himanshu Khasnis** and **CEO of global company ZOHO, SridharVembu** for joining together to write India's most amazing success story.

With India having more than 1.1 billion mobile phones in use, one of the highest in the world, Signalchip has created high performance and cost-efficient systems to enable densification of the network. India's first RF transceiver chip for high performance wireless standards like 3G/4G and WiFi, created by Signalchip in 2015.

### World's smallest baby boy goes home from Japan hospital

- An infant born in Tokyo, weighing the same as a beetroot has gone home healthy, becoming the smallest newborn boy in the world to leave hospital safely.
- The tiny tot weighed just 268 grams when he was delivered at 24 weeks, reportedly after he stopped growing in the womb.

The previous record was held by a boy born in Germany in 2009 weighing 274 grams, according to the Tiniest Babies registry managed by the University of Iowa. The smallest girl was born weighing 252 grams in Germany in 2015, according to the registry.

## Health/ Disease

### Measles Cases Nearly Doubled in 2018: WHO

- A total of 229,068 cases of measles were reported in 2018, nearly double the number of infections contracted in the previous year, the WHO has said.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) has appealed to the Member States to close gaps in vaccine coverage. The appeal follows its previous announcement that an estimated 110,000 people died from the highly infectious but easily preventable disease in 2017.

Measles is a highly contagious infectious disease caused by the measles virus. Measles is an airborne disease which spreads easily through the coughs and sneezes of infected people. Rubella, which is sometimes called German measles, and roseola are different diseases caused by unrelated viruses.

### Eat tomatoes to fight liver cancer, inflammation

- Higher consumption of tomatoes could be associated with a decreased risk of liver cancer caused by high-fat diets, a study has found.
- The study, conducted on mice, showed that tomatoes are rich in lycopene — a strong antioxidant and anti-cancer agent — which helps in effectively reducing fatty liver disease, inflammation and liver cancer development.
- This could be due to the potential beneficial effects of other nutrients in a whole tomato, such as vitamin E, vitamin C, folate, minerals, phenolic compounds and dietary fibres, said Xiang-Dong Wang, Professor at Tufts University in the US.

### Exercise may protect against Alzheimer's: Study

- Exercise produces a hormone that may improve memory and protect against Alzheimer's disease, according to a study. Researchers at Columbia University in the US have previously discovered a hormone called irisin that is released into the circulation during physical activity. Initial studies suggested that irisin mainly played a role in energy metabolism.

- The latest study, published in the journal Nature Medicine, found that the hormone, irisin, may promote neuronal growth in the brain's hippocampus, a region critical for learning and memory.
- Arancio and his colleagues at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil and Queens University in Canada first looked for a link between irisin and Alzheimer's in people.

### Vitamin C can lower BP, sugar levels in diabetics

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- Taking vitamin C supplements can help diabetics by lowering elevated blood sugar levels throughout the day, a study has found.
- The research, published in the journal Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism, also found that vitamin C lowered blood pressure in people with type 2 diabetes, suggesting benefits for heart health.
- According to Glenn Wadley from Deakin University in Australia, the results may help millions currently living with the health condition.

**Vitamin C**, also known as ascorbic acid and L-ascorbic acid, is a vitamin found in various foods and sold as a dietary supplement. It is used to prevent and treat scurvy. Scurvy is a disease resulting from a lack of vitamin C. It also functions as an antioxidant.



## **ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT**



### **Australian mammal becomes first to go extinct due to climate change**

- A small brown rat which lived on a tiny island off northern Australia is the world's first mammal known to have become extinct due to "human-induced climate change".
- The **Bramble Cay melomys** inhabited a small coral island on the **Great Barrier Reef**, measuring about five hectares (12 acres) and located in the Torres Strait, between Queensland state and Papua New Guinea. **The mammal had not been seen for almost 10 years** and was initially pronounced extinct after "exhaustive" conservation efforts failed.

The **Bramble Cay melomys**, or **Bramble Cay mosaic-tailed rat** (*Melomys rubicola*), is an extinct species of rodent in the family **Muridae** and subfamily **Murinae**. Considered the only mammal endemic to the Reef, its extinction was described as the first extinction of a mammal species due to anthropogenic climate change.

### **2018 officially ranks as the 4th hottest year on record for Earth**

- The year **2018** followed the pattern of higher-than-average annual temperatures, as the **Earth experienced its fourth hottest year on the 139-year record**. In a separate analysis of global temperature data, **NASA scientists also determined 2018 to be the fourth warmest year on record**.
- **Climate experts from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** independently released new data on the global temperatures for **2018** and the most important climate trends of the year.

Globally, **2018's temperatures rank behind those of 2016, 2017 and 2015**. The past five years are, collectively, the warmest years in the modern record. Since the 1880s, the average global surface temperature has risen about **2 F**. This warming has largely been driven by **increased emissions into the atmosphere of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gases (GHG) caused by human activities**.

### **Kerala's mystery frog**

- **Scientists from the University of Delhi** have discovered a new amphibian — a mysterious narrow-mouthed frog, that makes only a four-day appearance in seasonal roadside puddles every year in Kerala's Wayanad district.
- The frog **Mysticellus franki** (named after biologist **Franky Bossuyt from Brussel's Vrije University**) is not just a new species but also belongs to a completely new genus, **Mysticellus** (after Latin **mysticus**, meaning mysterious; and **ellus**, meaning diminutive, for the frog is just around 3 cm long).



## Rare frog species found in Arunachal

- Scientists at Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have found a rare frog species in Lower Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The **convex-vented horned species** (*Megophrys pachyproctus*), collected from Tale Valley Wildlife Sanctuary of the district in 2017, is crimson in colour.

Zoological Survey of India (ZSI), founded on 1 July 1916 by Government of India Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, as premier Indian organisation in zoological research and studies to promote the survey, exploration and research of the fauna in the country. It is headquartered in Kolkata, West Bengal. The history of ZSI begins from the days of the Asiatic Society of Bengal founded by Sir William Jones in 1784.

## Italy, UN, launch Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development

- Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has opened a new centre set up by the government in partnership with the UN to fight climate change and boost sustainable development in Africa.
- "The African continent represents a pillar of Italy's foreign policy and this government considers it a priority," Conte said at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Africa Centre for Climate and Sustainable Development.

## World's largest bee spotted for the first time since 1981

- The **Wallace's giant bee** is as big as a human thumb. It's the largest bee in the world, and scientists feared it might be extinct -- until now.
- A group of researchers made a stunning "rediscovery" of the elusive critter and took the first photos and video of a living Wallace's giant bee on January 25.
- The team -- composed of natural history photographer Clay Bolt, entomologist Eli Wyman, behavioral ecologist Simon Robson and ornithologist Glenn Chilton -- spent years studying the bee and slogged around in humid Indonesia forests for days before stumbling upon one.

Only two other lucky fellows are documented to have seen it in person before. The first was British naturalist Alfred Russel Wallace, who discovered the giant bee in 1858 while exploring the tropical Indonesian island of Bacan. Entomologist Adam Messer became the second in 1981.

## SPORTS



### Sports Personalities in News

#### Sana Mir becomes first Asian woman cricketer to play 100 T20Is

- Former Pakistan women's cricket team skipper Sana Mir became the first Asian woman cricketer to play hundred T20 international matches.
- Overall, Sana is the sixth woman cricketer to complete a century of T20 Internationals. Daendra Dottin of West Indies tops the list with a total of 109 T20Is to her name.

#### Smriti Mandhana scores India's fastest-ever T20I fifty

- Indian opener Smriti Mandhana hammered the fastest fifty for India in Women's T20Is. The left-handed batswoman struck a half century in just 24 balls in the 1st T20I against New Zealand at Westpac Stadium in Wellington.
- New Zealand's Sophie Devine holds the record of the quickest half century in women's T20Is. She set the record in 2005 against India when she hammered an 18-ball fifty.

#### Mirabai Chanu notched up gold at EGAT Cup in Thailand

- World champion Indian weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu notched up a gold medal at the EGAT Cup in Thailand.
- Chanu won the 48kg category gold with an effort of 192 kg in the silver level Olympic qualifying event.

#### Rohit Sharma becomes the first Indian batsman to smash 100 sixes in T20Is

- Indian opener and stand-in skipper Rohit Sharma became the first man from his country to smash a century of sixes in T20I cricket in the second T20 between India and New Zealand.
- Rohit Sharma, with 2,288 runs, overtook New Zealand batsman Martin Guptill, who has 2,272 runs, to become the leading run-scorer in the shortest format of the game and broke several other records during his knock at Eden Park. With 20 fifty-plus scores in T20Is, Rohit Sharma now also holds the record for most such scores in T20Is. His fifty in the second T20I helped him go past Virat Kohli, who has 19. Rohit Sharma became just the third cricketer to hit 100 T20I sixes.

#### Table Tennis: India's young paddlers clinch four medals

- In Table Tennis, India's young paddlers clinching four medals, including a gold, at the Bahrain Junior and Cadet Open tournament in Manama. Besides the gold, India won two silver and a bronze. India fielded three teams in the cadet girls' team event and swept all the three medals on offer.

India-A team won the gold, India-B - Silver and India-C - Bronze. **The India-B team of Yashaswini Ghorpade and Kavya Sree Baskar beat Egypt in the first semifinal**, while India-A defeated India-C in the other semifinal.

### **Jamie Chadwick: Briton becomes first female winner of MRF Challenge Series**

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- **The British driver, 20, won three of the five races in Chennai, India, to close an 18-point margin on Belgium's Max Defourny and take the title.**
- Chadwick won six of the 15 races in the series, which began in November and included events in Dubai and Bahrain. In August, **Chadwick became the first woman to win a British F3 race.**
- In doing so, **she added her name to a prestigious list of former winners that includes Formula 1 drivers Ayrton Senna, Mika Hakkinen and Daniel Ricciardo.**

### **IPL: Shane Warne named brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals**

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- **Australia spin legend Shane Warne has been named the brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals for the upcoming Indian Premier League.**
- **Warne, who led Rajasthan Royals to its first and only IPL title in 2008,** was the mentor of the side last season.

### **Corentin Moutet clinches Chennai Open ATP Challenger title**

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- **In Tennis, France's Corentin Moutet has clinched the Chennai Open ATP Challenger tournament title after beating Andrew Harris of Australia 6-3, 6-3 in the singles final.**

### **Cummins wins Allan Border Medal**

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- **Australian fast bowler Pat Cummins won the Allan Border Medal, the country's highest cricketing honour.**
- **Born in Sydney, Cummins is the third bowler, after Glenn McGrath and Mitchell Johnson, to win the award in the past two decades.**
- **Alyssa Healy claimed the Belinda Clark Award ahead of Megan Schutt and Ashleigh Gardner, after an outstanding year for the wicketkeeper-batter.**
- **Allan Border Medal is considered to be the most prestigious individual prize in Australian men's cricket.**
- **First awarded in 2000, the medal is named after former Australian men's captain Allan Border.**

### **Prajnesh Gunneswaran breaks into top 100 for the first time**

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- **Gathering rewards for his continuous brilliant performances, Prajnesh Gunneswaran scored an ace by breaking into men's singles top-100 for the first time in his career.**
- **He jumped six places to take him to the 97 spot.**
- **After Somdev Devvarman and Yuki Bhambri, Prajnesh became only the third Indian player to ever break the top-100 barrier in the past decade.**

### **Sportstar Aces Lifetime Achievement Award for Padukone**

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- **Prakash Padukone was honoured for Lifetime Achievement while Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah shared the Sportsman of the Year (cricket) accolade at the Sportstar Aces Awards ceremony.**

### **De Goede and Van Doren named Players of the Year in 2018 FIH Hockey Stars Awards**

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- **The Netherlands' Eva de Goede and Arthur Van Doren of Belgium have been revealed as the FIH Players of the Year in the 2018 Hockey Stars Awards, the International Hockey Federation (FIH) has announced.**
- **Female Player of the Year Eva de Goede was one of the superstars of the all-conquering Netherlands team that dominated the Vitality Hockey Women's World Cup London 2018 in July and August last year, having been a consistently brilliant midfield performer as the Oranje stormed to the title.**

- It was a **second successive World Cup title for the 200-capped De Goede**, who also **captained the Netherlands team that stormed to victory** at the Wanglibao Champions Trophy 2018 in Changzhou, China.

### Sunil Chhetri was conferred with the first-ever Football Ratna award

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- **Talismanic Indian striker Sunil Chhetri** was awarded the first-ever ‘Football Ratna’ by Football Delhi, the State Association governing the sport in Delhi. **Dr. Shaji Prabhakaran, President, Delhi Football** presented the honour a function at the majestic Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.
- **Chhetri**, who was **recently named as the 6<sup>th</sup> Indian Footballer in the elite Padma Shri list**, said: “I am honoured by the kind gesture of Football Delhi for recognizing me with the Football Ratna award.”

### Dale Steyn surpasses Kapil Dev in Test wickets list

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- **Fast bowler Dale Steyn** continued his **record-breaking spree** as he **equalled England pacer Stuart Broad's tally of 437 wickets in Test cricket**.
- **Steyn, playing only his 92nd Test, surpassed Kapil Dev's tally of 434 wickets and is now joint 7th in the list of leading wicket-takers in Test cricket**. The list is headed by **Muttiah Muralitharan (800 wickets)** while **Shane Warne (708), Anil Kumble (619), James Anderson (575), Glenn McGrath (563) and Courtney Walsh (516)** are the other five bowlers ahead of Steyn.

### Boxing great Mary Kom named brand ambassador of PUMA

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- **Six-time world women boxing champion MC Mary Kom** was **named as a brand ambassador for global sportswear giant PUMA** for a two-year period.
- ‘**Magnificent Mary**’, as she is **popularly known as**, will be **PUMA India's new ambassador for the company's women's training category** and shall represent the brand in marketing campaigns in the country.

### Les Bleus named Team of the Year

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- **The French** had played dazzling, dominant football to **triumph in a football World Cup in Russia** in which giants like Brazil and Argentina disappointed their considerable number of fans across the world. **France won the Team of the Year at the Laureus World Sports Awards**.

### Elise Mertens wins Qatar Open title beating Simona Halep

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- **In tennis, Belgium's Elise Mertens** has **claimed the biggest title of her career by beating top seed Simona Halep 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 to win the Qatar Open**.

### Nikhat, Meena win gold medals at Strandja Memorial Boxing

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- **Nikhat Zareen and Meena Kumari Devi** became the **first Indian women boxers to win gold medals at the Strandja Memorial Tournament** in Sofia, Bulgaria.
- **Zareen, a multiple-time national medallist**, claimed a 5-0 win in the 51kg category finals against Filipino Irish Magno. **Devi defeated another Filipino Aira Villegas 3-2**, in the bantamweight (54kg) summit clash.

### Rajyavardhan Rathore inaugurates ISSF Shooting World Cup

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- **Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore** inaugurated the **International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) World Cup** in New Delhi.
- Various events in the world cup started from February 23rd and ended on the 27th.

### Chris Gayle breaks Shahid Afridi's record for most sixes in international cricket

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- **Chris Gayle** toppled **Shahid Afridi** to top the list of most international sixes. **Gayle surpasses Pakistan's Afridi**. Gayle now has **477 international sixes**, one more than Afridi.



- Third on that list is former New Zealand wicket-keeper-batsman **Brendon McCullum**, who has hit 398 international sixes. Former Sri Lanka opener **Sanath Jayasuriya** is fourth with international sixes 352.

### India's Apurvi Chandela smashes world record to win women's 10m Air Rifle Gold

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- **Apurvi Chandela** gave India their first medal at the **ISSF World Cup 2019** by winning gold in the women's 10-metre air rifle event at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi. The prolific Indian shooter set a new world record by registering a score of **252.9 points** in the final. China's **Zhao Ruozhu** finished second with 251.8 points while her compatriot **Xu Hong** had to settle for the bronze medal with 230.4.

### Manpreet Singh honoured with AHF's Player of the Year

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- The Asian Hockey Federation has honoured Indian skipper **Manpreet Singh** with the **2018 Player of the Year** award. Women team's striker **Lalremsiami** has bagged the **Rising Player of The Year** prize.
- **Manpreet** led the Indian team to an unbeaten streak at the **Asian Champions Trophy** in Muscat where the team was declared joint winners with Pakistan. He also contributed to the team's silver medal win at the **FIH Champions Trophy** in Breda.

### Australia's Alyssa Healy sets Guinness World Record at MCG

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- Australia wicketkeeper **Alyssa Healy** set a new **Guinness World Record** after achieving the feat for the 'highest catch of a cricket ball' at the **Melbourne Cricket Ground**. Healy caught a ball which was dropped from a drone 80 metres above the MCG.
- Courtesy of her efforts the previous record of 62 metres held by England's **Kristan Baumgartner** now stands broken. Former England captain **Nasser Hussain** had registered the previous best of 49 metres.

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### Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta lifts Cannes International Open trophy

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- In Chess, Indian Grandmaster **Abhijeet Gupta** lifted the **Cannes International Open** trophy. He took an easy draw with **Pier Luigi Basso** of Italy in the ninth and final round.

### Shooting World Cup: Saurabh Chaudhary wins gold, sets world record in 10m Air Rifle; secures Olympic quota for India

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- **Saurabh Chaudhary** shattered World Record to finish top of the 10m air rifle men's event. **Manu Bhaker**, however, could not add to India's medal tally as she finished fifth in Women's 25m Pistol final.
- The 16-year old, competing in his first World Cup, won the **Men's 10m Air Pistol** event with a **World Record score of 245.0** after some phenomenal shooting. Along with this, he secured an Olympic quota for India.

### Suresh Raina first Indian to achieve this T20 milestone

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- **Suresh Raina** has become the first Indian to register 8,000 runs in T20s. Raina has now scored 8,001 from 300 T20s which consisted of 284 innings.

### Hungary's Veronika Major wins gold medal at ISSF World Cup

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- In shooting, Hungary's **Veronika Major** won a gold medal at the ongoing **ISSF World Cup** in New Delhi.
- She bagged the medal in 10-metre air pistol event, with **245.1 points** in the tournament at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range.

## Chris Gayle Reaches 10,000 ODI Runs, 1st Batsman to Hit 500 Sixes

- Chris Gayle became the first batsman in the world to smash 500 sixes in international cricket; earlier in the series, he had toppled Shahid Afridi to record the most number of sixes by any batsman in international cricket.

## ISSF World Cup: Manu, Saurabh clinch 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team gold

- In shooting, the duo of Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker claimed a gold medal for India in 10-metre air pistol mixed team event at the ISSF World Cup in New Delhi.
- They shot a total of 483.5 points to finish on top of the podium at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range. Saurabh and Manu had entered the final after equalling the qualification world record.
- The Chinese duo of Ranxin Jiang and Bowen Zhang won silver with 477.7 points, while the bronze went to the Korean pair of Minjung Kim and Daehun Park who scored 418.8 points.
- India jointly topped the standings with Hungary in the ISSF World Cup claiming three gold medals, but managed to secure only one Olympic quota. The tournament offered 14 quota places for the 2020 Tokyo Games.

## One gold, five silver medals for India at Makran Cup

- National champion Deepak Singh was the lone Indian boxer to notch up gold while five others claimed silver medals in the Makran Cup in Chabahar, Iran.
- Deepak defeated Jaafar Naseri in the finals. However, none of the other five Indian finalists could win their summit clashes. Finishing second on the podium were P Lalitha Prasad (52kg), Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Manish Kaushik (60kg), Duryodhan Singh Negi (69kg), Sanjeet (91kg) and Commonwealth Games silver-medallist Satish Kumar (+91kg).

## Kumble retained head of Cricket Committee

- Former India captain and coach Anil Kumble has also been reappointed as chairman of the ICC Cricket Committee to serve for a final three year term.
- Additionally, the Board agreed a new composition of the Women's Committee that provides for a greater strategic focus for the group.

## Sport Events

### FIFA, Qatar set up joint venture to deliver 2022 World Cup

- Global soccer body FIFA has set up a joint venture with 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar as part of its effort to streamline organisation of the tournament.
- The global soccer body said in a statement that it would hold a 51 percent share of the venture while the Qatar organising committee would hold 49 percent.

The Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) is an organization which describes itself as an international governing body of association football, beach soccer, and eFootball. FIFA is responsible for the organization of football's major international tournaments, notably the World Cup which commenced in 1930 and the Women's World Cup which commenced in 1991. FIFA was founded in 1904 at Paris, France. Gianni Infantino is the current president of FIFA.

## FIFA Rankings: India drop outside top-100, Belgium remain top

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- **India has dropped six places in the latest FIFA Rankings released and the first of the year. India's points tally has gone from 1240 to 1219 which has seen the Blue Tigers slide to 103rd in the rankings.** In their most recent outing, India was bundled out of the Asian Cup in the group stages. **The last time India were outside the top-100 in the FIFA rankings was on February 15, 2018.**
- **Belgium is continuing to be the top-ranked side in the world.** Iran are the highest ranked side to force any change as they've jumped seven places to 22nd – remaining the top-ranked Asian side in the world.

## Vidharbha lift Ranji Trophy for second time in a row

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- **Vidharbha lifted the Ranji Trophy for the second time in a row, defeating Saurashtra by 78 runs at Nagpur.**
- **Requiring five wickets to defend their title, the home team bundled out the visitors for 127 with more than two sessions to spare at the VCA stadium of Nagpur.** Chasing the 206 runs target in the second innings, top order of Saurashtra collapsed.

## ICC ropes in Coca-Cola as official sponsor

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- The **International Cricket Council (ICC) announced a five-year global partnership deal** with beverage manufacturer **Coca-Cola Company.**
- The **partnership will see Coca-Cola's brands becoming exclusive non-alcoholic beverage partners of the ICC until 2023.**
- The **five-year agreement includes all ICC events around the world including the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2019 in England and Wales, the ICC men's and women's T20 World Cups in Australia in 2020, the ICC Women's World Cup 2021 in New Zealand and the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup in India in 2023 amongst other global tournaments.**
- ICC has signed similar partnerships with alcobev brands, Royal Stag and Bira 91.

## Haryana Hammers is champion

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- **Moldovan World junior champion Anastasia Nichita stunned Olympian Mimi Hristova as four-time finalist Haryana Hammers defeated two-time defending champion Punjab Royals 6-3 to win its maiden Pro Wrestling League (PWL) title.**
- **Hammers won the first five bouts to defeat Royals with four bouts to spare.**

## International Paralympic Committee to reinstate Russia

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- **A ban on Russian athletes competing in the Paralympics will be lifted provisionally by 15th March 2019, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) said.**
- **The ban has been in place since 2016 when the bombshell McLaren Report, commissioned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA), found that Russia had operated a state-sponsored doping program.**
- **Russian para athletes were unable to compete in the 2016 Rio Paralympics, while those who could prove they were clean were permitted to compete under a neutral flag at the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Games.**

## Clouded Leopard will be mascot for National Games 2022 in Meghalaya

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- **Meghalaya's state animal Clouded Leopard will be the mascot for the National Games 2022 coinciding with the 50th year of the creation of the state.**
- This decision was taken at the **first National Games 2022 executive committee meeting** chaired by Meghalaya Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Banteidor Lyngdoh.
- **Clouded leopard is one of the wild cats that live throughout the forests of Garo, Khasi and Jaintia Hills.**

## First NBA games in Mumbai in October

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- In October this year, history will be made when **Indiana Pacers** and **Sacramento Kings** face off in two pre-season games in Mumbai.
- This will mark the first NBA games to be played in India.

## Railways lift Senior Men's National hockey title

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- **Railway Sports Promotion Board** lifted the **9th Senior National Men's Hockey Championship** crown at Gwalior.
- They dished out a scintillating performance to stun defending champions **Punjab 3-2** and claim the gold medal. Harsahib Singh scored a brace, while Dilpreet Singh struck late for the winners. Punjab's goals came from Rupinder Pal Singh and Ramadeep Singh.
- **Petroleum Sports Promotion Board** beat Punjab and Sind Bank, 4-1 to clinch the Bronze medal.

## Vidarbha clinches Irani Cup title

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- Riding on their first innings lead, **Ranji champions Vidarbha** clinched the **Irani Cup** defeating **Rest of India (RoI)** at the **Vidarbha Cricket Association Stadium**. Despite the match ending in a draw, Vidarbha emerged champions on the basis of a **95-run first innings lead**.

## India win the team event at inaugural Mallakhamb World Championships in Mumbai

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- **India** emerged as winners in the team event at the **first Mallakhamb World Championship** that concluded in **Mumbai**. The two-day tournament was held at Shivaji Park in central Mumbai, in which participants from 15 countries participated.

## SC appoints former judge Jain as BCCI ombudsman

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- The Supreme Court appointed retired Supreme Court judge **Justice D.K. Jain** the first ombudsman under the new **BCCI Constitution**. The court also appointed **Lt. Gen. Ravi Thodge, PVSM**, as the third member of the **Committee of Administrators** managing the BCCI.

## Sri Lanka became the first team from Asia to win a Test series in South Africa

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- **Sri Lanka** became the first team from Asia to win a Test series in South Africa as they chased down 197 to win the second Test in Port Elizabeth.
- Before the two-Test series the Sri Lankans had not won a game in any format since October 2018. Sri Lanka have won two of their last six Test series, both against South Africa whose run of seven consecutive home Test series wins came to an end.

## Afghanistan post highest ever T20 total

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- **Afghanistan** created history against **Ireland** in their second **Twenty20 International** at the **Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium** in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
- **Afghanistan** scored **278** for the loss of three wickets from their allotted **20 overs**, to register the **highest-ever total in T20s**.

## Cabinet approves Setting up Centre for Disability Sports at Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh

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- The Union Cabinet chaired by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** has approved the proposal for setting up of a **Centre for Disability Sports at Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh**, to be registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
  - The **Finance Minister** in his **Budget Speech of 2014-15** announced the setting up of a **Centre for disability sports**. At present no specialized sports training facilities for **Divyangjan** are available in the Country.
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## AWARDS



### 92-year-old priest from Bengal was conferred France's highest civilian honour

- **Father Francois Laborde**, a 92-year-old priest, was conferred the **Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour)**, the highest civilian award of France, in recognition of his work for specially-abled children.
- **Father Laborde** is of **French-origin** but he has been given **Indian citizenship**. He is the **third person** from the state to have been awarded the **Legion of Honor** after **film maestro Satyajit Ray** and actor **Soumitra Chatterjee**. While **Ray** was awarded in **1987**, his favourite actor got the honour last year. The French Ambassador also visited an exhibition on the works of **Father Laborde**, organised on the occasion.

**Legion of Honour (National Order of the Legion of Honour)** is the **highest French order of merit for military and civil merits**, established in **1802** by **Napoleon Bonaparte** and retained by all the divergent governments and regimes later holding power in France, up to the present. **Durga Charan Rakshit (1896)**, a **Bengali** from **Chandannagar** was the **first Indian** to receive the **Legion of Honour**.

### President Kovind confers Sangeet Natak Akademi awards

- **President Ram Nath Kovind** gave away the **prestigious Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards 2017** at **Rashtrapati Bhawan**.
- **Forty-two artists** from the fields including **Music, Dance, Theatre, and Traditional, Folk, and Tribal music** were awarded. Eleven eminent artists were selected in the field of **Music**.
- They include **Lalith J Rao, Umakant and Ramakant Gundecha** in the field of **Hindustani Vocal music** and **MS Sheela** in **Carnatic music**.
- **Nine artists** were awarded in **Dance category** including **Ramakrishna Talukdar** for **Sattriya** and **Rama Vaidyanathan** for **Bharatnatyam**. Nine artists were chosen for the award in **Theatre**.

**Sangeet Natak Akademi Puraskar** is an award given by the **Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's National Academy of Music, Dance & Drama**. It is the **highest Indian recognition** given to practicing artists. It was set up by the **Indian education ministry** on **31 May 1952**.

### Deepa Mehta to receive Lifetime Achievement Award from Canadian Academy

- The **Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television** has announced that it will **honour filmmaker Deepa Mehta** with the **Lifetime Achievement Award**.
- The **film director** will be presented the award during **Canadian Screen Week**, which begins on **March 25**.

## **'The Favourite' wins big at BAFTAs with multiple honours**

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- Tragicomic royal drama **'The Favourite'** and Mexican family memoir **'Roma'** split the honors with **multiple wins each at British Academy Film Awards**, victories that suggest a wind of change may be blowing through the movie industry.
- **'The Favourite'** won seven trophies including best British film and best actress for **Olivia Colman**, who plays Britain's 18th century Queen Anne in the female-centric drama.
- **Alfonso Cuarón's 'Roma'**, which centers on the nanny to a middle-class Mexico City family, **took prizes for best picture, director, and cinematography and foreign-language film.**

## **Sudanese refugee Abdul Aziz Muhamat wins major human rights award**

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- **Abdul Aziz Muhamat**, a Sudanese refugee who has been held in Australia's notorious offshore **Manus Island** processing centre for over five years, has **won the prestigious Martin Ennals human rights prize**, the UN refugee agency UNHCR has said.
- It is the **first time that the major prize** has been awarded to an individual focused on refugee issues and who has been a **victim of human rights violations by a Western democracy.**
- **Muhamat**, from the **Zaghawa ethnic group of Darfur**, in north-western Sudan, was granted refugee status in early 2015 but has been **detained on Manus Island, Papua New Guinea since 2013** as he has not found a host country, according to the Swiss-based Martin Ennals Foundation.

## **Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam has won Israel's prestigious Dan David Prize**

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- **Noted Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam** has won Israel's prestigious **Dan David Prize** for this year for his **work on inter-cultural encounters between Asians, Europeans and people of North and South America during the early modern era.**
- **Mr Subrahmanyam**, son of strategic analyst **K Subrahmanyam** and brother of former foreign secretary **S Jaishankar**, won the award in the category of **"past time dimension"** for his work in macro history.
- He shares the **USD 1 million award** in this category with **Prof Kenneth Pomeranz** of University of Chicago.
- The **international Dan David Prize** is awarded annually to those who have made outstanding scientific, technological and humanistic accomplishments in fields representing the **past, present and future of human achievement.** Three Dan David Prize are given every year.

## **Bradley Cooper cast his dog in A Star Is Born, wins Ocat from PETA**

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- **Actor-director Bradley Cooper** has won the **Ocat award** from animal rights organisation **People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA)** for directing his dog in **A Star Is Born.**
- According to people.com, **PETA's Film and Television Division** awarded Cooper the **Ocat award** "for his enlightened decision to **cast his own canine companion in A Star Is Born** rather than using one supplied by a notorious animal exhibitor".

## **'Napalm Girl' Kim Phuc receives German prize for peace work**

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- **Kim Phuc**, known as the **'Napalm Girl'** in an iconic 1972 Vietnam War photo, is receiving a **€10,000 award** in Germany for her work for peace. Organisers of the **Dresden Prize** say she is being honoured for her support of **children wounded in war.**

## **President Kovind presents Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony**

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- **President Ram Nath Kovind** presented the **Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony.** Exponent of Manipuri dance **Rajkumar Singhajit Singh** was given the award for the year 2014.

- Chhayanaaut, a cultural organization of Bangladesh was given the award for 2015 for its role in the promotion of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's works and Bangla arts. Renowned sculptor and scholar Ram Vanji Sutar was given the award for 2016.

The Tagore Award is an award given in commemoration of the 150th birth anniversary of the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore (1861–1941) for cultural harmony. Established in 2011 by Government of India, it is given for outstanding achievement in fostering harmony and universalism and values of cultural harmony especially in conflict or extreme situations through innovative systems/strategies and which have an enduring and transformational impact. The first award was given in 2012 to Pandit Ravi Shankar by the President of India Pranab Mukherjee.

### Divya Karnad first Indian woman to receive Future of Nature award for marine conservation

- Dr Divya Karnad has grown to be the second Indian and the first girl to obtain the 'Global Future of Nature Award' for her paintings on marine conservation.
- The 'Future For Nature Award' is a prestigious international award that celebrates tangible achievements in protecting wild animal and plant species.

### PM Modi arrives in Seoul on a two-day visit; to receive Seoul Peace Prize

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Seoul on a two-day visit to South Korea. Mr Modi was held bilateral talks with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and received the Seoul Peace Prize in recognition of his dedication to international cooperation, global growth and human development.
- At present bilateral trade is around 21 billion dollars and is targeted to reach 50 billion dollars by 2030. Another important aspect is the strengthening of Cultural relations which speaks volumes of India's soft power.

The Seoul Peace Prize was established in 1990 to commemorate the success of the 24th Olympic Games held in Seoul, Republic of Korea – an event in which 160 nations from across the world took part, creating harmony and friendship and a worldwide atmosphere of peace and reconciliation. The Seoul Peace Prize was established to crystallise the Korean people's yearning for peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the rest of the world.

### President confers Gandhi Peace Prize

- President Ramnath Kovind gave away the Gandhi Peace Prize for four years from 2015 to 2018.
- Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, got the award for 2015 for their contribution to rural development, education, development of natural resources.
- For 2016, it has been jointly given to Akshaya Patra foundation for its contribution in providing mid-day meals to children and Sulabh International for improving the condition of sanitation and emancipation of manual scavengers.
- Ekal Abhiyan Trust has won the award for 2017 for their contribution in providing education to rural and tribal children in remote areas, rural empowerment, gender, and social equality.
- Goodwill Ambassador of the World Health Organisation for Leprosy Elimination Yohei Sasakawa has been honoured with Gandhi Peace Prize for 2018 for his role in leprosy eradication.

The International Gandhi Peace Prize, named after Mahatma Gandhi, is awarded annually by the Government of India. As a tribute to the ideals espoused by Gandhi, the Government of India launched the International Gandhi Peace Prize in 1995 on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of Mohandas Gandhi. The award carries Rs. 1 Crore (10 million) in cash, convertible in any currency in the world, a plaque and a citation. It is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, creed or gender. A jury consisting of the Prime Minister of India, the Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, the Chief Justice of India and two other eminent persons decides the awardee each year.

## The documentary tilted **Period. End of Sentence** wins the Oscar Award

- **Kathikhera**, a small village in Hapur district, hogged the limelight after a documentary, **Period. End of Sentence**, shot won an Oscar in the **Best Documentary Short Subject** category at the 91st Academy Awards.
- The 26-minute documentary is based on the work being done by two village women, **Sneha (22)** and her sister-in-law **Suman (37)**, who dared to raise the issues of periods and menstrual hygiene in a conservative society and installed a sanitary pad making machine in their house.
- **Sneha and Suman** themselves feature in the documentary that has been directed by 25-year-old **Rayka Zehtabchi** and co-produced by **Guneet Monga's Sikhya Entertainment**, which has backed films like **The Lunchbox** and **Masaan**.

## Oscars 2019: '**Green Book**' surprises as Best Picture winner

- Biographical drama "**Green Book**" has bagged the **Best Picture Oscar** at the 91st Academy Awards in Los Angeles. The movie is about the story of an unlikely friendship across racial divides.
- Filmmaker **Alfonso Cuaron** won the **Best Director** award for '**Roma**', the film about a housekeeper in a middle-class family in the 1970s.
- British actress **Olivia Colman** clinched the Oscar for the **Best Actress** win for "**The Favourite**" for her portrayal of temperamental Queen Anne.
- **Rami Malek** won the **Best Actor** for his turn as Queen Musician **Freddie Mercury** in "**Bohemian Rhapsody**".
- For the first time awards for best costuming and best production went to African American nominees. **Ruth Carter** took home the Oscar for best costuming for her work on "**Black Panther**," and **Hannah Beachler** for production design, also for her work on the super hero film.
- **Alfonso Cuaron's "Roma"** won best foreign film, marking the first time a Mexican film has ever won in the category.

## MP: **CZPDC Bhopal, WZPDC Indore** bag **Saubhagya** award

- In Madhya Pradesh, the **Central Zone Power Distribution Company, Bhopal** and **West Zone Power Distribution Company, Indore** has been awarded the **Saubhagya** award under **Pradhanmantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana** at the National Conference of Energy Ministers. The award included **100 crore rupees** each.
- **Central Zone Power Distribution Company, Bhopal** is the first power distribution company in the country which has illuminated more than **7 lakh 85 thousand** houses while around **four lakh** houses have been electrified by the **West Zone Power Distribution Company, Indore** under **Pradhanmantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana- Saubhagya**.

**Pradhanmantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana- Saubhagya** implemented by the Central Government from **25th September, 2017**, which was intended to provide electricity to all **BPL** houses of rural and urban areas.

## National Award-winning actress **Tabu** to be honoured at **LA Indian Film Festival**

- National Award winning actress **Tabu** will be honoured at the **Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles** in April, 2019.
- While **Tabu's** recently released film "**Andhadhun**" will be the opening film of the festival, other female filmmakers' work will also be showcased on the occasion.
- The short film "**Maya**" featuring **Kirti Kulhari** and **Naveen Kasturia** will also be screened at the festival.

The **Indian Film Festival of Los Angeles (IFFLA)** is an annual film festival held in **Los Angeles, California**. Established by **Christina Marouda** in **2003**, as a **nonprofit organization** devoted to paving the way for a greater appreciation of **Indian cinema and diverse culture** by providing the public with a selection of films from and about the Indian diaspora by Indian and international filmmakers.



### PM Modi conferred Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes for Science & Technology

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- Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi conferred Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) prizes for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 in New Delhi.
- The SSB prize is awarded each year on the basis of conspicuously important and outstanding contributions to human knowledge and progress, made through work done primarily in India during the five years, proceeding the year of the prize.
- The SSB prize, comprising a citation, a cash award of Five Lakh rupees and a plaque is given to each person selected for the award in the following disciplines viz. Biological sciences, Chemical Sciences, Medical Sciences, Physical Sciences, Mathematical Sciences, Engineering Sciences and Earth, Atmosphere, Ocean and Planetary Science.

The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar (SSB) Prize for Science and Technology was instituted in the year 1957 in the memory of late Dr (Sir) Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar, the founder director of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). Any citizen of India engaged in research in any field of science and technology up to the age of 45 years is eligible to be nominated.



## PERSONS IN NEWS

### Sindhu is PNB MetLife brand ambassador

- PNB MetLife, a life insurance company, signed P.V. Sindhu as its brand ambassador. She is respected by contemporaries, created a fan following across generations with athleticism and aggression on court.
- The shuttler conquered some of the biggest names in women's badminton.

### Pakistan appoints first ever female Hindu civil judge

- Pakistan has appointed the country's first ever Hindu female civil judge after she passed an examination for induction of judicial officers.
- Suman Kumari, who hails from Qambar-Shahdadkot in Sindh province, will serve in her native district.

### Nepal Nilambar Acharya appointed as country's ambassador to India

- Former Law Minister of Nepal Nilambar Acharya has been appointed as country's ambassador to India. President Bidya Devi Bhandari administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr. Acharya in Kathmandu this evening. He has been appointed on the recommendation of cabinet.
- Mr. Acharya served as a member of Eminent Persons Group formed by India and Nepal on bilateral relations. He was Law Minister in the interim government of 1990. Mr. Acharya had also served as Nepal's envoy to Sri Lanka. The position of Nepalese ambassador to India was lying vacant after Deep Kumar Upadhyay resigned in October 2017 to join politics.

### Lt Bhavana Kasturi becomes first woman to lead an all-men contingent in Republic Day

- Lt Bhavana Kasturi led a contingent of the India Army Service Corps' and Capt Bhavna Syal, a third-generation officer in the armed forces; will front the transportable satellite terminal's contingent. Lt. Kasturi is the Contingent Commander of Indian Army Service Corps who created history by becoming the first woman ever to lead all men Army contingent in the history of India.

### P V Bharathi assumes charge as CEO of Corporation Bank

- P V Bharathi, executive director of Canara Bank has assumed charge as managing director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the city-based Corporation Bank, a statement said. She is the first woman to serve the bank in this capacity.
- Bharathi has been executive director of Canara Bank since September 15, 2016 and served as the firm's general manager in the risk management wing. She has more than 37 years of experience in the banking industry.

### William Barr sworn in as US Attorney General

- In United States, William Barr was sworn for second time as the nation's Attorney General, taking the helm of the Justice Department as special counsel Robert Mueller investigates Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election.

### UN appoints Chandramouli Ramanathan as ASG in Management Strategy dept

- The UN has appointed an Indian official in one of the top most positions in its Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance.
- Chandramouli Ramanathan has been appointed as Controller, Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Finance in the management strategy, policy and compliance department.

## KJ Alphons lays foundation stone for Sree Narayana Guru spiritual pilgrimage circuit

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- Union Tourism Minister KJ Alphons has laid the foundation stone for the Sree Narayana Guru spiritual pilgrimage circuit at the spiritual abode of the renowned social reformer in Varkala, Kerala.

## Ashwani Lohani reappointed Air India CMD

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- Ashwani Lohani, a retired bureaucrat, has been appointed the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of national carrier Air India.
- Lohani held the position for around two years from 2015. In August 2017, he was named the Chairman to the Railway Board. Lohani retired on December 31, 2018.

## First woman to climb Kerala's Agasthyarkoodam peak

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- Dhanya Sanal K name got etched into history books after she became the first woman to mount the peak of Agasthyarkoodam, an 1868-metre high mountain in Kerala. Every year, the state forest department conducts treks to the mountain peak, but on paper, women are barred from climbing citing security and safety risks.
- Ms Sanal is a 2012 Indian Information Service Officer, currently posted as a defence spokesperson, in Thiruvananthapuram.

## Twitter co-founder Evan Williams steps down from Board after 13 years

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- Twitter Inc. co-founder Evan Williams steps down from the company's board. "It's been an incredible 13 years, and I'm proud of what Twitter has accomplished during my time with the company," Williams, 46, now chief executive officer of web publisher Medium Corp., said.
- Williams, Jack Dorsey and Biz Stone started the San Francisco-based social media company in 2006 that is known for its original 140-character limit on messages. He served in various roles, including chief executive officer, chief product officer and chairman before giving up day-to-day responsibilities in late 2010. He started Medium in 2012. Twitter went public in 2013.

## PepsiCo's Kurkure signs Taapsee Pannu as brand ambassador

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- Kurkure, the snack brand owned by PepsiCo India, announced that it has appointed actor Taapsee Pannu as its brand ambassador.
- The brand has also launched a television campaign to unveil a new brand positioning 'Khayal toh chatpata hai' (loosely translated into 'It's a fun thought') to celebrate the progressive thinking that young Indian homemakers bring in to the traditional Indian families.

## Union Minister Arun Jaitley assumes charge as Finance Minister

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- Union Minister Arun Jaitley has assumed the charge of Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The charge of the Ministries was given to Union Minister Piyush Goyal on a temporary basis on the 23rd of January.
- President Ram Nath Kovind, as advised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has directed that the Finance and Corporate Affairs portfolios be assigned to Union Minister Arun Jaitley.

## Indra Nooyi joins Amazon Board of Directors

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- India-born Indra Nooyi, PepsiCo's former CEO, has joined Amazon's board of directors. Nooyi, who stepped down as CEO of Pepsico in October last year, is the second women of colour to be added on the Amazon's Board of Directors. Starbucks executive Rosalind Brewer joined the board.
- She was Pepsico CEO from October 2006 to October 2018, where she also served as the Chairman of its board of directors from May 2007 to February 2019. She was elected to PepsiCo's board of directors and became its President and Chief Financial Officer in 2001.

- Nooyi has served as a director of Schlumberger Limited since April 2015.
- Indra Nooyi has been appointed to the International Cricket Council (ICC) Board as its first independent female director.

### First Saudi female ambassador replaces king's son in U.S.

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- Saudi Arabia appointed its first female ambassador to serve as its top diplomat in the United States, pulling a son of King Salman back to the kingdom to serve as deputy defense minister amid deteriorating ties with America after the killing of Jamal Khashoggi.
- Princess Reema bint Bandar Al Saud, a daughter of the kingdom's longtime ambassador to Washington Bandar bin Sultan Al Saud, faces a stark challenge in improving ties between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia.
- She replaces Prince Khalid bin Salman Al Saud, a son of King Salman and a former fighter pilot who insisted after Khashoggi's disappearance that the Washington Post columnist simply left the kingdom's consulate in Istanbul.

### Inarritu to head Cannes jury

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- The five-time Oscar-winning Mexican director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu is to head the jury at this year's Cannes film festival.
- Mr. Inarritu made his big breakthrough at Cannes in 2000 with his breathtaking debut, "Amores Perros", a gritty overlapping panorama of Mexico City that introduced the world to the actor Gael Garcia Bernal.
- It won the sidebar Critics' Week prize and was later pipped for the best foreign language Oscar by "Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon".
- Inarritu later won best director at Cannes -- the world's biggest film festival -- for "Babel", his 2006 epic told in five different languages over three continents.

### Arun Jaitley released book titled 'Mann Ki Baat - A Social Revolution on Radio'

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- Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley released a book titled 'Mann Ki Baat - A Social Revolution on Radio' in New Delhi.
- The Book is a compendium encompassing 50 editions of the 'Mann Ki Baat' by Prime Minister Narendra Modi over All India Radio.

### Veteran author Nayantara Sahgal unveils new novel

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- Veteran author Nayantara Sahgal unveiled her new novel "The Fate Of Butterflies" at a function attended by bibliophiles and several known faces from the literary and political world.
- The novel, Sahgal said, confronts the toxic dangers of "war, religious polarisation and authoritarian charisma -- a dystopian future that is already upon the world.

### George Fernandes, Former Defence Minister passed away

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- George Fernandes, a former Defence Minister of India, has passed away. He had been unwell and bedridden over the past few years. George Fernandes served as Defence Minister between 1998 and 2004.
- One of the most prominent leaders of the socialist movement in the 1970s, George Fernandes was a senior Janata Dal leader before he founded the Samata Party.
- Apart from the defence ministry during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led government, Mr Fernandes held several ministerial portfolios including communications, industry and railways.

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## MISCELLANEOUS

### Doordarshan to broadcast a travelogue series Rag Rag Mein Ganga

- Doordarshan started to broadcast a travelogue series Rag Rag Mein Ganga from February 2, every Saturday and Sunday at 9.00 PM on DD National. The program will highlight Ganga's journey from Gomukh to Gangasagar.
- The travelogue series is an account of the spiritual, religious, cultural and socio-economic heritage of the river Ganga and its present ecological condition.

### 2,680 indigenous languages in danger: UN

- There's Ojibwe in Canada, Ami in Australia and Ayapanec in Mexico: these are among the world's nearly 2,700 indigenous languages at risk of disappearing unless new initiatives are taken, UN officials say.
- The UN is hoping to raise awareness of the cultural loss with the launch the International Year of Indigenous Languages, a year-long project to help protect these ancient mother tongues. Out of the roughly 7,600 languages spoken worldwide, 2,680 indigenous languages are in danger and many are disappearing at an alarming rate.

### Nari Shakti is Oxford Dictionary's Hindi Word of the Year 2018

- The Oxford Dictionaries announced 'Nari Shakti' as the Hindi Word of the Year. The Hindi Word of the Year chosen every year, in many ways, reflects the conversations, ethos of a particular year. The word this year, Nari Shakti, has been derived from Sanskrit and when broken down, the word 'nari' means women and 'shakti' means power.

### Election Commission of India hosts International Conference on Making our Elections Inclusive and Accessible'

- The Chief Election Commissioner of India, Shri Sunil Arora and Election Commissioner Shri Ashok Lavasa inaugurated an International Conference on 'Making our Elections Inclusive and Accessible' in New Delhi.
- ECI is hosted the International Conference on the occasion of 9th National Voters Day which is observed on 25th January every year.

### Shri Piyush Goyal launches the IEA's Report "The Future of Rail"

- Minister of Railways & Coal, Shri Piyush Goyal launched the report "The Future of Rail" of International Energy Agency (IEA) at an event. It will be a game-changer in the way forward as we move towards 100% electrification for the Indian Railways.

### Maharashtra government launched special scheme to curb infant deaths

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

### Gorkha Brigade Contingent chosen as Best Marching Contingent in RD Parade 2019

- The Gorkha Brigade Contingent has been chosen as the Best Marching Contingent among the three services in this year's Republic Day Parade.

- **CRPF Marching contingent has been adjudged Best Marching Contingent** among paramilitary forces and other auxiliary marching contingents. **Tripura has been chosen as the best tableau among states**, followed by Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab.
- **There is a tie between CISF and India Council for Agricultural Research for best tableau** among central ministries and departments. **CPWD has been chosen for special prize** and **Navy Children School, Chanakya Puri, Delhi, has been selected as Best School Children Item.**

### Kala Ghoda Arts Festival all set to begin

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- The **Kala Ghoda Arts Festival - KGAF, India's largest multi-cultural street festival begins in Mumbai.**
- **Commemorating 20 years of its inception, KGAF 2019** will celebrate two glorious decades of art and culture through cinema, theatre, dance, literature and sculpture through various spots on Mumbai's map.
- The festival will also host exhibition at the historic Jehangir Art Gallery to **celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and some rich history of Mumbai.**

### Special Postage Stamp on Kumbh Mela Released

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- **Union Minister of State for Railways and Communication Mr Manoj Sinha released a special postage stamp of the Indian Postal Department on Kumbh Mela.** A special first day cover was also released on the occasion. **Its cost is five rupees.**
- On this occasion Mr Sinha said Kumbh is a major event of not only of the country but the World. Mr Sinha also said **Kumbh is not only a religious and spiritual event but an astrological, cultural and astronomical event of the world.** He said Kumbh has been **treated as source of light of Knowledge.**

### Uttar Pradesh Government Presents Rs. 4.79 Lakh Crore Budget

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- The **Uttar Pradesh government presented a Rs. 4.79 lakh crore budget for 2019-20**, and announced populist schemes ahead of the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.
- The **annual budget presented by finance minister Rajesh Agarwal** in state Assembly is **12 per cent higher than the 2018-19 budget of Rs. 4,28,384.52 crore.** The budget includes new schemes **totalling Rs. 21,212.95 crore.**

### Odisha FM Sashi Bhusan Behera presents interim budget for 2019-20

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- **Finance Minister of Odisha Sashi Bhusan Behera has presented the interim budget for 2019-20 financial year amounting to 1 lakh, 32 thousand, 660 crore rupees** in Assembly.
- But the **vote on account** was for four months **amounting to 56 thousand 921 crore rupees.**

### Chhattisgarh CM presents budget for 2019-2020

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- **Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel presented his government's maiden budget for the financial year 2019-2020.**
- With an outlay of about **Rs. 91 thousand crore rupees**, the budget focuses on farmers, agriculture and rural development.

### Every single home in country will have energy access by April 2019

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- **Finance Minister Piyush Goyal has said, by March-April this year, India will take energy access to every single home in this country, about a decade ahead of the deadline of the Strategic Development Goals 2030.**

### 20th Bharat Rang Mahotsav inaugurated in New Delhi

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- The Minister of State for Culture (I/C), Govt. of India, **Dr. Mahesh Sharma, inaugurated the 21-day-long nationwide theatre spectacle at Kamani Auditorium** in a program presided over by **Dr. Arjun Deo Charan, Acting Chairman, NSD Society and other senior officers of Culture Ministry, in New Delhi.**

- The **20th edition of Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM)**, the international theatre festival of India, is **organized by National School of Drama (NSD)**, one of the prominent training institutions in the world. The National School of Drama (NSD) is an autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India. The **20th BRM comes with 111 national and international acts** in its basket that includes folk and other traditional theatre forms, invitee plays, and productions by the students of the National School of Drama.

### Kala Ghoda Arts Festival inaugurated at Cross Maidan, Mumbai

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- **India's biggest cultural street festival, Kala Ghoda Arts Festival (KGAF) is inaugurated in Mumbai.** The festival celebrates two glorious decades of art and culture, across various forms and communities including design, cinema, theatre, dance, literature and much more. **The festival is centered on a theme each year.**
- **This year, the Kala Ghoda Arts Festival commemorates 20 years** of its inception and also **marks the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.** The festival this year is paying tribute to Bapu's philosophy and contribution to the nation. **The nine-day festival concluded on February 10.**

### 325 child labourers rescued under 'Operation Smile'

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- **As many as 325 child labourers have been rescued as part of 'Operation Smile' in Hyderabad,** Commissioner of Police Anjani Kumar said. Operation Smile was launched on January 1 this year to trace missing children. The month-long **programme aims to rescue child labourers, children engaged in begging for alms and so on.**
- Speaking to media, Kumar said: "In Hyderabad city, 17 teams were constituted. **So far, 325 children have been rescued including 11 girls.**

### Upgradation of Secondary Schools to Senior Secondary level under Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan

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- **Department of School Education and Literacy has launched an Integrated Scheme for School Education-Samagra Shiksha,** subsuming three erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE), with effect from 2018-19. The new integrated scheme envisages school education as a continuum **from pre-school to senior secondary level and aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels.**
- During the year 2018-19, under Samagra Shiksha, 44 schools have been upgraded **from secondary to senior secondary level** and additional subject streams have been **approved in 851 senior secondary schools,** based on appraisal of the proposals received from the States/UTs.

### Legendary cricketer Kapil Dev to flag off 'Tridhaatu Navi Mumbai Half Marathon' on 15th Feb

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- **Legendary cricketer and former India skipper Kapil Dev will flag off the 'Tridhaatu Navi Mumbai Half Marathon' on February 17th from Vashi,** in Navi Mumbai. Well-known marathon coach and ultra-marathon athlete Norrie Williamson is the race director for the event.
- The race will be held in two categories - the **half marathon run over a distance of 21.097 kms,** where participants **above 18 years of age can take part,** while another category is the **'Future Generali 10K run,** where **participants above 16 years of age can participate.**

### Labour Ministry notifies rules to allow employment of Women in Mines

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- In exercise of the power conferred under sub-section (1) of section 83 on the Mines Act, 1952 (35 of 1952), the **Central Government hereby exempts the women employed in any mine above ground and in any mine below ground from the provisions of section 46 of the Mines Act, 1952.**
- **The Mines Act, 1952, restricted the employment of women in underground mines** and also in opencast or aboveground workings of the mine during night hours between 7PM and 6AM. Ministry of Labour & Employment

has taken a decision in line with the **recommendations of the Section 12 committee set up under Mines Act, 1952.**

### Arunachal's Nyishi tribe celebrates Boori Boot Yollo festival

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- The **Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh** is celebrated its **fortnight-long Boori Boot Yollo festival**. Boori Boot Yollo is observed in the month of **February every year** to welcome spring and a successful harvest.
- **Arunachal Pradesh Governor Dr BD Mishra** and **Chief Minister Pema Khandu** in separate messages have greeted the people of the state on the occasion. They expressed hope that the festival would usher in peace, prosperity and happiness.

### Uttar Pradesh government forms SIT to investigate 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Kanpur

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- The **Uttar Pradesh government** has set up a **four-member Special Investigation Team (SIT)** to **re-examine all FIRs related to 1984 anti-Sikh riots in Kanpur** as the fall out of the **assassination of the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi**. Over 125 persons were murdered or burnt alive during the riots in Kanpur.
- Acting on a writ petition filed in Supreme Court, the **state government set up the SIT headed by former UP DGP Atul**. The other members of the team include retired district judge Subhash Chandra Agarwal, Additional DG, Prosecution (retired) Yogeshwar Krishna Srivastava and Senior Superintendent /Superintendent of Kanpur police as member secretary of the team.

### Taj Mahal, Qutub Minar among top 10 revenue-generating monuments

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- The **top revenue-generating monuments during 2015-18** include **Taj Mahal, Agra Fort, Qutub Minar, Red Fort and Humayun's Tomb**, Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma informed Parliament.
- Responding to a query in the Rajya Sabha, he said along with these monuments the others in the **top 10 include Sun Temple Konark, group of monuments in Mamallapuram, Ellora caves, group of monuments in Khajuraho, and the Ajanta caves in Aurangabad.**

### President opened annual Udyanotsav of Rashtrapati Bhavan

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- **President Ram Nath Kovind** opened the **annual Udyanotsav of Rashtrapati Bhavan** in New Delhi on February 04, 2019.
- The **Mughal Gardens will remain open for the general public from February 04 to 10th of next month**. The visitors can visit the garden between 9:00 AM to to 4:00 PM.

### Odisha's Kalia scholarship scheme for farmers' to boost higher education

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- **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik** announced the new '**KALIA Chhatravritti Yojana**', which is a scholarship for the children of farmers who are the beneficiaries of **Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation (KALIA)** scheme.
- Under this scheme, the children of farmers, who are the **beneficiaries of the KALIA scheme**, will be **provided scholarships for pursuing higher education in professional courses free of cost**. Children of farmers who have taken admission at **Government Professional colleges** on merit basis will be **eligible for the scholarship scheme**.

### India and Germany join hands on water and waste management

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- **India and Germany** have **joined hands for cooperation on Water and Waste Management**.
- During the meeting of **3rd Indo-German Working Group for cooperation on water and waste management which concluded in New Delhi** both sides discussed potential cooperation in this area.



## Part two of Darwaza Band campaign launched in Mumbai

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- To further promote the use of toilets and to sustain the open defecation free status of villages across India, the part two of Darwaza Band campaign was launched in Mumbai.
- Promoted under the aegis of Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen, the campaign was launched by Amitabh Bachchan in the presence of Maharashtra's Minister for Water Supply and Sanitation, Mr. Babanrao Lonikar and Secretary of Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Mr. Parameswaran.

## I&B Ministry participates at Berlin International Film Festival 2019

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- Information and Broadcasting Ministry, in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry, is participated at the Berlin International Film Festival, 2019.
- India Pavilion has been set up at Berlinale to showcase Indian cinema at the global platform and facilitate new business opportunities in media and entertainment sector.

## Foundation Stone of Taj View Garden laid

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- Dr. Mahesh Sharma, Minister of State (Independence Charge), Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, laid the Foundation Stone of Taj View Garden on the Taj Corridor Area between the Agra Fort and Taj Mahal in Agra.

## Govt approves the introduction of Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Bill, 2019

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- The Union Cabinet has approved the introduction of Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Bill, 2019.
- The Bill provides for amendment of the legal framework to act as a deterrent to the erring NRI spouses and creating more accountability and offer protection against exploitation of Indian Citizens married to NRIs.

## CREDAI conference in Delhi

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- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a real estate conference organised by realtors' apex body CREDAI in New Delhi.
- The prime minister addressed the CREDAI YouthCon-19 on February 13 at Talkatora Stadium. YouthCon is the annual youth conclave of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India (CREDAI), held to bring together the future of the real estate Industry in India.

## UNICEF in Maharashtra to join hands with Goa WCD to address issues in child protection

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- The UNICEF in Maharashtra has joined hands with Goa Women and Child Development (WCD) to focus on and support in the area of child protection in the State.
- Ms. Rajeshwari Chandrasekar Chief Field Officer, UNICEF Maharashtra and Ms. Alpa Vora, Consultant , Child Protection, UNICEF were participated in a discussion on “key challenges around child protection in Goa”, at training programme on Integrated Child Protection Scheme(ICPS), by WCD on February 12.

## PM Narendra Modi inaugurated PETROTECH-2019

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- Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally inaugurated the 13th International Oil and Gas Conference - PETROTECH-2019 in Greater Noida. Three-day biennial event began at India Expo Mart.

## PM Modi launches several projects in AP, TN and Karnataka

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- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched several development projects in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka on a day-long visit to the three states.

- At Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, the **Prime Minister dedicated to the nation the 1.33 million metric ton capacity Visakhapatnam Strategic Petroleum Reserve facility**. He also inaugurated Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited's **Vashishta and S1 development project located in the Krishna-Godavari Offshore Basin**. Foundation stone was also laid for setting up of a **new terminal of BPCL at Krishnapatnam**.
- At Tiruppur in Tamil Nadu, Mr Modi commissioned the **10-km stretch of the Chennai Metro rail** through video-conferencing. The stretch connects DMS and Washermanpet and also completes the 45-km long Metro rail first phase in the state capital.
- At Hubli in Karnataka, the Prime Minister laid the foundation stone of **Indian Institute of Technology - Dharwad and Indian Institute of Information Technology - Dharwad**.

### PM launches several development projects at Kurukshetra in Haryana

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- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and laid foundation stone of several development projects at Kurukshetra in Haryana.**
- He dedicated to the nation the **National Cancer Institute at Bhadsa in Jhajjar district**.
- The institute is the **state-of-the-art tertiary cancer care-cum-research centre constructed at the AIIMS Jhajjar campus**.

### President unveils life size portrait of Atal Bihari Vajpayee at Central Hall of Parliament

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- **President Ram Nath Kovind unveiled the life size portrait of former Prime Minister Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the Central Hall of Parliament.**
- Vajpayee, a towering BJP leader, was the **Prime Minister thrice – first for 13 days in 1996, then for 13 months from 1998 to 1999, and then from 1999 to 2004.**
- **Born on December 25, 1924, in Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh, the BJP veteran passed away on August 16, 2018.**

### Fifth International Dam Safety Conference 2019 is held on 13-14 February at Bhubaneswar

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- The **5th International Dam Safety Conference–2019** is held during 13 and 14 February 2019 in **Bhubaneswar as a joint initiative of the Government of India, Government of Odisha and the World Bank** under aegis of the ongoing **World Bank assisted Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)** as a part of institutional strengthening. **Dam Safety Conferences are organized as an annual event in different DRIP States** in collaboration with the Implementing Agencies and leading academic institutes to provide a common platform for all stakeholders including non-DRIP States.
- **Globally India ranks third after China and the USA in terms of the number of large dams with 5264 large dams in operation and 437 large dams under construction.**

### AYUSH Minister launches e-AUSHADHI portal for Online Licensing System of AYUSH Medicine

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- **Minister of State (IC) for AYUSH, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik launched the e-AUSHADHI portal, for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs and related matters at New Delhi.**
- **This e-AUSHADHI portal is intended for increased transparency, improved information management facility, improved data usability and increased accountability.**

## **Bihar announces universal old age pension scheme-Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna**

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- Bihar government has announced a universal old age pension scheme - Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna- MVPY for all people above 60 years of age.
- Chief Minister Nitish Kumar told state assembly that the scheme will come into force from the 1st of April this year.
- Except those senior citizens who have retired from government service, all will be eligible for 400 rupees monthly pension irrespective of caste, religion or community.

## **First Annual Conference of Media Units under I&B Ministry organized**

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- The First Annual Conference of Media Units working under I & B Ministry was organized at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.
- Union Minister of State (IC) for Information & Broadcasting and Youth Affairs & Sports Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore chaired the Conference.
- During the Conference, performance of the Media Units was reviewed. The focus of the Conference was on ensuring synergy between the Media Units in their day to day functioning.

## **National Conference on “Sustainable and Environment-friendly Industrial Production”**

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- Under Indo-German Development Cooperation, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change(MoEFCC) organized Second National Conference at Hyatt Hotel, New Delhi on Sustainable and Environment-friendly Industrial Production (SEIP) Project which is a joint programme of Ministry &GIZ - The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH or GIZ in short is a German development agency.

## **PM Narendra Modi to launch scheme to give Rs 6,000 to farmers on February 24**

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- The Centre will start paying farmers the first instalment of Rs 2,000 on February 24 at a high-profile event where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to formally kick off the implementation of the PM-KISAN scheme.
- The second instalment of the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, which BJP hopes will cheer rural voters on the eve of the general elections, will be due on April 1, immediately after all beneficiaries get the first payment by March 31.

## **Sushil Kumar Modi presents budget for Bihar**

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- Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi presented budget of 2 lakh 501 crore rupees for the financial year 2019-20 in the assembly.
- Mr Modi said the maximum allocation of 34 thousand 799 crore rupees has been made to education sector followed by Rural Development and rural works department.
- One lakh farmers have so far been registered under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana in Bihar.

## **PM inaugurates Pahari Dam Modernization Project**

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- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched various development projects worth over Rs 20000 crore at Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh. Mr Modi laid the foundation stone of the Defence Corridor.
- Jhansi is one of the six nodal points of the UP defence corridor. PM inaugurates Pahari Dam Modernization Project. Pahari Dam is a water storage dam situated on Dhasan River in Jhansi district.

- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, earlier visited Vrindavan and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh to serve the three billionth meals to underprivileged children from schools and for the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas respectively.

### Amrut Cities--Municipal Corporations of Raigarh, Ambikapur, and Kumbakonam Bag Top Swachhata Excellence Awards

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- AMRUT cities and Municipal Corporations of Raigarh, Ambikapur and Kumbakonam have bagged the first, second and third prizes respectively of Swachhata Excellence awards 2019.
- Nagar Palika Parishad Jashpur Nagar, Malappuram Municipality, and Nagar Palika Parishad Surajpur have claimed the prizes in the category of Statutory Towns. For Million Plus Cities, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation has been awarded with first prize. For Aspirational Districts, Chas Municipal Corporation has been awarded with a consolation prize.

### MEA organises training course for Nepal Govt officials

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- The Ministry of External Affairs has organised a training course for the officials of the Government of Nepal under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme.
- A second group of 20 officials of Nepal's Ministry of Finance joined their training course on 'Global Perspectives on Public Financial Management' at the Institute of Government Accounts and Finance (INGAF) in New Delhi

### Banned Punjabi poem on Jallianwala massacre to be published in English after 99 years

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- A poem on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre by acclaimed Punjabi writer Nanak Singh, which was banned by the British after its publication in 1920, has now been translated into English.
- Singh was present at Jallianwala Bagh on April 13, 1919. He was 22 years old at the time. The poem was a scathing critique of the British Raj and was banned soon after its publication. Its manuscript was subsequently lost.
- Singh (1897-1971) is widely regarded as the father of the Punjabi novel. With little formal education beyond the fourth grade, he wrote an astounding 59 books and received the Sahitya Akademi Award in 1962.

### Pranab Mukherjee releases book containing selected speeches of Venkaiah Naidu

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- Former President Pranab Mukherjee released the book containing selected speeches of Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu at a function in New Delhi.
- The book is a compilation of 92 speeches of Mr Naidu. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Mukherjee said the speeches reflect the wide experience of Mr Naidu in public affairs.

### Department of Justice Launches Tele-Law

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- Keeping in line with the government's initiative to ensure empowerment to the common man through technology for access to justice, the law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad launched a tele-law mobile application that is integrated with a dashboard and an application called Nyaya Bandhu.
- The application will benefit 73,000 PLVs of National Legal Service Authority and State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA) in the country who will be associated under the tele-law service", it was stated.
- Till January, it resulted in enabling legal advice to 49,192 beneficiaries that include 36,526 (Women), 7049 (SC) and 13970 (ST) in 11 states including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and all North-Eastern states and the State of Jammu and Kashmir, he said.



### Governor of West Bengal, Keshari Nath Tripathi launches book dedicated to Swami Pragyananandji at the Kumbh Mela

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- Famous industrialist and philanthropist Dinesh Shahra's book, 'Simplicity & Wisdom' was launched at Parmarth Ashram in the ongoing Kumbh Mela. The book is dedicated to late eminent Vedanti Swami Pragananandji.
- The book was formally launched by Keshari Nath Tripathi, Governor of West Bengal, and Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Head of Parmarth Ashram. The book is primarily aimed at offering saintly wisdom and guidance to lead a content and happy life.

### Commerce Minister launches 'SWAYATT' on GeM

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- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, launched SWAYATT in New Delhi.
- SWAYATT is an initiative to promote Start-ups, Women and Youth Advantage Through eTransactions on Government e Marketplace (GeM). This will bring together the key stakeholders within the Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem to Government e-Marketplace the national procurement portal.

### Bhopal hosted Indian History Congress

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- After Savitribai Phule Pune University allegedly backed out, the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh has hosted the 79th Indian History Congress in Bhopal on February 26. The 79th session of IHC organised at Barkatullah varsity, Bhopal.
- As an organisation, this cancellation was unprecedented in the history as the only time we had not held the congress session was in times of national need like 'Quit India' movement in 1942 and the wars in 1962 and 1971.

### Rajnath Singh to launch pan-India number 112 for women safety

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- Home Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister for Women and Child Development Maneka Gandhi launched a range of citizen safety initiatives in New Delhi.
- It includes the Emergency Response Support System, ERSS, for women safety in 16 states and Union territories. The states include Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Jammu and Kashmir.
- The service has already been launched in Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland. Persons in distress can dial a pan-India number: 112. Under this system, all the states have to set up a dedicated Emergency Response Centre, ERC.
- These include 33 per cent reservation for women in the Police Force, introduction of marriage of NRI Bill 2019, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, National Registry of Sexual Offenders, Forensic Science Laboratories and Panic Button.

### President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated International Conference & Exhibition on Energy and Environment

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- President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the three day International Conference and Exhibition on Energy and Environment in New Delhi.
- The event was organized by CSIR-Central Institute of Mining and Fuel Research, Dhanbad from 20th to 22nd February 2019 in New Delhi.

## International Annual Desert Festival begins in Jaisalmer

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- The **40th International Annual Desert Festival** kicked-off on the sand dune with thousands of tourists participating in the **colourful event in Jaisalmer**. The three-day festival, which exhibits rich cultural heritage of the desert state, commenced with a colourful procession from Gadsisar lake fort.

## 4TH India-Asean Expo Summit held in New Delhi

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- The **4th India-ASEAN Expo and Summit** was held on 21-23 February, 2019 in **New Delhi**. This is a flagship event of **Department of Commerce**, organised with **FICCI** to carry forward the momentum and to further **strengthen India-ASEAN relations under the Act-East Policy**.
- The 4th India-ASEAN Expo and Summit, 2019 is being **built upon the success of the previous edition of ASEAN-India Business and Investment Meet and Expo** which was held in **2018** as a precursor to India-ASEAN Commemorative Summit.

## Operation Digital Board launched to provide better digital education

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- **Government has launched Operation Digital Board** on the lines of **Operation Blackboard** to provide better digital education in schools.
- Human Resource Development Minister **Prakash Javadekar** said, under the initiative, **seven lakh classrooms of 9th, 10th and 11th standards and two lakh classrooms of colleges and Universities** will be equipped with digital boards in the next three years.

## Cabinet approves construction of Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System

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- **Union Cabinet** has approved construction of **Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS)** covering a distance of **82.15 kilometers**.
- The completion cost of the project will be **30,274 crore rupees**. It comprises two corridors of total length of over 28 kilometres. The corridor first will be from **Motera Stadium to Mahatma Mandir** and corridor second is from **GNLU to GIFT City**.

## Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurated VIVID 2019

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- **“VIVID-Vision Insight and Voices as India goes Digital”- the District Informatics Officer (DIO) meet** organised by **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** on 21st and 22nd February, 2019.
- The meet is held as an initiative to interact with the DIO's and to share their experiences as well as contribution, as digital change-makers at the grass-root level in the States.
- **Union Minister of Electronics and IT, Law and Justice Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad**, inaugurated the event with conferring of **NIC TechGov Awards and Swachhta Awards**.
- **IOT Open lab, Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) Bengaluru**: It intends to support **100 start-ups per year** with an overall target to support **500 start-ups over a period of 5 years**.

## Patnaik launches Kalia scholarship for farmer's children

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- **Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik** unveiled a scholarship programme for the children of the beneficiaries of the **Kalia scheme**.
- **Kalia scholarship or 'Kalia Chhatra Brutti'** will ensure that not a single eligible child of **Kalia** beneficiaries aspiring for technical and professional education.

## Aero India event in Bengaluru to observe Technology Day on 3rd day

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- The Asia's biggest air show **Aero India event in Bengaluru** observed **Technology Day** on the third day. The Indian National Academy of Engineering was held a knowledge seminar on **Regional Technology Aircraft**.

- Seminars are also organised on linking India to the Global Aerospace supply chain, MSMEs in the Aerospace Eco-system, **Defence Park in Kerala and on Indo Russian Defence and Aerospace cooperation.**

### Govt approves air travel entitlement to CAPF personnel on Delhi-Srinagar-Delhi, Jammu-Srinagar-Jammu sectors

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- The Home Ministry has approved entitlement of air travel to all personnel of Central Armed Police Forces, CAPFs. The Ministry approved the entitlement of air travel on Delhi-Srinagar, Srinagar-Delhi, Jammu-Srinagar and Srinagar-Jammu sectors to all the personnel of CAPFs.
- The decision will **immediately benefit approximately 7 lakh 80 thousand personnel of the CAPFs** in the ranks of Constable, Head Constable and ASI who were otherwise not eligible earlier.

### UP CM launches Scheme for Adolescent girls

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- In Uttar Pradesh, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched Scheme for Adolescent girls. The scheme focuses on girls aged between 11 to 14 years who have left studies and will take steps for proper nutrition and special care for them.
- The state government also decided to observe Adolescent girls day on 8th of every month at Anganwadi centres across the state. State Government will also launch Nutrition Campaign for the adolescent girls on 8th March.

### Shisht Bharat Campaign

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- ‘Shisht Bharat Abhiyan’ was organised by an NGO. The theme of the event was to discuss the importance of moral science education in schools and colleges and to include Moral Science as a subject in the educational curriculum.

### Suresh Prabhu inaugurates Aviation Infra Projects in 7 States

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- Civil Aviation Minister, Suresh Prabhu, inaugurated several infrastructure projects across the length and breadth of the country via video link in New Delhi.
- These airports include Trivandrum, Calicut airports in Kerala, Mangaluru airport in Karnataka, Madurai airport in Tamil Nadu, Rupsi airport in Assam, Jaipur airport in Rajasthan, Amritsar airport in Punjab and Imphal airport in Manipur.

### PM addresses delegates at the Kumbh Global Participation Event organized by ICCR

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- The Indian Council for Cultural Relations organized a special event at Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in Delhi, to felicitate delegates from 188 countries, who participated in the Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj, joined the 188 delegates for a historic group photo.

### Indian sign language dictionary gets a second edition

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- The second edition of the Indian Sign Language (ISL) dictionary was released listing 6,000 words in Hindi and English along with their corresponding visual representation.

### PM attends Gita Aradhana Mahotsav at ISKCON, New Delhi

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- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, attended the Gita Aradhana Mahotsav at ISKCON-Glory of India Cultural Centre, New Delhi.
- He unveiled a unique Bhagwad Gita, prepared by ISKCON devotees. It measures over 2.8 meters and weighs over 800 kg.

## IRCTC launches Payment Aggregator iPay

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- In a bid to promote digital transactions, the **Indian Rail Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC)** launched its much awaited payment aggregator system 'IRCTC iPay'.
- The exclusive digital payment gateway will provide better digital experience and improved online digital payment convenience to rail passengers availing online travel-related services through the website.

## Union HRD Minister launches the Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS) for providing industry apprenticeship opportunities

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- The Minister for Human Resources Development, **Shri Prakash Javadekar** has launched the Scheme for **Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS)** for providing industry apprenticeship opportunities to the general graduates exiting in April 2019 through the National Apprenticeship Promotional Scheme (NAPS).
- It was launched in New Delhi; the program aims to enhance the employability of Indian youth by providing 'on the job work exposure' and earning of stipend.

## New airport at Rajkot gets Centre's approval

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- The Centre gave its approval for the development of a new airport at Hirasar in Gujarat's Rajkot at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,405 crore.

## AYUSH Minister lays foundation stone for National Institute of Unani Medicine

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- AYUSH Minister **Shripad Yesso Naik** laid foundation stone of National Institute of Unani Medicine, NIUM at Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh. The 200-bedded hospital will be one of the largest institutes of Unani Medicine in North India.

## PM Modi inaugurated Construction Technology India-2019 Expo-cum-Conference

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- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** inaugurated the Construction Technology India-2019 Expo-cum-Conference in New Delhi.
- Proven technologies which are identified during CTI - 2019 will be further invited to design and build lighthouse projects of nearly one thousand housing units each in Gujarat, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Tripura and Uttar Pradesh.

## National Mineral Policy 2019

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- The policy is aimed at bringing about more effective regulation to the sector as well as a more sustainable approach while addressing the issues of those affected by mining.
- "The aim of National Mineral Policy 2019 is to have a more effective, meaningful and implementable policy that brings in further transparency, better regulation and enforcement, balanced social and economic growth as well as sustainable mining practices".

## Assam launches PRANAM Commission to protect parents of government employees

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- Assam Chief Minister **Sarbananda Sonowal** had launched the PRANAM Commission, a panel set up to look after the issues concerning a Bill, for protection of parents of state government employees.
- PRANAM Bill, which was approved by the cabinet last year, makes it mandatory for state government employees to look after their parents and unmarried Divyang siblings who do not have their own sources of income.

## Jitendra Singh presents National e-Governance Awards 2019

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- Minister of State in Prime Minister's Office, **Dr Jitendra Singh** presented National e-Governance Awards, 2019 in New Delhi.



- The awards are given every year to recognise and promote excellence in implementation of e-Governance initiatives. The 14 Awards were given in 6 categories to recognize achievements in the area of e-Governance, with Gold and Silver Awards in each category. A Special Jury Award is also being presented in Category-I for IRCTC Rail Connect Mobile App.

### Assam to be oil exporting hub for Southeast Asia

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- Assam is slated to soon become one of India's major oil exporting hubs catering to the eastern neighbours of the country and Southeast Asia.

### Odisha launches boat ambulance service for remote areas

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

### Scheme for developing knitwear sector

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- Union Minister Smriti Irani launched a scheme for development of knitting and knitwear sector under Power Tex India, which will be in operation up to March 31, 2020. "The Ministry has approved combined SFC (Standing Finance Component) of PowerTex India Scheme and Knitwear Scheme with an outlay of Rs.487.07 crore.

### Smt Anupriya Patel inaugurates the 'International Digital Health Symposium'

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- Smt. Anupriya Patel, Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare inaugurated the 'International Digital Health Symposium,' in New Delhi.

### Rail Drishti Dashboard launched to keep people informed about ongoing Railway works

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- Railway Minister Piyush Goyal launched Rail Drishti Dashboard in New Delhi. Dashboard has been launched to keep people informed about the work going on in the Railways across the country.

### PM dedicates the Joint Venture Indo-Russian Rifles Pvt. Ltd. to the Nation, at Amethi

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- The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, visited Kauhar, Amethi in Uttar Pradesh. He dedicated to the nation, the Joint Venture of Indo-Russian Rifles Pvt Ltd, for Kalashnikov Assault Rifle Production. He also laid the Foundation Stone and dedicated various development projects in Amethi.

### Delhi government presents Rs 60,000 cr budget for 2019-20

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- The Delhi government presented a Rs 60,000 crore budget for 2019-20 in the Assembly. The 26 per cent of total budget have been earmarked for education. 13 thousand seats will be added to engineering and polytechnic colleges of Delhi. A total of 375 crore rupees have been set aside for 100 mohallah clinics

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## IMPORTANT DAYS

### World Cancer day observed on 4th February

- **World Cancer day is observed on 4th February.**
- The **Day aims to save millions of preventable deaths each year through education, raising awareness** and by pressing governments and individuals across the world to take action against the deadly disease.
- **Union for International Cancer Control, which organizes World Cancer Day, is launched a new 3-year campaign with the theme: “I Am and I Will.”**

### International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation was celebrated on 6 February

- **International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation** is a United Nations-sponsored annual awareness day that **takes place on February 6 as part of the UN's efforts to eradicate female genital mutilation. It was first introduced in 2003.**
- **Female genital mutilation (FGM)** comprises all procedures that **involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons and is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights of girls and women.**

### National Road Safety Week launched

- **The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India has announced the observance of 30th Road Safety Week Campaign from 4th to 10th February 2019. The theme for this year campaign is Sadak Suraksha - Jeevan Raksha".**
- The rally will travel through places historically associated with Gandhiji, both in India, as well as in Bangladesh and Myanmar. It will conclude at Yangon in Myanmar on the 24th of this month, covering a total distance of 7250 km.

### International Day of Women and Girls in Science: 11 February

- **In order to achieve full and equal access to and participation in science for women and girls, and further achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution declaring 11 February as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.**
- **The Theme for the 2019 is "Investment in Women and Girls in Science for Inclusive Green Growth".**

### National Deworming Day

- **The National Deworming Day is an initiative of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India to make every child in the country worm free. This is one of the largest public health programs reaching large number of children during a short period.**
- **NDD (first round) is conducted on February 10 each year.** Bi-annual round of deworming is recommended in the States where prevalence of STH infection is more than 20% and annual round in other (less than 20% prevalence) states. **Only two States namely Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have reported less than 20% prevalence** and recommended for annual round. All the remaining States/UTs are implementing bi-annual round of deworming.

### National Productivity Week

- **National Productivity Council (NPC) celebrated its 61st Foundation Day. NPC observes foundation day as Productivity Day and celebrates National Productivity Week from February 12-18, 2019.**
- **This year's theme is “Circular Economy for Productivity & Sustainability”** which represents a unique opportunity for circular business models for Make - Use - Return. It presents an opportunity for long term

economic prospects and regeneration of materials. Transitioning to an efficient circular economy will benefit industry and all stakeholders now and in future.

### World Radio Day: 13 February

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- **World Radio Day** is an observance day **held annually on 13 February to celebrate radio as a medium**. It was **proclaimed on 3 November 2011** by UNESCO's 36th General Conference after originally being **proposed by the Kingdom of Spain**.
- **2019 Theme: Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace.**

### World Pulses Day: 10 February

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- **World Pulses Day** is a day established by the **Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations** to **recognize the importance of pulses (dry beans, lentils, dry peas, chickpeas, lupins)** as a global food.
- It has been **designated on February 10 each year since 2019 by the seventy-third session of the United Nations General Assembly on December 20, 2018**. The date aims to bring attention to activities and information connected to the pulse sector worldwide.
- **World Pulses Day** also seeks to maintain momentum **gained during FAO's announcement of 2016 as the International Year of Pulses**.

### International Mother Language Day being celebrated

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- **International Mother Language Day** is observed on the **21st of February every year** to promote **linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism**.
- Since **2019** is also the **International Year of Indigenous Languages**, the **theme of this year's Mother Language Day is Indigenous Languages as a factor in development, peace and reconciliation**.

### World Thinking Day

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- **World Thinking Day**, formerly **Thinking Day**, is celebrated **annually on 22 February** by all **Girl Guides and Girl Scouts**. It is also **celebrated by Scout and Guide organizations** and some boy-oriented associations around the world.
- **World Thinking Day 2019** is dedicated to the group of girls who took the lead in **1909** and demanded **Lord Baden-Powell** creates 'something for the girls'.

### National Science Day being celebrated

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- **National Science Day** is celebrated in **India on 28 February each year** to mark the **discovery of the Raman Effect** by Indian physicist **Sir C. V. Raman on 28 February 1928**. For his discovery, **Sir C.V. Raman** was awarded the **Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930**.
- This year the theme for the **National Science Day** is, '**Science for the People and the People for Science**'.

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## QUESTIONS

1. Who has been chosen as the Best Marching Contingent among the three services in this year's Republic Day Parade?  
(a) Gorkha Brigade      (b) Punjab Regiment      (c) Indian Air Force      (d) Assam Regiment
2. Which of the following is to broadcast a travelogue series Rag Rag Mein Ganga which will highlight Ganga's journey from Gomukh to Gangasagar from February 2019?  
(a) AIR      (b) DD National      (c) Colors      (d) NDTV Imagine
3. Recently, Six days cultural extravaganza Bharat Parv concluded in:  
(a) New Delhi      (b) Lucknow      (c) Bhopal      (d) Chandigarh
4. PETROTECH-2019, the 13th International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition, being organised under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India, is all set to be inaugurated in:  
(a) Greater Noida      (b) Navi Mumbai      (c) Naya Raipur      (d) Cuttack
5. Recently, Germany, France and the UK have set up a payment channel with \_\_\_\_\_ called INSTEX, to help continue trade and circumvent US sanctions.  
(a) Iraq      (b) Iran      (c) India      (d) Italy
6. Which of the following European countries has opened a new centre set up by the government in partnership with the UN to fight climate change and boost sustainable development in Africa?  
(a) Spain      (b) Italy      (c) Belgium      (d) Netherlands
7. The International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements was launched at UNESCO's Headquarters in:  
(a) Madrid      (b) Paris      (c) London      (d) Amsterdam
8. Recently, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced a five-year global partnership deal with beverage manufacturer:  
(a) Coca-Cola Company      (b) AB InBev.      (c) PepsiCo.      (d) Nestle SA.
9. Who has been roped in as the brand ambassador of PNB MetLife, a life insurance company?  
(a) Sania Mirza      (b) Saina Nehwal      (c) P.V. Sindhu      (d) Virat Kohli
10. Who won its maiden Pro Wrestling League (PWL) title recently?  
(a) Haryana Hammers      (b) Punjab Royals  
(c) Delhi Sultans      (d) Mumbai Maharathi
11. In the Interim Budget 2019, New Scheme- namely "Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)" is to extend direct income support at the rate of \_\_\_\_\_ per year to farmer families, having cultivable land upto 2 hectares.  
(a) Rs. 3,000      (b) Rs. 4,000      (c) Rs. 6,000      (d) Rs. 10,000
12. Recently Union Finance Minister Piyush Goyal proposed a capital expenditure of \_\_\_\_\_ crore for the Railways Ministry for the year 2019-20 in the Interim Budget.  
(a) Rs. 1,23,238      (b) Rs. 1,35,345      (c) Rs. 1,47,456      (d) Rs. 1,58,658



13. To provide pensionary benefits to at least 10 crore labourers and workers in the \_\_\_\_\_ a new Scheme called 'Pradhan Mantri Shram-Yogi Maandhan' is announced in Interim Budget 2019.  
(a) Unorganized Sector (b) Organized Sector (c) Tea States (d) Sugar Industries
14. Name the Indian American Congressman/ Congresswoman, who would chair the US Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations.  
(a) Pramila Jayapal (b) Tulsi Gabbard (c) Ami Bera (d) Nikki Halley
15. Recently, RBI eased operational curbs on three state-run lenders, which of the following is not among the given banks?  
(a) Bank of India (b) Bank of Maharashtra  
(c) Indian Overseas Bank (d) Oriental Bank of Commerce
16. Who is the first Indian to earn a card for the Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA) after coming through its first-ever Qualifying Tournament at the Ballarat Golf Club?  
(a) Vani Kapoor (b) Ankita Tiwana (c) Aditi Ashok (d) Sharmila Nicolett
17. Who is the first female cricketer to play 200 ODIs?  
(a) Jhulan Goswami (b) Mithali Raj (c) Nida Dar (d) Shikha Sharma
18. The Kala Ghoda Arts Festival - KGAF, India's largest multi-cultural street festival begins in:  
(a) New Delhi (b) Kolkata (c) Mumbai (d) Chennai
19. Name the Iranian held in an Australian-run camp on a Papua New Guinea island, who won the \$72,390 Victorian Prize for literature with his book No Friends but the Mountains.  
(a) Behrouz Boochani (b) Mefred Loghani (c) Dertrint Neghali (d) Ahmed Mouherer
20. World Wetlands Day occurs annually on:  
(a) 27th January (b) 29th January (c) 31st January (d) 2nd February
21. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation Railway electrification of 294- km-long Andal-Sainthia-Pakur-Malda and Khana- Sainthia Sections in:  
(a) Sikkim (b) Kerala (c) Karnataka (d) West Bengal
22. The Centre put forth a proposal to launch a mega pension scheme 'Pradhan Mantri ShramYogi Maandhan' for unorganised sector workers with a monthly income of up to Rs.\_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) 10,000 (b) 12,000 (c) 15,000 (d) 20,000
23. Who laid the foundation stone for the permanent High Court building at Amaravathy?  
(a) Chief Justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi  
(b) Governor E.S.L. Narasimhan  
(c) Chief Minister Chandra Babu Naidu  
(d) Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court, Chagari Praveen Kumar
24. Prince Albert II is the head of state of:  
(a) Romania (b) Monaco (c) Mongolia (d) Vietnam
25. Former Law Minister of Nepal Nilambar Acharya has been appointed as country's ambassador to which of the following countries?  
(a) India (b) China (c) USA (d) France

26. USA has suspended one of the last major nuclear arms control treaties 'Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty' with which of the following countries in February 2019?  
(a) North Korea (b) China (c) Russia (d) France
27. Finance Minister Piyush Goyal has proposed that individuals with income upto Rs \_\_\_\_\_ will not have to pay any income tax for FY2019-20.  
(a) 2 lakh (b) 3 lakh (c) 4 lakh (d) 5 lakh
28. East African countries have approved the separate trade agreements with which of the following?  
(a) European Union (b) African Union  
(c) World Trade Organization (d) United Nations
29. Huawei is going to launch a foldable 5G smartphone at the Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2019, which will be held in:  
(a) Barcelona (b) London (c) New York (d) Geneva
30. Who among the following Indian Women Cricketers has become number one in the latest ICC women's ODI rankings?  
(a) Mithali Raj (b) Harmanpreet Kaur  
(c) Smriti Mandhana (d) Deepti Bhagwan Sharma
31. Name the Indian woman, who leads a contingent of the Indian Army Service Corps to become first woman to lead an all-men contingent in Republic Day Parade 2019.  
(a) Lt Deepika Gupta (b) Lt Bhavana Kasturi (c) Capt Anandita Rani (d) Capt Rani Desota
32. According to a survey by ECA International, which has been rated as the most livable location for Asian expatriates in 2019 for the 14th consecutive year?  
(a) Singapore (b) Panaji (c) Hong Kong (d) Kuala Lumpur
33. Which of the following Asian countries celebrates its Independence Day on 4th February every year?  
(a) Indonesia (b) Malaysia (c) Sri Lanka (d) Mauritius
34. Recently, Pope Francis became the first pontiff to visit:  
(a) Australian Continent (b) South Asia (c) Arabian Peninsula (d) Mexican Gulf
35. In 2019, India is observed National Road Safety Week from:  
(a) 4th February to 10th February (b) 11th February to 17th February  
(c) 18th February to 24th February (d) 25th February to 4th March
36. Recently, the Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC), the hub of ISRO's future manned missions, was inaugurated at ISRO headquarters in:  
(a) Bengaluru (b) Hyderabad (c) New Delhi (d) Mumbai
37. Who is the first Asian woman cricketer to play hundred T20 international matches?  
(a) Sana Mir (b) Harmanpreet Kaur (c) Chamari Atapattu (d) Bismah Maharoof
38. Who is the newly appointed Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation, CBI?  
(a) Gyanendra Mishra (b) Rishi Kumar Shukla (c) Rakesh Asthana (d) Ashim Khurana
39. World Cancer day is observed every year on:  
(a) 2nd February (b) 4th February (c) 7th February (d) 11th February

40. The President Ram Nath Kovind was opened the annual Udyanotsav of:  
(a) Parliament (b) Delhi Secretariat (c) Yamuna Bank (d) Rashtrapati Bhavan
41. Indus River dolphin has been declared as state aquatic animal of:  
(a) Sikkim (b) Kerala (c) Karnataka (d) Punjab
42. The first State in India to set up a price monitoring and research unit (PMRU) to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO) is:  
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Kerala (c) Bihar (d) Punjab
43. Nayib Bukele as won a landslide victory in presidential elections of:  
(a) Chile (b) Ghana (c) El Salvador (d) Panama
44. According to the latest survey by the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's), what is the percentage of India's working-age population, which is not contributing to any economic activity?  
(a) 20% (b) 30% (c) 50% (d) 60%
45. According to the study conducted by San Francisco-based online payment processing firm Stripe, what is the rank of India, when it comes to online companies doing business abroad?  
(a) 5 (b) 7 (c) 11 (d) 15
46. P V Bharathi has assumed charge as managing director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of:  
(a) Bank of Baroda (b) Andhra Bank (c) Bank of India (d) Corporation Bank
47. The Indian Space Research Organisation is launched its 40th communication satellite GSAT-31 from the spaceport in:  
(a) French Guiana (b) Sriharikota (c) Bengaluru (d) Trivandrum
48. The Hubble Space Telescope has made an unexpected discovery of a dwarf galaxy in our cosmic backyard, located just \_\_\_\_\_ million light-years away in February 2019.  
(a) 20 (b) 30 (c) 40 (d) 50
49. As many as \_\_\_\_\_ child labourers have been rescued as part of 'Operation Smile' in Hyderabad.  
(a) 325 (b) 400 (c) 500 (d) 525
50. India's biggest cultural street festival, Kala Ghoda Arts Festival (KGAF) is inaugurated in:  
(a) New Delhi (b) Mumbai (c) Bhopal (d) Chennai
51. The first State level awareness programme on Agriculture Export Policy was organized in:  
(a) New Delhi (b) Pune (c) Bhopal (d) Chennai
52. A World Heritage Centre housing 'spiritual camps' of 45 countries would be set up at:  
(a) Meerut (b) Mayapur (c) Miyapur (d) Agra
53. How many countries are there in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)?  
(a) 10 (b) 15 (c) 19 (d) 22
54. In February 2019, U.S. President Donald Trump plans to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in:  
(a) Singapore (b) Indonesia (c) Japan (d) Vietnam

55. Two regional rural banks (RRB) - Pallavan Grama Bank and Pandyan Grama Bank - will be amalgamated into a single RRB in:  
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Kerala (d) Karnataka
56. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has imposed penalty for violation of norms on which of the following bank/banks in February 2019?  
(a) Axis Bank (b) UCO Bank (c) Syndicate Bank (d) All of the above
57. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has bought a 14% stake in micro-financier Annapurna Finance for Rs 137 crore. Annapurna Finance is headquartered in:  
(a) Chennai (b) Vijayawada (c) Bhubaneswar (d) Surat
58. Scientists from \_\_\_\_\_ have developed a graphene-based biosensor that could 'sniff' out evidence of lung cancer from a person's breath, paving the way for low-cost, early diagnosis systems.  
(a) UK (b) USA (c) India (d) Japan
59. Who among the following Indian Cricketers will flag off the 'Tridhaatu Navi Mumbai Half Marathon' on February 17th from Vashi, in Navi Mumbai?  
(a) Virat Kohli (b) Sachin Tendulkar (c) Kapil Dev (d) Sourav Ganguly
60. Global soccer body FIFA has set up a joint venture with 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar as part of its effort to streamline organisation of the tournament. The global soccer body (FIFA) would hold a \_\_\_\_\_ percent share of the venture.  
(a) 49 (b) 51 (c) 60 (d) 75
61. Recently, the Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for the establishment of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog for conservation, protection and development of:  
(a) Cows (b) Goats (c) Bamboo (d) Tea Estates
62. Recently, Union Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani launched a first-of-its-kind project in the history of the country "India Size" in:  
(a) Mumbai (b) Ahmedabad (c) Surat (d) Kanpur
63. Recently, India and \_\_\_\_\_ have joined hands for cooperation on Water and Waste Management.  
(a) Germany (b) France (c) Netherland (d) Spain
64. In order to further promote the use of toilets and to sustain the open defecation free status of villages across India, the part two of Darwaza Band campaign was launched recently in:  
(a) New Delhi (b) Nagpur (c) Mumbai (d) Kolkata
65. Which country has signed an accord to join NATO to become the 30th member of the US-led alliance recently?  
(a) South Sudan (b) Nauru (c) Macedonia (d) India
66. Which of the following banks regional head in the UK has been honoured with the 'Freedom of the City of London' award in recognition of his contribution to promoting the bilateral relations?  
(a) Punjab National Bank (b) State Bank of India (c) Bank of Baroda (d) Canara Bank
67. What is the name of the person nominated by President of USA Donald Trump to head World Bank?  
(a) Thomas Muchhanan (b) David Malpass (c) Jonathan Duncan (d) Amican Rathore



68. Name the India's communication satellite, which has been launched successfully from French Guiana in February 2019.  
(a) GSAT 23 (b) GSAT 26 (c) GSAT 29 (d) GSAT 31
69. Who has scored the fastest fifty for India in Women's T20Is against New Zealand recently?  
(a) Smriti Mandhana (b) Harmanpreet Kaur (c) Shikha Sharma (d) Daylan Hemlatha
70. Who among the following has been conferred the Sangeet Natak Akademi award in Carnatic music recently?  
(a) Lalith J Rao (b) MS Sheela  
(c) Umakant and Ramakant Gundecha (d) Ramakrishna Talukdar
71. Which among the following countries is the world's second largest LPG consumer?  
(a) China (b) India (c) USA (d) Japan
72. Which among the following state government has made it mandatory for industries seeking various incentives to provide 70 per cent employment to locals in the state in February 2019?  
(a) Madhya Pradesh (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Kerala (d) Karnataka
73. The second edition of the India Heritage Walk Festival (IHWF) is being held across \_\_\_\_\_ cities in February, with the UNESCO joining hands with Sahapedia this year.  
(a) 15 (b) 25 (c) 37 (d) 50
74. The Siamese fighting fish was named as the national aquatic animal of:  
(a) Japan (b) Russia (c) China (d) Thailand
75. Father Francois Laborde was conferred the Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour), the highest civilian award of France. He hails from:  
(a) Kerala (b) Goa (c) Sikkim (d) West Bengal
76. What is the India's rank in the latest International Intellectual Property (IP) Index released in February 2019?  
(a) 26 (b) 36 (c) 46 (d) 50
77. Reserve Bank of India in its bi-monthly monetary policy has reduced repo rate by 25 basis points to \_\_\_\_\_ per cent.  
(a) 5.75 (b) 6.25 (c) 7.25 (d) 6.75
78. According to the latest data from NASA scientists, the year 2018 experienced its \_\_\_\_\_ hottest year on the 139-year record.  
(a) Third (b) Fourth (c) Fifth (d) Sixth
79. What is the India rank in the latest FIFA Rankings released in February 2019?  
(a) 97 (b) 99 (c) 101 (d) 103
80. The Nyishi tribe of \_\_\_\_\_ is celebrated its fortnight-long Boori Boot Yollo festival in February 2019.  
(a) Jharkhand (b) Nagaland (c) Arunachal Pradesh (d) Tripura
81. Which of the following states announced a new scheme "Kanya Sumangala Yojna" to raise the health and educational standards of girls in the budget presented recently?  
(a) Chhattisgarh (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Odisha

82. Recently, Finance Minister of Odisha Sashi Bhusan Behera has presented the interim budget for 2019-20 financial year amounting to:  
(a) 1 lakh, 16 thousand, 135 crore rupees (b) 1 lakh, 24 thousand, 900 crore rupees  
(c) 1 lakh, 32 thousand, 660 crore rupees (d) 1 lakh, 45 thousand, 710 crore rupees
83. Recently, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister \_\_\_\_\_ presented his government's maiden budget for the financial year 2019-2020.  
(a) Bhupesh Baghel (b) Tamradhvaj Sahu  
(c) Tribhuvan Narayan Singh (d) Raman Singh
84. According to Finance Minister, every single home in country will have energy access by:  
(a) April 2019 (b) October 2019 (c) April 2020 (d) March 2021
85. In Bihar, the three-day Krishi Kumbh, which is the largest Krishi Kumbh of Eastern India is organised in:  
(a) Gaya (b) Darbhanga (c) Patna (d) Motihari
86. Recently, the Reserve Bank of India or RBI raised the limit of collateral-free agricultural loans to \_\_\_\_\_ from the current Rs. 1 lakh with a view to help small and marginal farmers.  
(a) Rs. 1.2 lakh (b) Rs. 1.3 lakh (c) Rs. 1.4 lakh (d) Rs. 1.6 lakh
87. Name the weightlifter, who notched up a gold medal at the EGAT Cup in Thailand in 48 Kilogram category.  
(a) Mirabai Chanu (b) Sanjita Chanu (c) Anita Rani (d) Deepika Lahiri
88. Which of the following cricket teams won the Ranji Trophy Tournament recently?  
(a) Vidarbha (b) Saurashtra (c) Railways (d) West Bengal
89. The Nyishi tribe of which of the following Indian states celebrates its fortnight-long Boori Boot Yollo festival?  
(a) Manipur (b) Mizoram (c) Arunachal Pradesh (d) Nagaland
90. Name the filmmaker, who is to be honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award by the Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television.  
(a) Harshal Mehta (b) Shekhar Kapur (c) Deepa Mehta (d) Karan Johor
91. The Centre announced that the \_\_\_\_\_ will be its mascot for the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on the conservation of migratory species (CMS) to be held in Gujarat next year.  
(a) Rhino (b) Lion (c) Great Indian Bustard (d) Tiger
92. Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal laid foundation stone for Mega Food Park in Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. Under the Scheme, Government of India provides financial assistance upto Rs. \_\_\_\_\_ Crore per Mega Food Park project.  
(a) 50 (b) 100 (c) 200 (d) 500
93. Multinational Maritime Exercise AMAN 19 formally commenced at:  
(a) India Navy Dockyard (b) Pakistan Navy Dockyard  
(c) Nepal Navy Dockyard (d) Bhutan Navy Dockyard
94. Which of the following banks has raised 5.2204 billion Philippine pesos (\$100 million) from a new issue of local currency bonds in the international market in February 2019?  
(a) World Bank (b) Asian Development Bank  
(c) New Development Bank (d) European Bank

95. The Reserve Bank has imposed a cumulative penalty of Rs 3.5 crore on which of the following bank/banks in February 2019?  
(a) Corporation Bank (b) Allahabad Bank (c) SBI Bank (d) Both a and b
96. Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 announced \_\_\_\_\_ as winner in "Innovation in Data Science" category for their industry-first project "Yes EEE (Engage Enrich Excel)".  
(a) Canara Bank (b) SBI Bank (c) ICICI Bank (d) YES Bank
97. India test fired its helicopter-launched version of one of the most-advanced anti-tank weapons from the Odisha coast. What is the name of it?  
(a) Kalam (b) Helina (c) Aryabhata (d) Surya
98. Who has become the first Indian batsman to hit 100 T20I sixes in February 2019?  
(a) Virat Kohli (b) Sikhar Dhawan (c) Rohit Sharma (d) M.S.Dhoni
99. According to the International Paralympic Committee (IPC), a ban on \_\_\_\_\_ athletes competing in the Paralympics will be lifted provisionally by 15th March 2019.  
(a) Russian (b) Indian (c) Chinese (d) Israeli
100. Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the strategically important Sela Tunnel Project in:  
(a) Kerala (b) Goa (c) Sikkim (d) Arunachal Pradesh
101. Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the Institute of Advanced Virology (IAV) in:  
(a) Kochi (b) Wayanad  
(c) Idukki (d) Thiruvananthapuram
102. Who inaugurated the 13th International Oil and Gas Conference - PETROTECH-2019?  
(a) Narendra Modi (b) Ramnath Kovind (c) Peeyush Goyal (d) Venkai Naidu
103. Recently, Union Tourism Minister KJ Alphons has laid the foundation stone for the Sree Narayana Guru spiritual pilgrimage circuit at the spiritual abode of the renowned social reformer in:  
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Kerala (c) Maharashtra (d) Gujarat
104. Which of the following has decided to include Hindi as the third official language used in its courts, alongside Arabic and English, as part of a move designed to improve access to justice?  
(a) Saudi Arabia (b) Egypt (c) Qatar (d) Abu Dhabi
105. Who has been elected as the chairman of the African Union recently?  
(a) Abdelaziz Bouteflika (b) Jacob Zuma (c) Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi (d) Paul Kagame
106. Name the Indian industrialist, who topped the Hurun India Philanthropy List 2018, released with the highest contribution of Rs 437 crore between October 2017 and September 2018.  
(a) Anil Ambani (b) Mukesh Ambani (c) Ajay Piramal (d) Azim Premji
107. Recently, A Himalayan Cloud Observatory has been set up in \_\_\_\_\_ to receive forecast and monitor cloud burst incidents in the Himalayan region and help minimise the damage.  
(a) Tehri (b) Dehradun (c) Leh (d) Pitthoragarh
108. Which of the following hockey teams won the 9th Senior National Men's Hockey Championship crown at Gwalior?  
(a) Railways (b) Saurashtra (c) Indian Airlines (d) Jammu & Kashmir

109. Name the player, who has been named as the brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals for the upcoming Indian Premier League.  
(a) Rahul Dravid (b) Shane Warne (c) Brad Hodge (d) Ajinkya Rahane
110. Which of the following Indian ministries in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry, is participating at the Berlin International Film Festival, 2019?  
(a) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology  
(b) Ministry of Information and Broadcasting  
(c) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology  
(d) Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
111. The Prime Minister dedicated to the nation the National Cancer Institute at \_\_\_\_\_ in Haryana.  
(a) Jhajjar (b) Sonapat (c) Panipat (d) Bhiwani
112. In Rajasthan, Jaipur based Sapta Shakti Command of Indian Army is conducted a two- day Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise. What is the name of the exercise?  
(a) Exercise Madad (b) Exercise Rahat (c) Exercise Sahayata (d) Exercise Help
113. The Ministry of External Affairs has organised a training course for the officials of the Government of \_\_\_\_\_ under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme.  
(a) Bhutan (b) Sri Lanka (c) Nepal (d) Mauritius
114. According to the study, published in the journal Nature Medicine, Exercise produces a hormone that may improve memory and protect against \_\_\_\_\_ disease.  
(a) Brain Stroke (b) Alzheimer (c) Heart Attack (d) Intestine Cancer
115. Recently, the first of the 15 \_\_\_\_\_ heavy lift helicopters ordered by the Indian Air Force (IAF) arrived in India.  
(a) Chinook (b) Storm (c) Tussle (d) Master
116. Name the Australian cricketer, who won the Allan Border Medal, the country's highest cricketing honour.  
(a) Josh Hazlewood (b) Tim Paine (c) Mitchell Starc (d) Pat Cummins
117. Name the British driver, who becomes first female winner of MRF Challenge Series.  
(a) Anna Thomas (b) Breton Mass (c) Jamie Chadwick (d) Joe Roe
118. Which of the following movies won seven trophies including best British film at BAFTA awards?  
(a) Napalm Girl (b) The Gutsy (c) The Favourite (d) Roma
119. International Day of Women and Girls in Science is celebrated across the world on:  
(a) 4th February (b) 6th February (c) 9th February (d) 11th February
120. Recently, the Parliamentary panel on Information Technology has summoned \_\_\_\_\_ head Jack Dorsey to appear before it on the 25th of February 2019.  
(a) Skype (b) Twitter (c) IMF (d) Google
121. Union Minister Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal commissioned Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park at Tundurru Village. This is the first Mega Aqua Food Park operationalised exclusively established for fish and marine products processing in the State of:  
(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Telangana (c) Tamil Nadu (d) Kerala



122. Globally India ranks \_\_\_\_\_ in terms of the number of large dams with 5264 large dams in operation and 437 large dams under construction.  
(a) Second (b) Third (c) Fourth (d) Fifth
123. In which of the following countries women with four children or more will be exempted for life from paying income tax in February 2019?  
(a) India (b) Mexico (c) Vietnam (d) Hungary
124. The seventh session of the World Government Summit kicked off in:  
(a) New Delhi (b) Tokyo (c) London (d) Dubai
125. Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated Cremica Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd. This is the first Mega Food Park operationalized in the State of:  
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Andhra Pradesh (c) Goa (d) Sikkim
126. Prajnesh Gunneswaran is associated with which of the following sports?  
(a) Cricket (b) Tennis (c) Badminton (d) Boxing
127. Noted Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam has won \_\_\_\_\_ prestigious Dan David Prize for this year for his work on inter-cultural encounters between Asians, Europeans and people of North and South America during the early modern era.  
(a) Israel (b) USA (c) France (d) Germany
128. The Red Cross called for a total ban on nuclear weapons, warning of the growing risk that such arms could again be used with devastating effect. The Red Cross is headquartered in:  
(a) Beijing (b) Paris (c) London (d) Geneva
129. National Productivity Council (NPC) observes foundation day as Productivity Day and celebrates National Productivity Week from:  
(a) February 11-17 (b) February 10-16 (c) February 12-18 (d) February 13-19
130. The National Deworming Day is an initiative of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India to make every child in the country worm free. NDD (first round) is conducted on every year on:  
(a) February 10 (b) February 11 (c) February 12 (d) February 13
131. The third Indo-German Environment Forum with the theme "Cleaner Air, Greener Economy:" is held in:  
(a) Mumbai (b) Bengaluru (c) Hyderabad (d) New Delhi
132. Which of the following state government has announced a universal old age pension scheme - Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna- MVPY for all people above 60 years of age?  
(a) Uttar Pradesh (b) Bihar (c) Madhya Pradesh (d) Haryana
133. Who has been appointed the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of national carrier Air India?  
(a) Atul Garwekar (b) Subhash Narlikar (c) Samar Ranade (d) Ashwani Lohani
134. Recently a new species of frog, *Mysticellus franki* (named after biologist Franky Bossuyt from Brussel's Vrije University) is discovered in:  
(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Kerala (c) West Bengal (d) Rajasthan

135. According to the recent issued guidelines of WHO for audio devices, a volume above \_\_\_\_\_decibels for eight hours is considered as unsafe.  
(a) 55 Decibels (b) 65 Decibels (c) 75 Decibels (d) 85 Decibels
136. What will be the mascot for the National Games 2022 coinciding with the 50th year of the creation of Meghalaya?  
(a) Asiatic Lion (b) One Horn Rhinoceros (c) Hangul (d) Clouded Leopard
137. World Radio Day is an observance day held annually on \_\_\_\_\_to celebrate radio as a medium.  
(a) 13 February (b) 14 February (c) 11 February (d) 12 February
138. Who has been selected as Winner under the Miniratna Category (Category II) by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)?  
(a) ARTIFICIAL LIMBS MANUFACTURING CORP.OF INDIA  
(b) INDIAN MEDICINES PHARMACEUTICAL CORP.LTD.  
(c) ENGINEERING PROJECTS (INDIA) LTD.  
(d) NATIONAL FILM DEVELOPMENT CORP.LTD.
139. Recently, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi presented budget of 2 lakh 501 crore rupees for the financial year 2019-20. In this budget the maximum allocation of 34 thousand 799 crore rupees has been made for:  
(a) Education Sector (b) Rural Development (c) Urban Development (d) Farmer Loan
140. Which of the following state government passed a bill to provide five per cent quota in jobs and educational institutions to Gurjars and four other communities recently?  
(a) Haryana (b) Uttar Pradesh (c) Rajasthan (d) Himachal Pradesh
141. The Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan scheme is to be implemented from:  
(a) 15th February 2019 (b) 20th February 2019 (c) 24th February 2019 (d) 1st March 2019
142. Recently, In a report submitted to the Ministry of Labour and Employment, an Expert Committee on Determining the Methodology for Fixation of the National Minimum Wage has recommended the wage for workers across the country be set at:  
(a) Rs. 270 per day (b) Rs. 305 per day (c) Rs. 330 per day (d) Rs. 375 per day
143. Who has been appointed as the new Election Commissioner of India?  
(a) Deepak Rawat (b) Vishwajeet Rana (c) Arjun Mahajan (d) Sushil Chandra
144. Who was sworn for second time as the USA's Attorney General?  
(a) Thomas Bach (b) Nathan Gorald (c) Theries Nert (d) William Barr
145. Recently, A 48mm long non-venomous snake species "Crying Keelback" was discovered in:  
(a) Tripura (b) Arunachal Pradesh (c) Nagaland (d) Manipur
146. In October 2019, the First NBA games in India will be played in:  
(a) New Delhi (b) Mumbai (c) Hyderabad (d) Chennai
147. Who was honoured for Lifetime Achievement award at the Sportstar Aces Awards recently?  
(a) Prakash Padukone (b) Geet Sethi (c) Dhanraj Pillai (d) Sachin Tendulkar
148. Recently, the annual youth conclave of the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India (CREDAI) was held in:  
(a) Mumbai (b) New Delhi (c) Hyderabad (d) Bengaluru

149. In February 2019, World Pulses Day was celebrated on:  
(a) 5th February (b) 8th February (c) 10th February (d) 14th February
150. Name the actor & director, who has won the Oscar award from animal rights organisation People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) for directing his dog in A Star Is Born.  
(a) Johny Depp (b) Bradley Cooper (c) Brad Pitt (d) Leonardo Di Caprio
151. Who is the first woman flight engineer of Indian Air Force?  
(a) Supriya Shukla (b) Hina Jaiswal (c) Deepika Rajawat (d) Alka Saha
152. Recently, India revoked the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status given to which of the following countries?  
(a) China (b) Nepal (c) Bangladesh (d) Pakistan
153. The inaugural trip of India's first semi-high speed train, Vande Bharat Express, was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at:  
(a) Delhi Railway Station (b) New Delhi Railway Station  
(c) Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station (d) Sarai Rohilla Railway Station
154. Name the AMRUT city and Municipal Corporation, which bagged the first prize at Swachhata Excellence awards 2019.  
(a) Kumbakonam (b) Raigarh (c) Tirupati (d) Ambikapur
155. Which among the following launched a new portal LADIS (Least Available Depth Information System)?  
(a) Airports Authority of India (b) Inland Waterways Authority of India  
(c) Indian Railways (d) Port Authority of India
156. Recently, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone of the Defence Corridor in:  
(a) Jhansi (b) Gorakhpur (c) Jaipur (d) Hisar
157. Who has been appointed as Controller, Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Finance in the management strategy, policy and compliance department by UN?  
(a) Siddhartha Lather (b) Chandramouli Ramanathan  
(c) Divya Ramakirthi (d) Shubhash Ramaswami
158. Recently, Amazon launched "Amazon Pay Unified Payments Interface (UPI)" for Android users in partnership with \_\_\_\_\_ to issue UPI IDs to its customers in India.  
(a) Axis Bank (b) HDFC Bank (c) ICICI Bank (d) Yes Bank
159. Recently, NASA has announced a new space telescope mission dedicated to understanding the origins of life and the universe called the Spectro-Photometer for the history of the Universe in which of the following years?  
(a) 2020 (b) 2021 (c) 2022 (d) 2023
160. Asia's largest early Childhood Conference - Early Ed Asia 2019 was hosted in:  
(a) Udaipur (b) Jaipur (c) Lucknow (d) Kanpur
161. India's first district cooling system is set to be built in:  
(a) Bhopal (b) Hyderabad (c) Chennai (d) Amaravati

162. Abdul Aziz Muhamat, a Sudanese refugee who has been held in \_\_\_\_\_ notorious offshore Manus Island processing centre for over five years, has won the prestigious Martin Ennals human rights prize.  
(a) Australia (b) Italy (c) China (d) USA
163. Which of the following has become the first US bank to offer its own cryptocurrency in February 2019?  
(a) Goldman Sachs (b) JP Morgan Chase (c) Morgan Stanley (d) Citigroup
164. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) withdrew the \_\_\_\_\_ per cent limit on investments by FPIs in corporate bonds of an entity with a view to encourage more foreign investments.  
(a) 10 (b) 15 (c) 20 (d) 25
165. Union Government of India has raised Rs \_\_\_\_\_ crore by additional offering of Bharat-22 Exchange Traded Fund (ETF) in February 2019.  
(a) 5000 (b) 10,000 (c) 15,000 (d) 20,000
166. A total of 229,068 cases of measles were reported in 2018, nearly double the number of infections contracted in the previous year. Measles is caused by:  
(a) Bacteria (b) Virus (c) Algae (d) Fungi
167. The Netherlands' Eva de Goede and Arthur Van Doren of \_\_\_\_\_ have been revealed as the FIH Players of the Year in the 2018 Hockey Stars Awards.  
(a) Belgium (b) Spain (c) Finland (d) Denmark
168. A poem on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre by acclaimed Punjabi writer Nanak Singh, which was banned by the British after its publication in \_\_\_\_\_, has now been translated into English.  
(a) 1916 (b) 1917 (c) 1918 (d) 1920
169. PM inaugurates Pahari Dam Modernization Project. Pahari Dam is a water storage dam situated on Dhasan River in:  
(a) Jhansi (b) Agra (c) Amritsar (d) Pune
170. Former President Pranab Mukherjee released the book containing selected speeches of Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu. The book is a compilation of \_\_\_\_\_ speeches of Mr Naidu.  
(a) 50 (b) 75 (c) 92 (d) 100
171. India hiked the customs duty on all goods imported from \_\_\_\_\_ to 200% with immediate effect in February 2019.  
(a) Pakistan (b) Iraq (c) China (d) Japan
172. Who has assumed the charge of Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Corporate Affairs in February 2019?  
(a) Piyush Goyal (b) Arun Jaitley (c) Subramanyam Swamy (d) Rajnath Singh
173. Union government of India has issued a set of guidelines to set up charging stations for electric vehicles across the country, outlining ways to build such fuelling points every \_\_\_\_\_ km.  
(a) 25 (b) 50 (c) 75 (d) 100
174. Which of the following has become the number one buyer of Venezuelan crude in the first half of February 2019?  
(a) USA (b) India (c) Russia (d) China
175. The first 'Regional Maritime-Safety Conference' was held in:  
(a) Dhaka (b) Beijing (c) Tokyo (d) Mumbai



176. Who among the following took over as the new chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) in February 2019?  
(a) Pramod Chandra Mody (b) Preveen Sinha  
(c) Punkaj Advani (d) Suresh Chandra
177. Who has been appointed as the brand ambassador of Kurkure in February 2019?  
(a) Anushka Sharma (b) Taapsee Pannu (c) Samantha Akkineni (d) Priyanka Chopra
178. The Reserve Bank has imposed Rs 3.5 crore penalties on which of the following bank/banks?  
(a) Oriental Bank of Commerce (b) Punjab National Bank  
(c) Bank of India (d) All of the above
179. Who among the following has surpassed Kapil Dev's tally of 434 wickets and is now joint 7th in the list of leading wicket-takers in Test cricket?  
(a) Dale Steyn (b) Morne Morkel (c) Pat Cummins (d) Mitchel Stark
180. The famous industrialist and philanthropist Dinesh Shahra's book, 'Simplicity & Wisdom' was formally launched by:  
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Keshari Nath Tripathi  
(c) Shri Pranab Mukherjee (d) Shri M Venkaiah Naidu
181. India's first 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' was inaugurated by Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma in:  
(a) Indore (b) Chennai (c) Kolkata (d) Lucknow
182. The 79th session of Indian History Congress (IHC) is to be organised in:  
(a) Bhopal (b) Tirupati (c) Bhubaneswar (d) Varanasi
183. Rajnath Singh is to launch pan-India number \_\_\_\_\_ for women safety, under this system; all the states have to set up a dedicated Emergency Response Centre (ERC).  
(a) 101 (b) 102 (c) 111 (d) 112
184. Which of the following countries launched its first moon mission, sending an unmanned spacecraft to collect data to be shared with NASA?  
(a) Israel (b) Japan (c) India (d) Indonesia
185. Recently, The board of Reserve Bank of India had decided to transfer an interim surplus (dividend) of \_\_\_\_\_ to the government.  
(a) Rs. 14,000 crore (b) Rs. 19,000 crore (c) Rs. 23,000 crore (d) Rs. 28,000 crore
186. What is the name of the first walking robot that navigates without GPS?  
(a) BullBot (b) AntBot (c) OxBot (d) SheepBot
187. The inaugural Mallakhamb World Championship was held in:  
(a) Pune (b) Mumbai (c) Ahmedabad (d) Darjeeling
188. Who has been named as a brand ambassador for global sportswear giant PUMA for a two-year period recently?  
(a) Saina Nehwal (b) Sania Mirza (c) Vinesh Phogat (d) MC Mary Kom
189. Who has claimed the biggest title of her career to win the Qatar Open tennis tournament recently?  
(a) Simona Halep (b) Elise Mertens (c) Rezxieveh Meriyt (d) Alexandra Svitchovic

190. Who is the first Indian woman to mount the peak of Agasthyarkoodam, an 1868-metre high mountain in Kerala?  
(a) Dhanlaxmi S (b) Dhanya Sanal K (c) Shanaya L Khanam (d) KM Subulaxmi
191. Recently, which of the following Indian state Assembly passed a Bill to make Sanskrit as the second official language of the state?  
(a) Rajasthan (b) Gujarat (c) Himachal Pradesh (d) Uttar Pradesh
192. President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the three day International Conference and Exhibition on Energy and Environment in:  
(a) Jaipur (b) Bokaro (c) New Delhi (d) Mumbai
193. Which of the following Indian city is set to host the Attakal Ponkala festival which is considered as one of the world's largest religious gathering of women on a single day?  
(a) Hyderabad (b) Kochi (c) Thiruvananthapuram (d) Kollam
194. Who became the first Indian women boxers to win gold medals at the Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria?  
(a) Deepika Rana and Arti Yadav (b) Nikhat Zareen and Meena Kumari Devi  
(c) Zareena Khan and Geetika Naik (d) Geetanjali Kushwaha and Amrita Negi
195. Recently, who was conferred with the first-ever Football Ratna award?  
(a) Subrata Pal (b) Sunil Chhetri (c) Sandesh Jhingam (d) Jeje Lalpekhlua
196. Recently, The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) has received a bulk production clearance from the Indian Army and the Defence Ministry for production of \_\_\_\_\_artillery guns.  
(a) Pinak (b) Gandeav (c) Dhanush (d) Vidyut
197. Name the non-life insurance provider in the private sector, which announced the launch of 'Trip Protector' insurance policy.  
(a) Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (b) Religare Health Insurance Company Limited  
(c) HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company (d) Kotak Mahindra General Insurance
198. Recently, International Annual Desert Festival began in:  
(a) Jaipur (b) Jaisalmer (c) Bikaner (d) Udaipur
199. Recently, who among the following was presented with the Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony for year 2016?  
(a) Rajkumar Singhajit Singh (b) Ram Vanji Sutar  
(c) Chhayanaut (d) Mallika Sarabhai
200. Which among the following launched a new micro insurance plan 'Micro Bachat'?  
(a) State Bank of India (b) Punjab National Bank  
(c) Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) (d) RBI
201. Which of the following Indian states unveiled a scholarship programme 'Kalia Chhatra Brutti' for the children of the beneficiaries of the Kalia scheme?  
(a) Jharkhand (b) Odisha (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Madhya Pradesh
202. Who inaugurated "VIVID-Vision Insight and Voices as India goes Digital" 2019 recently?  
(a) Shri Prakash Javadekar (b) Shri Rajnath Singh  
(c) Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad (d) Shri Arun Jaitley

203. Every year, International Mother Language Day is being celebrated on:  
(a) 17th February (b) 18th February (c) 19th February (d) 21st February
204. Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore inaugurated the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) World Cup in:  
(a) Guwahati (b) Hyderabad (c) Dehradun (d) New Delhi
205. Recently, Scientists have discovered massive mountains in the Earth's:  
(a) Core (b) Crust (c) Mantle (d) Molten Lava
206. Recently, the government has approved recapitalisation of Rs 48,239 crore in \_\_\_\_\_ public sector banks in this fiscal to help them maintain regulatory capital requirements and finance growth plans.  
(a) 6 (b) 7 (c) 9 (d) 12
207. With which of the following banks the merger of Vijaya bank and Dena Bank will be effective from 1st April 2019?  
(a) Punjab National Bank (b) Bank of Baroda (c) Bank of Maharashtra (d) Bank of India
208. Who received the Seoul Peace Prize in recognition of his dedication to international cooperation, global growth and human development?  
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Shashi Tharoor (c) Shri Venkai Naidu (d) Shri Rajnath Singh
209. Which of the following ministries launched Operation Digital Board to provide better digital education?  
(a) Ministry of Human Resource Development  
(b) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
(c) Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions  
(d) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
210. The 4th India-ASEAN Expo and Summit was held in:  
(a) Mumbai (b) New Delhi (c) Kolkata (d) Bengaluru
211. Which of the following Indian states government has become the first police department in the country to use a robot for police work?  
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Kerala (c) Karnataka (d) Andhra Pradesh
212. Name the retired Supreme Court judge, who has been appointed as the first BCCI ombudsman under the new BCCI Constitution.  
(a) Justice D.K. Jain (b) Justice Gyan Sudha Mishra  
(c) Justice Markandey Katju (d) Justice Sudhakar Sharan Singh
213. Recently the mammal from which of the following countries became the world's first mammal known to have become extinct due to "human-induced climate change,"?  
(a) India (b) Australia (c) Cuba (d) Poland
214. Which of the following countries unveiled the world's first ever artificial intelligence (AI) female news anchor?  
(a) New Zealand (b) Japan (c) China (d) Russia
215. Recently, Uttar Pradesh state government has decided to observe Adolescent girls day on \_\_\_\_\_ of every month at Anganwadi centres across the state.  
(a) 3rd (b) 4th (c) 8th (d) 10th

216. According to the Indus Waters Treaty, subject to certain conditions, India has the right to use water of which of the following rivers?  
(a) Chenab (b) Indus (c) Jhelum (d) Beas
217. Recently, Asia's biggest air show "Aero India" event began in:  
(a) New Delhi (b) Dehradun (c) Bengaluru (d) Hyderabad
218. Who has been appointed as the First Lokayukta of Nagaland?  
(a) Justice Nagendra Singh (b) Justice Uma Nath Singh  
(c) Justice Ruma Pal (d) Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai
219. Recently, Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the "Waste to Wonder" Park; where first time scrap has been used to create 'Wealth from waste' in:  
(a) Kolkata (b) Bengaluru (c) New Delhi (d) Lucknow
220. Name the cricketer, who broke Shahid Afridi's record for most sixes in international cricket.  
(a) Darren Bravo (b) Kieron Powell (c) Chris Gayle (d) Mahendra Singh Dhoni
221. Who is the first Indian woman to receive Future of Nature award for marine conservation?  
(a) Dr Sunaina Rohtagi (b) Dr Divya Karnad (c) Dr Alankrita Bajaj (d) Dr Kalpana Mehra
222. The Regional Maritime Safety Conference 2019 was organized by India for the first time and it commenced in:  
(a) Kochi (b) Mumbai (c) Panaji (d) Vizag
223. To provide greater operational flexibility to non-banking lenders, the Reserve Bank created a single category for them by bundling their present\_\_\_\_\_.  
(a) Two tier structure (b) Three tier structure (c) Four tier structure (d) Five tier structure
224. Civil Aviation Minister, Suresh Prabhu, inaugurated several infrastructure projects across the length and breadth of how many states in India?  
(a) Three (b) Four (c) Seven (d) Eleven
225. What is the name of the largest bee spotted for the first time since 1981 in Indonesia?  
(a) Asian giant hornet (b) Bumblebee (c) Wallace's giant bee (d) Meganomiinae bee
226. Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani launched the Integrated Large Scale Eri Farming in \_\_\_\_\_under North East Region Textile Promotion Scheme (NERTPS).  
(a) Arunachal Pradesh (b) Meghalaya (c) Assam (d) Nagaland
227. Which of the following country President Omar al-Bashir has declared a year-long state of emergency, dissolving his cabinet and local governments throughout the country?  
(a) Sudan (b) Congo (c) Djibouti (d) Eritrea
228. Name the Israeli robotic lander, which launched from Cape Canaveral in Florida, beginning a two-month journey to land on the Moon.  
(a) Outstander (b) Important (c) Beresheet (d) Bestie
229. Recently, International terror financing watchdog, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has decided to keep \_\_\_\_\_on its grey list.  
(a) Myanmar (b) Pakistan (c) Afghanistan (d) Iraq



230. World Thinking Day is celebrated annually on \_\_\_\_\_ by all Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.  
(a) 19th February (b) 20th February (c) 22nd February (d) 23rd February
231. Justice Uma Nath Singh took the oath of office as the first Lok Ayukta of:  
(a) Nagaland (b) Sikkim (c) Kerala (d) Goa
232. Who inaugurated a new park which houses the replicas of Seven Wonders of the World at Sarai Kale Khan, New Delhi?  
(a) President of India (b) Prime Minister of India  
(c) Union Home Minister (d) Union Finance Minister
233. Which of the following has become the first state in the country to get a second Coast Guard district?  
(a) Tamil Nadu (b) Maharashtra (c) West Bengal (d) Andhra Pradesh
234. The drill is dubbed as "Velayat 97" has been launched by:  
(a) India (b) Iran (c) Iraq (d) Indonesia
235. The new currency known as RTGS dollars has been launched by:  
(a) Zambia (b) Algeria (c) Zimbabwe (d) Rwanda
236. Evan Williams steps down from the company's board at the end of February. He is the co-founder of:  
(a) Facebook (b) Snapdeal (c) Twitter (d) Flipcart
237. Which of the following companies has been honoured with the prestigious 'FICCI CSR Award' for Women Empowerment?  
(a) Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (b) RIL  
(c) TCS (d) Adani Group
238. The new space probe named Hayabusa 2, has touched down on an asteroid more than 300 million km from Earth on a mission to seek clues about the origins of life. It is a new space probe of:  
(a) USA (b) Japan (c) South Korea (d) China
239. Who won the India's first medal at the ISSF World Cup 2019 in the women's 10-metre air rifle event at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi?  
(a) Tejaswini Sawant (b) Saniya Shaikh (c) Apurvi Chandela (d) Rahi Sarnobat
240. Who has been honoured with the 2018 Player of the Year award by the Asian Hockey Federation?  
(a) Sardara Singh (b) Parattu Raveendran Sreejesh  
(c) Birendra Lakra (d) Manpreet Singh
241. Who launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh?  
(a) President of India (b) Prime Minister of India  
(c) Union Home Minister (d) Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh
242. Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, MSME, is being organized a Conclave "Empowering Women Entrepreneurs 2019, Financing & Enabling Women from Marginalised Sections", in:  
(a) Bhopal (b) Hyderabad (c) Chennai (d) Mumbai
243. Saudi Arabia has appointed Reema bint Bandar Al Saud as its first female ambassador to serve as its top diplomat in which of the following countries?  
(a) India (b) USA (c) Japan (d) South Korea

244. Akihito is the current Emperor of:  
(a) Thailand (b) Morocco (c) Japan (d) Vietnam
245. Mohamed Tahir Ayala has been appointed as the Prime Minister of:  
(a) Sudan (b) Armenia (c) Iraq (d) Syria
246. According to an analysis by Motilal Oswal, India's government debt-to-GDP ratio is 68.4 per cent, second only to which of the following countries?  
(a) Argentina (b) Mexico (c) Greece (d) Brazil
247. NITI Aayog co-hosted a conference on "The Future of Indian Banking" on February 22, 2019, with the Foundation for Economic Growth and Welfare (EGROW Foundation) in:  
(a) Bhopal (b) New Delhi (c) Chennai (d) Mumbai
248. India-based global audio and music streaming service JioSaavn has announced that it has secured the first rank India-wise and \_\_\_\_\_ rank globally in the 2019 list of "50 Most Innovative Companies".  
(a) 18th (b) 28th (c) 38th (d) 48th
249. Which of the following has launched a cruise missile from a submarine for the first time during an ongoing annual military drill in the Strait of Hormuz?  
(a) India (b) Iran (c) Iraq (d) Indonesia
250. Australia wicketkeeper Alyssa Healy set a new Guinness World Record after achieving the feat for the 'highest catch of a cricket ball' at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Healy caught a ball which was dropped from a drone \_\_\_\_\_ metres above the MCG.  
(a) 60 (b) 70 (c) 80 (d) 90
251. Recently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation the National War Memorial in:  
(a) New Delhi (b) Kolkata (c) Imphal (d) Shillong
252. Name the first state in the country to have raised a special dog squad to detect liquor consignment?  
(a) Jharkhand (b) West Bengal (c) Bihar (d) Uttar Pradesh
253. Which of the following Indian state government has launched a boat ambulance service to ferry patients to hospitals in remote areas?  
(a) West Bengal (b) Assam (c) Bihar (d) Odisha
254. The second summit of US President Donald Trump with North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un will be held in:  
(a) Istanbul (b) Hanoi (c) Bangkok (d) New York
255. Name the country where voters took part in a referendum on a new constitution that expands recognition of private property?  
(a) Suriname (b) Trinidad and Tobago (c) Cuba (d) Guyana
256. Recently, the research, published in the journal Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism found that .....lowered blood pressure in people with type 2 diabetes, suggesting benefits for heart health.  
(a) Vitamin A (b) Vitamin B (c) Vitamin C (d) Vitamin D
257. Name the Indian Grandmaster who lifted the Cannes International Open trophy in chess?  
(a) Samar Pratap (b) Mayank Rana (c) Abhijeet Gupta (d) Sunil Sharma

258. In Shooting World Cup, name the shooter who won gold and sets world record in 10m Air Rifle?  
(a) Deepak Luthra (b) Amit Mitra (c) Saurabh Chaudhary (d) Sanjaya Narayan
259. Name the biographical drama which has bagged the Best Picture Oscar at the 91st Academy Awards in Los Angeles?  
(a) Bohemian Rhapsody (b) Black Panther (c) Roma (d) Green Book
260. Name the Indian documentary which won an Oscar in the Best Documentary Short Subject category at the 91st Academy Awards?  
(a) Ladies First (b) Period. End of Sentence  
(c) Prabhat Nagari (d) Smile Pinki
261. Name the cricket team which posted highest ever T20 total recently?  
(a) Ireland (b) Afghanistan (c) Pakistan (d) Scotland
262. Name the first Indian to register 8,000 runs in T20 cricket?  
(a) Rohit Sharma (b) Suresh Raina  
(c) Mahendra Singh Dhoni (d) Virat Kohli
263. Recently, Muhammadu Buhari has been re-elected for a second four year term as President of:  
(a) Liberia (b) Nigeria (c) Uganda (d) Angola
264. Recently, the Delhi government presented Rs 60,000 crore budget for 2019-20 in the Assembly. What percentages of total budget have been earmarked for education?  
(a) 12% (b) 16% (c) 18% (d) 26%
265. Recently, Skill Development Ministry inaugurated Skill Saathi Youth Conclave in:  
(a) Jharkhand (b) Odisha (c) Chhattisgarh (d) Madhya Pradesh
266. Recently, the Ministry of Civil Aviation, in association with Airports Authority of India, AAICLAS and Confederation of Indian Industry, is organizing the Aviation Conclave 2019 in:  
(a) Mumbai (b) New Delhi (c) Bhubaneswar (d) Chandigarh
267. Recently, the Gita Aradhana Mahotsav was organized in:  
(a) Kurushetra (b) New Delhi (c) Nagpur (d) Pune
268. A joint military exercise Sampriti-2019 will be conducted between:  
(a) Bhutan and India (b) India and Bangladesh (c) China and India (d) India and Nepal
269. Recently, President Ramnath Kovind gave away the Gandhi Peace Prize for year 2016 to:  
(a) Vivekananda Kendra (b) Ekal Abhiyan Trust  
(c) Akshaya Patra foundation and Sulabh International (d) Yohei Sasakawa
270. Name the India-born who has joined Amazon's board of directors recently?  
(a) Kamla Harris (b) Indra Nooyi (c) Deepika Bharadwaj (d) Pramila Jayapal
271. Southern Coast Railway will be a new zone of the Indian Railways. This new 18th railway zone of the country will be headquartered at:  
(a) Guntur (b) Visakhapatnam (c) Nanded (d) Secunderabad

272. Which of the following Indian states had launched the PRANAM Commission, a panel set up to look after the issues concerning a Bill, for protection of parents of state government employees?  
(a) Assam (b) Arunachal Pradesh (c) Nagaland (d) Manipur
273. Who will launch Minimum Support Price for Minor Forest Produce and Value Addition Component of Van Dhan scheme in New Delhi?  
(a) Shri Narendra Modi (b) Shri Ramnath Kovind (c) Shri Jai Oram (d) Shri Raghubar Das
274. Which of the following Indian ministries has launched the Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS) for providing industry apprenticeship opportunities to the general graduates exiting in April 2019 through the National Apprenticeship Promotional Scheme (NAPS)?  
(a) Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment  
(b) Ministry of Human Resource Development  
(c) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology  
(d) Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises
275. Recently, the 'International Digital Health Symposium' was inaugurated in:  
(a) Gurugram (b) Chandigarh (c) New Delhi (d) Kolkata
276. US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un met in Hanoi. Hanoi is the capital city of:  
(a) Laos (b) Vietnam (c) North Korea (d) Cambodia
277. Recently, An infant born weighing the same as a beetroot becoming the smallest newborn boy in the world was born in:  
(a) China (b) Mexico (c) Japan (d) USA
278. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will confer the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes for:  
(a) Art & Culture (b) Mathematics (c) Astronomy (d) Science and Technology
279. Name the first batsman in the world to smash 500 sixes in international cricket matches?  
(a) Chris Gayle (b) David Miller (c) Rohit Sharma (d) Dwayne Bravo
280. Recently, the second edition of the Indian Sign Language (ISL) dictionary was released listing .....words in Hindi and English along with their corresponding visual representation.  
(a) 4,000 (b) 4,800 (c) 5,500 (d) 6,000

## ANSWER KEY AND EXPLANATION

1. a The Gorkha Brigade Contingent has been chosen as the Best Marching Contingent among the three services in this year's Republic Day Parade.
2. b Doordarshan started to broadcast a travelogue series Rag Rag Mein Ganga from February 2, every Saturday and Sunday at 9.00 PM on DD National.
3. a Six days cultural extravaganza Bharat Parv concluded in New Delhi.
4. a PETROTECH-2019, the 13th International Oil & Gas Conference & Exhibition, being organised under the aegis of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India, is all set to be inaugurated on February 10, 2019.
5. b Germany, France and the UK have set up a payment channel with Iran called INSTEX, to help continue trade and circumvent US sanctions.
6. b Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has opened a new centre set up by the government in partnership with the UN to fight climate change and boost sustainable development in Africa.
7. b The International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements was launched at UNESCO's Headquarters, Paris.
8. a The International Cricket Council (ICC) announced a five-year global partnership deal with beverage manufacturer Coca-Cola Company.
9. c PNB MetLife, a life insurance company, signed P.V. Sindhu as its brand ambassador. She is respected by contemporaries, created a fan following across generations with athleticism and aggression on court.
10. a Moldovan World junior champion Anastasia Nichita stunned Olympian Mimi Hristova as four-time finalist Haryana Hammers defeated two-time defending champion Punjab Royals 6-3 to win its maiden Pro Wrestling League (PWL) title.
11. c New Scheme- namely "Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)" to extend direct income support at the rate of Rs. 6,000 per year to farmer families, having cultivable land upto 2 hectares is announced.
12. d Union Finance Minister Piyush Goyal proposed a capital expenditure of Rs. 1,58,658 crore for the Railways Ministry for the year 2019-20 in the Interim Budget. This is the highest-ever allocation for the national transporter, surpassing last year's allocation of Rs. 1, 48,528 crore.
13. a To provide pensionary benefits to at least 10 crore labourers and workers in the unorganised sector a new Scheme called 'Pradhan Mantri Shram-Yogi Maandhan' is announced
14. c Indian-American Congressman Ami Bera has been named the head of a key congressional subcommittee that will have broad jurisdiction to conduct oversight into America's foreign policy.
15. c Bank of India (BoI), Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) and Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) are out of the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework.
16. a Vani Kapoor became the first Indian to earn a card for the Australian Ladies PGA Tour (LPGA) after coming through its first-ever Qualifying Tournament at the Ballarat Golf Club.



17. b India captain Mithali Raj became the first female cricketer to play 200 ODIs, adding another achievement to her illustrious career.
18. c The Kala Ghoda Arts Festival - KGAF, India's largest multi-cultural street festival begins in Mumbai.
19. a Behrouz Boochani, an Iranian held in an Australian-run camp on a Papua New Guinea island, won the \$72,390 Victorian Prize for literature with his book No Friends but the Mountains.
20. d World Wetlands Day occurs annually on February 2nd, marking the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on February 2, 1971.
21. d The Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation Railway electrification of 294- km-long Andal-Sainthia-Pakur-Malda and Khana- Sainthia Sections in West Bengal.
22. c The Centre put forth a proposal to launch a mega pension scheme 'Pradhan Mantri ShramYogi Maandhan' for unorganised sector workers with a monthly income of up to Rs. 15,000.
24. The Andhra Pradesh High Court new building at Amaravathy, was inaugurated by the Chief Justice of India, Ranjan Gogoi. It's after functioning from Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister's Camp Office for over a month's time, the AP High Court moved to a new building at Amaravathy on a temporary basis.
24. b The head of state of Monaco, Prince Albert II arrived in New Delhi on a week-long visit to India. Prince Albert attended the India-Monaco Business Forum afternoon followed by a round-table on energy and climate.
25. a Former Law Minister of Nepal Nilambar Acharya has been appointed as country's ambassador to India. President Bidya Devi Bhandari administered the oath of office and secrecy to Mr. Acharya in Kathmandu this evening. He has been appointed on the recommendation of cabinet.
26. c The Trump administration said that it was suspending one of the last major nuclear arms control treaties with Russia, following five years of heated conversations over accusations by the United States that Moscow is violating the Reagan-era agreement. The decision has the potential to incite a new arms race - not only with Russia but also with China, which was never a signatory to the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, widely known as the INF.
27. d Finance Minister Piyush Goyal has proposed that individuals with income upto Rs 5 lakh will not have to pay any income tax for FY2019-20. As per the Budget speech, "Individual taxpayers having taxable annual income up to Rs 5 lakh will get full tax rebate and therefore will not be required to pay any income tax."
28. a East African countries have approved the separate trade agreements with the European Union (EU).
29. a Huawei recently confirmed that it is working on a foldable 5G smartphone, which will be launched at Mobile World Congress (MWC) 2019 in Barcelona. The company has shared a press invite on its official Twitter account for the same.
30. c Indian opener Smriti Mandhana has climbed three spots in the batters' list to become number one in the latest ICC women's ODI rankings. Earlier, she was named ICC Women's Player of the Year 2018.
31. b Lt Bhavana Kasturi to Become First Woman to Lead an All-men Contingent in Republic Day Parade

32. a Singapore has been rated as the most liveable location for Asian expatriates in 2019 for the 14th consecutive year, according to a survey by ECA International.
33. c The National Day of Sri Lanka is celebrated on 4 February to commemorate its internal political independence from British rule on that day in 1948.
34. c Pope Francis landed in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), on a historic visit, becoming the first pontiff to visit the Arabian peninsula.
35. a The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways, Govt. of India has announced the observance of 30th Road Safety Week Campaign from 4th to 10th February 2019. The theme for this year campaign is Sadak Suraksha - Jeevan Raksha"
36. a The Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC), the hub of ISRO's future manned missions, was inaugurated at ISRO headquarters in Bengaluru.
37. a Former Pakistan women's cricket team skipper Sana Mir became the first Asian woman cricketer to play hundred T20 international matches.
38. b A 1983-batch IPS officer of Madhya Pradesh Cadre Rishi Kumar Shukla has been appointed as the new Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation, CBI. He will serve in the post for a period of two years.
39. b World Cancer day is observed on 4th February.
40. d President Ram Nath Kovind was opened the annual Udyanotsav of Rashtrapati Bhavan.
41. d Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh gave the nod to declare the endangered Indus River Dolphin, found only in Beas River, as Punjab state aquatic animal.
42. b Kerala has become the first State to set up a price monitoring and research unit (PMRU) to track violation of prices of essential drugs and medical devices under the Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO).
43. c Nayib Bukele, a former mayor of El Salvador's capital, has won a landslide victory in presidential election, winning more votes than his two closest rivals combined to end a quarter of a century of two-party dominance in the crime-plagued Central America nation.
44. c Half of India's working-age population (15 years and above), for the first time, is not contributing to any economic activity, according to the National Sample Survey Office's (NSSO's) latest jobs survey. The labour force participation rate (LFPR) stood at 49.8 per cent in 2017-18, falling sharply from 55.9 per cent in 2011-12, Business Standard reported based on the leaked survey.
45. c Singapore and Hong Kong are the number one countries when it comes to online companies doing business abroad. India fell just outside the top ten but still ahead of the UK and US.
46. d P V Bharathi, executive director of Canara Bank has assumed charge as managing director and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the city-based Corporation Bank, a statement said. She is the first woman to serve the bank in this capacity.
47. a The Indian Space Research Organisation is launched its 40th communication satellite GSAT-31 from the spaceport in French Guiana.

48. b The Hubble Space Telescope has made an unexpected discovery of a dwarf galaxy in our cosmic backyard, located just 30 million light-years away, scientists say. Researchers used the NASA/ESA Hubble Space Telescope to study white dwarf stars within the globular cluster NGC 6752.
49. a As many as 325 child labourers have been rescued as part of 'Operation Smile' in Hyderabad, Commissioner of Police Anjani Kumar said. Operation Smile was launched on January 1 this year to trace missing children. The month-long programme aims to rescue child labourers, children engaged in begging for alms and so on.
50. b India's biggest cultural street festival, Kala Ghoda Arts Festival (KGAF) is inaugurated in Mumbai. In 2019, the festival celebrates two glorious decades of art and culture, across various forms and communities including design, cinema, theatre, dance, literature and much more.
51. b For creating awareness among the farmers, exporters and other concerned stakeholders, a first State level awareness programme on Agriculture Export Policy was organized on 2nd February, 2019 in Vaikunth Mehta National Institute of Cooperative Management (VAMNICOM), Pune.
52. b A World Heritage Centre housing 'spiritual camps' of 45 countries would be set up at Mayapur, the global headquarters of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), in Nadia district.
53. d The Ministry of Home Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is organised a meeting of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Cluster Group on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) on 5-6 February 2019 in New Delhi. Indian Ocean Rim Association is an inter-governmental organisation and has many disaster-prone countries among its 22 members and nine dialogue partners.
54. d U.S. President Donald Trump plans to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Vietnam on Feb. 27 and 28.
55. a Two regional rural banks (RRB) - Pallavan Grama Bank and Pandyan Grama Bank - will be amalgamated into a single RRB in Tamil Nadu, according to a statement from Indian Bank.
56. d The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it has imposed a total penalty of Rs 2.2 crore on private sector lender Axis Bank in two separate cases. A penalty of Rs 2 crore has also been imposed on UCO Bank and Rs 1 crore on Syndicate Bank for violation of norms.
57. c The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has bought a 14% stake in micro-financier Annapurna Finance for Rs 137 crore, reinforcing the belief that India's microfinance sector is on course to attracting long-term funds from global lenders and investors. Annapurna Microfinance's headquarters is located in Bhubaneswar.
58. a Scientists from University of Exeter in the UK have developed a graphene-based biosensor that could 'sniff' out evidence of lung cancer from a person's breath, paving the way for low-cost, early diagnosis systems.
59. c Legendary cricketer and former India skipper Kapil Dev will flag off the 'Tridhaatu Navi Mumbai Half Marathon' on February 17th from Vashi, in Navi Mumbai. Well-known marathon coach and ultra-marathon athlete Norrie Williamson is the race director for the event.
60. b Global soccer body FIFA has set up a joint venture with 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar as part of its effort to streamline organisation of the tournament. The global soccer body said in a statement that it would hold a 51 percent share of the venture while the Qatar organising committee would hold 49 percent.
61. a The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for the establishment of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog for conservation, protection and development of cows and their progeny.

62. a Union Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani launched the India Size project in Mumbai. A first-of-its-kind project in the history of the country, India Size aims to arrive at a standard Indian Size for the ready-to-wear clothing industry, on the lines of the standardized sizes available in countries such as the USA and the UK.
63. a India and Germany have joined hands for cooperation on Water and Waste Management.
64. c To further promote the use of toilets and to sustain the open defecation free status of villages across India, the part two of Darwaza Band campaign was launched in Mumbai.
65. c Macedonia signed an accord to join NATO to become the 30th member of the US-led alliance.
66. b India's largest state-owned lender SBI's regional head in the UK has been honoured with the 'Freedom of the City of London' award in recognition of his contribution to promoting the bilateral relations.
67. b In the USA, President Donald Trump has nominated senior Treasury official David Malpass as the next chief of the World Bank.
68. d India's communication satellite GSAT-31 has been launched successfully from French Guiana.
69. a Indian opener Smriti Mandhana hammered the fastest fifty for India in Women's T20Is. The left-handed batswoman struck a half century in just 24 balls in the 1st T20I against New Zealand at Westpac Stadium in Wellington.
70. b Lalith J Rao, Umakant and Ramakant Gundecha in the field of Hindustani Vocal music and MS Sheela in Carnatic music.
71. b The government's push to provide clean cooking fuel to every household has turned India into the world's second largest LPG consumer whose demand is projected to rise 34 per cent by 2025, Oil Secretary M M Kutty said.
72. a The Congress government in Madhya Pradesh has made it mandatory for industries seeking various incentives to provide 70 per cent employment to locals in the state.
73. c The second edition of the India Heritage Walk Festival (IHWf) is being held across 37 cities in February, with the UNESCO joining hands with Sahapedia this year.
74. d Tiny, testy and eye-catching with a colourful fin plumage, the Siamese fighting fish was named Thailand's national aquatic animal. Known in the West as a betta fish, the underwater brawler is popular in home aquariums for its iridescent body and many-hued tail.
75. d Father Francois Laborde, a 92-year-old priest from West Bengal, was conferred the Légion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour), the highest civilian award of France, in recognition of his work for specially-abled children.
76. b Recognition of international standards of copyright protection and incentives for intellectual property have helped India jump eight places to 36th position on the International Intellectual Property (IP) Index, the highest gain for any country this year.
77. b Reserve Bank of India in its bi-monthly monetary policy has reduced repo rate by 25 basis points to 6.25 per cent. RBI's six-member monetary policy committee also brought down reverse repo rate to 6 per cent.

78. b The year 2018 followed the pattern of higher-than-average annual temperatures, as the Earth experienced its fourth hottest year on the 139-year record. In a separate analysis of global temperature data, NASA scientists also determined 2018 to be the fourth warmest year on record.
79. d India has dropped six places in the latest FIFA Rankings released and the first of the year. India's points tally has gone from 1240 to 1219 which has seen the Blue Tigers slide to 103rd in the rankings.
80. c The Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh is celebrated its fortnight-long Boori Boot Yollo festival. Boori Boot Yollo is observed in the month of February every year to welcome spring and a successful harvest.
81. b The UP government also announced a new scheme to raise the health and educational standards of girls. Kanya Sumangala Yojna was allotted Rs 1,200 crore in the budget. A provision of Rs 2,579 crore was also made under the Old Age and Farmers' Pension Scheme running in UP.
82. c Finance Minister of Odisha Sashi Bhusan Behera has presented the interim budget for 2019-20 financial year amounting to 1 lakh, 32 thousand, 660 crore rupees in Assembly.
83. a Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel presented his government's maiden budget for the financial year 2019-2020.
84. a Finance Minister Piyush Goyal has said, by March-April this year, India will take energy access to every single home in this country, about a decade ahead of the deadline of the Strategic Development Goals 2030.
85. d In Bihar, three-day Krishi Kumbh is organised in Motihari.
86. d The Reserve Bank of India or RBI raised the limit of collateral-free agricultural loans to Rs. 1.6 lakh from the current Rs. 1 lakh with a view to help small and marginal farmers.
87. a World champion Indian weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu notched up a gold medal at the EGAT Cup in Thailand.
88. a Vidharbha lifted the Ranji Trophy for the second time in a row, defeating Saurashtra by 78 runs at Nagpur.
89. c The Nyishi tribe of Arunachal Pradesh is celebrating its fortnight-long Boori Boot Yollo festival. Boori Boot Yollo is observed in the month of February every year to welcome spring and a successful harvest.
90. c The Academy of Canadian Cinema & Television has announced that it will honour filmmaker Deepa Mehta with the Lifetime Achievement Award.
91. c The Centre announced that the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) will be its mascot for the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on the conservation of migratory species (CMS) to be held in Gujarat next year.
92. a Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal laid foundation stone for M/s Nandvan Mega Food Park Private Limited located in Badawal, Chhata-Barsana road in Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. Under the Scheme, Government of India provides financial assistance upto Rs. 50.00 Crore per Mega Food Park project.
93. b Multinational Maritime Exercise AMAN 19 formally commenced at Pakistan Navy Dockyard, with a colorful flag hoisting ceremony.
94. b The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has raised 5.2204 billion Philippine pesos (\$100 million) from a new issue of local currency bonds in the international market.



95. d The Reserve Bank has imposed a cumulative penalty of Rs 3.5 crore on state-owned lenders Corporation Bank and Allahabad Bank for violation of various norms.
96. d Aegis Graham Bell Award 2018 announced YES BANK as winner in "Innovation in Data Science" category for their industry-first project "Yes EEE (Engage Enrich Excel)".
97. b India test fired its helicopter-launched version of one of the most-advanced anti-tank weapons from the Odisha coast. Helina, the helicopter-launched version of the Nag anti-tank guided missile with a hit range of 7-8 km, was launched from an Army chopper.
98. c Indian opener and stand-in skipper Rohit Sharma became the first man from his country to smash a century of sixes in T20I cricket in the second T20 between India and New Zealand.
99. a A ban on Russian athletes competing in the Paralympics will be lifted provisionally by 15th March 2019, the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) said.
100. d Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the strategically important Sela Tunnel Project in Arunachal Pradesh.
101. d Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the Institute of Advanced Virology (IAV) in Thiruvananthapuram.
102. a Prime Minister Narendra Modi formally inaugurated the 13th International Oil and Gas Conference - PETROTECH-2019 in Greater Noida.
103. b Union Tourism Minister KJ Alphons has laid the foundation stone for the Sree Narayana Guru spiritual pilgrimage circuit at the spiritual abode of the renowned social reformer in Varkala, Kerala.
104. d Abu Dhabi has decided to include Hindi as the third official language used in its courts, alongside Arabic and English, as part of a move designed to improve access to justice.
105. c Egypt's President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has been elected as the chairman of the African Union at the continental body's summit in Ethiopia.
106. b Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) Chairman Mukesh Ambani topped the Hurun India Philanthropy List 2018, released with the highest contribution of Rs 437 crore between October 2017 and September 2018.
107. a A Himalayan Cloud Observatory has been set up in Tehri district to receive forecast and monitor cloud burst incidents in the Himalayan region and help minimise the damage.
108. a Railway Sports Promotion Board lifted the 9th Senior National Men's Hockey Championship crown at Gwalior.
109. b Australia spin legend Shane Warne has been named the brand ambassador of Rajasthan Royals for the upcoming Indian Premier League. Warne led Rajasthan Royals to its first and only IPL title in 2008, was the mentor of the side last season.
110. b Information and Broadcasting Ministry, in collaboration with Confederation of Indian Industry, is participated at the Berlin International Film Festival, 2019.
111. a PM dedicated to the nation the National Cancer Institute at Bhadsa in Jhajjar district.

112. b In Rajasthan, Jaipur based Sapta Shakti Command of Indian Army is conducting a two- day Joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief Exercise "Exercise Rahat".
113. c The Ministry of External Affairs has organised a training course for the officials of the Government of Nepal under the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) programme.
114. b Exercise produces a hormone that may improve memory and protect against Alzheimer's disease, according to a study. The study, published in the journal Nature Medicine, found that the hormone, irisin, may promote neuronal growth in the brain's hippocampus, a region critical for learning and memory.
115. a The first of the 15 Chinook heavy lift helicopters ordered by the Indian Air Force (IAF) arrived in India.
116. d Australian fast bowler Pat Cummins won the Allan Border Medal, the country's highest cricketing honour.
117. c Jamie Chadwick: Briton becomes first female winner of MRF Challenge Series.
118. c 'The Favourite' won seven trophies including best British film and best actress for Olivia Colman, who plays Britain's 18th century Queen Anne in the female-centric drama.
119. d In order to achieve full and equal access to and participation in science for women and girls, and further achieve gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls, the United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution declaring 11 February as the International Day of Women and Girls in Science.
120. b The Parliamentary panel on Information Technology has summoned Twitter head Jack Dorsey to appear before it on the 25th of this month.
121. a Union Minister Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal commissioned Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park at Tundurru Village in Bhimavaram Mandal, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh via video conferencing. The park is promoted by M/s Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park Pvt. Ltd. This is the 1st Mega Aqua Food Park operationalised exclusively established for fish and marine products processing in the State of Andhra Pradesh.
122. b The 5th International Dam Safety Conference-2019 is being held during 13 and 14 February 2019 in Bhubaneswar as a joint initiative of the Government of India, Government of Odisha and the World Bank under aegis of the ongoing World Bank assisted Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) as a part of institutional strengthening. Globally India ranks third after China and the USA in terms of the number of large dams with 5264 large dams in operation and 437 large dams under construction.
123. d Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has said that women in the country with four children or more will be exempted for life from paying income tax, in a move aimed at boosting the country's population.
124. d The seventh session of the World Government Summit kicked off in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), with the participation of more than 4,000 people from 140 countries.
125. a Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Smt Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated Cremica Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd via video conference. The Park is located at Village Singhain Una District of Himachal Pradesh. This is the first Mega Food Park operationalized in the State of Himachal Pradesh.
126. b Gathering rewards for his continuous brilliant performances, Prajnesh Gunneswaran scored an ace by breaking into men's singles top-100 for the first time in his career. He jumped six places to take him to the 97 spot.

127. a Noted Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam has won Israel's prestigious Dan David Prize for this year for his work on inter-cultural encounters between Asians, Europeans and people of North and South America during the early modern era.
128. d The Red Cross called for a total ban on nuclear weapons, warning of the growing risk that such arms could again be used with devastating effect. The Red Cross founded in 1863 in Geneva, Switzerland, in particular by Henry Dunant and Gustave Moynier.
129. c National Productivity Council (NPC) celebrated its 61st Foundation Day. NPC observes foundation day as Productivity Day and celebrates National Productivity Week from February 12-18, 2019.
130. a The National Deworming Day is an initiative of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India to make every child in the country worm free. NDD (first round) is conducted on February 10 each year.
131. d Third Indo-German Environment Forum with the theme "Cleaner Air, Greener Economy:" is being held in New Delhi.
132. b Bihar government has announced a universal old age pension scheme - Mukhyamantri Vridhajan Pension Yojna-MVPY for all people above 60 years of age.
133. d Ashwani Lohani, a retired bureaucrat, has been appointed the Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) of national carrier Air India.
134. b Scientists from the University of Delhi have discovered a new amphibian - a mysterious narrow-mouthed frog, that makes only a four-day appearance in seasonal roadside puddles every year in Kerala's Wayanad district.
135. d WHO considers a volume above 85 decibels for eight hours or 100 decibels for 15 minutes as unsafe.
136. d Meghalaya's state animal Clouded Leopard will be the mascot for the National Games 2022 coinciding with the 50th year of the creation of the state.
137. a World Radio Day is an observance day held annually on 13 February to celebrate radio as a medium. It was proclaimed on 3 November 2011 by UNESCO's 36th General Conference after originally being proposed by the Kingdom of Spain.
138. d National Film Development Corporation of India has been selected as Winner under the Miniratna Category (Category II) by Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).
139. a The maximum allocation of 34 thousand 799 crore rupees has been made to education sector followed by Rural Development and rural works department.
140. c Rajasthan government passed a bill to provide five per cent quota in jobs and educational institutions to Gurjars and four other communities.
141. a Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-Dhan pension scheme comes into effect from 15 February 2019.
142. d An expert panel has recommended that a need-based national minimum wage for workers across the country be set at Rs. 375 per day, or Rs. 9,750 per month.
143. d Chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes, Sushil Chandra, has been appointed as the new Election Commissioner.

144. d In United States, William Barr was sworn for second time as the nation's Attorney General, taking the helm of the Justice Department as special counsel Robert Mueller investigates Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election.
145. b Crying Keelback snake: Guwahati researcher finds new snake in Arunachal Pradesh.
146. b In October this year, history will be made when Indiana Pacers and Sacramento Kings face off in two pre-season games in Mumbai.
147. a Prakash Padukone was honoured for Lifetime Achievement while Virat Kohli and Jasprit Bumrah shared the Sportsman of the Year (cricket) accolade at the Sportstar Aces Awards ceremony.
148. b Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed a real estate conference organised by realtors' apex body CREDAI in New Delhi.
149. c In 2018, the UN General Assembly decided that 10 February will mark World Pulses Day, keeping alive the positive momentum surrounding these healthy, nutritious, protein-rich, nitrogen-fixing legumes after FAO's successful 2016?International Year of Pulses?Campaign.
150. b Actor-director Bradley Cooper has won the Ocat award from animal rights organisation People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) for directing his dog in A Star Is Born.
151. b Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal becomes the first woman flight engineer, breaching what until last year was the Indian Air Force's men-only club.
152. d India revoked the Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status of Pakistan and warned of more measures in response to its support for terrorist groups targeting India.
153. b The inaugural trip of India's first semi-high speed train, Vande Bharat Express, was flagged off by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the New Delhi railway station.
154. b AMRUT cities and Municipal Corporations of Raigarh, Ambikapur and Kumbakonam have bagged the first, second and third prizes respectively of Swachhata Excellence awards 2019.
155. b Moving a step ahead towards ensuring optimum use of National Waterways, the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) launched a new portal LADIS - Least Available Depth Information System.
156. a Mr. Modi laid the foundation stone of the Defence Corridor. Jhansi is one of the six nodal points of the UP defence corridor.
157. b Chandramouli Ramanathan has been appointed as Controller, Assistant Secretary-General for Programme Planning, Budget and Finance in the management strategy, policy and compliance department.
158. a To facilitate secure payments and financial transactions on its platform, Amazon launched "Amazon Pay Unified Payments Interface (UPI)" for Android users in partnership with Axis Bank to issue UPI IDs to its customers in India.
159. d NASA has announced a new space telescope mission dedicated to understanding the origins of life and the universe. It's called the Spectro-Photometer for the History of the Universe, Epoch of Reionization and Ices

Explorer or SPHEREx, for short. The space agency is aiming for a 2023 launch and has already earmarked \$242 million for the project, not including launch costs, which is supposed to last for at least two years.

160. b Jaipur hosted the Early Ed Asia 2019.
161. d A UAE-based international cooling provider has entered into a 30-year concession with Andhra Pradesh government to build, own, operate and transfer India's first district cooling system in the state's new capital Amaravati.
162. a Abdul Aziz Muhamat, a Sudanese refugee who has been held in Australia's notorious offshore Manus Island processing centre for over five years, has won the prestigious Martin Ennals human rights prize, the UN refugee agency UNHCR has said.
163. b US investment bank, JP Morgan Chase, has become the first US bank to offer its own cryptocurrency.
164. c The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) withdrew the 20 per cent limit on investments by FPIs in corporate bonds of an entity with a view to encourage more foreign investments.
165. b Union Government of India has raised Rs 10,000 crore by additional offering of Bharat-22 Exchange Traded Fund (ETF). The additional 'on-tap' offering of Bharat-22 ETF was opened for a single day with a base issue size of Rs 3,500 crore and an option to retain over-subscription.
166. b A total of 229,068 cases of measles were reported in 2018, nearly double the number of infections contracted in the previous year, the WHO has said. Measles is caused by a type of virus called a paramyxovirus.
167. a The Netherlands' Eva de Goede and Arthur Van Doren of Belgium have been revealed as the FIH Players of the Year in the 2018 Hockey Stars Awards, the International Hockey Federation (FIH) has announced.
168. d A poem on the Jallianwala Bagh massacre by acclaimed Punjabi writer Nanak Singh, which was banned by the British after its publication in 1920, has now been translated into English.
169. a PM inaugurates Pahari Dam Modernization Project. Pahari Dam is a water storage dam situated on Dhasan River in Jhansi district.
170. c Former President Pranab Mukherjee released the book containing selected speeches of Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu at a function in New Delhi. The book is a compilation of 92 speeches of Mr Naidu. Speaking on the occasion, Mr Mukherjee said the speeches reflect the wide experience of Mr Naidu in public affairs.
171. a India hiked the customs duty on all goods imported from Pakistan to 200% with immediate effect, a day after it revoked the most favoured nation (MFN) status that it had given its neighbour in 1996.
172. b Union Minister Arun Jaitley has assumed the charge of Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Corporate Affairs. The charge of the Ministries was given to Union Minister Piyush Goyal on a temporary basis on the 23rd of January.
173. a Union government of India has issued a set of guidelines to set up charging stations for electric vehicles across the country, outlining ways to build such fuelling points every 25 km.
174. b India is feasting on Venezuelan oil, after the US imposed a de facto ban on crude imports from the Latin American nation. While flows to the US came to a halt, India became the No. 1 buyer of Venezuelan crude in the first half of February, with imports jumping 66 per cent to 620,000 barrels a day.



175. d Safeguarding the shores and promoting India-Asean trade along the sea route would be the theme for the country's maiden 'Regional Maritime-Safety Conference' in Mumbai on February 19 and 20.
176. a IRS officer Pramod Chandra Mody took over as the new chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the policy making body of the Income Tax Department.
177. b Kurkure, the snack brand owned by PepsiCo India, announced that it has appointed actor Taapsee Pannu as its brand ambassador.
178. d The Reserve Bank has imposed Rs 3.5 crore penalties on three public sector banks, including PNB and OBC, for violation of various banking norms. A penalty of Rs 1.5 crore has been imposed on Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) and Rs 1 crore each on Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Bank of India.
179. a Dale Steyn, playing only his 92nd Test, surpassed Kapil Dev's tally of 434 wickets and is now joint 7th in the list of leading wicket-takers in Test cricket.
180. b Famous industrialist and philanthropist Dinesh Shahra's book, 'Simplicity & Wisdom' was launched at Parmarth Ashram in the ongoing Kumbh Mela. The book is dedicated to late eminent Vedanti Swami Pragananandji. The book was formally launched by Keshari Nath Tripathi, Governor of West Bengal, and Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Head of Parmarth Ashram.
181. c India's first 'fulldome 3D Digital Theatre' at the Science City was inaugurated by Union Culture Minister Mahesh Sharma.
182. a Bhopal is to host Indian History Congress.
183. d Persons in distress can dial a pan-India number: 112. Under this system, all the states have to set up a dedicated Emergency Response Centre (ERC).
184. a Israel launched its first moon mission, sending an unmanned spacecraft to collect data to be shared with NASA.
185. d The board of Reserve Bank of India decided to transfer an interim surplus (dividend) of Rs. 28,000 crore to the government.
186. b AntBot is the first walking robot that navigates without GPS.
187. b India wins the team event at inaugural Mallakhamb World Championships in Mumbai.
188. d Six-time world women boxing champion MC Mary Kom was named as a brand ambassador for global sportswear giant PUMA for a two-year period.
189. b In tennis, Belgium's Elise Mertens has claimed the biggest title of her career by beating top seed Simona Halep 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 to win the Qatar Open.
190. b Dhanya Sanal K name got etched into history books after she became the first woman to mount the peak of Agasthyarkoodam, an 1868-metre high mountain in Kerala. Every year, the state forest department conducts treks to the mountain peak, but on paper, women are barred from climbing citing security and safety risks.
191. c The Himachal Pradesh Assembly passed a Bill to make Sanskrit the second official language of the state.

192. c President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the three day International Conference and Exhibition on Energy and Environment in New Delhi.
193. In Kerala, the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram is all prepared to host the Attakal Ponkala festival which is considered as one of the world's largest religious gathering of women on a single day.
194. b Nikhat Zareen and Meena Kumari Devi became the first Indian women boxers to win gold medals at the Strandja Memorial Tournament in Sofia, Bulgaria.
195. b Football Delhi president Shaji Prabhakaran presented the first-ever Football Ratna award to Sunil Chhetri.
196. c The Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) has received a bulk production clearance from the Indian Army and the Defence Ministry for production of 114 'Dhanush' artillery guns.
197. c HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company, India's third-largest non-life insurance provider in the private sector, announced the launch of 'Trip Protector' insurance policy, a pioneering policy in the non-life insurance segment in India.
198. b International Annual Desert Festival begins in Jaisalmer.
199. b Renowned sculptor and scholar Ram Vanji Sutar was given the award for 2016.
200. c Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) launched a new micro insurance plan 'Micro Bachat'. It is a regular premium, non-linked, participating endowment micro insurance plan, which offers a combination of protection and savings.
201. b Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik unveiled a scholarship programme for the children of the beneficiaries of the Kalia scheme.
202. c Shri Ravi Shankar Prasad inaugurated VIVID 2019.
203. d International Mother Language Day is being celebrated. on the 21st of February every year to promote linguistic and cultural diversity and multilingualism.
204. d Sports Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore inaugurated the International Shooting Sports Federation (ISSF) World Cup in New Delhi.
205. c Scientists have discovered massive mountains in the Earth's mantle, an advance that may change our understanding of how the planet was formed.
206. d The government has approved recapitalisation of Rs 48,239 crore in 12 public sector banks in this fiscal to help them maintain regulatory capital requirements and finance growth plans.
207. b Bank of Baroda said the merger of Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank with itself would be effective from April 1 as per the scheme of amalgamation approved by the government.
208. a Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Seoul on a two-day visit to South Korea. Mr. Modi held bilateral talks with South Korean President Moon Jae-in and received the Seoul Peace Prize in recognition of his dedication to international cooperation, global growth and human development.
209. a HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar launched 'Operation Digital Board', which aims to set up one digital and interactive board per classroom in government and government-aided schools.

210. b The 4th India-ASEAN Expo and Summit was held on 21-23 February, 2019 in New Delhi.
211. b Kerala Police Headquarters has become the first police department in the country to use a robot for police work.
212. a The Supreme Court appointed retired Supreme Court judge Justice D.K. Jain the first ombudsman under the new BCCI Constitution.
213. b A small brown rat which lived on a tiny island off northern Australia is the world's first mammal known to have become extinct due to "human-induced climate change".
214. c China's state-owned TV channel Xinhua unveiled the world's first ever artificial intelligence (AI) female news anchor.
215. c Uttar Pradesh state government decided to observe Adolescent girls day on 8th of every month at Anganwadi centres across the state.
216. d According to the Indus Waters Treaty, subject to certain conditions, India has the right to use water flowing in eastern rivers, namely, the Beas, the Ravi and the Sutlej while Pakistan controls the right to use water in western rivers, namely, the Indus, the Jhelum and the Chenab.
217. c The Asia's biggest air show Aero India event in Bengaluru will observe Technology Day on the third day.
218. b Justice Uma Nath Singh will take oath as the First Lokayukta of Nagaland.
219. c Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the "Waste to Wonder" Park under the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC).
220. c Chris Gayle toppled Shahid Afridi to top the list of most international sixes.
221. b Dr Divya Karnad has grown to be the second Indian and the first girl to obtain the 'Global Future of Nature Award' for her paintings on marine conservation.
222. b The Regional Maritime Safety Conference 2019 was organized by India for the first time, commenced in Mumbai.
223. b To provide greater operational flexibility to non-banking lenders, the Reserve Bank created a single category for them by bundling their present three-tier structure.
224. c Suresh Prabhu inaugurates Aviation Infra Projects in 7 States.
225. c World's largest bee spotted for the first time since 1981.
226. a Union Textiles Minister Smriti Irani launched the Integrated Large Scale Eri Farming in Arunachal Pradesh under North East Region Textile Promotion Scheme (NERTPS) in Itanagar.
227. a Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has declared a year-long state of emergency, dissolving his cabinet and local governments throughout the country.

228. c About the size of a washing machine, the 585kg (1,290lb) robotic lander named Beresheet, the Hebrew word for Genesis.
229. b International terror financing watchdog, the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) has decided to keep Pakistan on its grey list at the end of its week-long plenary meeting in Paris.
230. c World Thinking Day, formerly Thinking Day, is celebrated annually on 22 February by all Girl Guides and Girl Scouts.
231. a The first Lok Ayukta of Nagaland, Justice Uma Nath Singh, took the oath of office. Nagaland Governor PB Acharya administered the oath to him at a function held at Raj Bhavan.
232. c Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated a new park which houses the replicas of seven wonders of the world at Sarai Kale Khan, New Delhi. The park, which is called the 'Waste to Wonder Park', was built by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC). It is the first-of-its-kind tourist attraction in the world, with the replicas of the Taj Mahal, the Great Pyramid of Giza, Eiffel Tower, Leaning Tower of Pisa, Christ the Redeemer statue of Rio de Janeiro, Rome's Colosseum, and the Statute of Liberty which were opened for the public at the inauguration.
233. a Tamil Nadu became the first state in the country to get a second Coast Guard district headquarters - Thoothukudi. The first district headquarters is Chennai.
234. b Iran launched a three-day annual navy drill in a vast area of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean including a sensitive global shipping route. The drill is dubbed as "Velayat 97," the drill will showcase Iran's submarines, warships, helicopters and drones, according to the admiral.
235. c Zimbabwe's central bank announced it would scrap the official 1:1 peg between its quasi-currency bond note and the U.S. dollar, launching a new currency known as RTGS dollars.
236. c Twitter Inc. co-founder Evan Williams steps down from the company's board at the end of February.
237. a Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL) has been honoured with the prestigious 'FICCI CSR Award' for Women Empowerment, a company release said.
238. b A Japanese space probe named after a falcon, Hayabusa 2, has touched down on an asteroid more than 300 million km from Earth on a mission to seek clues about the origins of life, Japan's space agency said.
239. c Apurvi Chandela gave India their first medal at the ISSF World Cup 2019 by winning gold in the women's 10-metre air rifle event at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range in New Delhi.
240. d The Asian Hockey Federation has honoured Indian skipper Manpreet Singh with the 2018 Player of the Year award. Women team's striker Lalremsiami has bagged the Rising Player of The Year prize.
241. b The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, launched the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) from Gorakhpur. With the launch, the first instalment of Rs 2,000 will be directly credited to the bank accounts of selected beneficiary farmers.
242. d Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, MSME, is being organized a Conclave "Empowering Women Entrepreneurs 2019, Financing & Enabling Women from Marginalised Sections", in Mumbai.

243. b In Saudi Arabia, Reema bint Bandar Al Saud appointed its first female ambassador to serve as its top diplomat in the United States, pulling a son of King Salman back to the kingdom to serve as deputy defense minister amid deteriorating ties with America after the killing of Jamal Khashoggi.
244. c Japan's Emperor Akihito attended a ceremony to mark the 30th year of his reign while calling for the country to embrace openness in a more globalised world.
245. a Sudan's President Omar al-Bashir appointed a first Vice-President and a new Prime Minister, a day after declaring a state of emergency to counter the most sustained protests since he came to power 30 years ago in a military coup. Mohamed Tahir Ayala, the former Governor of Gezira state whom Mr. Bashir had previously touted as a potential successor as President was appointed Prime Minister.
246. d Government debt as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) for India is one of the highest among emerging markets (EMs), making the domestic economy vulnerable to foreign flows and global uncertainties. According to an analysis by Motilal Oswal, India's government debt-to-GDP ratio is 68.4 per cent, second only to Brazil.
247. b NITI Aayog co-hosted a conference on "The Future of Indian Banking" on February 22, 2019, with the Foundation for Economic Growth and Welfare (EGROW Foundation) in New Delhi.
248. b India-based global audio and music streaming service JioSaavn has announced that it has secured the first rank India-wise and 28th rank globally in the 2019 list of "50 Most Innovative Companies".
249. b Iran says it has launched a cruise missile from a submarine for the first time during an ongoing annual military drill in the Strait of Hormuz.
250. c Australia wicketkeeper Alyssa Healy set a new Guinness World Record after achieving the feat for the 'highest catch of a cricket ball' at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Healy caught a ball which was dropped from a drone 80 metres above the MCG.
251. a Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation the National War Memorial near India Gate in New Delhi.
252. c Bihar has become the first state in the country to have raised a special dog squad to detect liquor consignment.
253. d The Odisha government has launched a boat ambulance service to ferry patients to hospitals in remote areas at a cost of Rs 5.40 crore.
254. b US President Donald Trump will reach Hanoi, the capital of Vietnam for his second summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un.
255. c In Cuba, voters took part in a referendum on a new constitution that expands recognition of private property.
256. c The research, published in the journal Diabetes, Obesity and Metabolism, also found that vitamin C lowered blood pressure in people with type 2 diabetes, suggesting benefits for heart health.
257. c In Chess, Indian Grandmaster Abhijeet Gupta lifted the Cannes International Open trophy.
258. c Saurabh Chaudhary shattered World Record to finish top of the 10m air rifle men's event.
259. d Biographical drama "Green Book" has bagged the Best Picture Oscar at the 91st Academy Awards in Los Angeles.



260. b Kathikhera, a small village in Hapur district, hogged the limelight after a documentary, Period. End of Sentence, shot here, won an Oscar in the Best Documentary Short Subject category at the 91st Academy Awards.
261. b Afghanistan created history against Ireland in their second Twenty20 International at the Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.
262. b Suresh Raina has become the first Indian to register 8,000 runs in T20s.
263. b Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari has been re-elected for a second four year term.
264. d Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Manish Sisodia said 26 per cent of total budget have been earmarked for education.
265. b Skill Development Ministry inaugurates Skill Saathi Youth Conclave in Odisha.
266. b The Ministry of Civil Aviation, in association with Airports Authority of India, AAICLAS and Confederation of Indian Industry, is organizing the Aviation Conclave 2019 with an overarching theme of "Flying for All" in New Delhi.
267. b The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, attended the Gita Aradhana Mahotsav at ISKCON-Glory of India Cultural Centre, New Delhi.
268. b As part of the ongoing India Bangladesh defence cooperation, a joint military exercise Sampriti-2019 will be conducted at Tangail, Bangladesh from 02 March to 15 March 2019.
269. c For 2016, it has been jointly given to Akshaya Patra foundation for its contribution in providing mid-day meals to children and Sulabh International for improving the condition of sanitation and emancipation of manual scavengers.
270. b India-born Indra Nooyi, PepsiCo's former CEO, has joined Amazon's board of directors. Early this month, Starbucks executive Rosalind Brewer joined the board.
271. b This new 18th railway zone of the country will be headquartered at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.
272. a Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal had launched the PRANAM Commission, a panel set up to look after the issues concerning a Bill, for protection of parents of state government employees.
273. c Tribal Affairs Minister Jual Oram will launch Minimum Support Price for Minor Forest Produce and Value Addition Component of Van Dhan scheme in New Delhi.
274. b The Minister for Human Resources Development, Shri Prakash Javadekar has launched the Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS) for providing industry apprenticeship opportunities to the general graduates exiting in April 2019 through the National Apprenticeship Promotional Scheme (NAPS).
275. c Smt Anupriya Patel inaugurates the 'International Digital Health Symposium' in New Delhi.
276. b US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un are meeting in Hanoi on the second day of their interaction in the Vietnamese capital.

277. c An infant born in Tokyo, weighing the same as a beetroot has gone home healthy, becoming the smallest newborn boy in the world to leave hospital safely.
278. d Prime Minister Narendra Modi will confer the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prizes for Science and Technology to the awardees in New Delhi.
279. a Chris Gayle became the first batsman in the world to smash 500 sixes in international cricket; earlier in the series, he had toppled Shahid Afridi to record the most number of sixes by any batsman in international cricket.
280. d The second edition of the Indian Sign Language (ISL) dictionary was released listing 6,000 words in Hindi and English along with their corresponding visual representation.

